



Dust to Stardust

by Angie

*But down in the underground
You'll find someone true
Down in the Underground
A land serene, a crystal moon.*

David Bowie - Underground (Labyrinth -1986)

Vincent felt a strange sadness from Catherine, and looked up from his chess game with Father. He had left her in bed in the brownstone that morning, wanting her to enjoy a rare sleeping-in. He knew she had risen later and probably made herself a coffee, but she had apparently come below without him noticing, probably while he was teaching his literature class.

What had made her sad? Where was she? He had to go to her.

“Father, I must postpone this game. Please excuse me.”

He rose and left Father looking at his retreating back. He knew who had distracted Vincent, but not why. He guessed it was nothing too dire, or Vincent would have forgone the formalities and left running. The years had not slowed his son much, he noticed. Father felt every one of those years, a weight that increased steadily. The patriarch sighed.

Vincent moved quickly along the tunnels, following his sense of Catherine. He found her sitting on the rickety planks of the bridge in the Whispering Gallery, her legs dangling over the edge.

He stood at the end of the bridge and regarded her, this small woman who had changed his life almost 30 years ago. Her hair was grey now with white highlights, as was his, but their bond had not aged. It still transmitted their eternal, undiminished love - and an everlasting joy to him.

She was holding onto the rope, her eyes closed, her posture slumped. He sat down quietly beside her and put his arm around her shoulders. She turned her head slowly and regarded him, her eyes haunted. It took her long moments to speak, and when she did, her voice was soft, filled with sorrow.

"I heard on the radio that someone died today, Vincent. His loss is devastating to music. I remember David Bowie from almost the first time I started listening to rock. He was always there, doing innovative things, singing songs that no one else sung, somehow always apart, not one of the crowd. He was in a few movies, always unique ones, dramatic and fine. He had a great vocal range, but I think I liked him best in the soft lower tones.

"He took root in my soul without me realizing it. And now he's gone. It's as if something essential has gone from the world, something precious, like the wind or the scent of roses."

"And you are here to see if you can hear any of his music," Vincent guessed, speaking softly, pulling her closer to him. She leaned her head on his padded shoulder and sighed.

"Yes. He created so many memorable songs, such beautiful moments. I thought ... someone would be playing them, probably many people, and perhaps they could be heard here."

"And?"

"Not yet. Perhaps it's too soon. Grief may have paralyzed his fans. But I'm sure"

She paused, and her face relaxed slightly.

"Yes, there's one. How appropriate. It's called '*As the World Falls Down*'. It was in a movie he did, '*Labyrinth*'."

The title sounded familiar to Vincent, as did the movie, but it was long ago. He said nothing. Tears rolled down her cheeks as the song played and he restrained himself from wiping them for her. He sensed she needed this release.

"*'I'll place the sky/ Within your eyes'*," she whispered. "Can you hear it, Vincent?"

"Yes."

A love that will last /Within your heart./I'll place the moon/ Within your heart.

"*'I'll be there for you/ As the world falls down'*," she recited softly.

He put his head on one side and concentrated.

I'll paint you mornings of gold./I'll spin you Valentine evenings.

They said nothing as the song continued into its final chorus.

When it ended, Catherine was silent but smiled sadly at him.

"Such simple but powerful images, Catherine."

"Yes."

She cocked her head and sighed.

"Listen, can you hear that? Another one! It's called *Wild is the Wind*."

"*With your kiss my life begins*," Vincent heard. He felt a shiver run through him at the haunting tune and lyrics. He closed his eyes and gripped the edge of the bridge with his other hand. He felt as if he should be swaying with the music.

"*'You're spring to me, all things to me'*," Catherine whispered softly.

"*'Don't you know, you're life itself'*," Vincent whispered.

They listened silently as the song finished with instrumentals.

"*Wild is the wind*," Vincent repeated softly.

"*'Oh my darling cling to me'*. It could have been written for us," Catherine whispered, turning to look at him.

“Yes. He sings with such passion.”

They were silent for long moments, when a soft instrumental made its way down the long shaft to them. There was something sad about it, almost alien. It reminded Catherine of ‘Blade Runner’. She knew it was written about a lost place, the remains left by World War 2, yet its message was current.

Vincent listened intently. It was electronic, sometimes jazz-like, but beautifully undefinable. It saddened him, without knowing why.

Catherine listened, tears running down her face again, her eyes closed.

She turned to Vincent when it finished. “That was ‘*Subterraneans*’, one of his instrumental pieces.”

“It was ... beautiful, ethereal ... poignant” he remarked. “I think even Father might find it interesting. It seemed ... other-worldly.”

“Like here, as the title suggested,” she whispered.

“Yes. And us,” he replied.

Catherine turned to him and regarded his beautiful face and its halo of fine, long white hair.

“No, Vincent, we aren’t other worldly, just a couple that no one could imagine. The fault is theirs, not ours. Bowie married a supermodel, you know, a tall, beautiful black woman from Somalia.”

“Then he didn’t do the expected either.”

“No.”

Catherine tilted her head and listened, then smiled.

“This one is a classic, Vincent. He wrote it with another fine singer, Freddie Mercury of Queen. “*Under Pressure*.”

“I remember him,” Vincent replied, recalling a special concert long ago.*

They listened. Bowie’s words were remarkably clear. Vincent could hear every one.

“*Love dares for your to care for/ the people on the edge of night’*,” she whispered.

This is ourselves and the world above, Vincent thought as he listened to the words.

“And now he’s with Freddie,” Catherine remarked sadly. She cocked her head, and Vincent realized another tune was rising above the muted city noises from above. He listened and felt a joy at the chorus. He saw Catherine smile.

“There’s a starman waiting in the sky

He’d like to come and meet us

But he thinks he’d blow our minds

There’s a starman waiting in the sky

He’s told us not to blow it

Cause he knows it’s all worthwhile

He told me:

Let the children lose it

Let the children use it

Let all the children boogie”

“Such a 70s song,” Catherine remarked softly. Vincent smiled. Even he could pick out the anachronisms.

“Thank you, Starman,” Catherine whispered.

“He lived here in New York for most of his artistic life, you know. I think he’d like our world and I wish he could have seen it. In wonder what he’s doing now?”

“I think he would be listening to his music, his legacy,” Vincent replied softly. “From what you say, that would take a small eternity.”

“Yes.”

The city noises and voices returned, loudly now, insistently, as if they had given up their dominance long enough. Both the listeners sighed.

I think it’s over for now,” she commented softly.

“Yes, and William will be waiting with lunch.”

“Food,” she mumbled. “I’m not sure this hole I feel can be filled with food.”

“But you must eat, Catherine. It isn’t the end. His music will survive, and be listened to, always. Like our love, it will never grow old.”

“True,” she sighed, then shifted herself into a better position for getting up.

Vincent stood up first, careful of his aging joints, then extended his hand to help her up. They stood a moment on the bridge and he held her close, carefully, as the structure rocked. Then they walked slowly across the rocking structure to the safety of the stone tunnels.

“I’m so glad you came to me,” Catherine said softly as they made their way to the dining chamber. “Sorrow should be shared.”

“You know I’m always here for you,” he replied.

“And I for you. Always.”

“Always.”

END

* See *‘The Song Never Ends - by Angie’*

LYRICS

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“As The World Falls Down”

*There’s such a sad love
Deep in your eyes.
A kind of pale jewel
Open and closed
Within your eyes.
I’ll place the sky
Within your eyes.*

*There’s such a fooled heart
Beatin’ so fast
In search of new dreams.*

*A love that will last
Within your heart.
I'll place the moon
Within your heart.*

*As the pain sweeps through,
Makes no sense for you.
Every thrill is gone.
Wasn't too much fun at all,
But I'll be there for you-ou-ou
As the world falls down.*

*Falling.
Falling down.
Falling in love.*

*I'll paint you mornings of gold.
I'll spin you Valentine evenings.
Though we're strangers 'til now,
We're choosing the path
Between the stars.
I'll leave my love
Between the stars.*

*As the pain sweeps through,
Makes no sense for you.
Every thrill is gone.
Wasn't too much fun at all,
But I'll be there for you-ou-ou
As the world falls down.*

*Falling
As the world falls down.
Falling
As the world falls down.
Falling.
Falling.
Falling.
Falling in love
As the world falls down.
Falling.
Falling.
Falling.
Falling.
Falling in love
As the world falls down.
Makes no sense at all.
Makes no sense to fall.
Falling
As the world falls down.*

*Falling.
Falling in love
As the world falls down.
Falling.
Falling
Falling in love
As the world falls down.*

“Wild Is The Wind”

*Love me, love me, love me, say you do
Let me fly away with you
For my love is like the wind,
and wild is the wind
Wild is the wind
Give me more than one caress,
satisfy this hungriness
Let the wind blow through your heart
For wild is the wind,
wild is the wind*

[CHORUS]

*You touch me,
I hear the sound of mandolins
You kiss me
With your kiss my life begins
You're spring to me,
all things to me
Don't you know you're life itself!*

*Like the leaf clings to the tree,
Oh, my darling, cling to me
For we're like creatures of the wind,
and wild is the wind
Wild is the wind*

[CHORUS]

*Like the leaf clings to the tree,
Oh, my darling, cling to me
For we're like creatures in the wind,
and wild is the wind
Wild is the wind*

"Starman"

*Didn't know what time it was and the lights were low
I leaned back on my radio
Some cat was layin' down some rock 'n' roll 'lotta soul,
he said*

*Then the loud sound did seem to fade
Came back like a slow voice on a wave of phase
That weren't no D.J. that was hazy cosmic jive*

[CHORUS]

*There's a starman waiting in the sky
He'd like to come and meet us
But he thinks he'd blow our minds
There's a starman waiting in the sky
He's told us not to blow it
Cause he knows it's all worthwhile
He told me:
Let the children lose it
Let the children use it
Let all the children boogie*

*I had to phone someone so I picked on you
Hey, that's far out so you heard him too!
Switch on the TV
we may pick him up on channel two
Look out your window I can see his light*

*If we can sparkle he may land tonight
Don't tell your poppa or he'll get us locked up in fright*

[CHORUS (x2)]

La, la, la, la, la, la, la