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JIM CARROLL: Praying Mantis

Jim Carroll claims all this spoken stuff came "...off the top of my head so to speak." Unlike the precision of an Eric Bogosian, Carroll's top-of-the-head delivery gives his poems and stories an unusual and pleasurable immediacy as well as an element of surprise. You notice surprise in Carroll's own voice as you hear the twisted images and the rich descriptions leak from his brain to his almost stammering lips, which emit each piece with wide-eyed wonderment-like a child witnessing lightning for the first time His subject matter ranges from the

disgusting like "A Day At The Races," a laughably strange tale about two lovers, a certain crotch infection and a sporting event, to comical commentary about the pomposity of performance art in "Tiny Torture to pure poetry, like the delicious and languid portrait of a Times Square prostitute in "Time Square's Cage." Other words to the wise: "To The National Endowment Of The Arts," "The Loss Of American Innocence '60s memory to end all, and the psychopathic "Just Visiting."

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