

# Brian



Volume 7

## Track Listing

### The Monks, *Black Monk Time*

1. Monk Time
2. Shut Up
3. Higgle-Dy-Piggle-Dy
4. I Hate You
5. Complication

### The Zombies, *Odessey & Oracle*

6. Care of Cell 44
7. A Rose For Emily
8. Hung Up On A Dream
9. Butcher's Tale (Western Front 1914)
10. Time Of The Season

### The Modern Lovers, *The Modern Lovers*

11. Roadrunner
12. Old World
13. She Cracked
14. Hospital
15. Someone I Care About

### Patti Smith, *Horses*

16. Gloria: In Excelsis Deo; Gloria
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## Introduction

As has been amply demonstrated these last six months, producing a cd for Brian is a lot like pissing down your leg - you think it's hot, but no one else does. I have no doubt that the experience will be the same for me, but I would like to take this opportunity to point out just how much I have enjoyed each and every selection on the previous cds that it has been my privilege to hear.

On the accompanying cd, and discussed in this little *vade mecum*, are extracts from four albums. I have known none of them for very long, and the first three I had scarcely heard of when the idea of forming something along the lines of a book group, but with music, and for chaps, was first mooted. My first thought was that we would suggest cds we hadn't heard, but liked the sound of, and everyone in the group would hear for the first time together. But Brian is a much more vicious beast than this, and demands some emotional attachment to each selection, so that the kicking one receives is felt so much more keenly. So, although I have not known these albums long, for me they represent a glimpse into *l'age d'or* of popular music, and I here declare that I love them all.

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The 60s

I thought I first heard The Monks on a garage rock compilation which included 'Black Wind' by Little John and the Monks, a fantastically atmospheric tale of a cuckold killing his girlfriend and her lover, only to beg for his own death out of remorse. I wanted to hear more. I got to this album by The Monks, but soon realised it was a different group. I was not sad for long though, as it dawned on me that I had stumbled upon a little gem of a record, and one far weirder than I could have ever expected.

I definitely first heard of The Zombies when I was about 13 and I decided to become a mod. I rifled through my Dad's singles collection and come up with three 'mod' singles: The Kinks, 'You Really Got Me', The Small Faces, 'All or Nothing', and The Zombies, 'She's Not There'. How I discovered that The Zombies were 'mods', I don't know, but around that time I felt anything recorded around the mid-sixties was fair game, and in any case most groups then dressed like mods, it seemed to me. I soon discovered that appearance should not be the sole criterion when my Grandad gave me an album by The Swinging Blue Jeans, which, on the basis of band-photo on the cover, I championed as a kosher mod album only to be ridiculed by the only other mod in the village.

The Monks  
*Black Monk Time*  
(1966)

1. Monk Time
2. Shut Up
3. Higgle-Dy-Piggle-Dy
4. I Hate You
5. Complication

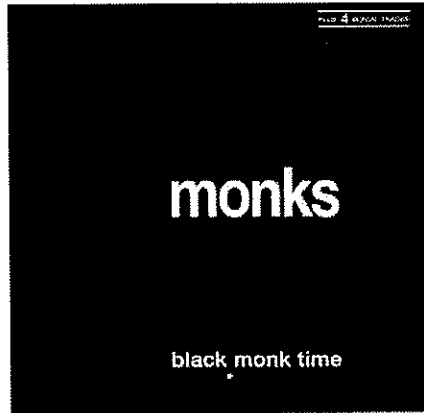
If you look up *sui generis* in the dictionary it will say 'The Monks'. Actually, it won't, but it might as well do, for The Monks are the very definition of unique, one-off, and all the other words you will find when you do look the phrase up. Formed by 5 ex-GIs in Germany, the band released their sole album in 1966, offering an idiosyncratic, if not to say bizarre, take on the beat music of the time. Standard song structure was rejected, a rhythm guitar replaced with an electric banjo, feedback used for one of the first times on record, and plenty of dissonance, that *sine qua non* of a satisfactory aural experience, utilised. They also possessed a phenomenal voice in the form of Gary Burger (although his tendency towards the yodel could be usefully curtailed). You'll note that they also sported tonsures, only wore black, and had noose ties around their necks - this is that rare occasion when the music lives up to image.

