

In the Full Force of a Cultural Moment We Did and Did Not Make

My sister Susan and I used to swirl like the winds
when no one else was at home.
We'd put on the Stones or someone full blast, lock the front door,
then go running crazily all over the house.

We especially relished
letting our long hair flop over when we put our heads down.
We took our cue from Janis, known as Pearl,
whom we'd seen on Ed Sullivan's
really big show.

Janis the hellacious, the first female star
to answer the suddenly wide
open call of the moment. Really and wholly wig out. Really and totally freak
every parent on the planet. Her body went into convulsions
on network TV, her kinky explosion of hair
would not be *ignored*, Dan. And her voice—well, hell,
something—maybe drugs, maybe war, maybe the hostile hometown Mothers
had utterly pulverized
it, yet she could still blast it out.

It was Janis who taught us
the lunatic blues and the bleeding whisper
of not forgoing the world, hell *love* the damn world, adore it for as long
as you can stand it, because anyway wind
won't let us stop.