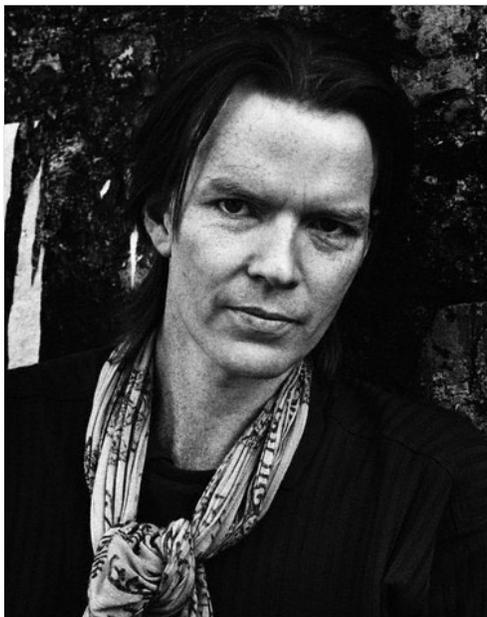


AND NOW HE'S DEAD

Jim Carroll, Author

By Foster Kamer, 8:15 PM on Sun Sep 13 2009, 10,090 views



Jim Carroll, the former drug addict turned prolific poet and writer of *The Basketball Diaries*, died of a heart attack on Friday at his residence in Manhattan. He was 60.

Carroll's writing career started when he was attending Catholic prep school in the 1960s; he chronicled his rapid descent into heroin addiction—and the lengths he went to get it, like prostituting himself for money to buy it—in his journals, which were turned into *The Basketball Diaries*. After gaining popularity in the 70s, the book surged to popularity again in the 80s when it was repackaged and republished, and again in the 90s, when they were adapted into a film with Leonardo DiCaprio playing Carroll.

Carroll quickly rose to fame as a downtown fixture on New York's punk scene after the publication of *Diaries*; he gained the accolades of and influence over Patti Smith, Harmony Korine, Keith Richards, Lou Reed, Pearl Jam, Rancid, and others over the years.

Carroll and his mentor, Ted Berrigan, once took a trip to see Carroll's idol, Jack Kerouac. When they got there, Kerouac supposedly said: "At thirteen years of age, Jim Carroll writes better prose than 89 percent of the novelists working today."

Writers, magazines, actors, rock stars continued to want to be a part of Carroll's ongoing narrative; if the CBGB of yore had a poet laureate, it would've been unanimously voted as him. At one point, he actually hit the stage of CBGB as a musician sometime after Patti Smith infamously made him get on stage with her to read. Shortly thereafter, he secured a three-record deal with Atlantic Records.

Carroll's personal life remained spotty. He moved from New York to San Francisco in lieu of escaping drugs, but since moved back. He married Rosemary Klemfuss in 1978., but they later divorced. Carroll, however, kept clean, continued to write, perform spoken word, and record music, prolifically so.

Carroll loved writers, and loved the act of writing as much as the art of it. Carroll's survived by his brother Tom. He will be missed. Here he is, talking about Frank O'Hara:



