

TOM CLARK

Beyond the Pale

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Monday, 14 September 2009

Jim Carroll



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File:Jim Carroll - Seattle WA - September 2000 - Photo by Eric Thompson.jpg

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A poet departs, too soon, and there is a void that will not be filled. From somewhere deep and old the tears well up in the dark night.

When I met Jim in 1967 he was seventeen. He had been leading a triple life: high school All-American basketball star, heroin addict/street hustler, poet.

On scholarship at the elite Ivy league prep academy Trinity School (alums include Humphrey Bogart, Truman Capote, Ivana Trump, Yo Yo Ma, John McEnroe, Aram Saroyan), he had shown unusual abilities on the court. He had played against the city's best (including Lew Alcindor, later Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, who had starred at Power Memorial, a school in Jim's own Inwood Park neighborhood). His skills had drawn the attention of college scouts. The turning point, according to one of his versions of the story, had come when a representative of Notre Dame took him out for dinner. Jim told the story with great good humor; the Notre Dame man had ordered a spaghetti dinner. Jim had listened politely to the man's talk of the virtues of a Notre Dame education. And then nodded out into the spaghetti.

His people were Irish Catholic. His father owned a bar. In 1995 he talked to John Stewart of *Interview* about his early life.

JC: ... the way I got into writing was Catholic grammar school. It was the one good thing that I got out of the nuns and Brothers that taught me...

JS: Was there ever a sense that basketball held a finite limit for you, and that writing was infinite?

JC: Well, yeah. But it wasn't that canny, actually, because I had been writing for a long time. People think that my demise in basketball was from drugs, but it wasn't. I wasn't getting high



Links

- Tom Clark's author profile at jacketmagazine.com
- A reading of TC's poem 'Hazard Response' on the pō'ī-trē audiopoetry site
- Vanitas Magazine (contributions by TC)
- Other Stuff
- The Other Stuff Annexe
- Tom Raworth
- wood s lot
- Isola di Rifiuti
- ads without products
- Thus Spake the Crow
- Sing Your Own Lullaby
- Locos por naufragar
- Best American Poetry
- The Blind Chatelaine's Keys

before every game. Once in a while we made the mistake of taking downers instead of ups and stuff before a game. But from the time I was eight, my whole goal was basketball. I practiced all day after school. By my junior year, though, the jock trip started running thin. This was the late '60s, and chicks wanted guys who had long hair and went to folk clubs and wrote poetry and stuff. So I started jerkin' off and hanging around the poetry scene. Instead of playing in the summer tournaments, my art teacher gave me his loft down in the Village while he went to Cape Cod for the summer. It was, like, hellza-poppin, man! I was what, sixteen? My first book of poems came out that summer, just a small book - like thirty pages. I made up my mind right then that I was going to be a poet. No matter how difficult it was to live or anything, that's what I was going to do. And that sort of opened me up in a whole different way, Because I was always kind of withdrawn and looking at things from a distance. I told Leonardo [DiCaprio, in the movie based on Jim's Basketball Diaries] to lay back at certain times. When the action's really happening, of course, stealing a car or something, you're involved in it completely. But sometimes you just withdraw yourself. Because they called me Daisy, since I was always in dazes. In fact, my parents took me to doctors because they thought I had some form of epilepsy. But it was determined that I just had a vivid imagination. I'd just go off. Even before I was into writing, I'd be waiting for a three-on-three game to end and they would have to shake me. But when I was into writing, I was not only thinking about strange things; I was formulating them on the page as well.

JS: And then you went on to become a rock 'n' roll performer. How did those two things connect?

JC: I remember reading *The Time of the Assassins*, which is Henry Miller's book examining Rimbaud's life and work - although he's really examining his own life and work. But it's a genius book, and he talks about, "Where are the poets today?" I mean, the nobility of poetry is missing. In the neighborhood where I grew up, you couldn't tell people that you were writing poetry, man. I mean, you were considered a sissy if you wrote poems, for God's sake. The mailman for

- A Flaw in the Motor
- The Birds and the Beads
- nobody in the rain
- Possum Ego
- Ron Silliman
- ursprache
- Farfalla Press
- Lally's Alley
- A Compulsive Reader
- Pantaloons
- Phaneronoemikon
- All Humans Are the Same
- Viking Dog and Conehenge
- Eyeball Hatred
- Wild Horses of Fire
- Mappemunde
- Amy's Alias
- Politely Homicidal
- Exquisite Corpse
- Nomadics
- Dumbfoundry
- A Collection of Thoughts

my building hung out in my father's bar, and one day when he was half in the bag he starts asking my father, "What's happening with your son? I used to read about him in the papers making the all-city team and shit. Now he's getting all these poetry magazines in the mail. He's got long hair. What the hell's wrong with him?" My father comes home. I'm like, "Hey, Dad, how you doin'?" Boom! "Get a hair-cut! What's with this poetry shit?"

Jim had by that time already begun haunting the Poetry Project at St. Mark's in the Bowery Church. He loved the poetry of Frank O'Hara, and writing under a rush of Frank's influence, at seventeen produced his own first slim chapbook, *Organic Trains*. Ted Berrigan had taken Jim under his wing. Poetry not basketball was where Jim wanted to go in his life.

A sweet, shy, gentle, lovely good-humored young man, gracious to a fault. We were soon friends. He gave me his phone number and asked that I give him a call any time. I rang the number and a young woman's voice came on, saying Jim wasn't home. I later asked if that had been his girlfriend. "No," he said with his customary shy twinkle, "my mom."

I was dazzled by the promise of unusual gifts evident in Jim's poetry and soon began putting his poems in *The Paris Review*. Over the next few years I placed a half dozen of them there (along with, later on, an excerpt from *The Basketball Diaries*).

One of those *Paris Review* poems is in my mind tonight.

The Birth and Death of the Sun

Now the trees tempt

the young girl below them

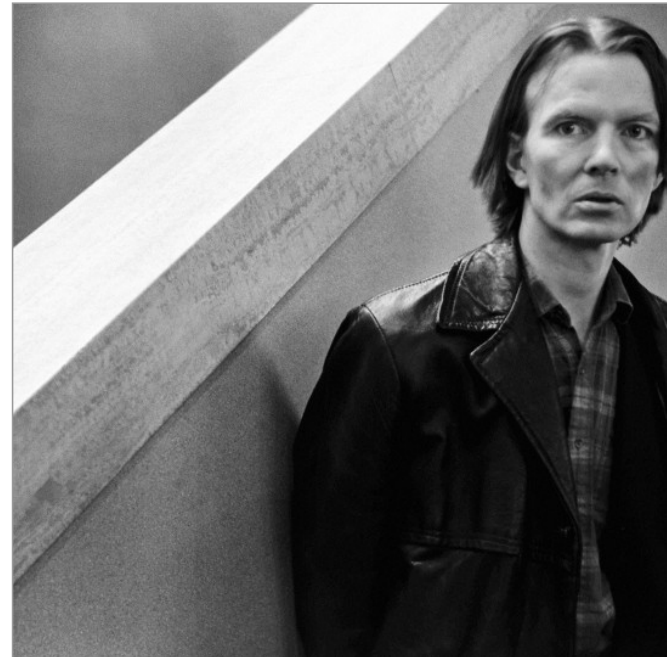
each moves off the other's wind

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endlessly, as stars from the earth,

stars from the stars.



