

Allen Ginsberg



Wait Till I'm Dead

Uncollected Poems

Edited by Bill Morgan

Allen Ginsberg



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Also by Allen Ginsberg

POETRY

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Kaddish and Other Poems

Empty Mirror: Early Poems

Reality Sandwiches

Angkor Wat

Planet News

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Wait Till I'm Dead

Uncollected Poems

ALLEN GINSBERG

Edited by Bill Morgan

With a Foreword by Rachel Zucker

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Rainy night on Union Square, full moon. Want more poems? Wait till I'm dead.

—August 8, 1990, 3:30 a.m.

FOREWORD

Allen Ginsberg is dangerous! So, come and get some!

When I first read Allen Ginsberg's poems as a teenager, they worked on me like a gateway drug. Leading me deeper and deeper into a life of poetry, Ginsberg's poems woke me up and whet a poetic appetite I've spent years trying to satisfy. I saw the world differently after reading "Howl," "Kaddish," "Sunflower Sutra," and "America." Language became clamorous and mystical in my brain, words delicious and unwieldy on my tongue.

Reading Ginsberg gave me the chutzpah to complain to the chair of my high school English department that there wasn't enough poetry on the syllabus. The chair shrewdly offered to give me poetry on the side—as much poetry as I could manage. The poets he proffered—

Elizabeth Bishop, Marianne Moore, Wallace Stevens—sounded tame or impregnable to my adolescent ears. The chair gave me Sylvia Plath, but even Plath failed to turn me on (then), failed to bother me the way Ginsberg did, the way I wanted poetry to bother me. No, no, no! I wanted *POETRY*! disruption, danger, mind-blowing, dirty-talking, proselytizing prophecy! I wanted the kind of Talmudic Beat-babble queer broken-guitar-Bob-Dylan American song that only ALLEN GINSBERG had the nerve to sing!

This is not to say that my adoration for Ginsberg was monogamous. Far from it! Loving Ginsberg led me into all sorts of wondrous affairs. Having read Ginsberg, I fell easily in love with Walt Whitman who made perfect anachronistic sense to me *after* Ginsberg. I fell hard for Adrienne Rich whose diction, cadence, and density of language were unlike Ginsberg's but whose passion and social activism were inherent to what I expected from poetry (from reading Ginsberg).

Throughout high school, college, graduate school, and beyond, Ginsberg led me astray and into fertile adventures. I never would have read William Blake if not intrigued by the stories of Ginsberg's visions of him. Ginsberg led me to Anne Waldman and back, eventually, to Plath and Anne Sexton. I spent years following a wild, imagined map of Ginsberg's affiliations and associations. The Ginsberg–Frank O'Hara relationship led me to poets who would sustain me for decades—David Trinidad, Wayne Koestenbaum, James Schuyler, Alice Notley, Bernadette Mayer. Even when months went by without reading one of Ginsberg's poems, I always felt he was there with me and in the poems I was reading, a gorgeous contamination.

Returning to Ginsberg's poems was never disappointing. Years later, after countless rereadings, his poems still feel *hot* to me, infectious, infected, propelling. His poems invite me to keep writing, to write longer, to write messier, to write more authentically, with more ego and more humility, with everything I have and about everything I am.

My conception of poetry is inspired and ineluctably bound up in my (mis)understandings of Ginsberg's work and life. I embrace a libidinous, expansive, socially aware poetics of opposition and love. It took years for the word "poet" to engender a mental image of someone who looked like me—a mother-writer, her young children in the next room or in the

same room or climbing all over her. But I think that because my earliest "poet" chimera was *not* a consumptive poet alone in a dank room with a bit of candle but was, rather, a delirious, bearded, smiling, ranting man, a shy but outspoken Jewish bard, always in the *midst* and *among*—this made me feel that I, too, could be a poet!

For years I felt afraid of Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton, distant from Elizabeth Bishop and Marianne Moore, and even if I liked some of their poems, I felt ignored (or reviled) by writers like T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams, and Robert Lowell. But Allen was a good mother to me. He invited me into the kitchen of poetry and made me a sandwich. He offered a messy, imperfect, inclusive, exuberant, erotic (we both like men) kind of poetry that I could share. I didn't end up dropping acid or dropping out or living on an ashram. I never left New York for San Francisco or Boulder. In a way, Ginsberg was a good mother

because I didn't feel that I had to (or could) be him (or like him) in order to be worthy, in order to be worth something as a poet or a person. Loving Ginsberg didn't mean I had to be Beat or be Buddhist. Loving Ginsberg meant that I had to be very big and very small, mindful and connected.

What a delight it is to read these old-new poems! It's a bit like watching a memorial slide show of someone I loved dearly. How beautiful he was in younger years! How innocent-looking! How wise! One marvels at what has come back into fashion or never went out of fashion, at the images that feel familiar but are, actually, seen for the first time. "Of course!"

one thinks. Or, "I never knew!" I'm so grateful for these unearthed poems, for the *moreness* of them, which is not just memory but new connection, new discovery. I love Ginsberg's fearsome prolificity, but the massiveness of his published oeuvre makes it difficult to get a sense of Ginsberg's development across time. What a pleasure it is to journey through this substantial (but manageable) temporal road trip of a collection and watch Ginsberg break (through) lines like "Ready are we to meet the challenge hurled: / 'To battle, conquer, and rebuild the world.'" Ginsberg knows, early on, that his throat "was tight, as if to choke / My tongue from talk; though in my ear / The bawdy brawl was ringing clear." We get to hear Ginsberg start singing. We see him "wake to see the world go wild" as he writes his "own physical eternity."

I love the tonal range of this collection, which includes euphoric lines like "I am Bard to my own nature nameless as the very Vast I look at" (from the marvelous poem "After Wales Visitacione July 29 1967") and doleful lines like "Melancholy to sit here middle-aged / with worn sleeve & hairy hand / exposed, alone" (from the sad, cinematic, Hopperesque poem

"Cleveland Airport"). I love these poems' inclusion of so many of Ginsberg's friends (as direct collaborators or dedicatees), of Whitman (so present he feels nearly word-made-flesh), of John Ashbery, Frank O'Hara, Kenneth Koch, Bob Creeley, Charles Olson, Amiri Baraka, Gregory Corso, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Bob Dylan, Gary Snyder, Anne Waldman, Ted Berrigan, Ron Padgett, Susan Sontag, Carl Solomon, and others. I love the way Ginsberg always cares *deeply* about *everything*, but never takes himself too seriously: "And I— / 'Om Om Om' etc— /

repeat my prayers / after devouring the *NY Post* / in tears—.”

I love the short, haiku-like poems: “Awakened at dawn trying to run away — / Got caught dream / shop-lifting” or the poem “Trungpa Lectures” which reads, in its entirety: *Now that bow arrow brush & fan are balanced in the hand*

—*What about a glass of water?*—

Holding my cock to pee, the Atlantic gushes out.

Sitting down to eat, Sun and Moon fil the plate.

And then there are the mini-epics and the awesome “New York to San Fran,” a bird’s-eye coast-to-coast view, an ode not only to America but to “vastitude” itself. I’m so glad Bill Morgan included the unabashedly sexual “[Poem]” that begins “Bebbe put me on your lap ...”

alongside the sweet birthday poem to seventy-seven-year-old Marianne Moore. The personal, the political, the physical, and the spiritual—it is the tangle of these life forces, an awareness that these are not even, ever separable, that is quintessential Ginsberg.

I am struck (but not, happily, struck dumb) by the alarming timeliness of this collection, which decries police violence, racism, class oppression, and the prison industrial system:

“Crazy cars roam the landscape lonesome scared of your police”; “freedom of speech / I’m an average citizen / scared of the cops”; “What divine congressional investigation will ever undo

/ all these decades of calumny, injustice, / brainwash, jail?”; “Remember pain suffering you caused others Power Head! / Stop & Frisk laws on your deathbed conscience!” This collection reminds us that we are still, too often, “unsuspecting mortals poisoning their air”; that our news isn’t new.

I laughed out loud at the very first poem in this collection. Written the same year my mother was born, I had no idea who Gordon Canfield was (until I

read the notes) but was startled by how current the poem feels as we approach the 2016 election. Later the same day my son asked me what I'd do if Donald Trump was elected (I fervently hope that seventy-three years from now no one will know who Trump was). "What would I do?" I asked.

"Yeah," said my son. What was he expecting me to say, that we'd move to Canada? That I'd stop everything and—"Mom," my son said, "Trump said a woman nursing her baby is disgusting!" I thought of Ginsberg. "I guess I'll eviscerate Trump in a poem?"

Ginsberg reminds me to write with my friends (even the dead ones), even poets I never met (like Ginsberg). He reminds me to have fun, to be serious, to be angry. He reminds me to meditate under the clouds, to give our crooked politicians a what-for, to wonder why the

"White / bankers, politicians, police & armies" still control almost everything. Ginsberg reminds me to "come back to my body," to fight the "misery ... created / to drown the joyful chant / of all our souls." Ginsberg's prescient poems didn't "work" in the sense that they didn't end the inequities he railed against. We need these poems now more than ever. This collection reminds me that our war on terror is a war of terror, and, as Ginsberg says, "War is black magic."

In an age so full of fear, so obsessed with quarantine, isolation, and self-protection, an age in which educators are instructed to provide trigger warnings to students about potentially disturbing material in the classroom and our government issues color-coded advisories about our current threat-level, Ginsberg's poems remind us that art *must* infect, contaminate, upset, disturb, question, invade, threaten, and excite. Ginsberg's poems have always done that and continue to do so. They are dangerous. They are fearless. We need them.

—*Rachel Zucker*

Note from the Editor

Gathering all of Allen Ginsberg's poetry into one place is not a new idea by any means.

Ginsberg himself considered doing just that in 1960, when he had been publishing his work for little more than a decade. Yet for one reason or another it wasn't until 1984 that his first

“collected” edition of poetry was released by Harper & Row. Even at that point it contained little more than half his poetic output, while weighing in at over 800 pages. At the time of his death in 1997 the collected was enlarged to nearly 1,200 pages to accommodate his last published books, but nothing was done to gather Ginsberg's stray poems until now.

More than anything else, Allen Ginsberg was a steady and prolific poet, and his poetry chronicled his busy life. He wrote incessantly for more than fifty years, from the early 1940s until a few days before his death in April 1997. He was extremely generous with his work, often composing poetry on demand, although he disliked the pressure that put him under. In the wee hours of the night he wrote poems that would be sent off in the morning to support a cause or encourage young students to write poetry. Sometimes he would send his first and only copy, so that he didn't even have a complete record himself of all he had written. At times he grew weary of the work and complained that he was overburdened, but the complaint often took the shape of a poem itself. Once he wrote back to one of his solicitors,

“Want more poems? Wait till I'm dead,” and from that note comes the title of this book.

There were hundreds of poems composed and never collected, poems spanning the broad range of his life and career. Ginsberg loved gathering his works together. He kept copies of his essays, his interviews, his music, and his speeches and organized them in large file cabinets in his office. I spent most of the 1980s and 1990s helping him organize his journals, press clippings, manuscripts, and correspondence, as well as his enormous photography archive. It was always with the knowledge that some day they would be made available, another example of his generous nature. So it gives me great pleasure to once again work on a project that Allen would have loved — collecting the uncollected.

A Note on the Arrangement of Texts

Ginsberg saw his first collected poems as an autobiography, and so it is with these materials.

They should be read as an extension of that and as such they are also in chronological order as much as possible. Virtually everything that Ginsberg created was kept in chronological order from notebooks to fan mail and continuing that practice seems to make sense here too.

In so doing notes have been added where necessary to help place the poetry into the context of Ginsberg's life, not to explain the poems per se. Allen pointed out that his poetic energy was cyclic, that every few years his creative powers would ebb and flow, and this collection also displays "a panorama of valleys and plateaus," as he put it. The reader will be overjoyed to find so many strong, fresh poems that never made it into the collections published during his more fertile periods of inspiration.

A Note on the Selection of Texts

All of Ginsberg's most successful poems were attempts to capture his spontaneous thoughts and insights, what he called "ordinary mind." Composed in that way, in the act of "catching himself thinking," it remained for me only to select the very best examples of his mind at work. This was achieved through careful reading and rereading of texts, whittling the mass down to those poems that best achieved that goal. If the mind was shapely, the art created by that mind would also be shapely was his creed. It also gave this editor the opportunity to reexamine every uncollected poem and select only the best from the entire span of his life without regard to subject matter. So here we follow his creative genius from his earliest political satire at the expense of his local congressman Gordon Canfield through his own "on the road" experiences worldwide. We conclude with his personal thoughts on mortality as he watched himself and his close friends such as Carl Solomon grow old and die.

Footnotes

Extensive notes, also something much favored by Ginsberg, follow at the end of the book so as not to interrupt the texts. The notes will aid in placing the poems into the context of their contemporary worlds. Ginsberg often

quoted Heraclitus by saying “You can’t step into the same river twice,” here meaning that with the passage of time memory fades, while history and meaning evolve. These notes may help put specific references into the context of their times or lead interested readers to additional information. Younger readers may not recall that Richard Nixon was vice president of the United States twenty years before Watergate, for instance. A note explaining the importance of the Dasaswamedh Ghat to Ginsberg’s development of a philosophy of life or why he sometimes referred to himself as the King of May might also save a lot of electronic trips to planet Google. Some notes might reveal the circumstances that led him to write particular poems too. I find it interesting to know his poem “The World’s an Illusion” was written for high school students in New Jersey in 1971.

Further notes acknowledge the original publication data for many poems, if and when they are known.

Within the texts of *Collected Poems*, Ginsberg made some alterations to previously published work. Not having Ginsberg here as the final arbiter, I have not made changes to either the texts or the layouts of the poetry. Some typographical errors and an occasional misspelling have been corrected whenever these errors seemed unintentional.

—*Bil Morgan*



1940s

Rep Gordon Canfield

(Mine Own Dear Congressman)

Canfield votes like a

Typical politician,

Guided strictly by

November Intuition.

For Canfield is

But half a man—

The other half

Republican.

