

CJ POETRY AND PAINTINGS

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Poetographs

© *Candice James*



“Fire Flowers”

Painting © 2013 Candice James

acrylic on canvas

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ROCK OF AGES

© Candice James

Weary from the journey
I rest beside the rock of ages,
I stand small, infinitesimal,
In awe of the beautiful images
Flashing within its veiled
boundaries.

I stand in a pool of clear glass
Alive with whispers
And melodies,
Forgotten promises
And familiar songs;
Imprisoned willingly
in this sheer joy and sorrow
Of sight and sound.

A still small voice,
Indistinct at first,
Slowly growing louder,
Infuses the atmosphere.

For a moment,
I am the wind,
The sky,
The universe.

The moment passes.
The pool of glass shatters.
The rock of ages crumbles.

I walk on
Holding hands with infinity:
The journey less tedious now.

From "Merging Dimensions"
(Ekstasis Editions 2015)

AGAIN AND AGAIN © Candice James

**I am the stillbirth of all things
Waiting to be born again;
And reborn again and again.**

**I have lingered in tall grasses on the moors and heard
The haunting echoes of long since vanished bagpipes.
I have parted the clouds in the sky
And casually left them naked and vulnerable
To maudlin indigo blue notes of another ilk.
I have listened with a fervent vengeance
And heard the breathing of angels as if I were an intricate part of them.
I have felt their heartbeat against my chest
And been touched by droplets of sacred crimson blood
Whetting the secrets perched on their lips.**

**I have carried my sins with me bearing my cross for all to see
And yet they remain invisible to those eyes that will not see.
I have done these things with a pure soul
But still have not graduated into the light.
Again and again... I am the preparation not the meal.
Again and again... I am the dampness not the rain.**

**I have flown wingless through layers of air
Leaving remnants of my flesh behind
As scars to remember me by
Lest the universe forgets I passed this way.
I have worshipped in churches with blood stained windows.
I have gazed through iron eyes and read steel scrolls burnt black.
I have been charred beyond recognition.
I have become the laughter of saints
And the sorrow of unblessed saviours.**

**I am the death of all life
Waiting to be shaped again;
And reshaped again and again.**

Alive In The Paint ~ © Candice James

From shadow to light, purple to white,
Nestled in between death and life,
I hang between disasters and hope clinging onto a threadbare rope
Climbing out of this cold damp mire
To bathe in the core of life's red hot fire
Falling headfirst into the flame, it beckons to me and calls me by name
So I pick up a brush in the dim candle-glow
To paint a feeling I know will flow
And cover the world with chance and romance, ribald rhythm and eloquent dance.
Where the blessed, the frail and obscurely quaint
Are part of the brilliance, alive in the paint.

Then I step back and remove myself from the picture
And with discerning eye I peruse the mixture

I put down my brush and cross the floor,
Gaze into the mirror that hangs on the door.
I look at my image in shock and surprise at the secrets hiding behind my eyes.
I see evidence of old truths thrown away
Where guilty pleasures once held sway

Dipping my world into ebony ink covering my mind up 'til I couldn't think
Or differentiate right from wrong;
A symphony from a rock'n'roll song.

So I polished my breath until it came to rest
On the satin edge of an artist's vest.

Now... stark moments splash onto reality,
Dripping in whispers of eternity,
Spinning my mind a bright shade of white
As I move from the shadow into the light

Delighting the eye in the sky I suppose
Because it applauds in quiet repose.

If I listen I hear the thunderous sound of one hand clapping...the other still bound.
The sound slowly fades away ever-faint
But something still whispers... alive in the paint.

Inside a pool of hot shiny embers,
Trapped in circles without any centers,
Travelling light years through this empty dark,
Scarred by saw edged swords that don't leave a mark,
My eyes have been bound with barbed wire and ice.
In a hazy world of gambling and vice
Blindly I stumble and sink in quicklime,
Crushed by the harsh hands of uneven time.

*I stand out of time; out of place; out of synch;
And then in a heartbeat as quick as a wink.*

On the brink of a cut glass precipice
I stand quite amazed that it's come to this.
With scarred feet I balance on diamond dust;
Then crumble to flakes of flesh, blood and rust.
I spin a metaphor in silver thread
That beckons me dance with ghosts of the dead;
Then I become a vague apparition
Wringing out sins in vows of contrition.