*

In March 1968 Angelica and I got married at the Church. The day before the wedding, while we were downtown obtaining a marriage license, the junkies who lived below me in a 14th Street apartment house climbed up the fire escape and stole all our belongings that seemed of value. That night John Giorno threw a bachelor party for me at his place down on the Bowery. After our trying day, Angelica understandably did not want to stay alone in my torn-up apartment. She came along to the party and immediately went to sleep on John's bed--as is documented in photos taken at the party by Peter Schjeldahl. Peter's photos from the party show Jim, babyfaced and

sweet looking, his strawberry mop tousled over his eyes, dressed up neatly in blue blazer, oxford shirt, red prep school tie. In one shot he can be seen intently studying a volume of poetry. In another he sits quietly at Ted's side as Ted, holding forth, carefully rolls a joint. Across the table is George Schneeman. John Wieners and Mike Goldberg are also in the photos. They're all gone now.

*

In another old fading photo stuck in a dusty album around here, five or six years have passed and a leaner, lankier, longer-haired Jim, now developing a craggy Prince Valiant look, is hanging out with me on Bolinas Beach. In 1973 he had come out to Bolinas to kick his heroin habit. He lived for awhile at a house downtown, under the informal protection of the ever generous Bill Berkson. There he dwelt largely unto himself, working on the long careful reconstruction of his youth that would be *The Basketball Diaries*. Bill regularly drove him over the hill to San Rafael, where Jim had entered a detox program.

This was the beginning of a long, deep, isolating struggle for him.

When the always variable weather allowed there was in those years a daily pick-up basketball game at the outdoor court in the playground of Bolinas School. I was guilty of forever attempting to get the reclusive Jim to come out to join us. Only on rare occasions did he agree, and then, as I recall clearly, in an entirely dispirited and lackadaisical fashion. It was like asking a great violinist to take up a plastic ukulele. He would stand disinterestedly at the top of the key, doing his best to seem invisible so as avoid the ball. If you insisted on passing it to him, however, there was always a moment or two of casual miracle work that told you of the quality of his skill in this sport of his youth. Always completely expressionless. For Jim this was an old familiar zone of proper action. A quick move. A silky smooth long jumper grabbing nothing but the tattered net on its true way

through the hoop. Or a brilliant nonchalant no-look pass, flicked without effort into the hands of the unmarked man.

Into

even the

perfect

jumpshot

can't match

the perfect

pass

for insight

into the

mysterious

*



A little later Jim found a place of his own, a small cottage in a eucalyptus grove at the foot of Mesa Road. He was then working on his *Forced Entries* diaries and the poems of *The Book of Nods*. Jim was a painstaking writer who never hurried things along. In these years he became even more withdrawn, his constant companion a small terrier he called Jo'mama. Jim loved that little dog dearly, I think its company got him through the darkneses of those years of seclusion.

Lying with the Dog

My dog sleeps with me. It's nice. He lies always in the same spot, at the bottom of the bed, with his little head on my right ankle. When the weather turns cold, he simply climbs beneath the covers and pads his way to the exact same place, resting his head. Only then can I feel his fuzzy neck and chin. I've come to rely on these simple pleasures.

Last night I had a hideous nightmare. Usually I can guide my dreams, once they arise, bad or good. But there is no control when the dream takes place in the room in which I'm actually sleeping. No guiding the horror of the man standing in the corner, or emerging from the closet

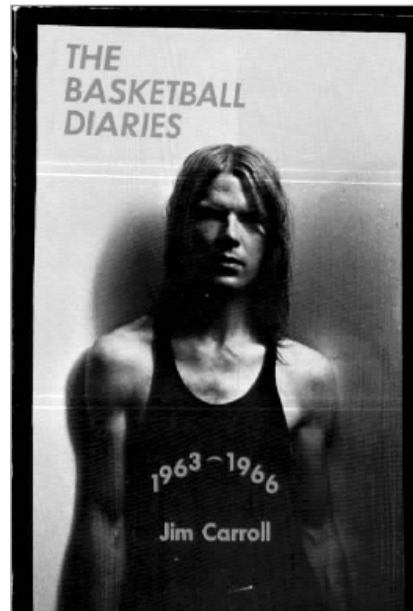
with luminous eyes, holding a huge syringe-like scepter, advancing at me, speaking in tongues.

("Tubalar," he says, that's the only word I can remember, "Tubalar.")


Then I can't separate the dream, can't divide it from the reality of my room. I've begun a program of detoxification, and the lower my dose of mojo juice, the more often this person invades the one sanctuary where I cannot ward off the nightmare's cunning, or control the demons. He comes in various costumes; he knows the rituals of my vulnerabilities.

But last night, as always when it happens, when I wake up in toxic sweat, sometimes dreaming, Jo'mama comes up to my face and licks, and kneels there like a sentinel. I'm open to such gushing sentiment. I welcome it. I've suppressed it for too long. I thank God for the dog... he calms me down, and that's as much as you can ask for. It surely is enough to feel free to lick him in return, before I can risk more sleep, and he goes back to my ankle and yawns as he circles once more before he rests his head there.

*



He invited me to come over to do a reading with him at the detox center in San Rafael. There he was among his company of fellow rehab souls, all lost and looking to find

 themselves. In one room the methadone (which Jim termed "mojo juice") was doled out from behind barred windows, in small plastic cups, mixed with orange juice. The cups had to be drained there at the window. Then came the reading.

Poetry readings have never exactly been my idea of a good time. This however was the most electrifying and intense poetry reading I have ever attended. Jim read "Guitar Voodoo" from *The Book of Nods*. His "look" at the time was pretty much as can be seen on the cover of the original edition of the *Basketball Diaries*. There were about ten people in the small windowless linoleum floored institutional chamber. It was totally mesmerizing; I felt privileged, uplifted and scared. While reading Jim seemed to leave himself and become the conductor of energies from another place. I understood then that I was in the presence of a master, his powers palpable yet perhaps beyond the understanding of anyone present. The work told a tale of sexual revenge occurring in a vivid psychic dimension of superhuman electrical charge. A harrowing experience, unforgettable.

