

# Siempre

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0:00

**Y**ou know that feeling? It's there in the music.  
How it warms you, sends shivers down your spine?

*Allow someone to give that to you.*

*Allow yourself to accept every part of it too.*

*To become lost in it.*

*To melt."*

0:41  
her

As I round that corner, I'm struck by two things. First, the lake! It really is stunning. All along the shoreline, trees are crowded around the edge, with branches arcing out over the water in search for more sunlight. Some have reached too far and toppled into the lake, their slowly decaying trunks forming a series of natural jetties, while others take their place in the sunlight.

And the sunset! The lake was almost completely still – any hint of a breeze had long deserted this place – and the sky splayed out in a warm gradient from orange, through pink, to the deep blue of endless space.

The second thing I see is undoubtedly more unexpected. There, perched on a trunk, is the source of the music I had thought was in my head.

**0:54**  
*him*

In moments like these, with boundless energy coursing through you, it takes all you have just to be still. My right hand plucks the strings as if repeating a mantra, consistent while the left finger tips move unthinkingly between chords – meandering through progressions with no real destination. I find myself singing verses, old and new, making up the melodies as I go.

In the electrifying stillness of the sun's parting rays my skin begins to melt away, until I lose it to the air and the earth. It's as though my very soul is melding with this place, enticing me to stay a moment longer, or maybe an eternity.

Finally, I let one final quiet chord ring out – just as the sun touches the horizon and the afternoon heat begins to dissipate. I am still repeating a verse, almost under my breath now, something new. I need to write it down, or record it.

So I allow myself to ripple the stillness of the air, carefully swinging down from the tree roots until my feet touch ground.

“Oh.”

I hesitate at the edge of the clearing. The remnants of his song hang in the air between us.

“Uh, sorry to interrupt. I didn’t expect to run into anyone here.”

Standing still at the edge of the lake as dusk began to settle, guitar in hand, he spoke as if coming out of a daze.

“No – I mean, I was just finishing up anyway. It’s all yours.” He flashed a polite smile.

As he started off in a different direction, I could see his brow unfurrowing and his eyes growing wider. He paused and knelt over a guitar case I hadn’t noticed before.

“How much of that did you hear anyway? I wasn’t really thinking about what I was singing. Like, I have real songs that make sense - I promise.” He spoke in a small voice, nothing like the one I’d heard through the trees.

“Oh don’t worry, I just got here. And actually, I thought the music was in my head. So it’s good to know I’m not too crazy at least.”

“Hah... yeah.”

Silence, except for the zip circumventing the edge of his case.

**1:50** I turn my gaze back over the lake. A single eucalyptus leaf had broken free of its branch and was forging a languid path toward the surface of the lake. I watch it twist and turn – why not just fall straight down, get it over with? But I suppose there is a kind of beauty to its silent dance. One that would be unwitnessed if not for my now very careful observance. This will be its only performance, never to be repeated. Then it strikes, breaking the stillness of the lake – the climax of the show I suppose. The ripples closest to the shore ricochet, combining with others to form complex, unknowable patterns. Other, unobstructed ripples sail off into the distance, with no idea as to their destination.

The boy has the guitar on his back now, and seems to be heading towards some other path that I can't make out. But there's something niggling at the edge of my mind, or perhaps deeper, that I can't seem to shake.

*And then I surprise myself.*

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**2:03** She plays the piano.  
*him*

I know this because she just said it aloud, rather suddenly, as I was rounding the corner to leave. Her clear voice shattered the silence I had ushered in between us.

I'd hesitated though, hadn't I? As I packed away my guitar, as I was leaving? Something about this situation felt almost like *déjà vu*, half remembered from some kind of hazy dream that slips through your grasp upon waking.

Somehow familiar enough to stop you in your tracks, if only for a moment, but that moment seems meaningful in some way – just beyond your grasp. And then the moment passes, and the image dulls once again as time weighs down on it and memory works to fade it back to into obscurity.

Or maybe it was just seeing this girl now, in this spot, after everything mum had told me. Like some kind of second hand déjà vu, or a manifestation come to life.

So I hesitated. I'm hesitating. *Say something!*

"I play guitar" I blurt out.

A *smile*. "I can see that!"

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**2:17**  
*him* "Should we start a fire?"

