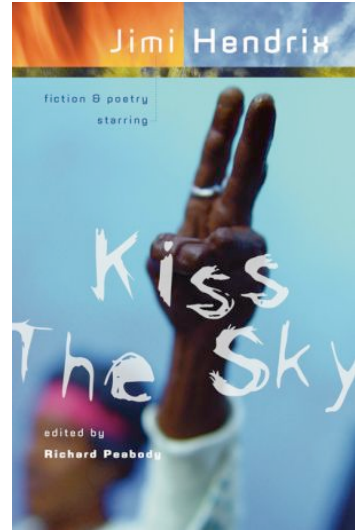


What They Did With Jimi

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COLLECTIVE



JEREMY TRYLCH is a bipedal primate from Saginaw, Michigan who writes. He lives on the planet Earth with his wife and son and 6+ billion other big brained monkeys.



They found Jimi in a box full of building HVAC equipment. He'd been folded at the knees, and his stand bent back. They set him up to see if he could stand on his own. With a little negotiation, bending the creases backwards, and getting his balance just right, he stood.

He didn't look as good as he once did. He wore a discolored frilly blouse over orange stretch pants. He was holding a high note on his yellow Stratocaster. The neck on the guitar had been broken, so they fixed it with gaff tape.

They stood him in the corner and kept moving the spare HVAC equipment. They thought they heard a squealing fan belt and decided perhaps they shouldn't move all the spare parts to the warehouse. When they went up, Jimi went with them. He stood back while they loaded the box truck and waited on the loading dock for them to come back with another load.

But when they came back, he was gone.

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Jimi made an appearance the next morning, propped against the street vendor's cart at the Dupont Circle South metro stop, accompanying an old Chinese man playing his erhu. At first it only sounded like the low tumble of a subway train coming up through the

alley with a cardboard cutout of Jimi Hendrix." "Jim was there when we left, and now he's gone. You see anything?" "Okay." He held his pudgy hands up. "I was sitting here at my post, watching the camera, and two guys in turbans came on the loading dock. So I called over the loudspeaker, 'May I help you?' I see one guy pick up the phone, but all I hear is feedback. Next thing I know, I see them two guys in turbans running down the alley with a cardboard cutout of Jimi Hendrix."

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"Where's Jimi?" they asked the front lobby security guard. "We only left him alone for ten minutes and now he's gone."

"Don't know what you're talking about," the security guard said, sweating.

Somebody started it-nobody is sure who-but Banner," and Jimi began to move. Some people say he started to sway because the crowd disturbed the air. But the needles were pegged on the mixing board, and the speakers were vibrating the stage. Jimi began to play. He got to the part about the red glare and bursting in air and the pyrotechs exploded the flares. One spark arced out from the spray and landed on Jimi's guitar. He held that high note on "the home of the brave," as his Strat burst into flames. The fire spread, the crowd banged their heads, making pitchfork signs in the air, and chanting Jimi's name. Then the pyrotechs hit him with the extinguisher and announced the show was through. There was nothing left but a charred cardboard mess, so they swept Jimi from the stage.

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Finally, Jimi got so popular he won the headline act at Woodstock 5. They stood him up, center stage under the purple lights, pointed cameras at him, and projected his image onto a Jumbotron screen setup in the farmer's field.

The crowd waited. He stood there, a ragged, soggy piece of cardboard holding a high note. Over time, the gaff tape had fallen off the neck of his Strat and the head had torn off. He'd spent so much time in the sun, his color had faded to blue, so he had an electric-psychedelic color under purple lights. Jimi did not make a sound.

They flicked Bics, lit Zippos, or flipped open flip phones, but Jimi did not make a sound. They left their seats, stomped their feet, and waved their hands in the air. But Jimi just stood there as if he didn't care. They danced around arm-in-arm and sang a sing-along song, and Jimi did nothing at all.

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air vents. Then it became more of a drone like a truck engine idling in a diminished A chord.

People stopped and listened. Some wondered how the man with the erhu could make such music. Many dropped spare change, even paper bills. He ate the chef's special double fried duck that day for lunch instead of his usual stir fried lettuce with pork fried rice.

In the weeks that followed, Jimi traveled the entire street musician circuit. He traded fours with a harp player at Dupont North. He played a distorted version of Louis Armstrong's "What a Wonderful World" behind Pal Kenmore's sax solo at Farragut North. He hit the Old Post Office Pavilion for the lunch show, riffing over "Green Dolphin." Wherever he played, people stopped and listened to the squelch of his guitar, and they threw money.

He met with Mars Frankens on the platform at Ballston at 6:35am one Monday. Jimi stood

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rendition over Roberts. He spilled his drink on himself.
Everyone asked the Englishman if he was all right, if he suffered from seizures, or perhaps he'd had a bit too much to drink. Someone else told him he needed to get cold water on that spill right away, but all he cared about was securing management of the Jimi Hendrix cutout. Jimi didn't argue when the Englishman made him an offer, at least he didn't say no.
So off to London he went where he was stored in a room next door to where a cutout of Handel had been stored three-hundred years earlier. He rocked out with a recording of the Messiah, but nobody heard it in the storage room.
They tried to put a band together for Jimi, but it was difficult to find cutouts who could match his caliber. So Jimi kept making guest appearances.

there, his guitar neck flapping and his fold out stand wobbling as each train went through.
"This is a real honor, Mr. Hendrix," Mars said. "You know I started playing after I seen you in Monterey Pop. Maybe you could show me a lick or two."
Jimi never answered him one way or another, but he showed his stuff in a solo part during "Puff the Magic Dragon." That day Mars Frankens made four times what he normally brought in.
After that, Jimi picked up club dates, standing, jittering on a stack of Marshall bass player. Jimi made his way around the mid-Atlantic states and finally up to New York City, where he got a guest appearance with Moses Roberts and they sang "Hey Joe." While Moses sang and Jimi was balanced against the handrail for the stairs leading up to the stage, one Englishman in the crowd only heard Jimi's