Afterward there was a workshop session with other writers from the detox program. Many were broken and down in soul, yet their readings seemed to bring them briefly to life. A woman with her arm in a cast after a dispute with her lover read a piece in which her private hells were entered. Jim gently supported her in the ensuing discussion. Here he was at home among the lost, helping as a guide whose words could be believed because he had been there, and indeed maybe dwelt there still.

In those years he mixed socially not at all. He had all but disappeared. I too had stepped away from the daily town whirl of sociality. Each day at dawn I ran down Mesa Road and out to the Olema Road, passing Jim's hermit's cabin. We saw each other and exchanged unspoken greetings, a wave, a nod. Neither of us asking more. To me he seemed then in his solitude with his demons and his angels (as I imagined them) a gaunt ascetic saint of a special order beyond the ken of the

scene, in its pleasant bubble.

The Door to the Forest

for Jim

Eric Dolphy can't wake up:

the green light's still burning

by the gate. Pine cones

when stepped on by

dogs or raccoons, click

gently, like bones

into the mist, which

smells like mint; the

sounds diminish it;

the white rose

through the dropper's eye

falls; and the rain remains.



*

In 1978 Jim finally resolved to let go of *The Basketball Diaries*. Our neighbor Michael Wolfe of Tombouctou Books leapt at the opportunity to publish the work. I wrote an introduction in which I staged an imaginary conversation between myself and an older Arthur Rimbaud, to whom I spoke of Jim as a latterday confrere. The impulse came from Jim himself, who felt Rimbaud's work deeply and in effect channeled him in pieces like "Rimbaud's Toothache" and "Rimbaud sees the Dentist", in which he transferred his own experiences to the long dead poet. That kind of detachment came naturally to Jim.

He and Jo went on long hikes, Jim with his pilgrim's staff walking stick. The two of them climbed far up upon the sleeping flanks of the great female shaped mountain Tamalpais. I believe that

despite the harsh loneliness and inner torments that were his burden in those years Jim was then finding ecstasy of a kind, in fleeting glimpses. The moments probably didn't last, but I sensed there must have been in them a shining intermittent respite from ambient pain, a kind of lapsing transcendence.

I have to reregister a room for my heart. It's been waiting a long time, somewhere outside, without so much as a whisper of protest. That abandonment wasn't just an abuse, it was a sin.

Today I went for a long walk with my dog, up to Mount Tamalpais. I watched a pumpkin spider for hours, weaving its web across a tri-pronged branch on a dead thorn bush. After watching all the insect death and escape, and the repairs that followed, I wanted to feel the web. It was nothing more than tactile curiosity. I reached out and fingered a piece, but I couldn't control my newly recovered senses. The fine tuning of my touch was off. I just couldn't gauge the resilience of the web. I was too caught up in the vibrance of the orange hump on the spider, and the silver intricacy of the weave. By the time I pulled my hand free, the whole web was torn apart. It seems the deeper I allow my perceptions to penetrate, the more ruin I leave in my wake.

I could vaguely fathom then that Jim was capable of a poet's pure wonder, the sort of thing I thought had gone out of poetry with Blake and Keats. Not until much later did I come to fully realize the quality of the poetic genius in whose presence I had been so fortunate to find myself, if only for isolated instants, as I padded along the cold asphalt in my two-dollar sneakers and he sauntered past with his stick and his little dog, giving me a wordless wink and a high sign, beneath the eucalypti, by the waters of the lagoon--all of it now drowned amid the tears of time.



Jim Carroll, Seattle: photo by Eric Thompson, 2000

Jim Carroll: photo via catholicboy website

Fields of Sawdust (Bolinás): photo by blmurch, 2007

The Basketball Diaries (cover), 1968

Bolinás Road: photo by Agent of Orange, 2005

Lone pelican (Mt. Tamalpais, from Bolinas Beach): photo by edwinsail, 2007

Jim Carroll: The Street Side of the Game, Interview 25.4

JC: *The Birth and Death of the Sun*: from *Living at the Movies*, 1973

TC: *Into*: from *Blue*, 1974

JC: *Lying with the Dog*: from *Forced Entries*, 1987

TC: *The Door to the Forest*: from *Blue*, 1974

JC: *Torn Web* (extract) from *Forced Entries*, 1987

at 06:46

59 comments:

 John Latta said...

Oh, man, I hate that. Just last week I went off looking for "People Who Died" because it'd popped into my brainpan biking. How I loved the story of the one who "beat the rap by rattin' on some bikers"--"hey, I know it's dangerous, but it sure beats Riker's / But the next day he got offed by the very same bikers." That wild nearly out-of-control exhilaration / crack'd sadness in the voice. I recall perfectly reading some of "The Basketball Diaries" in *The Paris Review*, when I was in junior high. And then the whole thing years later on a bus ride from Washington D.C. to Ithaca, N.Y. curling up along the Susquehanna.

John

14 September 2009 08:16

 TC said...

John,

The abrasion of tough experience up against sweet nature must have had something to do with the crack'd sadness though the out-of-control exhilaration seems to have come from Elsewhere.

14 September 2009 09:16

 Zephirine said...

It's a very fine tribute, Tom.

14 September 2009 09:26

 d scribe said...

Thanks Tom. Beautiful. Good to run into you again here on internet. Been years. Last time was w/ Noel Black (and maybe Anselm? Micah? Mike Price? Dale?) at your place listening to Donovan records. P.

S. Your response to John Latta is a fitting coda/ terrific insight.

Adam DeGraff

14 September 2009 09:29

 SarahA said...

I had a love affair with Jim Carroll one hot Summer, about six years ago.


I fell in crazy (I use to write all my Babies for him/about him) with a young Poet (younger than myself), who was totally obsessed with Mister Carroll and his writings.

He left me one morning, to go get some milk and never returned. He left a 'Fear of Dreaming' behind and that was the first time I read Jim Carroll. The beginning of my Summer love affair.

I am thinking, the ones most tortured; write the most beautifully.

I am liking your words, you.

14 September 2009 09:36

 Anonymous said...

Dear Tom Clark, thank you for a finely measured and beautifully felt tribute to Jim Carroll, entirely free of the self-love with which some poets lard their regrets at the passing of one of their tribe. I add this [via Yourcenar's Hadrian sending Antinous to the next level];

"and he will recognize the way...

and the guardians of the threshold will let him pass...

and he will come and go around those who love him for millions of days..."

14 September 2009 09:43

 TC said...


Thank you Zeph.

Thanks Adam, lovely to hear from you after all these eons.

SarahA, Jim would have appreciated your comment perhaps almost as much as I did, it would have brought a smile to his face.

Pity the poor lad who went for the milk.

14 September 2009 09:49

 jimo said...

thanks for that Tom-

Jimo

14 September 2009 10:03

 TC said...

Thank you Anonymous.

You make me think of the great Yourcenar's words in the mouth of Hadrian speaking of Antinous at an earlier time.

