

Lou Reed - Magic And Loss (1992)

Written by bluesever

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1 Dorita (The Spirit) 1:07 2 What's Good (The Thesis) 3:22 3 Power And Glory (The Situation) 4:23 4 Magician (Internally) 6:23 5 Sword Of Damocles (Externally) 3:42 6 Goodby Mass (In A Chapel Bodily Termination) 4:25 7 Cremation (Ashes To Ashes) 2:54 8 Dreamin' (Escape) 5:09 9 No Chance (Regret) 3:15 10 Warrior King (Revenge) 4:27 11 Harry's Circumcision (Reverie Gone Astray) 5:29 12 Gassed And Stoked (Loss) 4:18 13 Power And Glory Part II (Magic - Transformation) 2:57 14 Magic And Loss (The Summation) 6:39
Personnel Lou Reed - vocals, acoustic & electric guitar Mike Rathke - guitar
Rob Wasserman - bass Michael Blair - drums, percussion, background vocals Roger Moutenot - background vocals Little Jimmy Scott - background vocals

With 1982's *The Blue Mask*, Lou Reed began approaching more mature and challenging themes in his music, and in 1992, Reed decided it was time to tackle the Most Serious Theme of All -- Death. Reed lost two close friends to cancer within the space of a year, and the experience informed *Magic and Loss*, a set of 14 songs about loss, illness, and mortality. It would have been easy for a project like this to sound morbid, but Reed avoids that; the emotions that dominate these songs are fear and helplessness in the face of a disease (and a fate) not fully understood, and Reed's songs struggle to balance these anxieties with bravery, humor, and an understanding of the notion that death is an inevitable part of life -- that you can't have the magic without the loss. It's obvious that Reed worked on this material with great care, and *Magic and Loss* contains some of his most intelligent and emotionally intense work as a lyricist. However, Reed hits many of the same themes over and over again, and while Reed and his accompanists -- guitarist Mike Rathke, bassist Rob Wasserman, and percussionist Michael Blair -- approach the music with skill and impeccable chops, many of these songs are a bit samey; the album's most memorable tunes are the ones that pull it out of its mid-tempo rut, like the grooving "What's Good" and the guitar workout "Gassed and Stoked." *Magic and Loss* is an intensely heartfelt piece of music, possessing a taste and subtlety one might never have expected from Reed, but its good taste almost works against it; it's a sincere bit of public mourning, but perhaps a more rousing wake might have been a more meaningful tribute to the departed. ---Mark Deming, almusic.com

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