

The Girl who asked Questions

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There was once a girl with big ears. She had two big ears, and each ear had a diamond earring. Her ears with their shiny diamonds looked like question marks—which was a good thing because this girl asked questions; lots of questions:

*“Why was I born?
Why will I die?
Why do you love me?
Why do I cry?”*

Those were the sorts of questions she asked, and they had all sorts of answers:

“Because a star wanted to live on earth,” said her dad.

“Ashes to ashes; stars to stars,” said her mum.

“We just do,” said her dad.

“Because it hurts until the taps turn on,” said her mum.

Sometimes the Girl-Who-Asked-Questions sat silently. She didn’t ask questions; she was listening for them. They were everywhere:

*In the flowers,
In the trees,
In the rivers,
In the seas.*

She heard them in the rustling of the leaves as the wind passed over her head. She heard them in the blue that hides in snow. She heard them in babies.

"Mum, what does the sea ask?"

"Ummmm???" said her mum.

"Me neither, both of them," said the girl.

"Mum, what do flowers ask?"

"Ummmm???" said her mum.

"What do I say so silently beautiful?" said the girl.

"Mum, I see questions hovering around babies like butterflies—what are they asking?"

"That's easy," beamed her mum.

"Who becomes me and what will I be?

Will I be I, or just a me?"

"That's right," said the girl, "my heart can hear them too!"

One day the Girl-Who-Asked-Questions spent the whole day asking nothing. She wandered around the house. She wandered around the garden. She sat in the pantry. Finally she tugged at her mum's skirt.

"Mum, what's the biggest question ever?"

"You," said her mum, straight away and laughing.

The girl's eyes grew big and round. They were big and brown and full of questions. Then she smiled; she smiled and she smiled and she smiled.