"His presence was extraordinarily silent... I marveled at his gentleness, which had aspects of hardness, too..."

14 September 2009 10:05

 Jon said...

A terrible loss... thanks for the tribute Tom...

14 September 2009 10:14

 Richard Cooper said...

A poet's memory of a poet, so alive. Thank you for this.

14 September 2009 10:21

 d scribe said...

Tom, found this blog through Carroll post, but going back and loving the community here, your words

and the words about your words and your words about the words about your words. Exquisite blog.

Btw, I found two copies of '71 paris review you edited in a bookstore in P-Town. Gave one to the poet Tyler Burba as a gift. Kept the other. \$5 a piece i think. Steal. Loved it so much. The o'hara, the interview with Olsen (best. interview. ever.) and the Kyger poem has pretty much ruled my life ever since. Just to keep you abreast of the ripples.

Adam D

14 September 2009 10:30

 Nora said...

This is beautiful. Thanks, To.

14 September 2009 10:32

 Nora said...

This post has been removed by the author.

14 September 2009 10:33

 Annie said...

Oh, Tom, I hadn't heard till I saw the email notice of this post, and the wind got knocked out of me. I wouldn't have met him, but for the secret password of your name that opened the door to the interview that started my brief radio gig. He was startlingly patient and kind as I fumbled with the tape deck I borrowed from Chris for the occasion. It was early on a Saturday morning, and I'd brought him a cup of coffee prepared according to the preferences outlined in either Basketball Diaries or Forced Entries, lots of cream and sugar. He politely explained that was a junkie's breakfast, not how he took his coffee anymore. Clearly not meaning to make me feel stupid, but of course I did regardless. So I gave him my black coffee instead. I was so nervous and adrenalized, didn't really need the caffeine anyway.

Jim was so generous and open, I barely needed to ask any questions. I think he conducted the interview for me. He was pleased to be interviewed as a poet, as opposed to a celebrity, although he

acknowledged that the rock star thing definitely took his poetry to more people and places than books alone would. He spoke fondly of you and Bolinas and Jomama, and shared his poet heroes, how they validated him.

If it didn't sound discordantly calculating, one could say that he was much nicer to me than he had to be. For all the street edge and savvy, he was kind and gentle, sympathetic as he waited for a fellow pilgrim taking baby steps along the path though he was miles ahead.

He kept talking until he had to get ready or he'd miss his plane, and proceeded to change his pants as I loaded up my equipment as fast as I possibly could. Holy shit, Jim Carroll going commando in his hotel room, I gotta get outta here. I might be wrong, but I think he was as nonchalant about dropping trou in front of a stranger after all those hustles as I had to become changing entire costumes in the wings in full view of stagehands when I was still dancing. Anyway, if he was laughing at my surprise, he was again kind enough not to let me see it.

No doubt that degree of sweetness was the flip side of the depth of the ache. You feel it in his "8 Fragments for Kurt Cobain," which ends with these:

7/

But Kurt...

Didn't the thought that you would never write another song

Another feverish line or riff

Make you think twice?

That's what I don't understand

Because it's kept me alive, above any wounds

8/

If only you hadn't swallowed yourself into a coma in Roma...

You could have gone to Florence

And looked into the eyes of Bellini or Rafael's Portraits

Perhaps inside them

You could have found a threshold back to beauty's arms

Where it all began...

No matter that you felt betrayed by her

That is always the cost

As Frank said,

Of a young artist's remorseless passion

Which starts out as a kiss

And follows like a curse

14 September 2009 12:40


 Razovsky said...

This is an extraordinary and lovely tribute, Mr. Clark. Thanks for it.

Stuart Ross,

Toronto

14 September 2009 13:36

 Issa's Untidy Hut said...

Tom, this is beautiful, it helps us all through this rough time ...

Don

14 September 2009 14:24

 poetowen said...

moving tribute, Tom.

Amazing how great work sticks in the brain--remember reading that early edition of Basketball Diaries in a park in Santa Cruz, late 70's, also playing Catholic Boy until it skipped and crackled, 1980. Still


remember the lyrics/lines. A beautiful urban voice.

14 September 2009 16:27

 -otto~ said...

Loving tribute. Thanks for sharing it.

14 September 2009 19:53

 Stu said...

A beautiful tribute.

'Into' itself is the perfect pass.

Thanks, Tom.

14 September 2009 23:02

 Calvin V said...

There are three people that have inspired me to be the person I am. Bob Dylan, James Dean, and Jim Carroll.

I would have loved to have someday met him, I've been downhearted all day over his loss.

Your tribute was perfectly respectful and you recognized him as someone bigger than the man who wrote Basketball diaries.

I thank you for writing this.

14 September 2009 23:12

 TC said...

Thank you again Adam, and I've now had a chance to enjoy your blogs too. I don't have any of those old PRs (or any new ones either for that matter), but now you mention it, yes, as I recall it, that was indeed a pretty neat issue, it's strange to imagine such a thing could actually have occurred, old and ruined though I am just thinking about those days now makes we want to run out and get my ripples pierced (ouch! don't blame me, 'twas the "abreast" that did it).

15 September 2009 02:54

 TC said...

Nora,

Very lovely to hear from you. And thank you doubly. Actually, the name "To" might be preferable to "Tom". More exotic, kind of a pseudo-Sinophiliac maneuver? (And by the way, thanks too for feeding this link to the Laughing Squid--it perhaps needed that, to appease its squishy humours?)

15 September 2009 02:57

 TC said...

Annie,

Me too. Punch in the stomach, wind gone, stopped heart. Numbness. Then the night of tears and truth and writing it all out and posting it and then the sleepless day and night and then... it's great to have a friend like you.

Only people like you who have experienced it believe Jim's kindness and patience were the real deal. Though of course his natural inclination of withdrawal from dumb businesses could only have been compounded once he made it up there into those high-hokum aethereal dumb business realms--the worldly ones, not the real aether where is now--I don't think it changed him too much. I mean in his nature. Obviously no intelligent person suffers fools happily, but as you are no fool, I'm sure your whip-smart wit and savvy and sweetness would have won him over in a minute. You know in those later epochs of his so called stardom I never saw him, but he would call up now and then when passing through the area on tour, and it was apparent then he wanted simply to have someone real to talk to, that is someone to whom he could talk without the effort of having to try to fabricate (feign) subscription to the relentless stream of dumb rockstar businesses. That could never have been him.

Curious that you should raise the issue of how to conduct oneself when an unassuming and entirely

natural famous person casually takes off his or her pants in one's humble presence. Perhaps if we'd all been raised in nudist colonies it would be no problem. I recall once hanging out with Mark Fidrych and a poet friend, pouring the inevitable idle-hours brews into our respective heads, everybody having to pee at once and MF cheerfully suggesting we all simply do so, thus unzipping and cheerfully leading the way. When in Rome thought I and joined in, of course I'd hung out with Mark before and understood this was for him standard operating procedure, pure thoughtless conviviality, but as the group splash got underway my poor embarrassed poet friend found his flow impeded, while Mark, amused, noticed, and charmingly urged him on, to no avail.