—*New Jersey, ca. Fal 1942*

Published in: *Columbia Jester*, vol. 43, no. 1 (October 1943), p. 10.

[Poem]

[We leave the youthful pennants and the books,](#)

Discard the little compasses and rulers,

We open up our eyes and test our souls,

Prepare ourselves to wield more mighty tools.

Abandon dusty tales of history,

Of good King Arthur's Knights and Kubla Khan,

We wake, and enter now the world to find

A living tumult in the struggle of man.

For these are giant times, and history

Is fashioned as the minutes burn away.

Buildings of old beliefs are being bombed

And rotted walls are crumbling down today.

Ready are we to meet the challenge hurled:

“To battle, conquer, and rebuild the world.”

—*New Jersey*, ca. 1943

Published in: *Senior Mirror* (June 1943), p. 63.

[A Night in the Village](#)

(With Edgar Allen Ginsberg)

In Greenwich Village, night had come.

The darkened alleyways were dumb —

The only voices we could hear

Were lonely echoes, sounding clear

From basement bars, where reddish light

Obscenely sweated in the night,

Where neons called to passers-by

“Enter, drink, and dream a lie,

Escape the street’s reality,

Drink gin and immortality.”

I smiled to my comrades two:

We found a door and entered through;

We stumbled to a smokey brawl,

Reality fled beyond recall.

We sat down jesting, wit in flower,
Disputed wildly, burned the hour;
We drank a river of delight,
While pleasure's flame was kindled bright;
Memory came, and memory flew,
Dreams were lost, and born anew ...
Suddenly it seemed, I woke —
My throat was tight, as if to choke
My tongue from talk; though in my ear
The bawdy bawl was ringing clear,
Its meaning I no longer guessed;
My heart was thundering in my breast.
I looked up horrified to see
Eternity glaring down at me!
I looked about in wild alarm —
Death met my glance. He raised his arm:
Futility, mirrored everyplace,
Dwelt in every person's face —
In every visage was that taint.
Underneath a woman's paint,

Undisguised by colored lead,
Leered a mocking white Death's head.
Under the lurid light, the room
Was flushed with shame and vivid doom.
Reflected in a whiskey glass,
Fate's yellow eyes were molten brass;
In undertones, beneath a note,
Death spoke out of the singer's throat;
While, staring through a drunkard's eyes,
Fate confounded drinker's lies:
For all the drinks that they had tried,
Death still sat there at their side.
And Death peered with contemptuous calm
From the barman's open palm.
Thus, waiting patiently, alas,
Conferring there, and clinking glass,
And toasting Death, their drinking mate,
Bent Time, Futility, and Fate.
A woman's laughter rent the gloom —
And back came once again the room.

—*New York, Spring 1944*

Published in: *Columbia Jester*, vol. 43, no. 6 (May 1944), p. 2.

Epitaph for a Suicide

A weary lover

Once he was,

Who wept as only

A lover does.

Or laughed as only

A lover must.

Now his mouth

Is ringed with dust.

The credit's his —

He was quite brave,

To shut his loving

In his grave.

Epitaph for a Poet

This single pleasure

I have had:

I sang a song

When I was sad.

But since my lips
Would rot, in time,
I put my singing
In a rhyme.
On other lips
My songs will ring,
Now I am dead
And must not sing.

—*New York, August 20, 1944*

“Epitaph for a Suicide” was published in: Allen Ginsberg, *The Book of Martyrdom and Artifice* (DaCapo Press, 2006). “Epitaph for a Poet” was published in: *Columbia Jester*, vol. 43, no. 9 (October 1944), p. 13.

Song

Winds around the beaches blow:
Things being as they are, although
Half clearly understood, and I
Uncurious of mystery;
Such thoughts as once were my despair,
— The frantic sea, the silent air,
The changing moon, the frigid shore —
I find delight me more and more.

I had not dreamed the sea so deep,
The earth so dark; so long my sleep,
I have become another child.
I wake to see the world go wild.

— *ca. 1946*

Published in: *Columbia Review*, vol. 27, no. 3 (February 1947), p. 32.

[Poem]

[To live and deal with life as if it were a stone.](#)

Time like a turning stone that grinds my bones.

Time is a dog that gnaws my bones
and grinds my soul to sticks and stones

It's not mere time
that pricks my pride;

Just let my bones

Be satisfied.

—*May 21, 1949*

Published in: James E. B. Breslin, *From Modern to Contemporary*.
(University of Chicago Press, June 1984), p. 88.

[Behold! The Swinging Swan](#)

Behold! the swinging swan

Where the geese have gamboled

Say my oops

Beat my bones

All my eggs are scrambled.

—1949

Published in: Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, *Take Care of My Ghost, Ghost* (Ghost Press, ca. June 1977), p. 3.



1950s

Her Engagement

We have to go through the warehouse
to get to the lunchroom —
and he asked me for a date,
and he told me where we were going,
and he told me what time
he would pick me up —
what a doll he is.

We were walking
through the warehouse
hand in hand
and when we got near
the loading platform
he held my fingers
and kissed me
— we had to hide:
if anybody in Accounting
knew, the news
would spread like wildfire.

—*New York–California, March 30, 1952*

Published in: *Voices*, no. 158 (September – December 1955), p. 10.

[Hitch-Hiking Key West](#)

I walked for miles
toward that bedroom
on the starlit highway
in the lonesome night.
I knock. The bridegroom
opens the door.
‘I’ve come on the first
night as due.’
‘Farewell, man,’
his reply.
I go into the house,
he to the wild.

— *ca. December 1953*

Published in: *Yugen*, no. 1 ([March 13], 1958), p. 22.

[In a Red Bar](#)

I look like someone else
I don’t like in the mirror

— a floating city heel,
middleclass con artist,
I need a haircut and look
seedy — in late twenties,
shadows under my mouth,
too informally dressed,
heavy eyebrowed, sadistic,
too mental and lonely.

— *ca. 1954*

Published in: *Yugen*, no. 1 ([March 13], 1958), p. 23.

[Poem]

[What's buzzing](#)

in my head?

Self loathing? I

hate myself?

What literary

abstraction!

Ha! I'll kill

that fly!

—*San Jose, 1954*

Published in: *Beatitude*, no. 6 (June [ca. 13] 1959), p. 17.

Thus on a Long Bus Ride

thus on a long bus ride

my soul woke

arm in arm with a youth:

hours of communion

warm thighs

shoulders touching

bodies moved together

as we rode on

dreaming invisibly

—*San Francisco, April 1, 1955*

Published in: *Take Care of My Ghost, Ghost*, (Ghost Press, ca. June 1977),
p. 3.

[Poem]

We rode on a lonely bus

for half a night,

shoulders touching, warmth

between our thighs,

bodies moved together

dreaming invisibly.

I longed for a look of secrecy
with open eyes
— intimacies of New Jersey —
holding hands
and kissing golden cheeks.

Published in: *Yugen*, no. 1 ([March 13] 1958), p. 22.

[Poem]

[There's nobody here](#)

to talk to.

San Francisco house

April 12, '55

Slam of Neal's car

door outside

my shade at twilight.

Great art learned in

desolation.

Empty another ashtray.

—*San Francisco, April 12, 1955*

Published in: *Beatitude*, no. 2 (May 16, 1959), p. 5.

[On Nixon; Chain Poem](#)

(by Allen Ginsberg, Gregory Corso, and Jack Kerouac) Nixon has a
pillow in his mouth in the kitchen

Nixon has chickenfeathers coming out of his fly

Nixon's hair is purple like the egg-yolk of a saurian reptile Nixon's ears
whistle

Nixon's eyes whip back and forth like taxicabs

Nixon has a soul, the roses of the unborn, alas

Nixon never plays a bongo drum & that's why he's so lonely Nixon is
deathified towards two lonely cops

Nixon's head is full of pork

Nixon left his kissing lipstick on his television lensglass His sweating
pissing chin

Nixon wears silk shorts covered with shitscum

Nixon doesn't know Lafcadio [Orlovsky]

— *late 1956 – early 1957*

Published in: *Bombay Gin*, no. 7 (Summer/Fall [1980] 1979), p. 1.

[Dawn](#)

Dawn: fatigue

— white sky

grey concrete houses

sun rust red —

coming home to the furnished room

— nervewracking lovetalk.

I don't *want* her

Stop all fantasy!

live

in the physical world

moment to moment

I must write down

every recurring thought —

stop every beating second

fire-escape, stoop, stairway,

door,electric light,

desk and bed — weariness —

drunken sensation

of my own physical eternity.

— *ca. Spring 1958 or before*

Published in: *Chicago Review*, vol. 12, no. 1 (Spring 1958), p. 11.

[A Lion Met America](#)

A Lion met America

On the crossroads in the desert

Two figures

Stared at each other.

America screamed

The Lion roared

They leaped desperately

Knives forks submarines.

The Lion bit the head off America

And loped off to the golden hills

That's all there is to say

About America except

That now she's

Lionshit all over the desert.

—*ca.* 1959

Published in: *Beetitood [Beatitude]*, no. 7 (July 4, 1959), p. 16.

[Leave the Bones Behind](#)

Leave the bones behind

they're only bones

leave the mind behind

it's only thoughts

leave the man behind

he cannot live

Save the soul! But
Soul is ever Safe
& Sole
Itself Beauty's representative
Lost in accidental form
that'll soon be over with
when its nose falls off
and its eyes fall out
and leaves it alone to be itself
lone in One
Gold Be.

— *October 6, 1959*

Published in: *Take Care of My Ghost, Ghost* (Ghost Press, ca. June 1977),
p. 8.

The Real Distinguished Thing

(Steps to Unconsciousness under Laughing Gas)

High sentience of my presence in the grand harmonious Being

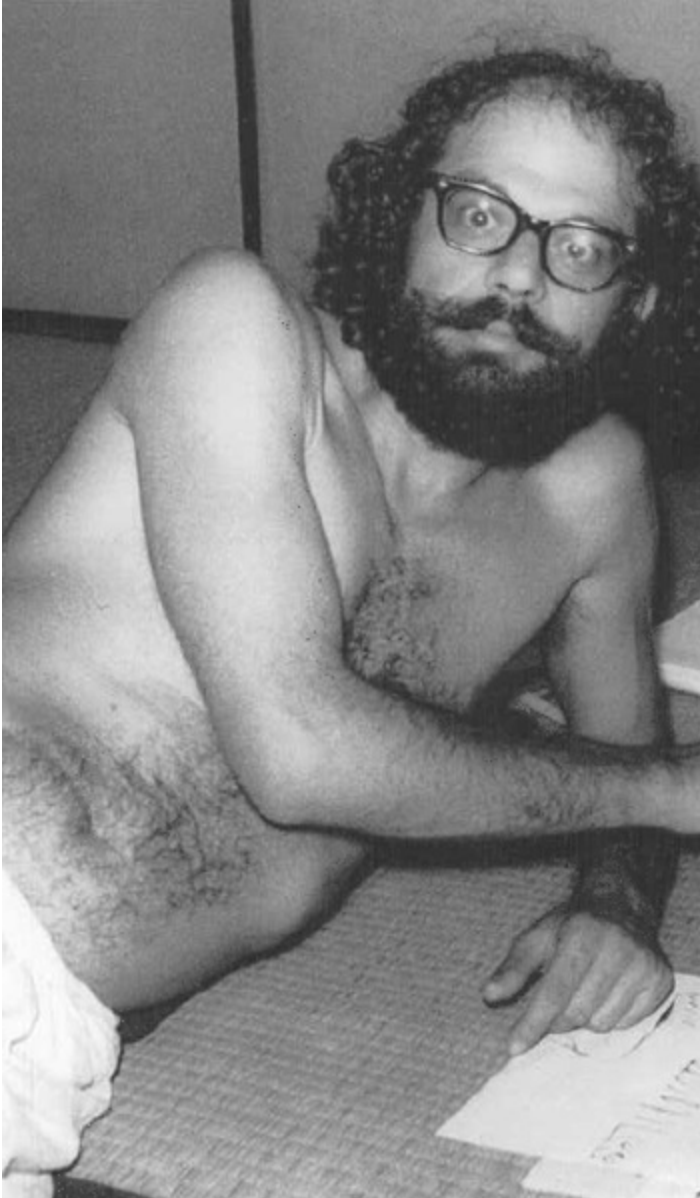
... in which The unknowable disharmony will now take place de ja-vu —
“I’m back here again” — sensation of mechanical illusion relapsing to its
stupid fate — with banal triumphant music — I give up

Glimpse of infinite co-incidental structures of horrific Reality risen by
mistake and left behind in silly realms of Nowhere consciousness

vanishing into the closing asshole of the void — a Stop Sign whirling & receding to the size of an eye in a peephole — gives me an ignorant wink & we disappear.

—ca. 1959

Published in: *Damascus Road*, no. 1 (1961), p. 46.



1960s

To Frank O'Hara & John Ashbery & Kenneth Koch

How real is Bolivia

With its snowy Andes lifting over the modern city

Now that one is in La Paz

Which means the peace in Spanish

Tho the natives speak their native tongue

Especially the women in brown bowler hats

Sitting in the mud with their hands over their noses

Selling black potatoes and blue onions

In the marketplace which covers the hillside

Over which one can see electrical towers

And airplanes landing from Santiago and Lima Caracas

It is strange how real Bolivia is

Its capital cupped in a valley in the Altiplano

Two miles up in the sky

So that I have a headache and continually take aspirin Which is relatively expensive tho the taxis are 10 cents And the poverty seems especially created to make me seem a Prince With my beard and black hat and dungarees

Strolling thru the market buying silver flies, spiders & butterflies And green and purple shawls the ladies use

To carry babies and garbage in

While I watch them over rich green pig stews

In the Rembrandtian restaurant filled with waiting bearded prophets
Dressed in rags and ancient grey hats over their white brows All the same I
feel a little out of place in Bolivia

Which was a beautiful name in my geography book

Lazing alone in my hotel room with two extra empty beds Tho I have seen
various unhoused Indian boys

I'd gladly share my solitude with, not knowing their names —

And the coca leaf does not really get me high as I expected So that I
masturbated 3 times this week

And wrote postcards to all my friends

In NY, Paris, Florence & Kyoto

— I think I'll take a trip to Machu Picchu

Which is a famous Inca ruined city in Peru.

