



Sunday, September 13, 2009

RIP Jim Carroll

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[Jim Carroll](#), New York City poet, author and punk rock musician, passed away Friday, September 11th from a heart attack. He was 60. [[New York Times](#)]

It was 1996, during my freshman year at Michigan State University, when I really got to understand the brilliant work of Jim Carroll. My American Thought and Language professor, Cassie Carter, (she is also the founder of [CatholicBoy.com](#)), had us read [The Basketball Diaries](#) and I was hooked. From there, I immersed myself in its sequel, [Forced Entries: The Downtown Diaries: 1971-1973](#), and eventually devoured [Book of Nods](#), [Living at the Movies](#), and [Fear of Dreaming](#).

But also, I remember hearing his best known punk song, "People Who Died," during my teenage years. My best friend and rock'n'roll partner in crime, Alyssa, and I thought Carroll possessed something different than all of the other punk legends we discovered during these impressionable years. As a singer, his swagger and his slinky vocal drawl was like no one else. As a writer, I appreciated his brutal, yet beautiful kind of honesty.

During the late '90s, I saw some of Jim's spoken-word performances; February 1998 at the Blind Pig in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and again at the Blind Pig in January 1999. It was at the '98 gig that he tested out the then unpublished "8 Fragments for Kurt Cobain" (found in *Void of Course*). It was there that I also had the distinct pleasure of spending an hour or so hanging with Carroll (thank you Cassie). He was incredibly kind, outgoing, and gracious enough to briefly speak with an excited, geeky fan as seen in the photo below.



I am so sad today. What a terrible loss. Bless you Jim Carroll.

Labels: [Jim Carroll](#), [RIP](#)

posted by mackenzieland at [7:05 PM](#) 

3 Comments:

It is a great loss but he had already left his tremendous impact on the world, so all is not lost.

By  [Chris R](#), at [Monday, September 14, 2009](#)

[12:35:00 PM EDT](#)

What a wonderful tribute, MacKenzie! Great picture too. I still cherish the autograph Cassie got me. That was such a kind, thoughtful, and touching gesture...beyond words. He was such a talent, and how great we were exposed to his work when we did. It left an indelible mark on my teenage years, without a doubt.

By  [Doostroyer](#), at [Monday, September 14, 2009 9:19:00 PM EDT](#)

I was just telling Ryan the story about the picture and how I went to class with you that day. I know his spirit will live on, but it's all such a shock.

By  [mackenzieland](#), at [Tuesday, September 15, 2009 7:41:00 AM EDT](#)

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