

Bowie & Prince

1. Death

An afternoon storm gave way
to a brilliant, wide-arching
rainbow low in the sky,
seen by everyone---
even by my friends
across the Pond.

That night, the eclipsed moon
smiled a bright crescent.

It wasn't until the next morning
that we knew
what the signs portended:

David Bowie had departed,
But not without a parting gift---

Black Star.

Within a day,
I would have my
very own copy.
It took me another day
To actually listen.

A morning rain in Minneapolis
gave way
to a rainbow's edge---
like a dagger---over Paisley Park,
captured in a photo
broadcast on TV
around the globe.

My morning had begun well.
Windy, but sunny.
I was so happy
with what I'd accomplished---
until I greeted my mom.

"Did you hear about Prince?"
she inquired.
"No.... I have not listened
to any news today,"
I replied.
"Prince died this morning,"
she continued, complaining
that she missed the end of her story.

My Black Star was gone?

I had to wait until late that night
to get the few details of *my* story,
and I could not find my *Purple Rain*.
I had to listen to snippets
posted by friends on the Internet.

2. *Crossovers*

Bowie & Prince were

Androgynous. Gender bending. Sexy. Outlandish.
Yet shy and reserved. Private and vulnerable.

Visionary. Original. Trend setting. Culture changing.
Genius. Prophetic.
Yet ever thoughtful, calculating, and nuanced.

Timeless
and
True.

Black

&

White.

Black Star” Bowie was too Black to be White,
by virtue of his discovery of Luther Vandross
on *Young Americans*.

Most White folks can never understand this---
How Black folks can *claim* a White artist
as *Black*,
playing their music on Black Radio
in a crossover that can never be reciprocal.

Bowie knew this---and spoke to it---
from the early days of MTV,
right up to his final record,
Even playing with that concept of himself
as a Black Star (“I’m not a *White* star, *I’m* a *Black* star...”).

Don’t cha know we played Culture Club and George Michael,
aaand... Bowie back in the ‘80s?
Don’t y’all know we now play Adele and Sam Smith
With great regularity on Black Radio?!?

Prince was
something else
altogether.

Yes, Black Radio played Prince.
But it took a special kind of Black Listener
To *claim* Prince is their own.
'Cause Prince was not mainstream
"Black" enough for the masses.
Kinda like
Michael Jackson.

But that's another comparison
for another day....

Suffice it to say
that Bowie & Prince
were cut from the same cosmic cloth,
giving us poor mortals
so much Light to aspire to.

Generous to a fault,
Bowie & Prince gave their music freely
to other artists,
igniting their creativity
like wildfires.

With hearts of gold,
Bowie & Prince
lit fires of hope
in so many---
their fans,
ordinary people,
the cause of justice
and peace
and love.

Not just with their music,
But their Life.

Suffice it to say
that Bowie & Prince
were cut from the same cosmic cloth,
and we will never see their like again.

At least not in the earthbound realm.

If we're lucky,
we will catch a glimpse of them
in Heaven's celestial band.