—*La Paz, Bolivia, April 1960*

Unpublished.

[Poem]

[Yesterday I was writing in Heaven or of Heaven](#)

or the day before yesterday, and this morning back

where

I started from dreaming of man. And

went to a Turkish Bath

wrapped my belly in a white towel

and sat self-conscious in the

steam hot room

staring at my knees

Then under a shower soaped my balls and ass

Then lay down in the small dark dormitory

with a white cloth over my genitals and

put my arms behind my head

and relaxed — a hand crept up my leg

and a mouth came down on my cock

and a warm slurp greeted my Mysticism

— but an old German with white hair and steel-rimmed

glasses

Sneaked in and interrupted the younger Peruvian

and after saluting my knees and belly with kisses

and further slurps

flopped down to suck, and I thought now after

4 months OK I'll come —

But the Peruvian

watching hissing in Spanish

heche-te bastante de saliva

make a lot of saliva

The old gentleman lifted his wings and

sat down with his ass over my prick

like a tomb

and began sucking away with his asshole

till I thought I would come

(in an hour) but he quit —

and sucked off the Peruvian

and I lay back with open eyes in the dark

in Lima

and enjoyed my nudity and the creepy sex of the world waiting for some
white-skinned Angel to come

Finish off the job.

— *Lima, Peru, May 26, 1960*

Published as “May 26, 1960” in *Marrahwannah Quarterly*, vol. 3, no. 1
(January 1967), p. 14.

[Poem]

[Ayahuasca —](#)

Moonlit nite

entered bamboo roof shelter

lay on ground on robe

— entered the Great Being
again
— we are all one Great Being
whose presence is familiar
— To be It, need to be
also the mosquito
that bites me
— I am also a mosquito
on the Great Being
— *Peru, June 6, 1960*

Published in: *Yage Letters Redux* (City Lights, 2006), p. 101 appendix.

[Poem]

[Walt Whitman](#)

I lost
Tears again last nite
Screwed out of Heaven
by a bitter face with eyeglasses
and a nightstick
Waving Death over America
Walt Whitman, the fuzz

is making Fate
the masses are terrified
No comrade walks the road
over mountains overlooks
the old metropolis from
under your vast hat —
I was trying to get the Prince to wake up!
O California
O soup of anxiety!
— *ca. 1960*

Published in: *Fuck You: A Magazine of the Arts*, no. 5, vol. 6 (April 1964),
p. 5.

[Tokyo Tower](#)

On top, the vast city
100,000,000 people
milky mist, spires of radio
antennae like Venus —
The Marine Band marching hymn
without a name on the Jukebox
Fifes and Flutes in Space Drums
& brass in all bright beauty

way up in the airy window
crashing around my head
I danced for joy to hear again
cleansed of all old associations
the nameless Hymn
without armies
in Space.

— *Tokyo, Japan, ca. July 1965*

Published in: *Ferret*, vol. 2, no. 6 (October 16, 1963), p. 5.

[B.C. \[Bob Creeley\]](#)

I was waiting for Eternals
superimposed on blue sky
and apartment building walls
I was in 15 years before
come back through future doors.
I can't wait forever,
I didn't and came back here
by myself feeling sure
lost in this University
with other males and females

looking in Creeley's live eye,

and we all told similar tales

— *San Francisco, October 14, 1963*

Unpublished.

War Is Black Magic

War is black magic

Belly flowers to North and South Vietnam

include everybody.

End the human war.

Name hypnosis and fear is the

Enemy — Satan go home!

I accept America and Red China

To the human race.

Madame Nhu and Mao Tse-Tung

Are in the same boat of meat.

— *San Francisco, October 30, 1963*

Unpublished.

Journals November 22, '63

The black and white glare blink in the inky Air Force night as the
Helikopter rose straight up the television frame carrying President Johnson
toward the newsphoto White House past the tail flag of the giant United

States of America super-jet settled at rest and lonesome under the klieg light
field swarmed with cops brass photographers microphones blip McNamara
chill Long nosed Oswald suspect in Dallas of halfmast pro Castro
assassination

—November 22, 1963

Published in: *Poetry Newsletter*, no. 1 (November 1964), p. 2.

May Day.

As the fire burns out tranquility returns

The angry voice at the back of the throat

softens, and quiet descends

on the body

The room becomes clear in the

afternoon light of the stage

The actors talk, growling, the eye

rests lightly on the invalid

and tenderness sighs from the pit

of the breast.

Lightness, lightness, as a breeze of

morphine, but no fear

in the belly that the police will

attack

or the rare powder disappear. Ah!
Let's stay where we are in this cafe
all evening,
No more coffee, I want to sit quiet
without talking
watching the red haired lady with a cane,
the string of pearls, the slap, the dark
backs of heads —
Oh shut your filthy mouth! I hate you!
Dad loved me!
Footlights! The heart attack! The gold ring
screaming in the sunlight.
I tip my head relax'd on my shoulder,
lean on a table, and gaze thru
no eyes.

— *ca. May 1964*

Published in: *Synapse*, no. 3 (January 1965), p. 10.

[In a Shaking Hand](#)

Loudspeakers drifting
clouds of music

Trumpets of prophesy!

Flutes of high-conscious

Shabda yoga

The giant cranes over

red buildings —

green railroad bridges

over the thruway

to New York

Temples domes

& black smoke—

stacks

in the towers of

the hilled

city of brick

Stone iron and glass

aluminum plastic

George Washington

High School

street!

RR arch jumping

the street valleys
whirling orange cureways
greyhound on
the dawn line
old apartments on
green mounts
rising buttressed in
the grass road —
Plonk of bass guitars
New York Mets
Stadium
The river mysterious
empty stream
Yankee Stadium's giant
chest — castellated
storage warehouse?
Neal at the wheel
shouting hoarse
abennied and slept
& et in the millionaire

mystic gated

abode —

Surrounded by river &

forest, poor dear —

Zawk, Zawk

Zawk! — the

giant milk

truck swooping

up the hill

by the apartment

rise to the skyway overpass

up to the high

elevated

6 lane concrete

Rising thru grey Bronxes

to black railroad

subway flight —

ports

down the curved

bowling alley

so much like S.F. [San Francisco]

The road

grasses & fences

I mean curving balconies

riding — the pink

purple — violined

hearse

over the gunk river

Back under black

Els on their thin

heights —

Oh this endless pro—

liferation of concrete

under the arch bridges

carrying highway above

highway

above their roofs the

buildings baby

faced peeks be low —

windows on the tiny



places & things —

Under the fluorescent

ceilings below

the city —

Higher higher, up the

high asphalt balconies

over the calm Harlem

River

into the artery fluted

into the head of the

Amsterdam Avenue idiot

at dawn —

old gals in the window

spying on the

street —

O hero of Bakersfield!

—*Mil brook to New York City, June 27, 1964*

Published in: *Poets at Le Metro*, vol. 15 (July 1964), pp. 4–5.

Little Flower M.M. [Marianne Moore]

I sit three miles from your flat
glass Manhattan the bridges grown old
your breasts the huge river
insect steelworks in the Navy Yard
your ears your mouth pursed small woman
in this same night myself New
York this Universe
I have a cold you have seventy seven years
a pain in my chest, I
eat no more meat I smoke much you
must understand this impulse to confession
all I can do a message
may arrive as a soft electric shock of feeling:
Man is no form no mighty molecule no just
idea alone — all that Thing —
I feel man tender radiance at Heart between
breast and belly, that physical place
where the Self urges — delicate sensation
//

I have no children, either
must not moralize. From my breast to yours a
skinny birthday ray.

—*New York, ca. October 1964*

Published in: Tambimuttu, ed., *Festschrift for Marianne Moore's Seventy Seventh Birthday* (Tambimuttu and Mass, ca. April 1965), p. 100.

Don't Know Who I Am

Don't know who I am
Whether President of Atlantis
with ruby dancing boys
longhaired smiling at my baldness
and teenaged nymphs
placing small soft hands on my belly fur
Or irresponsible rich prince-garbage man
of wavy quiet boulevards
of pacific water
So this minute I accept my
self
A big hairy Fish

— *Cambridge, MA, morning, November 12, 1964*

Published in: *Fag Rag*, no. 10 (Fall 1974), cover.

Liverpool Muse

Albion Albion your children dance again

Jerusalem's rock established in the basements of satanic mil s In the Sink,
stone basement of City

Vibrations of Vox electronic shudder thru brick & flesh, Children
beautifully collared and sleeved, with tapered silk dungarees,

each pubescent body thin & handsome shaking his hips, each darling
daughter alone on the concrete snapping

her fingers —

The longhair guitarist snarls into a silver microphone

& builds the drum beat to a heavy charge

and screams on the high note — a circle

of flesh is formed

he screams claps and shudders, a circle of

flesh dances round,

six boys and two girls, shuffling left

shuffling right hey hey,

shuffling left shuffling right the Yoruba

dance step come back to Mersey's Shores —

I stop writing and move my hips —

the Circle is

Complete.

— *England, ca. May–June 1965*

Published in: Pete Morgan ed., *C'Mon Everybody* (Corgi Books, 1971), p. 39.

[New York to San Fran](#)

And the plane bobs

back & forth like

a boat at Kennedy

asphalt Space Station

glass buildings,

Taking off from Earth, to fly

the day after Stevenson did die

heart attacked on Grosvenor

Square's July sunset

leafy calm.

And I —

‘ *Om Om Om*’ etc —

repeat my prayers

after devouring the *NY Post*

in tears —

The radars revolve in their Solitude —

Once more o'er these states
Scanning the cities and fields
Once more for the Rockies, to look
down on my own spermy history —
Once more the roar of Life Insurance
murmuring in the empty plane
5 hrs 20 min glimpse
The most beautiful Mantra, '*Hari*
Om Namo Shivaye —'
And the vibration of Shiva
in my belly merges
with the groan of machine
flying into milky sky —
If we should crash the flops of bloody
Skin won't be singing
that sweet song —
Once more the green puddles of
moss in the messy grey bay
once more wingtip lifting to the sun
& whine of dynamos in the

stunned ear,
and shafts of light on the page
in the airplane cabin —
Once more the cities of cloud
advancing over New York —
Once more the houses parked like used
cars in myriad row lots —
I plug in the Jetarama Theater
sterilized Earphones —

IT'S WAGNER!

THE RIDE OF THE VALKYRIES!

We're above the clouds! The
Sunlight flashes on a giant
bay!

Earth is below! The horns of
Siegfried sound gigantic in
my ear —

The banks of silver clouds like mountain
ranges

I spread my giant green map

on the air-table —

The Hudson curved below to the

floor-drop of the World,

Mountain range after mountain range,

Thunder after thunder,

Cumulus above cumulus,

World after world reborn,

in the ears with the Rhine

Journey brasses —

Spacey Sublime

charges of Aether and Drumbeat

Ascending & Descending

the Empty Aeternitas, free —

Click! over upper NY State

a witty guitar bumps with

pianos & drums — oops!

announcer! oops Peter Sellers

sounds breathing in ye ear

‘The Fleshpots! The Muckrakers!’

The little silver cow clouds flow

eastward under the wing,
the horizon's a blue mug, there's
green furze of forest naked &
unpioneered with little
strings of highway & houses
brown pendant —
Lakes with little bungalows —
Once more it's summer and the folks at
ease by their pastoral garages
reading the *Journal American*
Headline screams
100,000 more U S Troops to Vietnam
Adlai Flopped Dead Of Heart Attack On Sidewalk
and a cloverleaf to transport the family
past the Electronic Gasworks —
'Tis the LSD in the balmy upstate
Breeze seeping from Underground
Factory banks —
Switch the channel!
Surf music, oolee!

Plunk of Hawaii, I can feel
the moons, all seven of them
rising over the Mauna Loas
of my Grammar School Decade —
Orange moons, green moons,
blue moons, purple moons,
white moons sinking under wan waves,
Black moons over the lower
East Side
Red moons over China —
Skipping along one by one,
bouncing over the cragged horizon
of Jupiter thru the
clip clop ethereal violin strings
and the violas running thru my
solar plexus,
they're skipping down the
Hollywood streets in duck pants
and 1940s nylon skirts —
It's total Idiocy! a new song

from the tragic Fiji Island
love affair, a 30 year old
teenager weeping into her brassiere,
her boyfriend's just sailed off
for Korea and left her
sobbing with orgasms
from the Bowery in W W I.
Them plunked guitars and
descending Melachrino
— Ugh!

In certain moods it cd / be
seductive, over the
wingtip it's a Mediterranean
Blue approaching Cleveland (?)
hung with puffclouds &
Hawaiian guitars shining in
the sunlight —
A children's show! over the
low Catskills! Speaking in
a monstrous little voice,

Pyramus & Thisbe — Up here? —

The Lion's part, 'you may do
it extempore for it is nothing but
roaring' —

Distracted from her 'wide body
in the rain' — I gotta smoke
some Hashish in the bathroom.

'With impish glee, changes the
head of Bottom into a donkey' —
and the bottom hills are garden
green stretched all ways
with scratch-brown patchy
valley runnels —

Appears a tray with Old Fashioned!
I'll be drunk before this idiocy's over!

//

Finished the salad and daydreamed of war
and entered the air above checkered farmlands
to Lake Erie —

I disappeared in a cloud of smoke

in the plastic lavatory,
flushing my breath
down the maelstrom in the toilet —
hours and hours to go o'er America
and beef being served above the white carpet-clouds —
A fucking police state! I
feel at bay, in mid-air!
'Breaking' the 'Law' — dread
in the breast guilt in
the head, as I punched the
odorous green soap spigot to perfume
the washbowl & drown
the sweet Eastern smell
I carried —
Now I'll make that thornful pilgrimage
on feet of meat & bone across that
land I see stripped
& ruled below my
magic carpeted-cabin.
Another sip of old fashioned!