I suppose that somewhat uncouth reminiscence springs from my sense, reading that Interview bit with Jim, how much he resembled Mark. Similar backgrounds in some ways. The speech mannerisms. The openness, the vulnerability, and then the inevitable withdrawal when abused/misused. And both of them prematurely banished from life in the same year. Double bummer.

15 September 2009 03:00

 TC said...

De nada, Stuart, My pleasure. And I am glad to hear you are still alive. Vowing to read all 1200 of one's poetry books, now that could be a dodgy endeavor. (Something tells me it may not be best to start at the front--dip in, read around, allow yourself to be sucked in, and try not to remember you have 1199 to go... that could get to feel like the number of days in a sentence. The other kind of sentence I mean.)

15 September 2009 03:01

 TC said...

Issa's,

Thanks very much, I sincerely hope that's the case--though to tell you the truth, it's really putting me through the wringer. (But then again I suppose I was pretty wrung-out to start with.)

15 September 2009 03:03

 TC said...

Great to hear from you, O, I'm about ready for a bellwether to show up at this point. A verifiable Irishman to boot.

(Tom Raworth's backchannel comment: "Catholic boys indeed.")

Yes, it's the indisputable ring of the urbs in the voice upon which we concrete-pounders can build our trust.

15 September 2009 03:05

 TC said...

Thanks very much, Otto. (Jim would have liked your writing a lot, I suspect. Tough yet gentle.)

15 September 2009 03:07

 TC said...

Thanks Calvin. I think of him as he thought of himself, from the first day I met him: as a poet. And Dylan was a great hero of his, giving him the implicit permission to front a band and say his lyrics in that public space even though no more a singer than Dylan was/is.


(By the by, I like that slightly pensive Michael Caine of yours. He looks like he maybe smells a rat, but isn't quite sure whether or not to make a big thing out of it.)

15 September 2009 03:09

 TC said...

Thank you, Stu, you've made me think of a paraphrase of the Liverpool anthem--"You'll never blog alone".

15 September 2009 03:12

 Issa's Untidy Hut said...


My thoughts are with you ... I only met Jim once and his kindness, generosity and humor were evident

in the few minutes I spent with him. I'll be pointing folks your way via the blog today so they can share your feelings and recollections. They are revelatory.

best,

Don

15 September 2009 03:19

 TC said...

And last but not (maybe) least, at the risk of being guilty of blogaholical ventiloquism, I'd like to share a couple of backchannel messages sent as responses to this post.

The first is from the poet doctor Charlie Vermont, who's on emergency call and has the laudable priority of attending to the living:

"Read a good part of Rimbaud last week on vacation.

"Carroll was of the same cloth.

"I think the movie never did him justice. We loved his poems because we knew he had gone to hell and came out it with poems....that's how he got out....60 was a good run for someone with his early life."

Another comes from Jim's dear friend the poet Anne Waldman:

"Tried to enter something on your blog but it didn't get thru--I don't have an account. In any case your memoir & the poems lovely to read. Angels & light. Jim was gaunter in recent years in NYC, but working slowly on the novel...& a terrific reading maybe 3 years back at the Bowery Poetry Club...& he was at New Years days at the Poetry Project enjoying seeing the newer crowds & some old faces as well. Nice thoughts back in playful time float up... where are the poets of yesteryear? Walking the star path."

Also, the poet Pierre Joris has a sweet post at his great blog Nomadics aimed at counteracting the sadness a bit by means of Jim's own words:

Jim Carroll gone @ 60

And finally, from Eileen Tabios:

"Thanks for sharing this. It's so moving...and shows how a poet doesn't leave, to paraphrase, just ruin in his wake....which is affirming since I think a poet must ruin one's self in the process."

Eileen's comment reminds that this is such a difficult equation. I believe some of us couldn't help seeing into those "rituals of vulnerability" of Jim's in those years before they were perhaps covered over by a facade of eminence. But once having understood the private torment, and also felt it as we all of us probably to some degree have who've taken these poetic things as a calling, the whole matter of a poet's life and death does come to seem, as Eileen says, so terribly moving, calling to us softly for tenderness and sensitivity in a time when those are probably not commonly shared virtues. In such times maybe the quiet voice of a friend is the best we can ask--each from the ruined depths of ourselves.

Thanks to all poets and friends and fans of Jim's for remembering him. A Catholic funeral mass will be said for him later this week in New York City.

15 September 2009 03:20

 aditya said...

Heyy ..

i am big fan of Jim Carroll. Of his poetry.

He has a surreal ambience about him that pulls him so effortlessly to read him.

But I haven't been able to lay my hands on any of his books. I haven't found them in any of the

bookstores I have been to ...

I have read him mostly o the net.

I would be more than glad, if you could tell me his some of his online poetry links.

Glad, I came here. It was SarahA who gave me the link ...

:)

15 September 2009 10:13

 aditya said...

ohhh .. I am heartbroken ...

I never knew this was a tribute to Him ... he has died .. and I never knew this ...

I am sad as anything ...

<http://dippingbutterflies.blogspot.com/2009/09/eclectic-dream-viii.html>

15 September 2009 10:23

 TC said...

Aditya,

Pretty spooky that Jim passed a few days after you posted your poem dedicated to him (speaking of "Guitar Voodoo").

Your blogs are swell, I've talked to you over there a bit.

Is that an AC Milan shirt by any chance?

As to how to find Jim's poems, there are vultures who will descend upon the body of a dying god, and right now several of his poem sites are contaminated and bugged, beware.

I've found that the better a writer is (and especially the good ones who have been left out of the latest commodity trending), the more likely you are to be able to find their books remaindered or in bargain bins or recycling baskets or up on Amazon for a dollar. Two books easily obtainable in that category, if you poke about a bit, are Jim's *Fear of Dreaming* and *The Book of Nods*, both great.

(On the other hand, the first edition of *The Basketball Diaries*, with the intro I wrote, is now being sold at four figures, but that's in the sordid borderland of capitalist collector fetishism, probably not your shopping area. And for that matter I don't even have a copy.)

15 September 2009 11:36

 u.v.ray said...

It's a sad loss. Of course, I didn't know the man personally and couldn't add anything worthy to your great tribute, Tom. Ultimately, mere words can never be enough. I can only remember him as one of the most important writers of a generation and as the influence and inspiration he was.

16 September 2009 01:21

 TC said...

Ray,

No words can be enough to bring the dead to life, but Jim was a deeply committed writer, working at his desk on a novel when he died, and the fate of his work was important to him; so I'm certain your respect, expressed in your "mere words", which are also the true words of another hard-working, dedicated writing man, would have meant a lot to him.