The stars have just come out. I'm not sure what time it is, or how long we've been talking for, but there's a crescent moon and the stars are out.

"I'm horrible at it" I admit. "I can never keep it burning long enough to get anything going."

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**2:55**  
*her* *She would be proud.* It's a good fire, with enough coal built up now to go all night. And we just might need it tonight. The conversation has flowed effortlessly, with each lapse just a comfortable silence. We watched the last light drain the colour from each eucalyptus tree, and the Milky Way unravel itself across the darkening sky.

We talked about music and madness, nature and beauty, love and loss. We spoke until it felt as though I'd peeled back my skin and finally let a breath of air in.

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**2:50**  
*him*

We are lying side by side now, fire above our heads and toes towards the lake, staring up at the crowded sky. I absentmindedly strum the open strings of my guitar which lay to my other side. It's well past midnight now so the fire is low, its glowing coals barely illuminating our small patch of shore. The world feels enormous and small at the same time.

"Who was *she*? You keep alluding to this friend of yours, without really telling me anything about her."

I'd been wanting to ask this all night, but it seemed like a touchy subject any time she was brought up.

"Ana. She *ditched* me."

I turn to face her. The warm flickers of the coals are dancing across her cheek, turning a few loose strands of hair golden.

"Oh, sorry. If you don't want to talk about it..."

"No, it's just..."

A momentary pause, as though she's considering whether she has the energy to bring down a wall like this.

“We were friends since kindergarten, you know? I asked her to stay with me, for me, but she left anyway. And now we haven’t spoken in months. And I just...”

She lets out a long sigh.

“...well, I really miss her.”

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“So... why did she leave?”

I had to break the silence. I just know what it’s like to let your thoughts spiral for too long.

“She just said she had to get out of here. That she’d been born and grown up and lived in this one place her entire life, and that she felt stuck – or trapped here now. That she could see how her life was playing out and I guess that scared her or something, the certainty of it. And she’d always talked about wanting to move away, to ‘wander’ for a bit... But don’t we all? I didn’t think she’d actually follow through with it, you know.”

“Yeah far out, that sucks. But... I feel like I get that at the same time though. Not wanting to stay on the obvious path. Wanting to veer off and create something new and different for yourself. I think it would feel so liberating.”

She turns back to me.

“That’s the problem! I think I’m really starting to understand her now as well.

The worst part though, the part I keep playing over and over in my mind, is she did ask me to come with her. But I just couldn't do it, couldn't make that *jump*. What if I wandered too far, or for too long and lost *myself* out there? I just don't think I could trust my, like, sense of direction if I did that. That's if I even had one to begin with! I feel like at this point, I have no idea what I want to do, where or who I want to be in this life."

**5:22** I roll onto my back to face the stars, tracing the blinking path of a satellite as it streaks across the sky. I can't believe this – it's like she's reading my mind, giving voice to my own thoughts.

"Well, *that* definitely hits home for me as well at the moment. But, I don't know... lately I keep having this thought, that we're made up of all these borrowed pieces of the people who surround us, and the places we move through. I just don't think we realise sometimes that that's the case."

I've had that idea tugging at the corner of my mind for a while now, but never tried putting it into words until now and, well, this isn't exactly what I had wanted to say – but it was a start. I'm just not sure if it actually makes any sense at all.

"Like... a quilt patched together by hundreds of different hands?"

I couldn't help but laugh at this point – it made perfect sense, I just never would have put it that way.

“Well, not the exact metaphor I would have chosen, but I like it! *We are the quilt!* And it’s our job to put ourselves in the right hands to help it become bigger and more beautiful.”

She rolled back over now too, her gaze returning to the constellations travelling languidly across the night sky above.

“I guess Ana was tired of the limited selection of fabrics she was getting here.”

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**6:14** I couldn’t help but laugh along. *We are the quilt.*  
*her* From this point of view everything Ana was telling me in the lead up to her leaving made perfect sense.

She took a leap, took herself outside of her comfort zone and she’s going to make so many new connections – with people, places, ideas. She might not find out her life purpose, but she’ll unlock so many new and interesting parts of herself along the way. Like a flower coming into bloom, not in spite of its roots, but as part of a larger journey upward and outward – searching for the light.

**6:30**

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