I'll go to jail down there, heart
beating wildly! Not
because love's in my hands,
buttocks kissed in the Rockies,
but because this dreamy muzaked
liquored luxurious air-ride's
Euphoria's no heaven
If it costs blood-flaps on the smooth
hairless skin of high cheeked
Vietnamese teenagers.
Everybody forgets who's body
suffers the physical pain of Orders
undreamt in these High Air
Conditioned modern Powers.
Bam! Brahms brasses bang bright bombs
down over Ohio's highways
I eat meat and a pea
Klemperer changes to *Dance of*
the Seven Veils, the Head
of John America cut off

will be presented: Coffee —

And other Channels

Keep pushing Rock & Roll

Bottom on Shakespeare, Hallelujah

Waikiki, Bedtime Story,

Decline of the West Frug,

They'll even begin the movie

The Satan Bug after

I finish my cheesecake —

Anything to keep me from looking down

on that innocent vastitude

Bottomed with Earth speckled

with townships houses like

white dots, park centers,

Man has overtaken his universe,

says the music, and pictures

of Mars are expected when

I set my sneakers on Land —

Beethoven proclaims ethereal Joy!

Strauss is sadder by 2 centuries

and still the longing strain
Screams in my ears from
middleeurope Concert Halls
I do declare that I am God!
I do declare by my beard & fame
that I will die!
I do declare war on Satan!
I do declare I am willing to
take the glory death on
my hideous stomach
and sing my Prophecy before
the Nations! —
Hark! ye murderers! Hark
ye stuffed with vengeance!
Hark ye Angel Recordings! Hark
ye Joel Sebastian!
May I ask ye Sir Army, whom
ye hope to Kill?
Hark ye Chicago, the time for
Earth's Revolution's here!

Hark ye hopeless lovers, thine own
sweet will be done!

As Huncke came despairing Eastward
from this blue vast lake,

What misery has been created
to drown the joyful chant
of all our souls?

Oh great bend of shore, the men
on thee too many,

Chicago flowing with
red smoke

Pouring out hatred of Communism

It's you angry Hell Hounds
who have created Stalin and

his 15,000,000 murdered

Slavic hysterics —

It's your Capitalism
and your weak suited newsmen

and your Hearst Bank Mind
that has pushed the Communist

party to murder

your own asshole!

It's your bombs over Korea, it

is your fire in Vietnam, it

is your shooed diplomat

across his desk that has lied

like a Communist bureaucrat

when the order came to cease the

penetration of the flesh with

sharp instruments —

Wagner rides again! Hark

Ye, Ministers of Power and

ye Presidents of America

Ye Premiers of vast China

and ye Dalai Lamas of

Tibet —

Hark ye balding soldiers

reading *Mainliner*

on the jetplane speeding

thru the Wagner Dooms

above these blue

atomic waters and

Scratched terrain

above Chicago's tiny

Towers —

At this moment there is a skeletal

man lying on the leafshit cobbles

of Dasawamedh Ghat,

At this moment by our will a

child is beaten in the balls by

a mad communist lieutenant

in an Albanian Phnom-penh —

At this moment Joe Christ Screams

and falls raving on the

neck of a homosexual in Hué —

He bites his neck, he kisses,

he sucks the blood of the corpse —

At this moment a symphony of screams

arises in Uruguay as the riot

is 'quelled' by teeth-bash,

At this moment bombs on Barcelona burst
At this moment the charming children
of Joliet cower in Detention,
planning raids on weak villages
where Me-Kong hath sprouted —
I prophesy thee death, Rock Island
lined with white bungalows —
for thy mean farm's television
only communication to Saigon —
A bank of white cloud advances
as I advance on the Xylophones —
Bongo Rock! Nigeria advances
with clouds! Earth is
Hidden in white fleece
as the drums batter in Mechanic invisibility —
We're all out west, the squares
of perfect farmland, introduced
by Thelonious Monk *Off Minor* —
which penetrates these grouped hives
of suburbia diminutive on the Planet —

That Classical channel always
resounds thru hemispheres of
Empty Becoming,
Being filled with drumbeats and total
orchestra shaking Ascensions
Crane'd've come to Forever
If he could —
Over Indiana, the flutes —
Over Iowa and Omaha
A technicolor picture begins
on channel one — Elec
tronic Bee music.
The great steel safe door
crashes shut.
The buzzing sciencefiction
lights & gauges ascend like
Brahms didn't —
A new man is born —
The police answer the telephone —
CIA looks at its wristwatch —

They leave the atomic testing area

Goodnight Doctor! —

The glass door opens automatically,

a wolf runs round the barbed

wire, it's not state prison,

it's a scientific laboratory.

Paid for by Hollywood US Govt.

Your own taxes Dearie, it's

Y O U

Mr Electronics Nightclub

totally disconnected on yon farmhouse

in mid afternoon amid the

peaceful buzzing of the cows —

that created this faraway red bongo

music issuing from tank eyes

on the screen — your desire

by the boathouse.

A yacht on the screen in color

with a gangster spy conversation

‘outspoken on the immorality of war’

‘superb loan operator’ ...

Actually on this screen a confrontation

a pacifist (who’ll turn out

to be a murderous spiderman?)

‘about the most secret chemical

warfare station on this hemisphere.’

‘Reagan has been murdered and

Dr. Baxter has vanished’ —

So it’s not my paranoia

as I ride over these peaceful green

silent squares of Anonymous

Stevenson birthstate —

The movie on this airplane is projecting

the same angst as my hashish

bathroom —

So I share in this vast fantasy

which rises like poison gas

from the man-wormed farmlands

approaching Missouri River —

‘There’s something beyond the Botulinus —

Indestructible,'
our fantasies' guineapig doom —
The germ of Death loosed
on Earth —
The sacred drawer opened
The *Satan Bug*
Disappeared!

//

Oh heaven what have we come to
up here looking down on
ourselves,
man's consciousness is split
out of his self —
'Have they
told you
just what
this new
Virus
will do?'
'Paranoids ... they're very

brilliant the most of them

— my choice a Messiah'

as the 'obey or else'

culprit who stole the

Satan Bug.

Shit the movie's attacking

us Messiahs.

Not in this consciousness can I

resolve the confusion of Syntax.

Thin veil above the land,

the dotted grid of planet smoke —

above the rills' erosions on

brown ploughlands —

(I'm smoking Cancers)

This hashi is depressing,

Or else the mind I'm in,

or else the plane I sit within,

or else the movie croaking in

the loudspeaker,

or else America itself

that made the mind movie airplane
national Paranoia.

‘Who is this? Who is this!’ on
the telephone. ‘We have to get
everyman in the country to find him!’

And westerly the land’s become

Dry brown — and mottled
with Glacier tracks streaming

South — Epochs of

Paranoia have come & gone,

The Great White Ice skidded

its way

rippling the terrain like

wind over Summer water,

the bemedalled soldier lights

another cigarette —

and now it’s flat land and exact

Squares of Arnold’s fishing property —

//

Invisible police networks are set

up in the movie,
always complaining, always compleynts
Violins piercing the ears —
The Glacial skids
ruining the land for farming
½ million years later —
And the clouds've covered the entire
visible earth;
— that was the Platte I
saw before, streaked with Neal;
now great Rockies streaked
with snow —
Remove the earphones at the
climax, undivided attention
to the patches of summer snow on
the razor hills — a
green valley & its brown road
settled in between
black shoulders —
waves of mountains slant

an inch above the old
human hummingbird hills —
glacier patches & dust powder
hollows filled with white cold —
misted over by small vast
fog —
So I turn back to the
Satan Bug movie — they're
in a green Ford riding thru desert Utah —
As we pass the sunny Wasatch
glittering blue south —
Help police! invading a baseball
diamond
to find the Doomsday
Bomb in Los Angeles
'Power for its own sake!'
Over a grand canyon.
Shake Baby Shake!
'You've got every reason on
Earth to be mad.'

And of course the Beatles
swinging into a Sea of Clouds
'What this loven man can do,'
Typhoid Mary! We're
all hypocrites, tell me Why
The Beatles shouldn't spill the beans
Secret which might
Land them in Bedlam,
or Yevtuchenko in Lubyanka
instead of Spoleto if
he spoke without
450 corrections.
And if I opened my mouth I'd
be accused of treason in every
direction, high teacup Jazz,
Marxist, Demorep, Castroite, Maoist —
One'd be fallen on and torn to
pieces by Chinese teeth,
American knives, Scouse
bicycle chains, Vedado

cops hairy hands,
Demolished by the Dept. of Social
Undermining, thrown
in Ft Leavenworth, sent
to Siberia, reeducated in
Archangel,
sent to work on a Commune
in the fields beneath
the Potala.

Meanwhile flying over a red
desert, —

Is civilization going to
Blow up?

//

In ten years I've climbed over
this sunny windowsill John Wieners
Now from Olympian Heights I look
Downon the rough giant earth black
Streaks of snow on foreign hills
the vast cloudmass walled

over the South, above
the Impenetrable Blue Space
skied upward
as Brahms crash swirls
round my eardrums,
and what should I prophesy,
Messiah?

The wing tip pierces thru
mist white Brahms —
I must come back to my body.
No more question but the force
of wingtip lifting upward
to reveal the heaven-roof
as music burst
thru the Stereophonic
grey tipped earphones
Vast as the visible
Universe —

//

Our desires pounding on,

our desire mounting, past Mars,
our hearts beating a million years,
Otto Klemperer enraged on
the podium,
Salomé dancing again in
the airplane cabin,
Demands of the Beethovenian fist
in the Lightningstorm!
I am that I am,
renewed week after week,
planeride after planeride,
Despair after streetcorner
headache despair.
Joyfully flying to death,
till the atom cellular
consciousness invades
with its cancerous stabs and
flashes of electric chair.
All so solid it can't even be a
dream

Tho the phantom orgasm
of paraplegics proves
you can come in pure
Consciousness
& spurt your semen all over
a dreamwall bordello
painted blue in Lima
while the groin's dead
limp & wrinkled under
the transparent cellophane
sheets of Experiment.
It's too sad! It's too happy!
It's here, unfolding like
a giant rose,
It changes slow as eternity
shifts, it flies in triumph
thru the western clouds,
it approaches its old
memory city to find
its loves grown old & sane

and its own body middleaged
It flies toward old wrinkled faces,
It's inexplicable, it rises
Triumphant above the Very
Earth and Screams
in Delight
over
the cumulus clouds.
Fasten your seatbelts in
the Mist!
The violins are ascending in
every direction!

//

‘We have climbed to 35,000 feet!’
The desert flows like a river
thru the mountains passes,
wrinkled like our own faces
above the smooth sand.
Nevada's rough belly
breathless below!

I'll get drunk & give no shit,
& not be a Messiah.
and have long talks goofing
with Wieners in Belvedere
by a stinky pond,
drinking Dorian Gray martinis.

And 'twixt earnest & joke
Enjoyed the Ladeye, John.
We're stuck in our
Selves.

And who else to be stuck in?
A courteous Astronaut come
down from the Horizon
to gaze in our eyes with patience,
take our hand, and lift it
trembling, to his khaki breast —
Half the visible universe
excluded from this fantasy
but who's counting?
Mama? God? Dear widowed

Olson? Creeley

stumbling over his pecker?

Me, murmuring, what a beautiful

big pecker you got to a

pimple 16 year old boy

with his pants down on

my pallet,

who talked all night about his

intellectual disorders

till my belly softened & I kissed

him on his shirt?

Beethovenian Climaxes Impossible?

Wagnerian Valkyric rides

Immaterial?

Salomé dances too Incredible?

What're we groveling in but the

most magnificent Aluminum Heaven?

complete with transcontinental

cloudcities —

Complete with million horsepower

Jetroar astounding to any
pre war Daedalus —
Clouds racing eastward, the
plane lowering slowly thru
the veils, over the
flat Sacramento valley,
Down
into the inhabited shores,
the myriad minute boxes stacked
in rows, curved in clusters
planted like vast letters in
the giant flats
above the empty silent Space-
hangar in South Peninsula —
Over the Bay, pointing toward
Golden Gate & Tamalpais
Home,
to the weak sad destiny
of aging companion selves
trembling above the red broadcasting

towers,
Down to the brown rippled
water, past yacht basin parks
past outdoor movies empty
sunlight glaring off the
white billboards,
OM, Down to the
ground roar tremble
along the white line
Jetbrakes roaring,
Brahms screaming
Symphony concluding
as we taxi slowly
down the runway
to the metalvoiced
Terminal,
United.

—*Finit 7:30 p.m., July 15, 1965*

Published in: *City Lights Journal*, no. 3 ([January 1] 1966), pp. 108–28.

[Entering Kansas City High](#)

Entering Kansas City high
thin trees lining the highway wire balcony
over the Gulf, lit with orange flares
in the smoke in front of the green signs
where all-night factories pin-point grey-clouded space illumined blue bright
craned robot lamps.

Street after street each valley dark at midnight
rooms and attics lit, hills banded with caterpillars
of street illumination
high-tension wires across the railroad track mid-
city Kansas and Missouri meeting
7th Street North Business District fine
black mist
winking antenna
lights Sensitive City, ooh!
Cross the wheeled bridges
by wheat elevators' rounded parade
red U.S. Mail box blue-legged on the
sidewalk
a huge truck stopped at a red light
roar of jet harshness on the sky ear

For Sale an old brown cabin
along the road by Smitty's Bait Minnows
Eat: Air Reduction, Ohio Chemical
another viaduct above lone railroad
track assemblage of switch and
switch-light shack,
underneath river highway
lights
reflected doubled
along the curved level silver-black water,
the fear
of the police state under the bridge,
tail lights speeding up the alley
under the super highway overpass
concrete-vaulted
an instant later, the iron-ringed auto bridge and
sentinel stacks lit again with their feeding
ladders aluminum'd
Up the shining asphalt, lit-blue
outskirts' roads and trailers parked camping

row on row under the hill.

Rainbow Boulevard at night Kansas U Medical

Center

Greek column'd, mid-American brick

Jewel

Restaurant, with a little church with a

cross held

thinly above its door,

and the State Drive-in Bank, Safeway

empty-lit Brain-blood volume increased

stopped in a side street Club 423 red signs.

— *Midnite, February 12, 1966*

Published in: *Great Society*, no. 1 (1966), p. 10.