16 September 2009 04:29

 David Grove said...

Living at the Movies was one of the first poetry books I bought, and I read it thoroughly--feverishly. It gave me permission to do things I wanted to do in a poem. I'll always be grateful to Jim Carroll for the liberating effect he had on me--and grateful to you, Tom, for making Carroll's early work available to the public.

16 September 2009 06:16

 TC said...

David,

Thank you. Yes, Bill Berkson, on the phone yesterday, lamented that the NY Times obit had listed several of Jim's books, but not *Living at the Movies*--which was the work that had really landed him on the map for the rest of us poets. Writ as a very young man yet writ large in mind and memory e'er since.

Jim's wake happened last night and a funeral mass in his honor at Our Lady of Pompeii Church in the Village was said this morning.

This post commemorates the later occasion:

Jim Carroll: Pax Aeternum

The poet Simon Pettet, long close with Jim, sent this report after attending both the wake and the mass:

"...your memoir/respect on *Beyond The Pale* I read over many times, directed friends to, and (no need for you to know this but) it gave me real solace sitting in the funeral parlor last night and in the church (mass) this morning - these sorts of scenes, always, to use the over-used adjective, surreal; no, wait a minute very very real! What a kind sweet man, Jim was - what an extraordinary poet!

The funeral service (unlike the infamous service for Gregory [Corso] in the same church, where there was 'heckling' and various transgressive stuff, was quite restrained, and quite beautiful actually.

One single soprano, her voice echoing to the rafters, singing

Amazing Grace, Ave Maria, etc. -- Patti Smith steps up one time
to sing backed by Lenny Kaye -- The priest, who kept referring to our
brother, 'James', wasn't entirely out-to-lunch.

"Here are the three little poems they had printed up and gave away
at the service (and, actually the previous night at the funeral home)."

Jim Carroll (August 1, 1949 - September 11, 2009)

Poem

Your spirit was deep

It suffused grace surely as amber

Now it's a small sick bird

That spins around the gravel

No flying, no color, no warmth for a hand

Poem

Alright

Buddha gets

A backstage pass

But his friends have to pay

What Burroughs Told Me

Have you ever seen fjords?

You want to see fjords before you die

16 September 2009 12:57

 TC said...

Much has been said and writ about Jim this week, on this or that authority, but putting up two posts on him through the sleep lack and tears, I've had to turn away after a while. But then, the logical next question occurred to me through the fog of lamentation: Is there a doctor in the house?

As it happens, there is. Charlie Vermont, doctor-poet, has entered the house.

Let me therefore turn this over to Charlie, whose dictation follows (as it contains more than the prescribed comment limit of 4096 characters, I'm going to have to put it up in pieces; here's Part I):

Frankie Cohen was a Rah Rah

Uncle Jimmy Shanks (my Irish uncle) lived on Shakespeare Ave. in the Bronx

Cabeza de Vaca was a gasser(so said Lord Buckley)

Jim Carroll was a poet

On the subway station wall it was written Frankie Cohen is a Rah Rah.....

I didn't know what a Rah Rah was. The last time I saw him he was sitting in the grass leaning up against a tenement. Sores here and there on him. He asked me for \$5 and I gave him \$10. Later he died from a hot shot somewhere in the West

Bronx.....we lived in the same building he was taller.....not particularly Jewish

in appearance probably because he was adopted.....in grade school he got

whooping cough was out for a few months.....not sick, they just wouldn't let him

back in.....but he could be outside.....and it led to very a accurate jumpshot from the

corner.....he was pretty good as a pre-teen those hours outside alone on the court. When he grew up he was about six four....blond and quite a site.....even Murrah who had only Irish kids on his teams asked him to play for him. At Monroe highschool he was the star along with Ed Kranepool who was drafted out of school to play baseball for the Mets and did so for 17 years. I lost track of Frank because I went to a different highschool. When we were younger we laughed and cried as we ganged up on our crowd for the pink belly.....why would your friends want to do that. We played hockey once to sit in the bleachers behind Mantle at the World Series got there early an Frankie's picture as a fan was the whole page of the Daily News, New York's biggest paper, the next day. How Frankie Cohen became or whatever was a Rah Rah I don't know but he had long hair in 1962 and was life guarding at Far Rockaway.

17 September 2009 02:48

 TC said...

(Charlie again: Part II)

Uncle Jimmy was a cab driver.....and at all the family occasions was the odd man out not being Jewish.....but deep in my resume I cherish the thought that I was taught to drive by an Irish New York cab driver.....who lived on Shakespeare Ave. Not knowing anything about Jim Carroll I always imagined that he was from the West Bronx and may have lived on Shakespeare Ave.

About the last time I saw Frankie I ran into his drug pals Rosenberg and Madoff.....both like Frankie had a lot more going for them than I thought I had and they asked for a ride into a Puerto Rican neighborhood. I had the car I was a nice guy and if I was trying to be a social heavy I thought philosophically I should drive the ride and so I did. I didn't know they were

going for a score and would shoot up in my back seat/but I did witness the prurient interest in smack.....it was if I wasn't in the car and didn't exist. I really didn't know this was going to happen but then I was innocent as innocents are sometimes protected.....this also happened I was waiting nervously by my car in this bad neighborhood.....dressed in blue denim more or less.. three 12 or 13 year old Puerto Rican girls....start singing to me "He's so fine, wish he were mine, Du lang Du lang" And those kind of things tended to happen in my life.....a kind dissonance against the prevailing wind or an awakening one.....Watching the movie the Basketball Diaries.....I realized having been rudely mooned on a Circle Line Boat trip around Manhattan, while what I thought was a spiritual journey (power vision in relative solitude.....that kind of self centered shit)/ that the timing was right I had been mooned by Jim Carroll, a great poet of my generation. I was learning of his poetry and diaries about that time but it was almost 30 years later that I realized that he was one of the 3 on the bluff above the Harlem River.

Sometime ago I read Jim's story Curtis' Charm.....where he becomes an inadvertent healer to a fellow rehab patient in psychic need.....I love the ending where he encounters a snake in Manhattan outside a Korean grocery....never having seen one before having scoured Manhattan's parks most of his life.....Then having been successful in his quest he quotes a line from the Tempest "I abjure this rough magic" In his own way Carroll was a healer of sorts.....though probably he would have never have thought that about himself. I believe if Frankie Cohen had lived to read Jim Carroll

he too would have gone through rehab and perhaps lived to age 60. "Stars to the stars" Jim's poems were like rungs

to a rock climber. As he grabbed for each rung he got out of hell.

Cabeza de Vaca was part of an early Spanish explorer expedition of America starting in Tampa Florida.....he went all across

the southern tier of the continent to the Pacific and down into Mexico. He was one of 3 survivors out of an initial group of 300.

