WADDING THROUGH SEAS A BLOOD LIKE MACBETH. THROUGH NEW YORK'S STREETS FILLED WITH RAIN/SOAKED MATRAZES. PROSTITUTES, TRANSVESTITES, EXPLODING UZIS, AND MEN SELLING HEROIN AT 26 DOLLARS A TIME: WONDERFUL FIRE.


HIS SONGS BECAME THE SOUNDTRACKS OF LIVES, RATTLED BY DRUGS AND SEX, AS HIS WAS. VAČLAV PAVEL SMUGGLED HIS WORK INTO SOVIET CONTROLLED CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND IT BECAME AN UNDERGROUND ANTHEMS OF LIBERTY. HE SANG OF DRUG OVERDOSES IN LURID DETAIL: "BLOOD,
SHOOTING, UP THE DROPPERS NECK.” HE MUSED DREAMINGLY ON FELLATIO AND RANDOM COLORED GIRLS. “DOO DE-DOO DE-DOO”.

HAVEL WANTED TO TAKE LOU REED AS HIS GUEST TO THE WHITE HOUSE, AND THE WHITE HOUSE REFUSED. HIS MOST POPULAR SONG “PERFECT DAY” A HYMN TO SWEET SIMPLE TIMES:

JUST A PERFECT DAY
DRINK SANGRIA IN THE PARK
AND THEN LATER WHEN IT GETS DARK
WE GO HOME
AND THEN THE KICKER CAME.
YOU MADE ME FORGET MYSELF
I THOUGHT I WAS SOMEONE ELSE
SOMEONE GOOD
YOU ARE GOING TO REAP
JUST WHAT YOU SOW

WHICH WAS REPEATED MANY, MANY TIMES. EVERYTHING HAD ITS OPPOSITE:

“EUPHORIA IS THE SPIKE IN THE VAINE WHEN HE FELT LIKE JESUS’ SON.”

MISS MATCHED MELODIES AND WORDS, FLAT SINGING, AS IF HE WAS COMMENTING FROM THE SIDE LINES, RATHER THAN SINGING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SONG. HE WROTE FOR HIMSELF, AND IF IT WAS UGLY TO OTHERS HE SAID: “YOU THINK WHAT YOU ARE MAKING IS BEAUTIFUL”. HIS SONGS COULD
BE LYRICAL, WITTY, AND SHARP, AT THE SAME TIME DISSONANT AND TIDDEOUS.

ANDY WARHOL INTRODUCED HIM TO ME IN 1965 AT THE CAFÉ BIZZAR IN GREENWHICH VILLAGE. HIS VOICE AND LYRICS WERE SCREECHING OVER AN ELECTRIC VIOLA, WARHOL SAID, HE WAS THE BEST AND THAT HE WOULD MAKE HIM FAMOUS. IN 1975 WHEN HE MADE HIS ALBUM "METAL MASCHINE", FOUR SIDES OF FEEDBACK FROM AN ELECTRIC GUITARRE LOU SAID, NO ONE HAD EVER LISTENED TO THE WHOLE THING. HE WAS REALLY A BAD-ASS-CITYBOY FROM THE NEW YORK SUBURBS. DAVID BOWIE HELPED HIM IN 1972 BY RESCUING HIM AS A TYPIST IN HIS FATHERS ACCOUNTING FIRM. HE WAS MAKING 45 DOLLARS A WEEK.

HE HAD A VERY PUBLIC TRANSEVESTITE LOVE AFFAIR IN THE MID 70 IES. IN BLACK LATHER JACKET, SHORT BLOND CURLS, AND BLACK NAIL POLISH AND MASKARA, LATER HETEROSEXUAL MARRIAGES.

AT SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY HE UNDERWENT AN ELECTRIC SHOCK TREATMENT, ORDERED BY HIS PARENTS TO CURE HIS HOMOSEXUALITY.

IN SCHOOL HE STUDIED ENGLISH AND HE APPROACHED HIS LYRICS LIKE A NOVELLIST OR AS TENNESSEE WILLIAMS MIGHT HAVE DONE. SHAKESPEARE'S ECHOS EVERYWHERE: "YOU CANNOT BE SHAKESPEARE AND YOU CANNOT BE JOYCE/ SO WHAT IS LEFT INSTEAD/ YOU ARE STUCK WITH YOURSELF" HE WAS CRUSHINGLY RUDE TO THOSE WHO TRIED TO ANALYSE HIM. HE PREFERRED TO LEAVE PEOPLE IN CONFUSION. I WANT TO "NULLIFY LIFE". THE WORLD
THAT HE OFTEN SANG OF WAS OFTEN VISCIOUS, DECADENT, AND DURTY. HE TOLD ME HIS HEART WAS PURE AND HIS SOUL WAS PURE TOO, BUT HE PASSED THROUGH FIRE ON THE WAY.

HE CHANGED THE CURSE OF ROCK 'N' ROLL FOR EVER. SHORTLY BEFORE HE DIED ANOTHEY HEGARTY WENT TO SEE HIM AND THEN IMPROVISED THE FOLLOWING FOR A SMALL GROUP OF FRIENDS.

SUNDAY MORNING, THE DAY HE DIED, THE RECORDING WAS PLAYED. LAURIE TOOK HIM OUTSIDE OF THEIR HOUSE ON LONG ISLAND UNDER A TREE SHE HELD HIM UP, AND HE WAIVED HIS ARMS AND HANDS IN TAI CHI AS THE RECORDING PLAYED. IT WAS THE LAST HOUR OF HIS LIFE.