[Cleveland Airport](#)

Cafeteria's metallic counter, iced tea & a blue check, a yellow haired baby
long tressed kissing father's shaven cheek, fluorescent ceiling re-mirrored
thru plate glass over parkinglot darkness,

Melancholy to sit here middle-aged

with worn sleeve & hairy hand

exposed, alone.

—*June 8, 1966*

Published in: Allen Ginsberg, *Scrap Leaves* (Poet's Press, 1968), p. 7.

Busted

How many people have been busted?

How many people, their doors broken down,

dragged weeping in their nightgowns

to the station?

How many boys been slapped around

by midnight cops downtown in

the colored section?

How many musicians pushed out of jobs?

How many students kicked out of school?

How many businessmen hiding paranoiac behind their

doors afraid of disgrace

by narco bulls

hiding behind guns and badges

with their ignorance and misinformation?

How many cats shaken down beaten up &

asked for payoffs by Treasury fuzz?

How many pounds of pot seized & sold on black market

by cops?

How many scholars and doctors pressured,
warned, blackmailed, prosecuted?

How many newspapers radio stations bombarded with
dopefiend T-man propaganda?

What divine congressional investigation will ever undo all these decades of
calumny, injustice,
brainwash, jail?

— 1966

Published in: *High Times*, no. 225 (May 1994), p. 36.

[Nashville April 8](#)

Crescent faces row-tiered hanging
balconied face the great red
Striped flag podium microphonic reverberation
from one body outward
breathed painfully from rich suited abdomen
— mouth opening circle of white teeth — bells
clanging

Taillights along the Nashville city edge —

In the leather car, acrid perfume
sucked in the lung,

Majesty of Speech and Chant, on the lawn

Under the streetlight
dry grass crowded with sweating college shirted blond
& forehead-starred' Semite singing —
In the far cities riot under the Spring
moonless midnite Black Power.

—*April 8, 1967*

Published in: *Spectrum*, vol. 5, no. 3 (Spring 1967), pp. 24–25.

[After Wales Visitacione July 29 1967](#)

The Great Secret is no secret
Senses fit their rosy winds —
Visible is visible, rain mist
curtains wave thru the bearded vale —
Foxgloves erect green buds, mauve
bells droop trembling doubled down
the stem, spiked antennae —
Daisies push their inch of yellow air,
No imperfection on the budded mountain,
valley vegetables tremble, horses dance
in the warm rain
white sheep speckle the mountainside & move eating

green atoms shimmer

in grassy mandalas

Blue atoms shimmer in the sky, grey atoms wet the

Wind's Kabbalah

A solid mass of Heaven, mist-infused, ebbs thru the

Vale, a wavelet of Immensity lapping gigantic

thru Llanthony Valley

motion at the bottom of the sky,

earth rolls the days, sun hangs

the planet on its lightbeams

Mists drawn from the ocean & driven like lambs thru

the

meadows of Wye to these mounts, to the

edges of London —

pheasants croak flapping up from Fern steep

meadow —

Heaven shifting its cloudy floor on the

million feet of daisies

Each flower Buddha-eye, buds mirroring eyeball

manufactured many

Sat on a rock crosslegged in dusk rains
slit eyed, breath steady, mind moveless,
My own breath
trembles the white daisies by the roadside,
The breath of Heaven and my own breath
symmetric,
central emptiness manifests body
giant valley veined with tree-lined
canals manufactured over centuries,
sprouty bushes fringing households walls, hill
breast nipples with hawthorn,
belly meadows haired with fern —
Same breath that waved in the valley
drawn into my belly, slowly breathed
— Sounds of Aleph & Aum
thru forests of gristle, my skull
& Lord Hereford's Knob an equal windy place —
to my navel the
same breath as breathes thru Capel-y-ffin,
All Albion is one!

Stokely Carmichael flying on the same wind to Cuba

angry at the windy thistle's silly thorns?

News of the World ploughs in abstract fields

to harvest money not physical potatoes in silence,

& the physical sciences and in ecology, that is

the wisdom of earthly relationships,

mouths and eyes interknit

hoof, wing & leaf

bearing the giant body forward 10 centuries in

Llanthony,

orchards of mind language manifest human —

cows and sheep pass by twos to death

horses born for cancer of the snout —

I lay on a hill and entered Wales in Visitacione nameless bard on her hill
thru Blake's eye,

Wordsworth's particular thistle,

Stare close, no imperfection in the grass, symmetric

Maya

covering moist ground, smell of brown Vagina,

harmless.

The whole mass of Heaven balanced on a grassblade,

Gigantic sun at the end of heaven
& the lightest rose at the cottage door
weighed equal, on the exquisite scales
trembling everywhere
in balance the death of a brown grassblade, the
birth of a soft mushroom
Sheep look up revolving their jaws with empty eyes,
pacific gods
little gods that look at me curious & keep distant
from human fame.

Creatures revolving thru births and deaths, unharmed
horses in a tiny gigantic vale in Wales.

I am Bard to my own nature nameless as the very Vast I look at.

Lay down on the warm hillside & groaned release from
my body

sighed thru my breast a great Ooh!

Knelt before the thorn,

a mammal aware in the warm grass that smelled of my
sperm,

mixing my beard with the wet hair

of the mountainside, tasting the violet
hair of the thistle, sweetness.
Lifted my head and groaned.
Water from the sky came making noise, as
I babble to vastness
Earth and sky met and made noise between them
Death's black angel lifted
white fleshed day in his arm for a joyous kiss — in
the afternoon rain.

— *Wales and London, July 29–August 2, 1967*

Published in: *La Huerta*, vol. 1, no. 3 (1973), pp. 57–60.

[Mabillon Noctambules](#)

Baudelaire's Noctambules
Old Navy, Lipp, street cafes
Crowded chattering
autos exploding on cobblestone
grey St. Germain stone's stillness
Mabillon broods
with a beard oxygen shadow,
Lovers walk hand in hand with

empty eyes

Beautiful youths grow pimples sleeping

on the Seine with the police

under Notre Dame's silent

grey lacework —

Sad, as bored Apollinaire gave up

the ghost on Pont Mirabeau

Sad, as Tzara sat at Deux Magots

collating spit-soiled letters

from Artaud

Sad, as Michaux walks solitary

down Rue Segur to the Seine

brooding loveless —

Sad, as the cafes close for

the summer,

Sad, as a decade ago I shopped

in Rue de Seine for mussels

with Orlovsky weeping in bed

Gregory upstairs in fury

scribbling American

Burroughs enchambered considering
Silent blues —
Sad, as no poets emerged from
the streets, gaiety eyes
& eyebrows sharp with
new Francs
not old eternity, not old
Sadness of Meat realizing
Frenchness a moment
enthusiastic as the virgin belly of Jean-Arthur
arriving in Paris bedbugged
Screaming in melodious slang —
Merde! Le Con! Salaud! shriek
the bourgeois sharpies with
shaved short hair at the zinc bar,
bored with their jamais & red girls
No music, no magic Vulnerables
in manly wristwatches —
No beautiful faces on these
ancient streets yet —

I've been faithful w/ my beard
10 years,
& now arrive in silken gold-croft robe
hair perfumed & long, hero of
my own universe
& sit in the White Queen at 2 A.M.
recalling the ghosts of Paris, of the
50s as Hemingway
in Montana lamented a thought for a night
of the Great Lesbians
shining in 1924 surrounding Cloiserie
de Lilas —
Bill Myself Peter & Gregory the
angels of pain a decade
incognito
The barman's bald, I'm bald,
& Gregory's broke in New York —
More ghosts as sad as ourselves will
pass St. Sulpice or gaze
over the chimneyed roofs & mansards

curved along the Seine
Wondering what magic of Paris
was promised, what charm
that now's the fat barman spilling
blue-labeled lemonade
over the stainless steel drain.

— *Paris, 2:20 a.m., August 25, 1967*

Published in: *Big Sky*, no. 10 (1976), pp. 130–131.

Genocide

Dreamed, that I met Leroi
his American speech slightly thickened &
slurred from learning Yoruba
& thinking in Afric syntax —
We lay together, our
legs wrapped & twined round
each other's bodies, soft cheeks
together, I had difficulty making
out his words, and though he
was not aloof and I thought
he spoke against my Jews,

flashed thru my mind to
tell him this fault, I
listened instead, and sad
said “What will happen
to me Leroi? I may
perish for all this War
in America” — He lay his
head next to mine & held
me close, dawning on me
his tragic fear & sympathy
all along despite what
the newspapers said — But
dont remember his dream
words as murmured, far away,
& his body brown & warm as
we pressed our breasts together,
I felt his hard on at first,
which went away as we
clung closer. He wanted
to protect me in the War

storm, but was unable
for the great force that was
upon us, of strangeness and
alien white mind in America,
rising from Iowa, Kansas,
Nebraska, Wisconsin, Brooklyn.

— *Cedar Falls, Iowa, February 23, 1968*

Published in: Diane di Prima, ed., *War Poems*. (The Poets Press, 1968), pp. 37–38.

No Money, No War

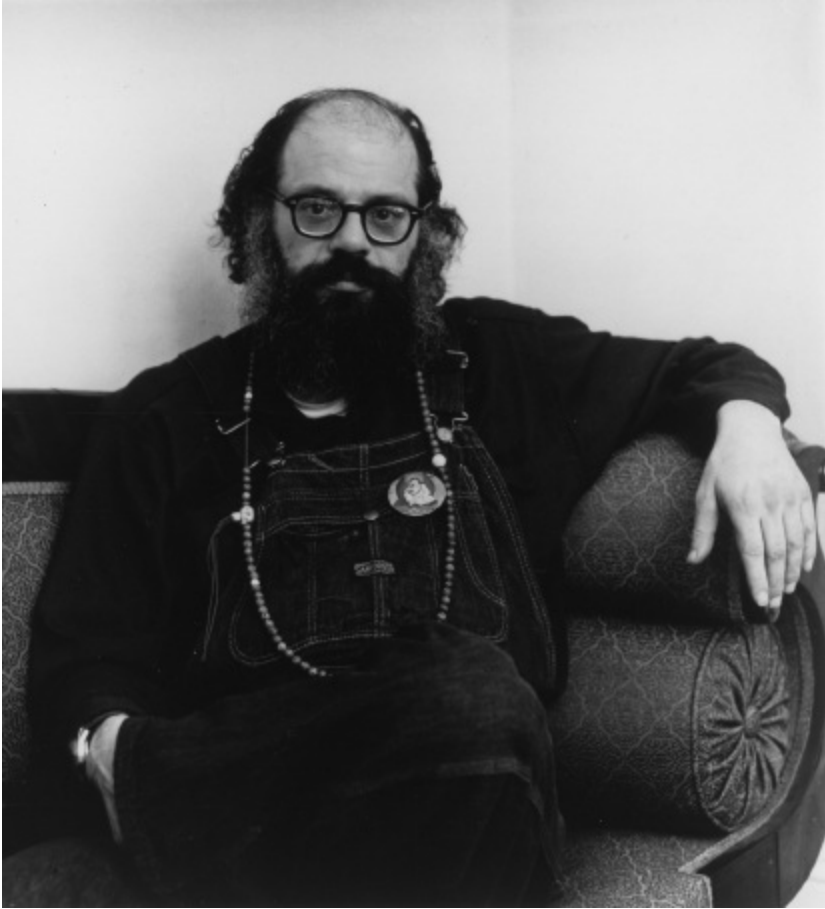
Government Anarchy prolongs illegal planet war over decades in Viet-nam.
Federal Anarchy plunges U.S. cities into violent chaos.

Conscientious objection to war tax payment subsidizing mass murder
abroad and consequent ecological disaster at home will save lives & labor
and is the gentlest way of political revolution in America.

If money talks, several hundred thousand citizens refusing tax payments to
our War Government will short-circuit the nerve system of our electronic
bureaucracy.

—*December 16, 1969*

Published in: *Tax Talk* (ca. December 29, 1969), p. 4.



1970s

May King's Prophecy.

Spring green buddings, white-blossoming trees, Mayday picnic

O Maypole Kings Krishnaic Springtime O holy Yale

Panther Pacifist Conscious populace awake alert

sensitive tender

children's bodies — and a ring of quiet Armies around town —

planet students cooking brown rice for scared

multitudes —

Oh souls all Springtime prays your bodies
quietly pass mantric peace Fest grass freedom thru our nation
thru your holy voices' prayers
your bodies here so tender & so wounded with Fear —
Metal gas fear, the same fear whales tremble war
consciousness
Smog city — Riot court paranoia — Judges, tremble!
Armies weep your fear —
O President guard thy sanity
Attorneys General & Courts obey the Law
and end your violent War Assemblage
O Legislatures pass your Creeds of order
& end by proper Law illegal war!
Now man sits Acme Conscious over his gas machine
covered Planet —
Springtime's on, for all your sacred & satanic magic!
Ponds gleam clouded heaven — Black voices chant thru
car radio
Oh who has heard the scream of death in jail?
Who has heard the quiet Maytime Om beneath wheel—

whine and drumbeat

In railyards on wire tower'd outroads from New Haven?

—*New Haven, CT, May 1, 1970*

Published in: *Strike Newspaper* (May 2, 1970), p. 3.

For the Soul of the Planet Is Wakening

For the soul of the planet is

Wakening, the time of dissolution

of material forms is here, our

generation's trapped in Imperial

Satanic cities & nations, & only

the prophetic priestly consciousness

of the bard — Blake, Whitman

or our own new selves — can

steady our gaze into the

fiery eyes of the tygers of the

Wrath to come

—*before September 21, 1970*

Published as a broadside: *For the Soul of the Planet Is Wakening* (Desert Review Press, 1970).

Six Senses

Hiss, gaslamp —

Night wind shakes leaves.

*

Hemp smoke in wood hall,
Kerosene leaked at lampbase
knocked off desk.

*

Yellow light on knotted wall,
Aladdin chimney, brass
wick cutter, pencil bottle
plastic passport, staple shine.

*

Who am I? Saliva,
vegetable soup,
empty mouth?

*

Hot roach, breath smoke
suck in, hold, exhale —
light as ashes.