*I stand out of time; out of place; out of synch;
And then in a heartbeat as quick as a wink.*

I'm a sacrament to an angel's sighs,
A windblown wish and a surreal sunrise.
I'm reborn in the shadow of the sun.
Wrapped in a teardrop then coming undone
I swim in the sun and bathe in its light.
The pool's lost its shine. I've regained my sight.
I dive into the fire wrapped in barbed wire
I burn in the flames 'til I am the fire

*I stand out of time; out of place; out of synch;
And burn in the flame until I am the fire*

Blue Rhapsody (Sonnet) © Candice James

The ink and blood are mixed together now.
What is this inspiration turned to chill?
A buried heartache 'neath lust's rusted plow
Where once it spun with love on passion's hill,
And fevered brow did glisten with love's sweat?
When bluest rhapsodies invade my mind
Reverberating echoes of regret
The final throes of love are underlined
But should tomorrow bring new rhapsody
And fill my heart and lift it from the mire,
Unwrapped in surrealistic poetry
I'll bathe in pools of inspiration's fire;

Then, once again, I'll kiss in moonlit tryst
Those lips it seems forever I have missed.



Dreamscape © Candice James

I entered the dreamscape.
There you were:
White shirt, blue striped tie;
Rosy cheeks, gray hair speckled with white;
Silver glasses glinting,
Framing questioning eyes;
Surprising the bandit smile
Tugging at your lips...

“Where have you been?”
You asked.
“I’ve been writing poems on Earth”
I answered.

Then the dream broke,
Swallowed you
Into the other dimension;
Gone in an instant.

≈ ♪ ≈ ≈ ♪ ≈
I see you everywhere now,
Your image is burned into my soul.
≈ ♪ ≈ ≈ ♪ ≈

I know you
But can't remember
Where or when;
Can't remember your name.

Tonight, I'll enter the dreamscape again,
Searching; Searching for my meaning...
Searching for you.

Poem from the book
“Merging Dimensions”
(Ekstasis Editions 2015)

A Hieroglyph Of Thought © Candice James



A sonnet is a hieroglyph of thought
With meanings buried deep inside the ink.
At times it wanes to cool then waxes hot:
To coax a tear. To cause an eye to blink.
A ghostly image hazing in and out;
A house of mirrors; fiction bending truth;
A whisper hiding in a blatant shout;
A bitter vetch stirred in a sweet vermouth.

Poetograph by
Saddlestone Designs



The written words spilt on the page have dried;
But still they resonate within the mind.
The heartaches, longing, passion, lust and pride,
In language set to form and thus refined;
The remnants of a poetic refrain
Words echoing in shadows of the rain

Distances

© Candice James

I'm just another distance
Too far away,
Out of reach,
Across the invisible divide;
A wall of tears between us,
Solid as Gibraltar,
Beyond destruction.

Tired of pulling
Against each other
On the river we travelled,
We split the boat in half
And moved
In opposite directions,
Sinking into
Our own realities,
Taking the nearest
Sympathetic bystander
Under with us.

And now,
Long since parted,
We live
An adequate existence
Of quiet desperation.

If I look hard,
Sometimes I can still see
Our water-logged
Broken boat shells
Bobbing haphazardly
On the horizon.

Out of reach
And too far away,
They're just
Another distance
To measure
The depth of tears we are
Away from each other.

Distances

© Candice James

Translation into Arabic
by Baha Alak

المسافات
الشاعرة كاندس جيمس
ترجمة د. بهاء العلق

أنا محضُ مسافةٍ أخرى
بعيدةٌ جداً،
بعيدةٌ المنال،

. عبر الفجوة غير المرئية بيننا
جدارُ الدمع بيننا،
صلبٌ مثلُ جبل طارق،
. لا يمكن كسره

متعبةٌ من التضادِ بيننا
في النهر الذي نسافر فيه،
نفتسم القارب نصفين
ونتجه به في اتجاهين متعاكسين،
نغرق في واقعنا،
نصطحب أول مارٍ بنا
. متعاطفٍ معنا.

والآن،
مضى زمنٌ طويلٌ مذ افترقنا،
نعيش عيشة هائلة
بهدوء المضطر.

حين أنظر بجد،
يتراءى لي أحيانا
حطام قاربنا المكسرة المغمورة بالمياه
. وهي تتمايل بشكل عشوائي في الأفق

بعيدةٌ المنال
بعيدةٌ جداً،
انهم محضُ مسافةٍ أخرى
لو قيست بعمق الدموع
نحن بعيدون عن بعضنا البعض

Aftertaste (a sonnet)

© Candice James

The sweetest nights lay in the hazy past
With burned out sunsets vague as summer dreams:

The residue of things that never last;
The days of love unrav'ling at the seams;
I drift and dream inside an old torch song
Then lightning strikes and thunder rolls above.
I face the cold hard truth. Those days are gone.
They'll never come again; those days of love.