They went from Indian tribe to tribeand presented themselves as healers and their reputation grew and they developed followers

Lord Buckley said in his routine that Cabeza became a healer because he believed he could.....maybe he did.

For my part I still have faith.....and not superstitiously believe that sometimes there's a deeper meaning hidden in chance.

If being mooned by a great poet unbeknownst to you shakes you back to a momentary reality.....it's because real poetry

and real healing take place in reality.....it's not the kind of thing you can tell your grandchildren about but it's deep

in my resume

Charlie Vermont MD

17 September 2009 02:49

 Lucy in the Sky said...

How many memories, Tom. A life too intense. I am sure he grasped every single second of it.

17 September 2009 05:45

 TC said...

Lucy,

Something tells me he did.

You might say Jim dwelt in his own private Patagonia. As you know that place can be lonely or it can be ecstatic.

Probably pretty intense either way, es verdad?

17 September 2009 06:37

 Anonymous said...

I was a friend of Jim's from the Breakfast Club if anyone heard him speak of it. There has been no comfort for Jim's death except here, Tom, with this beautiful tribute. This is what I wrote late Friday night when there were just a few of us who knew of his death and I was about a half bottle of Maker's Mark into the grieving process. From Leslie

He was a true gentleman poet

Athlete

Jim Carroll scored 47 points in his first game as a freshman member of the Varsity team at Trinity High School in Manhattan

The saints are always watching you they have this

Grave stare

Of love, of course,

But conditional and

Conditional

Writing is a messy business

Harnessed with manners, etiquette, rules and regulations

Stick and move

Fans are like snakes on hot rocks

Fickle

Fierce and

Forgetful

Just pass the torch already

Are you still talking about that one night in the desert?

We've spent many nights in the dunes of ancient Egypt

Eating rice pudding by Mad Hatter spoonfuls

The medicine goes down

Down

Down

Come on, Sugar

Just go down

Females are all the rage

Girls are the new "boy"

Can't we just talk for awhile in the grey glow

Of this sad room

Where are you, Jim Carroll?

Have your friends forgotten you? Do they know

What you like for breakfast?

HEY WORLD

You missed another opportunity to celebrate the living

God Damn

Man

Do we have enough gas to get to heaven?

Put your mouth on the tube and suck my

Gentleman,

Start your engines

Zero to Five Hundred Forty Three

And you ain't seen nothin' yet

Slumber steals your heart

Wake up

Smell the coffee

BREATHE

Shine

Shuffle down the avenue

Give a nod to the New York you once knew

It's gone forever

If you missed it

Heaven Awaits

17 September 2009 10:37

 TC said...

Leslie,

Thanks for coming round.

Now with your moving and enlightening poem we begin to come nearer the man, but no nearer than he would have wished, and approaching in the true way he always required of a friend.

"He was a true gentleman poet"

Of how many can this be said, with all those words actually meaning something.

I've been astonished to see some of the misunderstanding things said elsewhere in the past few days by people who maybe saw Jim do a reading once or heard some gossip about him from somebody who maybe saw him from afar once, a voyeuristic delight in gloating over reports of his "ruin", an ambient imperceptive envy, an unkindness even on the part of some who would see his sufferings as self-indulgences and his fame as something he did not earn the hard way. How easily the angel's beauties are overlooked for the human's flaws. Or as you say simply forgotten, missed yet not missed.

"Stick and move

Fans are like snakes on hot rocks

"Fickle

Fierce and

Forgetful"

Some would feel his keeping his soul unto himself were a vague crime of omission, not making the "lit scene" as he called it back when. To me it seems that whatever scene Jim may have made would have

been the better for his presence, I always felt he had the right to choose his own company.

17 September 2009 13:38

 Anonymous said...

Tom - Thanks for the memories. I put up a few photos I took of Jim from the days on Mesa Rd. I think I must have the only picture of him smiling—and a beautiful picture it is. Don't ever believe that the time in the little farmhouse didn't have it's value. It's when all the sweetness and gentleness came out and had its sway.

<http://marygreer.wordpress.com/2009/09/15/rest-in-peace-jim-carroll/>

17 September 2009 15:27

 Anonymous said...

he became symbolic for me

and that was an injustice for both of us

his inability to accept or understand the way things are gnawed at me

later, I felt sorry for him, that gnawed more

I understood him more earlier

Most of all I thank you for being true

the lyrics.wow.....I chased them

Thank you Jimmy

17 September 2009 15:40

 TC said...

Mary,

I see Jim right up there under The Magician on your Tarot blog and I say, That's him.

Lovely of you to put up these heartbreaking photos of this poet and friend whose sweetness blessed us all. That sweet shy smile I saw most every day, ambling past that little shack in the woods were he

and Jo'mama dwelt.

Thanks so much for coming over.

17 September 2009 19:20

 TC said...

Anonymous,

"being true

the lyrics.wow.....I chased them"

Yes, I'm still chasing those lines, with their lyric mystery and dark power.

17 September 2009 19:23

 TC said...

Reflecting a bit further in the quiet hours upon the pictures of young Lord Jim in his Bolinasian "Rimbaud period" found beneath The Magician on Mary's Tarot blog reminded me he'd been in my thoughts, in just this guise, when last month the line "In my youth I possessed a magic touch" swam into mind to frame a bit of Rimbaud's Adieu from Une Saison en Enfer:

Mage

This was part of a series of three Rimbaud posts that now strongly evoke for me the phantasmagoric "Rimbaud Scenes" from Jim's Book of Nods -- starting with this variation on Nuit en Enfer ("The hallucinations are innumerable... And I will now strip away the veils that conceal all the mysteries: religious, natural; death, birth..."):

Night in Hell

And ending with Après le Déluge from Illuminations ("The next world, so near yet so far away..."):

After the Deluge

Haunting images in the monitor looking oddly premonitory tonight, speaking of separation and eternity, in the timeless deep northern California darkness, under the new moon...

18 September 2009 01:20

 Joe Safdie said...

So sweet, Tom. Don't know if you remember that the third roommate in that Bolinas house (besides Jim G.) was Sara.

I remember talking with you about *Catholic Boy* when it came out -- I, ummm, liked it more than you did. Dug it out last night and played it again, and I think it holds up fine. From "It's Too Late":

It's too late

to fall in love with Sharon Tate

but it's too soon

to ask me for the words someone carved on my tomb

It's too late

there's no one left that I even want to imitate

you see you just don't know

I came to give you my heart

and you want some fashion show

but it aint no contribution

to rely on the institution

to validate your chosen art

to sanction your boredom

and let you play out your part

Not too late anymore. We saw him last in Seattle, about, what, seven or eight years ago? Frail, but

very charged.