*

Eye lids heavy, dreamed yesterday dawn

kissing the two eyed horse.

—*Xmas Meditation on Milarepa, 1970*

Published in: *Coyote's Journal*, no. 9 (1971), back cover. In addition the fourth and fifth parts have been collected in Ginsberg's *Collected Poems*, but not the other four parts.

[Poem]

[Frank O'Hara darkly.](#)

hearing *Così Fan Tutte*

scratches his nose.

— *ca. 1970*

Published in: *Clothesline*, no. 2 (1970), p. 36.

[Poem]

[Hum! Hum! Hum!](#)

Gregory Corso's genius despised,

Muses bored,

Mediocrity is prized —

Bullshit the award.

Hum! Hum! Hum!

— *ca. early 1971*

Published in: *Washington Post* (March 3, 1971), p. C1.

[Poem]

The world's an illusion

Everybody dies the day after they graduate High School

—*August 30, 1971*

Published in: *Embers* (Wayne Valley Senior High School, 1972), p. 134.

Reef Mantra

... Blue Starfish

Violet minnow,

Sea cucumber

Coral tide ...

— *Fiji, March 3, 1972*

Published in: Allen Ginsberg, *First Blues* (Full Court Press, 1975), p. 35.

Postcard To D

Chugging along in an old open bus

past the green sugarfields

down a dusty dirt road

overlooking the ocean in Fiji

thinking of your big MacDougal street house

& the old orange peels

in your mail-garbage load

smoggy windows you clean with a

squeegee —

— *Fiji, March 3, 1972*

Published in: Allen Ginsberg, *First Blues* (Full Court Press, 1975), p. 34.

[Inscribed In George Whitman's Guest Register](#)

Cold January ends snowing on sidewalks,
Millions of kids cry & sing in Lowell,
Massachusetts is full of bearded pubescent saints,
Notre Dame's lit up white as Whitman's beard,
I got a \$1 wool suit from Salvation Army and a tie
flowered from 1967 and a new round watch
& no beard, & Gregory a leopard spotted coat
on his back returned your *Pomes Pennyeach* —
talking of Jonathan Robbins the punk Jersey Rimbaud,
& Brion's operation, & who's been in & out the
bookshop

— This morning acid wakefulness overlooking the
Seine

Gregory claimed death's democracy while the river
streets

floated in Eternity eyeballed from the balcony, solid evanescent apartments
under a grey familiar sky —

Back and forth to Paris, utopian socialists' beards grow longer
and whiter — someday the whole city'll be white as

Notre

Dame's snow-illuminated facade, George's goatee, this
page

—*Shakespeare & Co. Bookshop, Paris, ca. 10 a.m.,*

January 31, 1976

Unpublished.

On Farm

Noisy beets boiling in the pressure cooker

Gas mantle mirrored white gold in the window

Answering letters, September first midnight

— *Cherry Valley, NY, September 1, 1973*

Published in: *Bombay Gin*, no. 7 (Summer/Fall [1980] 1979), p. 82.

Wyoming

A mountain outside

a room inside

a skull above

Snow on the mountain

flowers in the room

thoughts in the skull.

— *Teton Vil age*, WY, November 1973

Published in: *Poetry Project Newsletter*, no. 11 (January 1, 1974), p. 6.

Exorcism

You're going to grow old, white haired withered gasping stretched on sick-room bed helpless conscious oxygen

tent paralyzed

Several days secure immobile protected in coma

Fortunate karma, family billions, born power wealth

nurses richest doctors & medicines the world

unguents, attendants, gases, needles, morphines private suites —

Then suddenly realize no help — coma spreading thru

brain nerves

— your power Powerless, your money sand, dreamtime,

illusion

Lonely as an arthritic-handed charwoman washing the

floor in your skyscraper —

You stare at the ceiling and disappear, board rooms and Arabian derricks vanish with your extinction

Remember pain suffering you caused others Power

Head!

Stop & Frisk laws on your deathbed conscience! No-

Knock you introduced the Nation 1963

Anyone's head bashed to the door — police in his own

home no warning —

fragile in hospital sheets remember your tough-

mouthed Violence Governor

Built insubstantial buildings highways drained liquid chemicals

from earth to spread over unsuspecting mortals

poisoning their air

Crazy cars roam the landscape lonesome scared of your police — You
worshipped petroleum bank's

money monopoly with your brothers —

Your anger ordered massacre the guards and prisoners

Attica Prison yard

How you hid in your Albany mansion reading papers on

your lap

willing Mass Murder in Jail while junkies screamed Stop their Torture

How you screamed back a year later in front of Labor

Unions to send junkies to death!

Yea you money addict power fixer petroleum pusher

grow whitehaired sickened frail someday, body pained, gasping for
morphine

on deathbed remember Ego's actions & hatreds

Strangle to death as I will Governor, no guards protect you

Die blind wondering where the President went —

Reborn a red necked cursing gas station attendant on
thruways paved in Hell

Because you pounded the table mandatory death
penalty for junkies 1973

You energy-junkie Nelson Aldrich Rockefeller be reborn in your own
image.

—*January 28, 1974*

Published in: *Seven Days* (October 5, 1974), p. 7.

[Eyes Full Of Pitchpine Smoke](#)

(by Allen Ginsberg and Gary Snyder)

Eyes full of pitchpine smoke

Ears full of frogs

How can I keep my books?

Pitchpine smoke

drives mosquitoes crazy

they all go over to the Greensfelders

Bookkeeping in the moonlight

— frogs count

my checks.

— *Kitkitdizzie, CA, June 16, 1974*

Published in: *End*, no. 9 (1975), p. 24, and the third section

“Bookkeeping in the moonlight ...” is in Ginsberg’s *Collected Poems* as one of “Sad Dust Glories.”

Freedom of Speech

Freedom of speech

Oh yeah, scared of the cops

freedom of speech

I’m an average citizen

scared of the cops

freedom of speech

I’m an average citizen

scared of the cops

That’s my attitude

That’s my attitude too

That’s my attitude

That’s my attitude too

That’s my attitude

That's my attitude too

— *Boulder, CO, ca. June 1975*

Unpublished.

[Green Notebook](#)

Nothing lonelier
than on a Greyhound
crossing Donner Pass
Superhighway 80
thru Truckee to Reno
age 20,
rolling on concrete
past pines icy
Castle Peak.

— *ca. 1975*

Published in: Allen Ginsberg, *Sad Dust Glories* (Workingmans Press, September 18, 1975), p. 3.

[Imagination](#)

(by Gregory Corso and Allen Ginsberg)

Magnifying &
transmitting
unworded

eyebrian

on command

manikins

from the compartment

wallpaper

the cockpit

with star-come

Megagalactic

Broadways

delight

Buddha-junkies

Muhammad-Ali-fight

Wipe

the muleteer

shitface

off the Zoroastrian-mount

Fly

//

unwing'd-thought

mechanics

into the see-mind

Fish

with eyes like mine

for aery sharks

no DNA

remembers

Vivid

pilots

cosmosian-skinned

land

— *Paris, January 30, 1976*

Published in: *Beatitude*, no. 29 ([August] 1979), p. 50.

[Poem]

[Spring night four a.m.](#)

Garbage lurks by the glass windows

Two guys light a match

Smoke rolls over Eighth Street where

Spade queens walk lipsticked looking for a taxi

Spoon out their handkerchiefs

Coughing against the black dust rising up

Out of Imiri Baraka's latest volume of poems

The *Whole Earth Catalogue* up in flames

The water pumps methods for making home-made
yogurt

The crackling red fires running over the San Francisco Communal
catalogue

Herbert Marcuse exploding in flames

Howl, fiery volume after volume

Over the precipice

Fire spreads through the Skira catalogues

The Rembrandt canvas girl

Brown holes appear in priceless Van Goghs, Roman
statuaries

Smoke covered smudged Venus de Milo

//

Up on the front in embers Andy Warhol's *Philosophy From A To B*

Tennessee Williams autobiographical life in ashes

William Carlos Williams' poetry follows him

To a white dusty grave

Shakespeare himself leaves not a rack behind

—*New York City, ca. May 6, 1976*

Published in: *Vil ager*, vol. 44, no. 20 (May 13, 1976), p. 2.

Louis' First Night In Grave

Surrounded by transmission wires
and tombstones with old names
the sound of trains and auto tires
protested modern claims —
Weeping a little, earth thrown down
on your coffin lid
oblivion you called your town
Newark wherein you hid
Came out to see your fresh dug grave
red earth, as rounded Rose
the family gather'd, what could save
your memory, what we chose.
I knew the earth that covered you
was your own choice of bed
that year had water often true
of the highway we drove that led
To a small graveyard outside Newark
where remnants gather'd round

families that remember'd the odd quirk

That made you sing in sound

//

Aunts & uncles of old times

Silent movie cousins

Grandfathers whose faces mime

grandchildren by the dozens.

Brothers tearless in the mist

Sisters silent in fog

Nephews whose dead lips were kissed

gold haired children in smog

Poets of the days of youth

Passed, and were forgotten

Brothers in law dead in the booth

of Belmar's wharves gone rotten

Sisters uncles cousins passed

Friends from olden days

Drawers of the laundry cart,

Drugstore brothers ways —

Now I am fifty, olden days

echo like a chord
familiar from old phonographs
or photographs of yore —
Tears, tears and weeping thoughts
Sighs sighs & tears
All the world is swept away
as your coffin steers
Its way down underneath the earth,
down below life and breath
Form is emptiness and birth
Shows my Father's death
It's midnite on your burial day
I sit at your old desk
rhymes running thru my head that lay
a music on your breast —
Legs once strong were withered, now
can't support the player
Silent still and settling underground
layer under layer etc.
To capture all that golden look

Naomi gave to you
& you gave to your own true love
would be something olden new
Clear, sight and yellow sun
air, trees and moon
Shine still over Paterson
as when you were young

//

Trollying to highschool class
Thru the farmer's fields
Newark to Paterson you'd pass
Industry's new wheels
Now silence sits and buzzes in
The house you lived in long
a silent candle in the living room
burns all this one night long
Edith sleeps and sighs and dreams
I sit up late at night
Heavy hearted that my youth
and yours, are gone from sight

Candle that with yellow flame
keeps the watch for me
while you spend your first night at home
in new eternity
— *ca. July 9, 1976*

Unpublished.

[Kidneystone Opium Traum](#)

(for Michael Brownstein)

Its always acting like that beginning
you get in your car & drive in the opposite direction lock bumpers with a
truck going backward
Get out & taxi to the railroad station
Its bombed out & empty in Munich or its Albany
Suspicious of the train schedule suspicious of hot dogs Suspicious of this
suspicious, of that, you take a plane to Hawaii and act suspicious at the
baggage check-in
You delay the flight an hour arguing with the pilot
Suspicious the plane will take you by mistake to Buenos Aires
You want to go to Hong Kong but don't know the way
By foot impossible, by boat too long, by super jet
suspiciously easy. Burroughs always wanted a slow boat to China but you
didn't, you're suspicious of all forms of transportation —

Cash in your ticket let's go home, let's stay where we are —

I'm suspicious of any move you'll make

— *Boulder, CO, ca. August 3, 1977*

Published in: *Portage* (1978), p. 36.

Homage to Paris At The Bottom Of The Barrel

(for Philip Lamantia)

Take your god Shuddering morsel

Take delicious Lipstick

God white pussycat

Tiger moon dropped on the roof

Your god Snowflake

Gold ears Celluloid eyelids

Plaster Paris Poet bust

Take your god unreasonable Mamma

Pythagorean spaghetti

Your god oregano Henna

Hermetic multiplication of red Semen

Like solid matter kidneystones

Banana republic grammarschool silkstocking muscles

Your god Spittle-heart God atombomb

Crashed thru time like an umbrella
Descending from the Chrysler Building
O Chorusgirl God
Chant Radio City Music Hall forever
Hula hula purple gardens green sunsets
Volcanic ash sliding off your skull
With noise like a wet apple core falling into the
wastepaper basket.

— *ca.* 1977

Published in: David Applefield, et al., *Fire Readings* (Frank Books, 1991),
p. 133.

[Poem]

[Bebbe put me on your lap](#)

Belly up and Jack me off

Harder Harder suck me off

Bebe I'm old I'm old

I can't come I want you to see me

straining naked Help me Help me

come Please I can't you make me

This is me This is me ah this is me —

I want you to suck my thick cock

yes this is me Please this is me

—*March 6, 1978 1:30 a.m.*

Published in: *United Artists*, no. 12 (January 1981), p. 101.

Verses Included In Howl Reading Boston City Hall

... when the blonde & naked angel came to pierce

them with a sword

who were busted for eye-contact in the Boston Public

Library men's room

when a handsome youthful policeman flashed his Irish

loins & winning smile over urinal, & then

exhibited his badge

who were arrested for teenage porn ring headlines in

Boston Globe when the octogenarian bachelor

D.A. got hysterical screaming through his iron

mask at election time

lusting lustung lustung for votes, for heterosexual

ballotboxes' votes,

who arrested bus driving fairies & put them in an iron cage, & yelled at
little homeless boys

& made them sing and dance in tears to please the

plainclothes courts

& fink on lonesome middleaged bearded lovers

kneeling to worship kid Dionysus in Revere

Lord of orgies, ecstasies, poolhalls & pinball machines set up by Syndicate
near the old amusement

park freakshow fronting Atlantic Ocean ...

— *Boston, April 1978*

Published in: *Fag Rag*, no. 23/24 (Fall 1978), p. 1.

[All the Things I've Got to Do](#)

Things I gotta do

I remembered

when I sat down to meditate

after weeks wandering streets of iron thoughts

I have to go back to the universe

Buddha imagination

Practice path, four foundations and castle of thousand days mental breath
exercise

But on this desk Friday and Saturday *New York Times* its Monday noon's
lost news

Seven Days the pacifist radicals' temporary magazine *St. Marks Church*
Poetry Newsletter, the *Society of Useful Manufacturers Newsletter*

and poems from Paterson's souls born after the acid

wars

Does Murray Kempton's book *Briar Patch* really prove that the FBI's Gene Roberts started the New

York chapter of the Black Panthers?

