

Smith, Patti (1946-) Encyclopedia Article

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Smith, Patti (1946—)

Poet, performer, and "queen of punk" Patti Smith made her mark in the disparate worlds of punk, rock and roll, and poetry, with seven albums, six books of poetry, and a world-renowned performing style. "Three chord rock merged with the power of the word," Patti Smith's first album *Horses* described itself in 1975.

Patti Smith

Smith was born in Chicago but raised in Woodbury, in rural southern New Jersey, the eldest of Grant and Beverly Smith's four children. Isolated and sickly as a child, Patti was encouraged to be creative by her mother and lived an intense, imaginary life in games with her siblings and, as she grew older, in her writing, fed by the work of Arthur Rimbaud, Bob Dylan, James Brown, and the Rolling Stones. A literate punk icon in the 1970s, Smith achieved her greatest success with the single "Because the Night," off her album *Easter* (1978). In 1979, Smith left performing for marriage and children in suburban Detroit with Fred Smith, ex-MC5 guitarist and leader of Detroit's Sonic Rendezvous Band. In 1994 Patti lost her husband, Fred Smith, her brother, Todd Smith, and her longtime friend and former lover, Robert Mapplethorpe, to various early deaths. She slowly returned to performing and publishing with a book of poems, *Early Work* (1994), and an album, *Gone Again* (1996).

Further Reading:

Johnstone, Nick. *Patti Smith: A Biography*. United Kingdom, Omnibus Press, 1997.

Roach, Dusty. *Patti Smith: Rock and Roll Madonna*. South Bend, Indiana, And Books, 1979.

Smith, Patti. *Early Work, 1970-1979*. New York, W. W. Norton, 1994.

———. *Patti Smith Complete: Lyrics, Reflections and Notes for the Future*. New York, Doubleday, 1998.