But, even still, I deign to grasp at threads.
Though love has died and withered on the vine,
Old passions tend to rear their buried heads;
The usury of aftertaste's fine wine.

Abandoned in a sea as black as coal,
I'm shipwrecked with no anchor for my soul.

CAVING OUT © 2010 Candice James

**There was always that single shaft of sunlight.
Where it came from or how it got in
Was always a mystery.**

**All she had ever known
Was this multi shaded brown sky.
Always there; never ending.
She was born in this cave;
Lived in this cave,
But didn't want to die in this cave.**

**Today she decided to become a skyscraper.
She scraped at the brown tapestry ceiling
Of rust, beige, and amber that hung overhead:
The colour of a seasonal autumn
She'd never once seen.**

**The shaft of sunlight whispered
About the changes beyond her brown sky;
Changes that never passed before her eyes;
Changes she wanted to someday see.
She continued scraping her overhead skyscape
With a frustrated vengeance.**

***She was born to be a cave dweller
But she wanted to be a skyscraper.***

**She gripped the stone carved chisel
In her hand more tightly
And continued scraping,
Hoping her sky would cave in
That she may cave out.**

**We are all skyscrapers
Trying to cave out;
Out of the prisons we're trapped in.**

Distance

© Candice James

I'm just another distance

Too far away,
Out of reach,

Across the invisible divide;
A wall of tears between us,

Solid as Gibraltar,
Beyond destruction.

Tired of pulling against each other
On the river we travelled,

We split the boat in half
And moved in opposite directions,

Sinking into our own realities,
Taking the nearest

Sympathetic bystander under with us.

And now,

Long since parted,

We live an adequate existence
Of quiet desperation.

If I look hard...

Sometimes, I can still see

Our water-logged broken boat shells
Bobbing haphazardly on the horizon.

Out of reach

And too far away,

They're just another distance

To measure the depth of tears we are
Away from each other.

LAST TRAIN TO AVIGNON

© Candice James

I sit at the edge
Of the black side of darkness,
Headed toward the final station
On the last train to Avignon.

The ghosts come out to play with my mind.
Disembodied voices, tangled in vines and veins
Hanging from broken branches in my heart,
Chant their shrill incantations.
They snake through my spirit
Lacerating my soul
With rusty spears and arrows
Pillaged from yesterday's battles.

*Inside this speeding metal cocoon
Travelling to the final destination,
I am lashed to the cross of frailty;
Vulnerable to past sordid deeds;
Wired to barbed-wire bayonets
Plunged deeply into my psyche.*

I have seen
The scarred underbelly
Of love's treacherous wars.

I have seen
The blood of lovers
Running rampant
Over broken hearts;
And more of these atrocities
Will be perpetrated in the name
Of the dark angel, turned ghostly,
Sitting beside me tonight.

*The black lips of night whisper my name,
As this dark angel that knows no mercy
Takes my hand and leads me away
From everything I've ever known
....On the last train to Avignon.*

Mother © Candice James

After I kiss your cheek,
I turn my cheek
As the tears shiver
Rivers of aching pain
Into my wrist and fingers.

I'm crying for you
And I'm crying for me.
So many years together
And yet, so much time apart.
You're flying away forever,
My beautiful bird,
Leaving me behind.

A glint of silver,
Shines on old memories,
Sparkling,
For a moment in time,
As did we
Before our time was over.

Now...
A new kind of lonely,
More empty.

Not a day or night will pass by
When I don't think of you.
Not a smile or a tear will appear
Without some image of you in it.
You'll always reflect in me
Like a deeply rooted diamond,
Dusted and powdered
With the sweet, salty, sugar
Of yesterday's dreams.

And now, I am orphaned,
But...
The mother and child reunion
Is only a motion away...

Only a motion away!

*Photograph by Sharla Cuthbertson
Poetograph by Candice James*

Once Upon A Time In France

© Candice James

The rain falls softly through the semi bare trees,
Whispering kisses into the stream as it dances;
An unharnessed ballerina, it pirouettes and eddies
Beneath the run down wooden bridge
Where the lovers stand.

They stand on new ground tonight,
Bathed in sacred starlight,
This was once new ground to us
When we hung the new moon of another night
Higher than it ever hung before.

We wrestled the angels for a deeper touch of love;
For a stronger sense of truth;
For a truer sense of magic.
It slipped through our hands like sand;
Gritty, abrasive, raw;
Scarring, forever, the new ground
Never to be new to us again.

Tonight the rain falls in France
A little less softly through the now barren trees,
Whispering laments into the stream,
As it struggles and breaks.
A fragile, antique mirror, it stumbles, trips
And licks at the wet slick wooden bridge
Where our teardrops still stand.