This Gene Roberts witnessed Malcolm X's assassination on stage up in Harlem as his bodyguard

a government agent

Scott Nearing approved Stalin

but his *Making Of A Radical*, enlightened my momma's history

hereby also Irving Rosenthal's letter from anonymity

the True Levelers tilling common land in Cobham,

England April 1, 1649

"Digge up, manure and sowe corn upon George Hill in Surrey"

Free, Irving Rosenthal proclaims

As I look out my \$300 a month apartment window in

New York at TV antennae under gray sky on

the Lower East Side

I can't write this poem I got too much to do

Of Time and The River and *The Web In The Rock* on my desk old second hand books I found

got to read it before I die

The *Yipster Times*, old police state news,

David Erdman's *Symmetries of the Song of Los* a paper on my bookshelf a
year

and my Musiphonic radio which once stood on my
father's desk

Mahler's symphonies flying through the air

my dirty red bandana needs washing, windows too

six foot bookshelf of unread Buddhist classics

Lotus Sutra and haikus, telephone ringing

young scholar ear waiting my attention

desk with 365 unanswered letters

undigested news clips to file under CIA FBI Cosa Nostra dope surveillance
lies & truths in my cabinet

file drawers

ten years journals now typed

I haven't edited the misspellings and blanks the typist left

anti-nuclear protest decade now

consider a factory loft on Mill Street, Paterson

can I go home again?

A farm to till and pay nut trees for next generation

Thin out my bedroom library

Keep Plato, Prajnaparamita, David Cope and Gampopa

Visit my stepmother Mother's Day

A brother to cheer

Nephews to make money for and rescue from the
mental bomb

best friend to call, his day off Monday

A poetry secretary to instruct correspondence

a poem on junk mail to recall

I'll get up now

breakfast and talk to George Balmer before I xerox my Blake music sheets
edit Shambhala's *Talking Poets* and read up my file on nuclear poison.

—early May 1978

Unpublished.

[No Way Back to the Past](#)

On the Ferris Wheel rising to the full moon

by the canal, looking down on Ocean Grove

over a red-bulb-rooft green-lit carousel, silver Chariot of Muse with her
Lyre, revolving all too fast

through years from 1937 with cousin Claire in Asbury
Park

wandering Sunday morning from Belmar with a few

pennies dimes for tickets in Playland —
the wire-mesh railed cage swinging under a canvas-
flowered awning toward the full moon forty
years later,
a bent hunchback at the gate pulling his iron-rod
handle to bring the iron-spoked circle hung
with pleasure cars to rest.

Whacky shack's painted toy-wizard witch-monster
window

Machinery's laughing screaming lifting wooden eyelids at fair skinned
blond boys rubber-bumping electric cars along a sheet-tin floor,
with trolley pole antennae sliding and sparking across the silvery ceiling.

I used to ride the scooter with my cousins Clare and Joel Gaidemack or
brother Gene,

cars shocking lightly on the happy floor, wheeling the toy Dodgem in a
circle

turning round the curve, I looked up in the mirror
and saw a bald white bearded man in a white shirt
staring in my eyes —

and entered in the giant wood barrel-form slippery
rolling underfoot reflecting mirrored through

its other end *Time Tunnel*,

Time in the car with stepmother Edith at the wheel

returning from the shore, the panic of Eternal

space unchanging

through which our phantom bodies pass now highway

grandeur'd under blue sky.

And poor little Clarie's gone, a ghost in my mind —

walking the big sandy beach, jumping granite boulders sharp edged on the
jetty with

all us who played Jungle Camp in the Belmar weed-

grown empty lot's leafy bower

before going to Asbury, the Mayfair Theater Sunday see Paul Muni's movie
Dr. Pasteur.

One family house, sat on the porch at night and beat

away the mosquitoes

near the tiny Playland where Eugene worked, by a 20

foot Ferris wheel & carousel with tiny horses

going round

merrily on 16th Avenue across from ocean's wide

beach —

Old ladies with rolls of fat round their waists and silk stockings

on boardwalk benches faced the blue water spread's
sunny waves —

Ocean side infancy, pails in brown salt puddles of
sandcastles

A thrill at the heart, hearing German Attack Poland
radio, I biked to tell Esther Cohen

or Claire Mann niece of movie mogul Louis B. Mayer
of Metro Goldwyn Mayer owned Mayfair
Theater —

Riding under the full moon on the Ferris Wheel last
night 40 years ago,

grabbing the brass ring from the horse riding up and
down whirling slowly ecstatically to carousel
toot tune

repeated, the floating balance and calm of marijuana
meditation

Now Mindy her second daughter's alive young
vegetarian eyes

by the ocean at Long Beach, in the run down section
cleaned white in late May shine —

So return through the past to this moment on Route 36

Sandy Hook to Perth Amboy

past Exxon whose gas our car burns the Rockefellers —

David

they say wants to be loved liked respected — as long as he's loved and
pharmacied —

I was car sick on the bus to Morristown, Naomi in

Greystone that war year? she too afraid of

Hitler —

my first mother a victim of persecution of Jewess crazed by Earth Electric

Meanwhile I went to the shore every year from 1935 till World War II

when I went to High School and campaigned for Irving

Abramson for Congress

& lost to Congressman Gordon Canfield Republican

Isolationist

I write newsletters to Paterson papers, thirteen years old saved vast clipping
pix of Hitler and

Hindenburg blow up

Claire whirling away at dances with her boyfriends, a normal Jewish crowd

that went to showers and proms. When I think of the

bodies chill graves coffins & absence —

Then Claire grew up and got married to Jerry Gorlin

and moved to the ocean library in Rumsen,

NJ —

Cornell Hospital later rosey on the bed, hair cut for cancer therapy, I gave
her a Buddhabook —

Sudden hearted Death, old Claire young cousin Claire

Louis, Rose, and Claire, names returning from Belmar

through Perth Amboy and the Raritan River

Bridge, outlooking Raritan Bay

— distant towers of World Trade Center, passing White Gas tanks flat on
the marshes of Linden

Watercastles and barber-striped transmission towers

electric-armed with wires

& smokestacks smelling industrial not far from Louis

graveyard

Cracker stacks and flues & ironstairwayed metal tubes smoking at
Elizabeth's border

& the big brown gas tanks sinking into earth on their skeleton struts —

Newark airport, insurance buildings at left hand New

York's skein of towers resting on the right

horizon

Railroad *Southern* red cars under Jersey City's red-brick church, green-copper spiked under blue sky

Look how bright Manhattan! towery below the hill, car graveyard by the Turnpike,

Higher than Empire State

Mayor Hague's Hospital, scandals not run properly

my Grandmother didn't like the way she was treated.

Past the Exxon sign thru Holland Tunnel's bathroom-polished tile

Good old N.Y. cobblestoned and sunny

—*May 20, 1978*

Published in: *American Poetry Review*, vol. 8, no. 3 (May/June 1979), p. 26.

[A Brief Praise Of Anne's Affairs](#)

She was born in Greenwich Village

She saw Gregory Corso ambling

by MacDougal Street looking for an angry fix

She has a mother who translates

the Greek poets including Sikelianos

She has affairs with Poets & Poetesses,

Novelists, Bards & Carpenters

She has affairs with international
Shamanic minstrels dancing naked
She has affairs with herself on the side
like anybody else
She sits & meditates & prostrates
She has affairs with books
she writes, publishes, copulates
gives birth to books
She's been around the world to
Amsterdam and Kathmandu
She comes back & has affairs with
Buddha inside out in 10 directions
She goes away again like a
princess covered
with diamonds & has affairs
with sapphires
emeralds, amber & rubies
She had an affair w/ the ancient
Christian Church St. Marks in the
Bowery lasting a decade till

the church burned down

She has affairs with William S.

Burroughs when he isn't

looking and when he is

looking

She edits Full Court Books

like a basketball queen

She coordinates the J.K. School

of Disembodied Poetics with

her left pinkie and a

nervous breakdown full

of personal perfumo

She sings Contralto verses

like a 19th century opera

star

She orates her vowels like an

owl, she whistles consonants

like a fragile canary

She flies over her house in

Boulder like an eagle

She's friends with Andrei
Voznesensky, Chögyam Trungpa
& Bob Dylan
She belongs in the White House
surrounded by coke-sniffing
Vajrayana bureaucrats
She eats she sleeps she shits &
pisses with ordinary mind
She teaches Apprentices
how to listen like Plato
She knocks me out, she thrills
my bones, she supports my
skull with her right hand
She's the Muse of Naropa
She's 80 years old in Ted Berrigan's
whitehaired mind
She's Anne Waldman

—August 2, 1978

Published in: *Possible Flash*, no. 1 (1979), pp. 17–18.

[Popeye and William Blake Fight to the Death](#)

(by Kenneth Koch and Allen Ginsberg)

[Note: Ginsberg's lines are in bold.]

Popeye sat upon his chair,

Reading William Blake.

Blake got up and screamed out there,

“This seaman is a fake.”

I as William Blake complained

Of Popeye reading me.

William Blake could not attain

My great Popeye sublimity.

William Blake sat there and stared,

At Popeye's bulging muscle.

William Blake had never dared,

To engage him in a tussle.

Mary Blake however, sat,

Right next to Olive Oil,

And cooked her spinach in a pot,

In fact was Mary's foil.

Mary Blake washed underwear,

While Sweetpea crawled about.

Mary Blake she wept a tear,

And Sweetpea gave a shout.

//

Mary Blake in London town,

Said, “Why is Popeye present?

I think I’ll walk old Bill around

And try to shoot a pheasant.”

Mary Blake on Primrose Hill,

Saw Alice called the goon,

Wonderland it was presumed,

To see the beast so soon.

Mary Blake’s apocalypse,

Popeye’s Deuteronomy,

Made her kiss Bill on the lips,

And praise his male economy.

Bill and Mary sat down nude

And tried to read the Bible.

Mr. Stothard came in rude,

And acting rather trodled

Mary Blake said “Popeye, there,

Sweetpea and Olive Oil,

Please throw Stothard through the air”,

Popeye began to boil.

Mr. Stothard was a friend,

of Popeye and the Blakes,

Wandering wall-eyed through the streets,

Your rhymes are somewhat fake

Stothard, he could never rhyme

And he could never spell,

William Blake both at one time,

Could do it rather well.

William Blake a vision had,

Of Popeye high ascending.

For Milton was that little lad,

With Heaven’s azure blending.

William Blake said, “Milton sir,”

And Popeye answered “Dearest.”

Please come back to earth bestir,

For earth is quite the clearest.

Milton floating in the air,

was really Popeye reader.

Said however, “I am there”,

Then Blake declared a battle dire

On Milton and his spirit

And he threw Popeye in the fire

You’d think that that would clear it.

But Popeye rose a stronger man,

The modern spirit lighting.

And closed the Blake up in a can,

On nightmares they were riding.

Then Popeye cried, “I’ve won the battle.”

And Blake said “Down the shade,”

And Olive said, “You’ve quite a clout,”

And Mary stayed unlaid.

Somehow our subject ought to be

The battle of these Titans.

However Allen as you see,

We haven’t got to the fightin’.

There has been combat old and new,

And yet what was the issue?

Something to do with shades and you,

And Olive frail as tissue.

Something to do with Blake's foresight

And Sweetpea's backward looking.

Something to do with Mary's fright,

And Olive's awful cooking.

Milton entered in the air,

And flew above the comics.

Blake in the morass floundered there,

And wrote on many topics.

//

Thus we end the contest new,

Which Padgett has suggested.

Thus the last line given to you,

We don't know who was bested.

— *St. Mark's Poetry Project, New York, May 9, 1979*

Unpublished.

[For School Kids In New Jersey.](#)

Dawn I've been up all night answering letters

— Now to write a poem for 360 child poets:

Don't grow up like me, you never get enough sleep!

It's 6 AM, my friends are arguing, crying in the kitchen Sausages are
smoking on the stove, the poor pigs,

Taxis are passing down Avenue A to work

Buses are grinding down the street empty

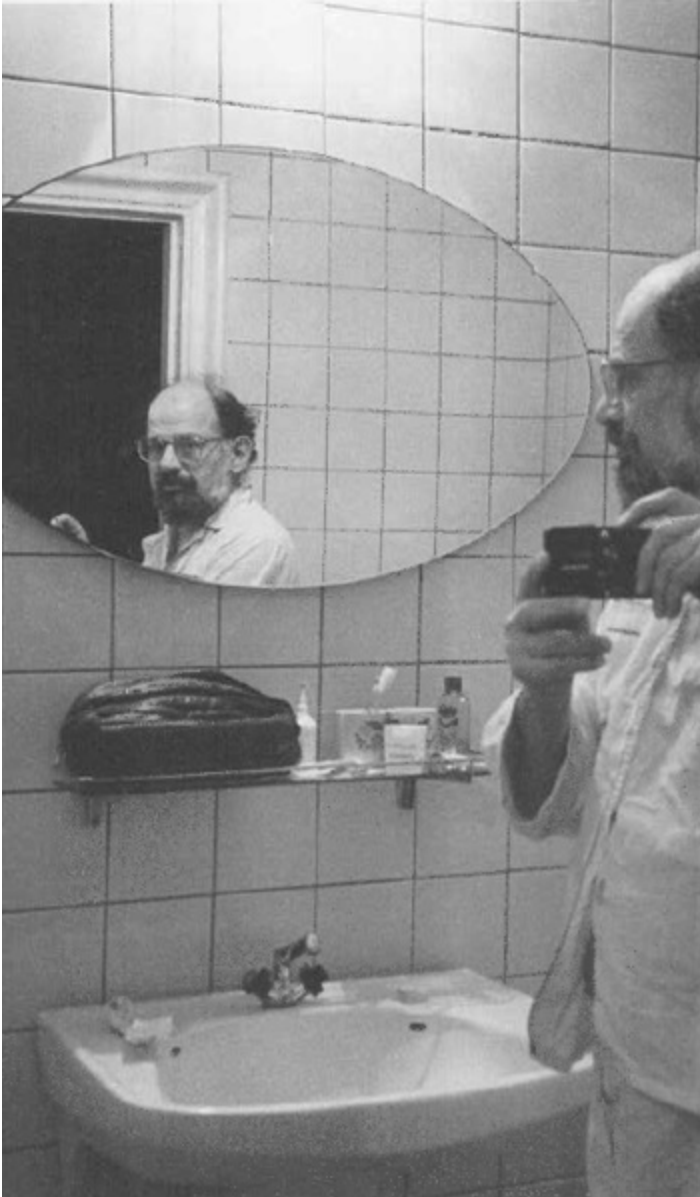
Birds are twittering on the church steeple, cats
yowling in the alley,

Punk Rock's already playing on the phonograph

— It's Thursday October 4th, time to go to bed.