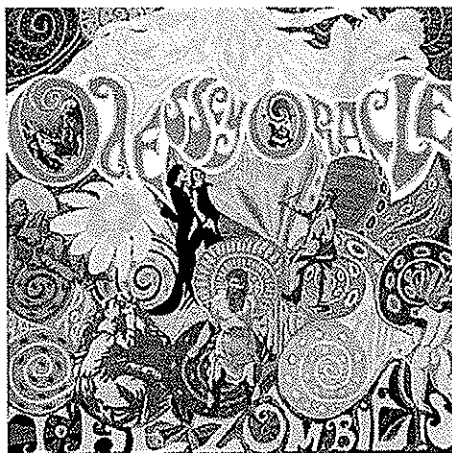
All great bands need a theme tune - think of The Monkees, think of The... actually I can't think of any more, but the point still stands. 'Monk Time' is the Daddy of all theme tunes. It is breathtaking in its self-reflexivity and its remarkable, stream-of-consciousness lyrics, which combine the Viet Nam war with James Bond with Pussy Galore with protest against the atomic bomb, and that's only the first verse. I defy anyone not to believe that it actually is Monk Time upon hearing this song.

But it is 'Higgle-Dy-Piggle-Dy' which is the band's *Meisterwerke*, offering as it does a distillation of their *Weltsanschauung* - hell for these cats is not hell, it's heaven! What's more, it includes a healthy dose of feedback and a scorching guitar solo. Gary Burger had discovered feedback independently when he went for a piss and left his guitar leaning against his amp. To his credit, he was not offended by this noise - he embraced it.

The subject matter of these five songs also explored darker themes than contemporary groups (witness the song titles, 'Shut Up' and 'I Hate You', the reference to constipation in 'Complication'), and if The Velvet Underground are The Beatles of an alternate universe, then The Monks deserve to be considered its Tremeloes.

Needless to say, the album bombed and went unreleased in the US and UK.





The Zombies  
*Odessey & Oracle*  
(1968)

- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| 6. Care of Cell 44    | 9. Butcher's Tale (Western Front 1914) |
| 7. A Rose For Emily   | 10. Time Of The Season                 |
| 8. Hung Up On A Dream |  |

Someone clever, I can't remember who, once said that the two things least deserving of empathy in this world are serial killers and zombies. While the former cannot be disputed, there is one exception to the latter - five grammar-school types from St Alban's who recorded a perfect 'pop' album at Abbey Road immediately after 'Sgt Pepper's' in 1967 and broke up on the day of its release, early in '68. The record flopped in the UK but, *mirabile dictu*, was a massive hit in the US on the back of the smash single, 'Time Of The Season'. You wouldn't believe the clamour there was for them to reform and tour over there, but they didn't - the fools.

A few years earlier they had had a number 1 in the UK with the aforementioned 'She's Not There', but their sales had hit a fallow patch. They were not worried, for they had two great songwriters - Rod Argent and Chris White - and by the time the record was made they had enough strong material for a solid album. The genre, I suppose, is 'psychedelic rock' (note the cover art), and what I find distinctive about it is how much it is keyboard-based, rather than guitar. 'A Rose For Emily', a cousin of 'Eleanor Rigby' in its subject matter, is solo piano; note the organ wig-out at the end of 'Time Of The Season'; while a pedal organ is the dominant instrument on 'Butcher's Tale'. On 'Care of Cell 44' and 'Hung Up On A Dream' the mellotron, after the theremin the second coolest non-guitar instrument in pop, is used. Where a guitar is prominent, i.e. the riff of 'Hung Up On A Dream', it is used sparingly but to great effect. The other significant feature is the vocal harmonies, easily comparable to The Beatles, if not The Beach Boys or Big Star.

The subject matter appears slightly whimsical and of its era ('Now is the time for looooving'; 'Hung Up On A Dream' betrays a familiarity with hallucinogens), but there is some flint just below the surface - an imprisoned girlfriend, an old crone dying alone and unloved, the trenches as a metaphor for the Viet Nam War.

I didn't know what the mellotron actually was before I had to write this, so I looked it up in Wikipedia and the article there follows. I think it is fitting that it was a Brian who was considered to have first mastered it. However, The Zombies and those others who used similar non-traditional instruments could not have foreseen, and should not be held responsible for, the eventual emergence of Kraftwerk.

The Mellotron  
(from Wikipedia)

The Mellotron is an electromechanical polyphonic keyboard musical instrument originally developed and built in Birmingham, England in the early 1960s.

The Mellotron, and its direct ancestor the Chamberlin, which in later years surpassed the Mellotron, were, in effect, the world's first sample-playback keyboards. The heart of the instrument is a bank of parallel linear (not looped) strips of magnetic tape, each with approximately eight seconds of playing time; playback heads underneath (but not directly underneath) each key enable performers to play the pre-recorded sound assigned to that key when pressed. The earlier MKI, and MKII models contained two side-by-side keyboards with 18 selectable sets of specially-recorded sounds on the right keyboard such as strings, flutes, and brass instruments which were called "lead", or "instrument" sounds, and pre-recorded accompaniment music (in various styles) on the left keyboard. The tape banks for the later, and lighter, M400 models contain three selectable sounds (per changeable tape-rack) such as strings, cello, and the famous eight-voice choir. The sound on each individual tape piece is recorded at the specific pitch of the key that it was assigned to.



*History*

Although tape samplers had been explored in research studios (e.g., Hugh LeCaine's 1955 keyboard-controlled "Special Purpose Tape Recorder", which he used when recording his classic "Dripsody"), the first commercially available keyboard-driven tape

instruments were built and sold by California-based Harry Chamberlin from 1948 through the 1970s.

Things really took off, however, when Chamberlin's sales agent, Bill Fransen, brought two of Chamberlin's instruments to England in 1962 to search for someone who could manufacture 70 matching tape heads for future Chamberlins. Harry Chamberlin was not at all happy at first with the fact that someone overseas was basically "copying" his idea, and that one of his own people (Bill Fransen) was the reason for this. He eventually found a UK company that were skilled enough to develop the idea further and a deal was struck with Bill and Lesley Bradley of tape recorder company Bradmatic Ltd. This resulted in the formation of a subsidiary company named Mellotronics, which produced the first Mellotrons in Birmingham, England. Bradmatic later took on the name Streetly Electronics. Many years later, following financial and trademark troubles, the Mellotron name became unavailable and later instruments were sold under the name Novatron. A small number of the instruments were assembled and sold by EMI under license.

Through the late 1970s, the Mellotron had a major impact on rock music, particularly the 35 note (G-F) M400 which was released in 1970 and sold over 1800 units, becoming a trademark sound of the era's progressive bands. The novel characteristics of the instrument attracted a number of celebrities and among the early Mellotron owners are Princess Margaret, Peter Sellers, King Hussein of Jordan and Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard.

Mellotrons were normally pre-loaded with string instrument and orchestral sounds, although the tape bank could be removed with relative ease by the owner and loaded with banks containing different sounds including percussion loops, sound effects, or synthesizer-generated sounds, to generate polyphonic electronically generated sounds in the days before polyphonic synthesizers.

Although they were highly prized and enabled many bands to perform string, brass and choir arrangements that had been previously impossible to recreate live, Mellotrons were not without their disadvantages. Above all, they were very expensive - the official Mellotron site gives the 1973 list price as US\$5200. And like the Hammond organ they were a roadie's nightmare - heavy, bulky and fragile. The tape banks were also notoriously prone to breakages and jams and those groups who could afford to (like Yes) typically took two Mellotrons on tour with them to cope with the inevitable breakdowns.

Despite these shortcomings, Mellotrons were prized for their unique sound, and they furthermore helped pave the way for the later sampler.

#### *The Mellotron in popular music*

The Mellotron was first made famous by The Beatles, who used it prominently on their groundbreaking 1967 single "Strawberry Fields Forever," as well as several other recordings they made in this psychedelic period. It was also used by The Zombies, the Moody Blues ("Nights in White Satin"), The Rolling Stones ("2000 Light Years From Home"), Pink Floyd ("Julia Dream") and others during the psychedelic era. Rolling Stones guitarist Brian Jones was supposedly the first musician to master the instrument, using it

liberally on the albums *Their Satanic Majesties Request* and *Beggars Banquet*. The Kinks featured the instrument prominently in their recordings between 1967-1969, particularly on the 1968 album, *The Kinks are the Village Green Preservation Society*.

The Mellotron was widely used to provide backing keyboard accompaniment by many of the progressive rock groups of the 1970s and alongside the venerable Hammond organ it was crucial to shaping the sound of the genre. It features on albums such as *In the Court of the Crimson King* by King Crimson, *Diamond Dogs* by David Bowie, *Fragile* and *Close To The Edge* by Yes, and *Foxtrot* and *Selling England By The Pound* by Genesis. Led Zeppelin used a Mellotron to recreate the flute arrangement for live performances of 'Stairway to Heaven', and it featured prominently on "The Rain Song" from *Houses of the Holy*. It was also used extensively by pioneering German electronic band Tangerine Dream through their prime, including solo work by Edgar Froese. See the Tangerine Dream albums, *Rubycon*, *Ricochet*, and *Encore* as well as Edgar Froese's *Epsilon in Maylasian Pale* for excellent examples of mellotron playing.

The advent of cheaper and more reliable polysynths and preset 'string machines' saw the mellotron's popularity wane by the end of the 1970s. Following the impact of punk, the mellotron tended to be viewed as a relic of a pompous era. One of the few UK post-punk bands to utilize its sounds were *Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark*, who featured it heavily on their platinum-selling *Architecture & Morality* album (1981).

The unique sound of the Mellotron is produced by a combination of characteristics of tape replay such as wow and flutter, the result being that each time a note is played it is slightly different from the previous time it was played (a bit like a real instrument). The notes also interact with each other so that chords or even just pairs of notes have an extremely powerful sound.

Mellotrons were not intended to be portable (they often become misaligned even when tightly jostled), and when installed permanently in a studio they provide a very realistic effect. An example of this can be found on Elton John's *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road* album.

Popular progressive rock band Porcupine Tree included a song called Mellotron Scratch on their 2005 album *Deadwing*.

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The 70s

Viewed from this distance, it's easy to forget how shit the seventies were. Take TV. There were only three channels, they only transmitted programmes between 2pm at 11pm, and no way of recording TV stuff had been invented. When they did put on a fourth channel it was an arts channel with no kids' programmes - thanks a lot. Popular music was similarly in the doldrums - of the three types of rock (glam, progressive and heavy) only glam was any good, and even with that one has to see beyond the tinsel and lamé of the costumes to get to a basic 12-bar blues. Thankfully, the whole lot was swept away by punk in 1976. But, it did not emerge fully-formed from Zeus' head, à la Aphrodite. It had antecedents, and amongst the greatest of these was the short-lived first version of The Modern Lovers (before they were all sacked and the new group renamed Jonathan Richman and the Modern Lovers), and Patti Smith.

These two turns are now usually grouped under the term 'proto-punk', which, while recognising their importance for later developments, has the unfortunate consequence of suggesting that they are somehow inferior to them. In one important respect this is definitely not the case, for both Jonathan Richman and Patti Smith were far more literate than any of the personnel of British punk bands. For instance, when Malcolm McLaren suggested to Steve Jones and Glen Matlock that they write a song with the title 'Submission', they wrote a song about a *submarine* mission. Next to this, Richman's rejection of conventional rock *mores* and Smith's 'rock poetry' are sheer genius.

Both albums were produced by John Cale of The Velvet Underground.



The Modern Lovers  
*The Modern Lovers*  
(recorded 1971/2, released 1976)

- 11. Roadrunner
- 12. Old World
- 13. She Cracked

- 14. Hospital
- 15. Someone I Care About

Until I became a Brianeer, the music I bought was stuff I read about and liked the sound of. I can't remember the last time I heard something completely unexpected and immediately liked it, without having heard of the band before; it was probably 'Instant Replay' by Dan Hartman in 1977. That all changed last year when 'She Cracked' came out of nowhere. To me this was the perfect song - urgent, distorted guitar, great bass and drums, a fully-formed persona singing caustic lyrics about the perils of a hippy girlfriend ('She did things that I dug/ She'd eat garbage, eat shit, and get stoned/ I stay alone, eat health food at home'), a droning organ and a discordant instrumental break where the song collapsed before being revived again (Sonic Youth nicked the idea for 'Sugar Kane'). I can only compare the experience to the first time I heard Big Star - it was that good.

The Modern Lovers were formed around *Wunderkind*, Jonathan Richman, just twenty when the first of these songs were recorded in 1971. The group included future Talking Head, Jerry Harrison, on keyboards, and future Car, David Robinson, on drums. The rhythm section is particularly tight, while pulling everything together is Richman's rhythm guitar, strongly influenced by Lou Reed's playing. Indeed, Richman had been obsessed by The Velvet Underground and as a teenager had travelled to New York to hang out with them.

Amazingly, these songs are just demos, recorded by Cale in order for the band to get a deal. Having got one, and having accumulated enough material for a full album, Richman announced that he would not play any of it on the tour to accompany the album's release. The record was shelved and released under licence in 1976, just in time to influence punk, providing not only material for the new crop of bands (the Pistols covered 'Roadrunner'), but some with their complete sound (The Buzzcocks) and others with a template for the future (Elvis Costello and the Attractions).

Married to a classic pop sound is Richman's unique lyrical vision. My fellow Brianeers will blanch at his love of his parents and the fifties, and his disdain for drugs and cheap sex, but he is consistent, and his ideas are presented with ingenuity. Consider the sense of place in 'Roadrunner' as he drives through the night listening to rock 'n' roll to dispel his loneliness (the 'Stop n Shop', Route 128, 'I'm in love with Massachusetts', 'The highway's your girlfriend and she drives by quick'); how amazing is the line in 'Hospital' that goes, 'I go to bakeries all day long/ There's a lack of sweetness in my life'; and who of us could hold their hand up and say, as he does in 'Someone I Care About', 'I don't want no cocaine-sniffing triumph in the bar/ I don't want a triumph in the car/ I don't want to make a rich girl crawl'? Grant?



Patti Smith  
*Horses*  
 (1975)

- |                                     |                              |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 16. Gloria: In Excelsis Deo; Gloria | 19. Land: Horses; Land Of A  |
| 17. Redondo Beach                   | Thousand Dances; La Mer (de) |
| 18. Kimberly                        | 20. Elegie                   |

If Little Richard didn't already hold the title, Patti Smith could fairly be adjudged to be the Queen of Rock'n'Roll. Unlike any other woman in Rock/Pop, Ms Smith did not rely or trade on her looks, figure or sexuality. With the release of the debut album in 1975, she was greeted as the greatest exponent of rock and poetry since Dylan. And unlike Dylan, and Hendrix or Morrison (the archetypal 'serious-poet' *manqu e*), Smith had published two volumes of poetry before recording her first album. Be warned, this album has pretensions to 'high-art'.

The songs were recorded largely live, with few overdubs, and I'm not sure how much credit Cale can take for the finished article ('You should have booked my engineer', he told Smith, when she explained she liked his production on his late 60s solo albums). The music is hardly punk, more a rough classic rock, and it's for this reason that it took me three attempts, separated by about fifteen years, to get the point of this record. It finally came while I drove along the coast road from Split to Dubrovnik last October. For part of the way I drove through Bosnia, and it was while I contemplated the sorry history of that state, with *Horses* blaring on the car stereo, that I found the perfect context for this heady mix of imagery and sonic maelstrom (just so you know, Wizz Air fly London Luton to Split for £65 return).

Tom Verlaine of Television co-wrote and plays phenomenal lead on one of the tracks ('Break It Up' - not on this selection), while elsewhere the musicianship is superlative - check out Lenny Kaye's mimicry of a murder of crows (or is it a parliament of rooks? Or a storytelling of ravens?) with his guitar on 'Birdland' (not on this selection).

But it is Smith's poetry which elevates all, and her iconoclasm. *Prima facie*, the first two tracks, 'Gloria' and 'Redondo Beach', are about lesbian lust and Sapphic love (and loss) respectively, and the androgyny of her appearance on the front cover fuelled this sort of interpretation when the record came out (don't worry, she is firmly heterosexual, with children, and a long and happy marriage to Fred 'Sonic' Smith of the MC5 before his early death). But let's pursue the lesbian theme a little further. 'Gloria' is a cover of a Van Morrison song, but Smith makes it her own by parenthesising it with an extract of one of her earlier poems, and by doing so makes it a much more powerful track. It opens with one of the most provocative and startling lines of any pop song, and anyone brought up in the western tradition will be shocked by it, whatever one's religious, erm, orientation. With it, Smith takes responsibility for the perceived 'sin' of lust which is celebrated in the main text, and this has greater impact if we imagine that she is singing about lesbian lust. In fact, she's just singing from a male viewpoint, but that's impressive too.

If you can get past the *faux* reggae of 'Redondo Beach' then this is a heartbreaking story of lost love, as Patti wakes in her hotel room, her lover gone, only to discover that she has committed suicide. It's an emotional song, and the sense of loss is palpable; as is that in 'Kimberly', the story of Smith rescuing her young sister from a barn fire. You'll probably blub at the song's climax when she sings, 'The palm trees fall into the sea/It doesn't matter much to me/ As long as you're safe, Kimberly./ And I can gaze deep/Into your starry eyes, baby, looking deep in your eyes, baby...'

The final song is 'Elegie' where the beauty of Smith's voice is demonstrated on those high notes. 'Land' is discussed in the next section.

#### 'Do you Know How To Pony?': Towards An Exegesis of Patti Smith's 'Land'

The twin *magna opera* of *Horses* are the nine-minute epics, 'Birdland' and 'Land'. The structure and subject matter of the former are straightforward: a linear description of a boy's vision of his dead father appearing out of the sky at the controls of a spaceship, only for the said vision to be revealed as a flock of birds (or is it an exaltation of larks?). 'Land' has a tripartite structure with two original Smith compositions bracketing a cover of the standard, 'Land of 1000 Dances'. The following is an initial attempt to get to grips with the lyrics to see whether their meaning can be teased out, and without reference to any external discussion of the song's meaning. It is very much a work-in-progress and I expect, nay demand, my fellow Brianeers produce similar detailed notes of their own.

*"Horses" lyrics written by Patti Smith*

*"Land of 1000 Dances" lyrics written by Chris Kenner*

*"La Mer (De)" lyrics written by Patti Smith*

*The boy was in the hallway drinking a glass of tea  
From the other end of the hallway a rhythm was generating  
Another boy was sliding up the hallway  
He merged perfectly with the hallway,  
He merged perfectly, the mirror in the hallway*

*The boy looked at Johnny, Johnny wanted to run,  
but the movie kept moving as planned  
The boy took Johnny, he pushed him against the locker,  
He drove it in, he drove it home, he drove it deep in Johnny  
The boy disappeared, Johnny fell on his knees,  
started crashing his head against the locker,  
started crashing his head against the locker,  
started laughing hysterically*

*When suddenly Johnny gets the feeling he's being surrounded by  
horses, horses, horses, horses  
coming in in all directions  
white shining silver studs with their nose in flames,  
He saw horses, horses, horses, horses, horses, horses, horses, horses.*

So ends the first section of the song, 'Horses', a preamble really as a rocker (see below) in an American high school is stabbed, probably to death. In his final moments, he imagines a herd of horses arriving. This is clearly an important motif as the album is called 'Horses' and Smith wears a badge of a horse on her lapel on the album cover. There's an exquisite transition to the next section, as we go from horses to a dance called the pony.

*Do you know how to pony like bony maroney  
Do you know how to twist, well it goes like this, it goes like this*

*Baby mash potato, do the alligator, do the alligator  
 And you twist the twister like your baby sister  
 I want your baby sister, give me your baby sister, dig your baby sister  
 Rise up on her knees, do the sweet pea, do the sweet pee pee,  
 Roll down on her back, got to lose control, got to lose control,  
 Got to lose control and then you take control,  
 Then you're rolled down on your back and you like it like that,  
 Like it like that, like it like that, like it like that,  
 Then you do the watusi, yeah do the watusi*

*Life is filled with holes, Johnny's laying there, his sperm coffin  
 Angel looks down at him and says, "Oh, pretty boy,  
 Can't you show me nothing but surrender?"  
 Johnny gets up, takes off his leather jacket,  
 Taped to his chest there's the answer,  
 You got pen knives and jack knives and  
 Switchblades preferred, switchblades preferred  
 Then he cries, then he screams, saying  
 Life is full of pain, I'm cruisin' through my brain  
 And I fill my nose with snow and go Rimbaud,  
 Go Rimbaud, go Rimbaud,  
 And go Johnny go, and do the watusi, oh do the watusi*

*There's a little place, a place called space  
 It's a pretty little place, it's across the tracks,  
 Across the tracks and the name of the place is you like it like that,  
 You like it like that, you like it like that, you like it like that,  
 And the name of the band is the  
 Twistelettes, Twistelettes, Twistelettes, Twistelettes,  
 Twistelettes, Twistelettes, Twistelettes, Twistelettes*

I think that the second section ends here. The horses have transported Johnny to the 'Land of 1000 Dances', and as she did with 'Gloria', Smith takes a cover and gives it much greater force, as the lyrics of a sort of novelty song are taken to represent a place of potentialities. Note too, the possible Sapphic interpretation of 'I want your baby sister...'. Smith inserts a few lines and describes the dead Johnny resurrected and defiant, and sporting a collection of knives. The final, longest and most complicated section, 'La Mer(de)' comes next (note almost immediate pun on mer/mare).

*Baby calm down, better calm down,  
 In the night, in the eye of the forest  
 There's a mare black and shining with yellow hair,  
 I put my fingers through her silken hair and found a stair,  
 I didn't waste time, I just walked right up and saw that  
 up there -- there is a sea  
 up there -- there is a sea  
 up there -- there is a sea*

