

CULTURE

A LOVE LETTER TO **PATTI SMITH**

by [Alex Brzezicka](#)

Patti Smith proves that even in 2022, we need our punk poets to shout the change at us, loud and clear.

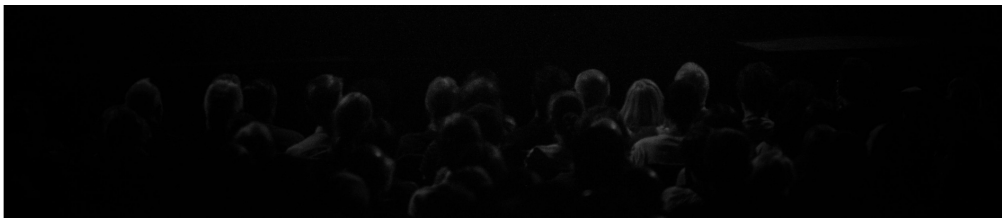
Did you ever admire someone so much but were too shy to tell them? Us too. Following the great tradition, from medieval courting, to Y2K notes slipped into the school lockers, to sliding into DMs today, we decided to write some love letters. Desperate for grand gestures and big words, let's try to impress those who impress us.

Let us tell you about the punk poet we met at London's Palladium stage a few Sundays ago...

"We need you to do great things," screamed Patti Smith from the stage of London's Palladium. It was a soul-shivering cry from the bottom of her heart to wake us the fuck up from the society-induced coma and fight. The weapon of choice is always peace. Patti is as real as it gets. The warrior poet of every present generation; a living proof that forces of nature take all forms. Patti's gentle thunder influenced battalions of activists looking for a place to host their restless thoughts, so eager to be the change, so clueless about how.

From the New York bumming days, the room-size utopias that she created with Robert Mapplethorpe, reaching far beyond the confinements of their low-rent flat and Chelsea Hotel, to the present day, she's stripping the world of illusions, showing us where salvation lives. Patti always tells how it is and how it should be. Thanks to the Higher Ground Festival, we got a solid reminder. The 75-year-old shook the sat-down crowd to the core. Indulged in the legend of Patti Smith, her act of running around and spitting on the stage, someone screamed, 'revolution'. "You're sitting on your ass and you want a revolution," Patti responded.





The crowd gradually got up. It's hard to sit still when you're face to face with the truth. 'People Have the Power', felt like it was the first time we truly heard it, in the presence of the supernatural: an unhinged spirit of something beyond the human form, but so humane, so fragile and so powerful, in a shape of a person.

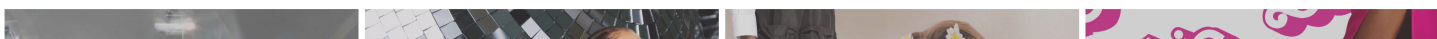
The power of Patti Smith lies in the contrasts and bravery to embody every single emotion, from unhinged rage for freedom in 'Gloria' to sweet singing of love, 'Because the Night', dedicated to her "eternal boyfriend", Fred "Sonic" Smith. Life's "a whole fucking package and we need to be ready for every drop of it," Patti said. She's here to prepare us to re-enter the world again, after a brief journey to the eternal womb. It's a place of ever-lasting magic where gatekeepers of past and future guard the progress. In Palladium, Patti honoured two of them, Allen Ginsberg with a moving reading of 'Footnote To Howl', and an English prophetic poet William Blake, reciting 'The Tyger' for the Tiger Year. Dreaming of the angels of the last few centuries, Patti's focus is on the here and now. She praised the artists supporting her, Connie Constance and Nadine Shah, as heirs of her hopes for the new worlds. Makes sense. Connie Constance bringing the fury of black punk to London Palladium is what we desperately needed. Nadine Shah, in a royal-like, smooth manner swept us away with her velvety deep voice and in-between notes statement of self-confidence. She refuses to accept anything but respect.



Though performing in what seemed to be a temporary centre of the universe, Patti Smith doesn't want to be praised like the rock 'n' roll saints and modern-day celebrities. Since her glory days in the 70s, she lived in and out of the public spotlight but was always aware of the impression she leaves. From strangers' spontaneous declaration of affection, world-class magazines wanting her on covers, to a new wave of teenagers finding haven in her art, she accepts neither the crown nor the pedestal. Instead, she laughs at her tangled hair and titles herself: "the sorriest looking icon I've ever seen".

Suddenly, we're sitting with Patti Smith on the wooden bench, listening to New York's busy streets and watching masses of people passing by. Tapped into the source that exists beyond our bodies, genders and any identity-focused adds-on we bought in the capitalistic sales department, we're still. For a second, gazing into the blue sky and counting clouds, we allow ourselves to throw the burden of definitions away, to see our bruised skin as soft and innocent as newborn babies', unaffected by the dirt and cruelty of this dimension. For a second, we're just kids. Ready for any challenges and inspired by the person who has been to hells of loss and love, and despite that, continues to tramp around, trying to make heaven her home.

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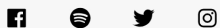
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