

The Afterlife

I am finally home. But I feel as if only my body arrived, leaving myself behind. I see children whom I know are mine, and a woman whom I know is my wife. But my love, my feelings for them were left behind. Can they tell? Do they know? I move in a shroud of loneliness, even as they hug and kiss me, proclaiming their love. Can they tell? Do they know? And why don't I even care if they do?

I am finally in bed, but sleep is miles away. I try not to succumb to her gentle pull, knowing that if I do, I will once again walk the war torn streets of terror that haunt my nightly dreams. I will lie helplessly as the dreams ravage my mind with memories of the sights and sounds and smells of fear, rage and death; the taste of war, causing me to cry out in my sleep for peace; the peace that eludes me daily.

But tonight, I fall into a tranquil cocoon of a dream, which wraps itself around me, and I allow myself to be part of it. I look out at a world that existed in my reality before I went away. The world is full of beauty, hope, joy and peace. I never want to leave this dream world I have finally been allowed to partake of. And I do not walk alone this time. I am joined by my family, cajoling me with promises of a future life where I am no longer separated by my inner wars.

I wake slowly, wishing not to leave the false reality of dreamland that granted me the taste of peace I have longed for so desperately. I lie in the afterglow and dare to believe that perhaps the dream foreshadowed a possibility of what may come to be; resolving to stay in my painful "afterlife" and work to find my dream.