*the sea's the possibility  
 There is no land but the land  
 (up there is just a sea of possibilities)  
 There is no sea but the sea  
 (up there is a wall of possibilities)  
 There is no keeper but the key  
 (up there there are several walls of possibilities)  
 Except for one who seizes possibilities, one who seizes possibilities.  
 (up there)  
 I seize the first possibility, is the sea around me  
 I was standing there with my legs spread like a sailor  
 (in a sea of possibilities) I felt his hand on my knee  
 (on the screen)  
 And I looked at Johnny and handed him a branch of cold flame  
 (in the heart of man)  
 The waves were coming in like Arabian stallions  
 Gradually lapping into sea horses  
 He picked up the blade and he pressed it against his smooth throat  
 (the spoon)  
 And let it dip in  
 (the veins)  
 Dip in to the sea, to the sea of possibilities  
 It started hardening  
 Dip in to the sea, to the sea of possibilities  
 It started hardening in my hand  
 And I felt the arrows of desire*

We change from third to first person, and we have a horse again; this time it gives access to a 'sea of possibilities', presumably a counterpart to the 'Land of 1000 Dances'. Then begins a long section of psychosexual imagery, as the first possibility is sex, and not just any kind, but a sort of death-sex. Johnny reappears and is handed yet another blade ('a branch of cold flame') and seems to cut into his own throat. This heralds the arrival of an ithyphallus, and full coitus (the 'braniac-amour' of the next line). Note that the horses have turned into sea-horses

*I put my hand inside his cranium, oh we had such a brainiac-amour  
 But no more, no more, I gotta move from my mind to the area  
 (go Rimbaud go Rimbaud go Rimbaud)  
 And go Johnny go and do the watusi,  
 Yeah do the watusi, do the watusi ...  
 Shined open coiled snakes white and shiny twirling and encircling  
 Our lives are now entwined, we will fall yes we're together twining  
 Your nerves, your mane of the black shining horse  
 And my fingers all entwined through the air,  
 I could feel it, it was the hair going through my fingers,  
 (I feel it I feel it I feel it I feel it)  
 The hairs were like wires going through my body*

*I I that's how I  
 that's how I  
 I died  
 (at that Tower of Babel they knew what they were after)  
 (they knew what they were after)  
 [Everything on the current] moved up  
 I tried to stop it, but it was too warm, too unbelievably smooth,  
 Like playing in the sea, in the sea of possibility, the possibility  
 Was a blade, a shiny blade, I hold the key to the sea of possibilities  
 There's no land but the land*

This activity then brings about the death of our narrator ('that's how I died'), we have another blade, which is described as the key to the sea of possibilities. The Tower of Babel is presumably another reference to a place of potentialities.

*Looked at my hands, and there's a red stream  
 That went streaming through the sands like fingers,  
 Like arteries, like fingers  
 (How much fits between the eyes of a horse?)  
 He lay, pressing it against his throat (your eyes)  
 He opened his throat (your eyes)  
 His vocal chords started shooting like (of a horse) mad pituitary glands  
 The scream he made (and my heart) was so high (my heart) pitched that nobody heard,  
 No one heard that cry,  
 No one heard (Johnny) the butterfly flapping in his throat,  
 (His fingers)  
 Nobody heard, he was on that bed, it was like a sea of jelly,  
 And so he seized the first  
 (his vocal chords shot up)  
 (possibility)  
 (like mad pituitary glands)  
 It was a black tube, he felt himself disintegrate  
 (there is nothing happening at all)  
 and go inside the black tube, so when he looked out into the steep  
 saw this sweet young thing (Fender one)  
 Humping on the parking meter, leaning on the parking meter*

The finale is a troubling and explicit description of Johnny's final moments as disappears into a black tube (death?) and we get a reprise of two lines from 'Gloria', i.e. 'saw this sweet young thing/Humping on the parking meter, leaning on the parking meter'. Note that this takes place on a bed.

*In the sheets  
 there was a man  
 dancing around  
 to the simple*

*Rock & roll  
 song*

The song finishes gently with a view of Johnny's(?) deathroes(?) and a reference to 'Land of 1000 Dances' as 'the simple Rock & roll song'.

What does it all mean? Is there a profound message or, to take the last section's parenthetical 'de' is it all just a load of *merde de cheva?*

