

1ST draft of RW speech for Lou Reed's memorial
= at the BE. Jan 2014.

STEEL VELVET

WONDERFUL FIRE

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

LOU DIED ON, SUNDAY MORNING, SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 27, ²⁰¹³ AGE 71. HE
WROTE FOR HIMSELF. HIS WORLD WAS ONE OF CONTINUOUS
CONTRADICTIONS, ALWAYS A GOOD THING/CANCELLED BY A BAD THING, AND
VISE VERSA. HIS MUSIC HEAVELY INFLUENCED ROCK AND PUNK BANDS THAT
FOLLOWED HIM: DAVID BOWIE, IGGY POP, PATTI SMITH, TALKING HEADS, SEX
PISTOLS, JOY DIVISION, R.E.M. STROKES AND ON AND ON. ^{HIS WORK HAD} ~~WITH~~ THE IMPACT OF
ELVIS PRESLEY OR BOB DYLAN HIS LYRICS WENT INTO THE REAL DARKNESS
OF HARD DRUGS, SEXUAL EXPLICIT HEROIN, DETAILING ROCK N' ROLL
SIGHTS. HE REVOLUTIONIZED THE SCENE. I MET HIM WHEN HE FORMED THE
VELVET UNDERGROUND BAND ^{IN} ~~FROM~~ 1965 ^{AND LATER IN. THE VELVET UNDERGROUND} TO 1970. ~~HE~~ NEVER SOLD MANY
RECORDS AND ALWAYS REMAINED SUBVERSIVE, A DARK FORCE, A CULT, ^{IT SOLD 30,000 COPIES, BUT INFLUENCE GENERATION TO COME & STILL COMING} ~~HIS~~ HIS
^{REJECTED HIM} ~~PARENTS DID NOT APPROVE OF HIM IF THEY KNEW HIM.~~

HIS SONGS BECAME THE SOUNDTRACKS OF LIVES, RATTLED BY DRUGS AND
SEX, AS HIS WAS. VACLAV 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.

after

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. *he would have been much more famous if it had*
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 more

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

AT SYRACUS 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
NOVELIST 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

not known for his misanthropic personality

THAT HE OFTEN SANG OF WAS OFTEN VISIOUS, DECADENT, AND DURTY. HE
TOLD ME HIS HEART WAS PURE AND HIS SOUL WAS PURE TOO, BUT ^{He had} ~~HE~~ PASSED
THROUGH FIRE ON THE WAY.

HE CHANGED THE CURSE OF ROCK N' ROLL FOR EVER / SHORTLY BEFORE HE
DIED ANOTHY 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}