

“Art is the captured energy of human emotion”—DKR

Chapter 28

Alive & Well at the Chelsea Hotel

The Chelsea Hotel was a wondrous place in a mid-1970s New York City.

Being an incurable romantic when it comes to creative artists who have had a role in the zeitgeist of their respective times, I was naturally drawn to the Chelsea. This rustic old, Victorian Gothic, structure on West 23rd street in Manhattan was gloriously famous as a magnet for creative persons.

Thomas Wolf (You Can't Go Home Again), James T. Farrell (Studs Lonigan), Leonard Cohen and Bob Dylan, had all stayed within these hallowed walls at some point during their creative lives. Arthur C. Clark worked on “2001; A Space Odyssey” while staying at the Chelsea.

Poet Dylan Thomas of “Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night” fame, was staying there when he himself went into that “Good Night,” dying of pneumonia, while no doubt, “Raging against the dying of the light!”

This magical citadel of the muse was my choice as my New York City home. The manager had given me a “long-term artist's” rate: \$60 a week. Of course, nothing in my room worked properly and I think I had housekeeping once a week, whether I needed it or not. As a hotel, possibly the worst. As an inspiration for a creative artist, probably the best. And I loved it dearly.

The liner notes for my album, “Some Days Are Diamonds,” were written at the Chelsea as I gazed down upon Twenty-Third Street through the ornate cast iron balcony.

Thumb-humped rhythms in the A.M. Quiet,
Star-crossed words in a hot tea buzz...
To say how it is!
Not how it should be.
Or even how it was.
I bring a mirror,
Not a pulpit.
Here, People,
I wrote these songs for you!

This was to be my second album released by the Elektra/Asylum record company.

There was a great lady at this record label named Patty who loved to introduce her artists to one another. She had sent me a couple of albums by a guy named Tom Waits. I fell in love with the writing, the honesty of the performance, just the entire work from this great eclectic, singer/songwriter.

One day, as I was coming out of my room at the Chelsea Hotel, down the hall, a fellow tenant was coming out of his room.

It was Tom Waits.

He said, "Hey, Man, I got your album. Patty sent it to me. Love that *Makin' the Best of a Bad Situation*. My girlfriend and I listen to it and we just laugh and laugh."

"Patty sent your stuff, too," I said. "Love your *Martha* tune."

We walked out together, past the Dylan Thomas plaque, the abstract lobby sculptures, and out to the curb where he turned toward 7th avenue to catch his cab for the village and I turned toward 8th to catch mine for uptown.

Thank you, Patty.