

The Gospel According to Miss Roj

(The darkness is cut by electronic music. Cold, pounding, unrelenting. A neon sign which spells out THE BOTTOMLESS PIT clicks on. There is a lone bar stool. Lights flash on and off, pulsating to the beat. There is a blast of smoke and, from the haze, Miss Roj appears. He is dressed in striped patio pants, white go-go boots, a halter, and cat-shaped sunglasses. What would seem ridiculous on anyone else, Miss Roj wears as if it were high fashion. He carries himself with total elegance and absolute arrogance.)

Miss Roj: God created black people and black people created style. The name's Miss Roj . . . that's R.O.J. thank you and you can find me every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights at "The Bottomless Pit," the watering hole for the wild and weary which asks the question, "Is there life after Jherri-curl?"

(A waiter enters, hands Miss Roj a drink, and then exits.)

Thanks, doll. Yes, if they be black and swish, the B.P. has seen them, which is not to suggest the Pit is lacking in cultural diversity. Oh no. There are your dinge queens, white men who like their chicken legs dark. *(He winks/flirts with a man in the audience.)* And let's not forget, "Los Muchachos de la Neighborhood." But the speciality of the house is The Snap Queens. *(He snaps his fingers.)* We are a rare breed.

For, you see, when something strikes our fancy, when the truth comes piercing through the dark, well you just can't let it pass unnoticed. No darling. You must pronounce it with a snap. *(He snaps.)*

Snapping comes from another galaxy, as do all snap queens. That's right. I ain't just your regular oppressed American Negro. No-no-no! I am an extra-

terrestrial. And I ain't talkin' none of that shit you seen in the movies! I have real power.

(The waiter enters. Miss ROJ stops him.)

Speaking of no power, will you please tell Miss Stingy-with-the-rum, that if Miss Roj had wanted to remain sober, she could have stayed home and drank Kool-aid. *(He snaps.)* Thank you.

(The waiter exits. Miss ROJ crosses and sits on bar stool.)

Yes, I was placed here on Earth to study the life habits of a deteriorating society, and child when we talkin' New York City, we are discussing the Queen of Deterioration. Miss New York is doing a slow dance with death, and I am here to warn you all, but before I do, I must know . . . don't you just love my patio pants? Annette Funicello immortalized them in "Beach Blanket Bingo," and I have continued the legacy. And my go-gos? I realize white after Labor Day is very gauche, but as the saying goes, if you've got it flaunt it, if you don't, front it and snap to death any bastard who dares to defy you. *(Laughing)* Oh ho! My demons are showing. Yes, my demons live at the bottom of my Bacardi and Coke.

Let's just hope for all concerned I dance my demons out before I drink them out 'cause child, dancing demons take you on a ride, but those drinkin' demons just take you, and you find yourself doing the strangest things. Like the time I locked my father in the broom closet. Seems the liquor made his tongue real liberal and he decided he was gonna baptize me with the word "faggot" over and over. Well, he's just going on and on with "faggot this" and "faggot that," all the while walking toward the broom closet to piss. So the demons just took hold of my wedges and forced me to kick the drunk son-of-a-bitch into the closet and lock the door. *(Laughter)* Three days later I remembered he was there. *(He snaps.)*

(The waiter enters. Miss ROJ takes a drink and downs it.)

Another!

(The waiter exits.)

(Dancing about.) Oh yes-yes-yes! Miss Roj is quintessential style. I corn row the hairs on my legs so that they spell out M.I.S.S. R.O.J. And I dare any bastard to fuck with me because I will snap your ass into oblivion.

I have the power, you know. Everytime I snap, I steal one beat of your heart. So if you find yourself gasping for air in the middle of the night, chances are you fucked with Miss Roj and she didn't like it.

Like the time this asshole at Jones Beach decided to take issue with my coulotte-sailor ensemble. This child, this muscle-bound Brooklyn thug in a skin-tight bikini, very skin-tight so the whole world can see that instead of a brain, God gave him an extra thick piece of sausage. You know the kind who beat up on their wives for breakfast. Snap your fingers if you know what I'm talking about . . . Come on and snap, child. *(He gets the audience to snap.)* Well, he decided to blurt out when I walked by, "Hey look at da monkey coon in da faggit suit." Well, I walked up to the poor dear, very calmly lifted my hand, and. . . *(He snaps in rapid succession.)* A heart attack, right there on the beach. *(He singles out someone in the audience.)* You don't believe it? Cross me! Come on! Come on!

(The waiter enters, hands Miss ROJ a drink. Miss ROJ downs it. The waiter exits.)

(Looking around.) If this place is the answer, we're asking all the wrong questions. The only reason I come here is to communicate with my origins. The flashing lights are signals from my planet way out there. Yes, girl, even further than Flatbush. We're talking another galaxy. The flashing lights tell me how much time is left before the end.

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(The waiter exits.)

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for approval. We know who we are and we move on it!

I guarantee you will never hear two fingers put together in a snap and not think of Miss Roj. That's power, baby. Patio pants and all.

(The lights begin to flash in rapid succession.)

So let's dance! And snap! And dance! And snap!

(Miss Roj begins to dance as if driven by his demons. There is a blast of smoke and when the haze settles, Miss Roj has revolved off and in place of him is a recording of Aretha Franklin singing "Respect.")