Bonafide Rojas

BASQUIAT

... 

So tell me Jean Michel?

How did it feel to be pedestalized
then pick-a-nannied, 1982
a Haitian Puerto Rican
in a pop art world on a raft by yourself,
displayed in galleries in Munich, L.A. and Tokyo
but what about The Lower East Side
the same old song of SAMO
slogans tell your life on brick walls of Loisada

Lithographs, wood, canvas cutouts
sketched with black marker Pilots
house painted your devotion for
Dali and Picasso
Showing your true colors for your heroes
Charlie Parker, Joe Louis,
Muhammad Ali and Roberto Clemente

How did it feel Basquiat?

Being the only black man
Graffiti writer
Turn talk of the art world in less than a year
From chalk floors to oils
jessoed in basement studio spaces
with hills of cocaine next
to buckets of white paint
you tried to stay sane
inherited the love for the moment
in these days of excess
addicted to painting your torture
breaking your bones slowly
breaking your spirit slowly
but all you wanted to do is paint
your soul on the street and be a little famous
to paint your acid tripped LSD on anything
then you were tapped by
art gallery dealers who represented you
wheeled and dealt for you
but did they have your voice, your interest
they knew they could make a lot of money
off of you and they slaved you
Your output was phenomenal
dozens of paintings
flying out of your hands at the hands
of these dealers who dealt pieces of
your soul to people who just wanted
a piece of the hype
then it’s your relationship
with Warhol         Jean Michel
Your collaboration with the
Intergenerational pop icon
who was inspired by your energy
I know you idolized Andy
The one man who embodies contemporary
You desperately wanted his approval
You two were inseparable
working and partying together
Warhol never joined you
in your escapades of drugs
but he watched you
in your youthful abrasiveness
Was he sincere in telling you
he like your paintings?
Or did he snicker the way he did?
Was he man enough to say you
had more raw untapped energy
than he ever would?
Did he         Jean Michel?
Warhol built you up
then broke you down
A white pimp with a black painting whore
in a downtown art scene
made of leeches and snakes
painting their lives away
Who’s using who
In this power dynamic
struggle of race and culture
Who’s using who
27 years of your life
fresh and vibrant
you had dozens and dozens of years
to paint your heart out to show people
What it meant to be a painter
a black painter

Tell me Basquiat?

How does it feel
to be a tainted immortal in a art world
that whispers under their breath
and says all you did was scribble
But you inspired me
to paint slogans of poverty
and anti-capitalist lines
over America’s dream of art imitates life
showed me to paint with a marker
draw on doors
sketch on the subway
showed me that graffiti is ART

It’s the same old song
It’s the SAMO song

Tell me Jean Michel?

How does it feel?