The lines for his performance at Bumbershoot were enormous . . . (he was still mightily pissed at DiCaprio).

Thank you for this, partner.

18 September 2009 13:42

 TC said...

Anne Waldman has attended with loving care upon Jim's last rites and has asked that I post this for her:

Grey but mild day Wed...we rushed to get there as hearse was pulling up...

Ed & I sat with Steven Taylor as the priest intoned and mumbled (terrible sound system) the death homilies. Big cedar casket, elegant bronze plaque with Jim's name, seemed so large the "box" (he was a long tall guy) but remembered what Ed Sanders had said at Ted Berrigan's funeral- Was it indeed big enough to contain the man?

Kept looking up at the paintings at ceiling...thinking of the angels in Jim's poems...

Young woman sang Ave Maria and various parts of the funeral liturgy, live sonorous organ above us...

But most moving when Patti & Lenny Kaye performed "Wing" with steady tone & pace-

Friends on the steps, weep & hug, reminiscing when we'd last seen Jim...His editor Paul Slovak there, committed to keeping the work in print and the new novel will come soon- TRIPTYCH- the last title Jim had thought of...after something with ravens or "The Petting Zoo". Ending lines from that novel that was still "in progress":

"Now that his vigil was over, the raven rose from the floor and through the window, disappearing directly into the white-out night of the great blizzard. Within three blocks, another bird soared down from the huge Port Authority building and joined him. It was a dove, gliding directly beside the long black wings, barely visible in the pale, frigid air."

I drove with Lenny to St Peter's Cemetery where Jim's parents are buried - in Haverstraw near the Hudson, simple words by priest without robe as the casket lowered. We all held roses & offered them. Jim already long gone from there. Then a welcoming lunch & company at Jim's brother Tom's house nearby. Big American Flag and Vietnam Missing In Action flags on a pole in the yard, shamrock motifs at the door.

Albums of photos with Jim as a boy- tow-headed, open face..or one, teen with his Trinity school blazer holding a tennis racket...Tom joking about their competitiveness... Now he's back in the family bosom...

Susan, Tamara, & Rosemary strong and elegant. Women who were close to him... you felt all that female warmth & sympathy at the beginning, in the middle, at the end... Jim's nieces, one grand niece eating a cookie...ordinary salutary suburbia...

Women who runs Jim's Catholic Boy blog & fanclub showed us Jim's recent text message to her, hours before he died- how he was listening to Van Morrison's Brown-eyed Girl -his current favorite...

I remembered sitting with Jim once on my father's bed at Macdougall Street (I think he'd been staying there) musing how I'd been his sister in a past life & still was...a million years ago...

Anne Waldman Sept18/09 Nueva York

18 September 2009 16:24

 TC said...

I want to thank everybody who's contributed to this chain in Jim's memory.

Have posted a short essay on Jim's poetry here:

Jim Carroll and the Imaginal Particular: "The clock is ticking..."

18 September 2009 16:32

 Mariana Soffer said...

Thanks tom for making me discover this incredible artist of our times, I have been reading his stuff, and trying to be calm to focus properly in his texts. When I can do it, I always realize that he had magic like when he says:

"There will always be a poem

I will climb on top of it

and come in and out of time,

Cocking my head to the side slightly,

As I finish shaking, melting then

Into its body, its soft skin"

--Jim Carroll, "Poem"

from Void of Course (1998)

Hope you are doing well and your wife too tom.


18 September 2009 22:04

 TC said...

Thanks so much Mariana for looking into Jim's poems, the one you've quoted carries the essence,

captures the soul of the poet and shows how deeply he lived into what he wrote. Perhaps a little bit of the depth and sensitivity of your man Chet Baker. It's so hard when these gentle gifted ones leave us early. Bless you my dear for keeping the flame.

18 September 2009 22:23

 Kirby Olson said...

I liked reading Anne Waldman's description of the memorial. Very nice.

I had a strange experience. I was walking to work when Carroll appeared to me in a vision and seemed very friendly. I hadn't thought of him for a decade!

I had heard that he had laughed mightily at my article that appeared in the Corpse in the late 80s entitled "My Night with Allen Ginsberg." I think Codrescu said something like Carroll said that Ginsberg had deserved that kind of account for some time. Why he said this I think is because he was a hustler of middle-aged gay men in his youth, and probably got a little sick of dealing with them and their predatory aspect, and probably found them ridiculous or something? I don't know. I never talked to him!

But I thought after the apparition of Carroll on the street -- I should find out what Carroll is doing these days. Two days later I opened Silliman's blog and find out that he died the day I had the vision of him. It's hard to account for the ontological status of the vision.

It was more than just a memory. It was more like he appeared before me plain as day. Did anyone else have this odd experience?

I can't explain it, and thought it was truly odd. Then the finding that he had died on the day he appeared before me was even odder (he was NOT physically there, as Christ appeared to the Doubting Thomas, but he was THERE in some real way that I can't explain).

I only actually met him once. He was at Naropa Institute and he read some poems in a small room up

in what I think were called the Boulderado apartments. I was impressed by him, and his strange presence, and by his later manifestation as a rock star, and maybe most by the strange size he manifested (as tall as Charles Olson?), and yet, so ethereal.

R.I.P.

And come again, if you had something you wanted to say, dude. I was thinking about something else while walking: ObamaCare, and the Congressional Budget Office pricing on the bill before the Republic. Sorry I wasn't more open at the time! I'm always missing opportunities to talk with people, caught up as I am with the disappearance of the Republic, and trying my best to salvage it.

19 September 2009 08:00

 TC said...

A final thank you is owed to my friend and neighbor Tom Luddy, who caught a typo in the piece that has now been corrected. I'd put a "T" instead of a "P" at the front of the name of Lew Alcindor's High School, Power Memorial, a city rival to Jim's school, Trinity. Power was indeed a formidable power in prep sports of that era. "I went to Stepinac in White Plains," Tom relates. "Power was in our league, so we had to play them all the time."

20 September 2009 18:42

 u.v.ray said...

I am a little late with this. But...

I didn't really have poignant words of my own. So I wanted to add this.

Because of Jim Carroll, I was reminded of something the record producer Rick Rubin said after Kurt Cobain died - I think it also applies to Jim:

"They feel different, but they don't know what it is. They feel more. Everything hurts. Everything. They're super sensitive. They see things that other people don't see. It can be crippling. And for

someone like Kurt Cobain, it can kill you."

21 September 2009 00:42

 Curtis Faville said...

Not least for me the meaning of this death is the superimposition of the "being" whom Jim Carroll was--upon the actual body which he inhabited a whole 60 years! Would he always be, somehow, a "young" man, who would never age, never become "old"? He always seemed to project a sense of "innocence" which shone through the translucency of his mortal body--fragile, lithe, curious.

But I didn't know him.

21 September 2009 17:08

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