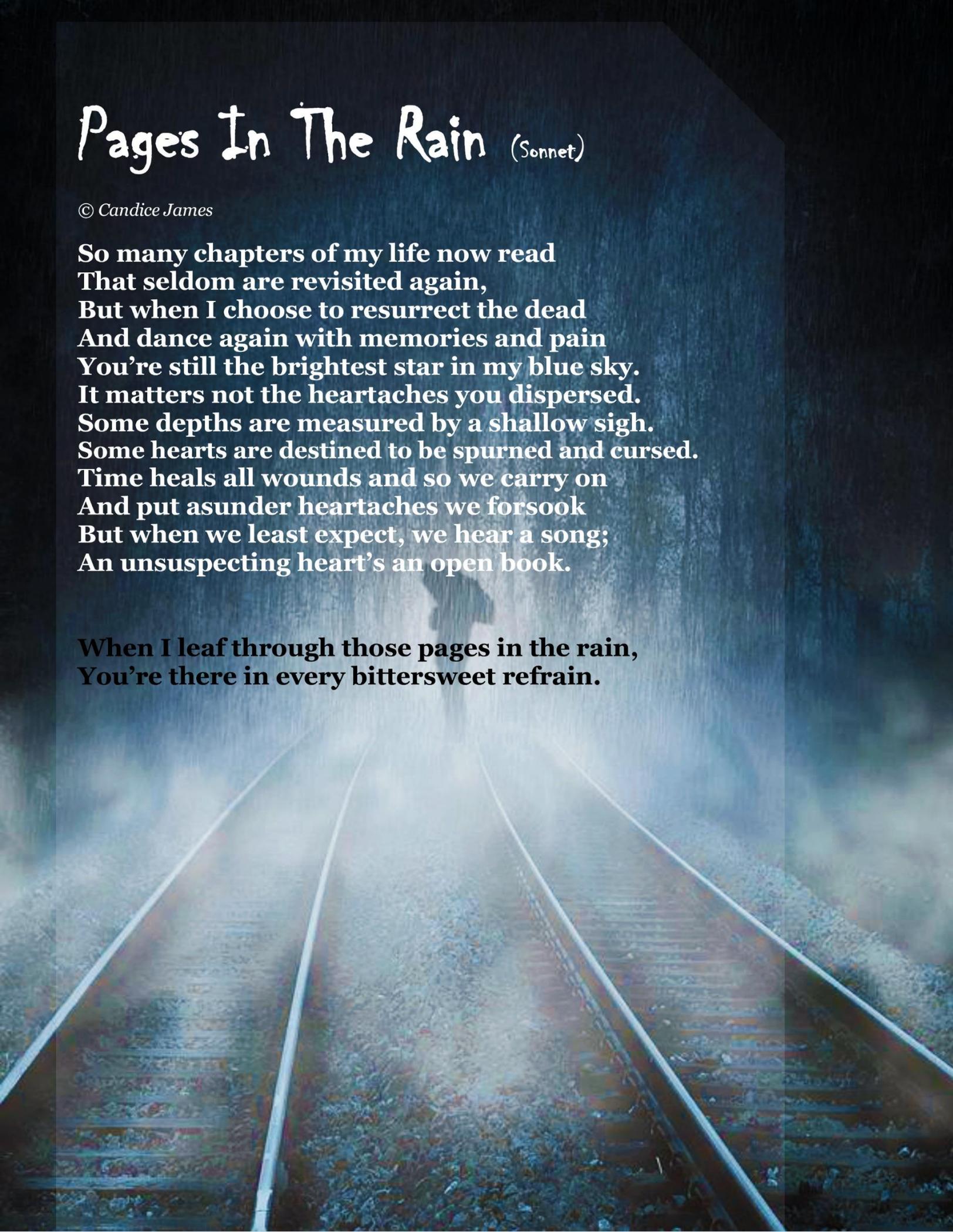
Tonight, haloed in my loneliness,
I remember another night,
Once upon a time in France,
When we hung the new moon
Higher than it ever hung before
And I realize... we'll hang it nevermore.

Pages In The Rain (Sonnet)

© Candice James

**So many chapters of my life now read
That seldom are revisited again,
But when I choose to resurrect the dead
And dance again with memories and pain
You're still the brightest star in my blue sky.
It matters not the heartaches you dispersed.
Some depths are measured by a shallow sigh.
Some hearts are destined to be spurned and cursed.
Time heals all wounds and so we carry on
And put asunder heartaches we forsook
But when we least expect, we hear a song;
An unsuspecting heart's an open book.**

**When I leaf through those pages in the rain,
You're there in every bittersweet refrain.**



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