

seventh heaven

she moves onto the stage.
she punches, pounds the air like a boxer.
she spits on the floor - nothing moves - except my thumping, pounding heart.
this is the first woman i have ever seen in my life.
"jesus died for somebody's sins but not mine"...

boys everywhere, crashing, thrashing into each other, smashing into bodies.
i smell the tension - fear.
suddenly a girl in a raincoat dancing wildly, dreadlocks flying, pounding drums,
manic rhythms, off the rails - pure joy.
"oh oh oh sweet love and romance"...

the tenderest pain hits my chest, pierces it, my skin falls off.
the building collapses and i fall on the floor.
blistering, soaring violin makes me fly.
her dark brown voice embraces me, takes me on a journey of love and despair.
"a scar is open i make mistakes" ...

in october 1978 i jumped into a van on the corner of portobello road and
started working at **rough trade** records. a drawing of 3 chords in a fanzine
had given everyone permission to form a band and that's what everyone
i knew was doing - energy. **scritti politti** brought out their first single
on their own label and the cover told you how - diy - empowerment. **rough
trade** was really the only place on earth where i wanted to be.

i was managing **the raincoats**, taking photographs and setting up the
rough trade booking agency with **kleenex**, **the raincoats**, **essential logic**,
delta 5, **young marble giants**, **the red crayola** and **the slits** to name just
a few. i had the chance to work with **carmen knobel** from **pure freude** in
duesseldorf, and with **ruth polsky** in new york city, sending all the bands
over there to play for the first time.

in october 2015 here i am reflecting on all this nearly forty years since
patti smith played the roundhouse - the night the **slits** and **the raincoats**
were conceived and my own life was changed. and looking down at my laptop
i begin to contemplate the full potential of the means of production i am
holding in my hands.

shirley o'loughlin