—*New York, October 4, 1979*

Published in: *Wit and Whimsy*, vol. 2 (June 19, 1980), p. 3.



1980s

Second Spontaneous Collaboration Into the Air, Circa 23 May 1980

(by Ted Berrigan and Allen Ginsberg)

Playing tapes of Woody Guthrie singing “Dust-
Pneumonia Blues”

We drove two hours across sun-baked pleasant hilly

Oklahoma landscape

Chatting about the latest war propaganda news

In a red Ford, rich man's car & all the gossip we could scrape

Up from the sandstone ruins of Arlo's father's hillside house —

Bearing freshly removed gifts, shingle nails, to take back to New York City friends

We sat awhile, stood awhile, scratched our heads, &

searched out a little mouse

It wasn't a mouse, it was a man from Wisconsin, who'd also come to see Woody's house! Then

I walked by myself down the dirt alley & saw a shack

where no one lived with a large TV

And when I rose from meditation you led us down the

mockingbird lane & showed that shack to me

An old grey-haired woman eating peanuts out of her

hand & putting them into her mouth

Came through the screen-door onto the porch to feed

her cat while we stood looking south

We snapped our photographs in Oklahoma looking

downhill on the plains

There were four of us & now we're gone & Woody's

house remains.

—*May 23, 1980*

Published in: *United Artists*, no. 11 (September 1980), p. 28.

[A Tall Student](#)

A tall student

walks down the mall

in full moonlight

passing silent window displays

where naked mannequin

observes her fingernails

— *Boulder, CO, ca. July 1980*

Unpublished.

[Poem]

[Good God I got high bloodpressure answering](#)

letters from Germany, Argentina, France!

I should meditate under the clouds again.

— *ca. December 1980*

Unpublished.

[Amnesiac Thirst For Fame](#)

An “autograph hound” armed

with a golden platter and a

gun

kneeled before John and

killed the Beatles.

A stringy-haired artist

tiptoed thru St. Peter's

and unsculpted

Michelangelo's

polished marble elbow with a

hammer,

Christ defenseless lying in his

stone Mama's arms.

Staring out of the canvas

under their Feathered Hats

Rembrandt's Night Watchers

were blind to the Slasher

that tore thru their coats with

a razor.

Did someone steal Mona

Lisa's smile forever from

the Louvre?

— *ca. December 8, 1980*

Published in: *Rolling Stone*, no. 335 (January 22, 1981), p. 70.

[Poem]

[A knock, look in the mirror](#)

“Reagan’s been shot”

The click of the door.

— *Boulder, CO, March 30, 1981*

Published in: *Shearsman*, no. 7 ([first quarter] 1982), p. 31.

[**The Black Man**](#)

in shiny

leather cap and neat jacket

held up his aluminum splint

bandaged finger

Shouting to the subway tunnel’s tile walls

“Dirty Nigger! Dirty Nigger!”

all the platform’s length

under 14th Street —

Continued grieving crosstown

“Dirty Nigger! Dirty Nigger!”

through the crowded car
till the last stop, “Shut up!
Shut up!” at the exit door
a half-white lady hissed
And far down the 8th Avenue platform’s
forest of iron pillars
“Dirty Nigger! Dirty Nigger!”
still echoed —
Climbing the subway stairs
I still heard the distant
“Dirty Nigger” voice as I walked
42d Street underground
to the Port Authority Bus Terminal
—*New York, March 30, 1981*

Published in: *American Poetry Review*, vol. 14, no. 6 (November/December 1985), p. 16.

Thundering Undies

(by Allen Ginsberg and Ron Padgett)

Passing through Manhattan’s sodium vapor sidestreet
glare
with pink electric powderpuffs overhead,

mmmmm, that Catholic churchwall's old as Science
tho Science is older, but O please don't tell me about it tonight,
no pain please in the strange spring light,
tho my baby's waiting on the corner with 160 pounds of meat
on her 148 bones all for sale for 25 bucks.

Furious & Aurelius, now that we're back in town, tell her to take cosmetics
from the air, and let the dark blue city sift slowly down to where lamplight
shadows her checks

& her lips shine dayglo purple moist with sperm of her 300 adorers

— O come let us adore her, weird Madonna of the street and not in real
great shape, though we're in far-off

Elsewhere

with our sad souls and aching teeth! Too late for old loves,

but a little nosegay of pansies cut by Time's tractor where

the pasture meets the dirt road and my heart meets the flower bed

dug up years ago to make East 12th Street, where you

float

a little off the ground, thinking of the withered posy of pussy-willows cox-
stamens & rosepetal lips dumped in the garbage can by unthinking lovers I
used to sleep & giggle with,

crazed, hateful & disappointed, Catullus.

—April 21, 1981

Published in: *Mag City*, no. 12 (1981), p. 16.

Trungpa Lectures

Now that bow arrow brush & fan are balanced in the
hand

— What about a glass of water? —

Holding my cock to pee, the Atlantic gushes out.

Sitting down to eat, Sun and Moon fill the plate.

—*July 8, 1981*

Published in: *Mag City*, no. 12 (1981), p. 15.

Pinsk After Dark

(by Ted Berrigan and Allen Ginsberg)

Reborn a rabbi in Pinsk, reincarnated backward time

I gasped thru my beard full of mushroom barley soup;

two rough-faced blonde Cossacks, drinking wine,

paid me no heed, not remembering their futures —

Verlaine & Rimbaud.

—*February 12, 1982*

Published in: Anne Waldman, ed., *Nice to See You: Homage to Ted Berrigan* (Coffee House Press, 1991), p. 116.

Two Scenes

(by Ted Berrigan and Allen Ginsberg)

Time Mag's Central American Expert sd

Gen. Haig was "an asshole" —

What a surprise in private on the telephone,

we dated each other up for next Thursday.

I stood outside the Kiev tonight, nose pressed

to the plate glass, feet freezing

in city mush, and watched two aging lovers

inhale their steaming bowls of mushroom barley

soup.

—*February 12, 1982*

Published in: Anne Waldman, ed., *Nice to See You: Homage to Ted Berrigan* (Coffee House Press, 1991), p. 118.

[Listening To Susan Sontag](#)

All the Centuries are the same.

Up to date, fashionably dressed in

skin, hair, worm mucous,

bark & feather

Fire burns continuously in the

hearth pit

warmth beats thru hearts,

footsteps walk to the grave

hole

or pass out the cemetery at the

low gate in the iron fence

to the grocery store on the hill,

Chautauqua Meadows

past caves & pine woods to the

mountain wall Flatironed

against blue space

Clouds float above

as sailed over Jurassic

Dinosaur heads lifted staring

higher than palm fronds

at the shining wall where Michael

stands on the gate house arch

with brilliant sword

waiting to usher in the next

Millennia's five billion

skulls.

Amazed Generation! Found Generation!

Diamond Generation! Brainwashed

Generation! Amnesiac

T.V. Bureaucracy Voidoids!

New Wave Punk Generation!

Neutron Bomb blast Babies!

Apocalypse Spermatozoa!

Did you grow up imbibing

Microchip sex waters?

Will you marry me in the

next Millennium?

Must I wait for the Great Year?

The only thing different Century

after Century

is the sun rises in a different

Fish or Water Pot

every two Millennia!

But that's already happened 167,000 times!

—*April 22, 1982*

Published in: *City*, vol. 1, no. 9 (1984), pp. 61–62.

You Want Money?

You want money?

fill out the forms

the universe will unroll its endless bank notes at this majestic stroke of your pen

money from Chilean coal miners' sweat in Loda
mineshafths

money from whales' ambergris

opium clipper ship profits from Indochina

luckor laundered by the CIA through the Buck Rogers

Foundation in the 21st century

peace money plucked from Venezuela by Chase Bank

pouring black gold on Wall Street

What?

yours for the asking

all the empty diamonds of South Africa

multi-national sapphires

blue oceans of desire

emeralds dragged up from Amazon River bottom by Mr.

Ludwig and U.S. Steel

Ford's amber pennies,

Rockefeller's oily rubies red as boy's blood in Bolivia walk off with the
treasury building under your left arm like a kiddie bank on Market Street

pick up the Federal Reserve and put it in your back
pocket

paper money, thin as dreams

take a wasted tree write your own tender

sign your own name as if you were a Secretary of the
Treasury

this suffering money comes from nowhere, goes
nowhere

this unborn money's made by labor millions who cut
coastal forests

sucking oil up in Evanston Wyoming

dredging uranium on gold peninsulas aboriginal
preserve

burning electric to fuel book sights for pots and pans that bit your ears off in
Santiago

rob the bank and scatter money back to the trees and fields and mountains

spend on art with ever returning agronomy

beautiful speech, practical windmills

children's meditative pencils

nightsoil recycled to daylight meadows

walnut forests green shade legible flowers

hazel nut shaded city streets

labor intensive persimmons near the Great Lakes' clear blue.

— *Boulder, CO, April 28, 1982*

Unpublished.

Cats Scratching

Cats scratching my leg, nails in my raw skin,

pulling at wool pants' threads —

Shall I sit here dignified & let you scratch me to Death or rise from my chair, angry, at war with white kittens?

— *ca. April 1982*

Published in: John Castlebury, ed., *Windhorse* (Samurai Press, July 1982), p. 50.

[Poem]

I used to live in gay sad Paris!

Decades in taxi-honk New York!

Smelly London, watery Venice,

Bright Tanger, and dark Benares!

Now I meditate in the mountains.

— *Boulder, CO, May 1982*

Published in: Karel Appel, *Street Art* (H.J.W. Becht, 1985), p. 249.

[Poem]

[As the rain drips from the gutter on to the bushes of the imperial court lawn](#)

And a motorcycle putters up Cascade Avenue

The ice cream man having delivered his sandwiches

The poets began to consider their minds

— *The Drawing Room, the Kalapa Court, Boulder, CO, July 26, 1982*

Published in: *Friction*, vol. 1, no. 2/3 (Winter [February 27, 1983] 1982), p. 82.

[Poem]

[Having bowed down my forehead on the pavement on](#)

[Central Park West](#)

By the car wheels of the guru

Whose vehicle I had once stolen in the presence of my father

Having taken a vow to be his love-slave

For this and other lifetimes, if any

Having been humiliated in my Ginsberg-hood and

praised for the same Ginsberg-hood

I accept the homage of my teacher-pupil and remain

with my forehead on the pavement at his feet.

— *The Drawing Room, the Kalapa Court, Boulder, CO, July 26, 1982*

Published in: *Friction*, vol. 1, no. 2/3 (Winter [February 27, 1983] 1982), p. 84.

Far Away

They say Blacks work sweating
in hot mines thousands of feet
deep in mountains of South Africa
to bring up gold & diamonds shining
on earth into the hands of White
bankers, politicians, police & armies.

—November 8, 1982

Published in: *American Poetry Review*, vol. 14, no. 6 (November/December 1985), p. 16.

Back To Wuppertal

Back to Wuppertal
in a car, thru snowy forests
Belgium to Köln and
the highway filled with trans-European trucks
Peter barefoot
his toes on the dashboard, I was
humming
base thump parts to “Airplane Blues”
Steven reading Lennon’s last conversation in a book
—Jurgen Schmidt in his silk foulard

sparkled with sequins
driving & thinking, “Netherlands fields
pass by, I stay;
I pass by, Netherlands fields remain”
and threw up his right hand remembering
he just thought that.

—*February 4, 1983*

Published in: Joachim Ortmanns and Wolfgang Mohrhenn, eds., *Al en Ginsberg on Tour February 16, 1983* (Lichtblick Video, 1983).

[Am I A Spy From The Moon?](#)

Am I a Spy from the moon?
a lunar Communist?
A Capitalist Counterrevolutionary
from the land of Big Prick?
No I just wandered in from
the Buddhafields
for a cup of bloody tea.

— *Wuppertal, West Germany, February 16, 1983*

Published in: *United Artists*, no. 12 (January 1981), p. 100.

[Poem]

[Awakened at dawn trying to run away —](#)

Got caught dream

shop-lifting

—*August 1983*

Published in: *Notebook*, no. 3 (April 1984), p. 4.

[Poem]

[Grey clouds hang over](#)

Flatirons

Boulder hangs under

sky —

Brown leaves fall down

—*November 1, 1983*

Published in: *Daily Camera* (November 20, 1983), Sunday Camera Magazine section, p. 1.

[1/29/84 N.Y.C.](#)

Up late Sunday, late nite reading thru New York Times Danced slow motion
Tai Chi once,

boiled water, hot lemonade purifies the liver

Twice more the 13 steps of Tai Chi,

cleaned my face, teeth, altar in my bedroom,

filled seven brass cups with water & laid them out

straight rowed

Sat for an hour — Why'd the *New York Times* call Living Theatre riffraff?

Has CIA taken over culture? am I a mad bohemian with
bad bile?

The steamheat radiator burned down ancient forests,
my window was open, excess heat escaped

I could hear chattering & cries of children

from the church steps across the street —

well dressed adults stepped out fur collared

as I looked up from my pillow —

hundreds of fluffy snowflakes filled the air

above East 12th Street's lamps & cars

floating down like dandelion seeds from grey sky

floating up and drifting west and east by the fire escape.

—*New York, January 29, 1984*

Published in: Alan Moore and Josh Gosciniak eds., *A Day in the Life*. (Evil Eye Books, 1990), pp. 132–133.

CXXV

Surviving death,

Feminine-jawed Williams: grey Rutherford house-gable

Tara, Quan Yin, Kannon

“Same eyes as an Indian holyman”

Avelokiteshvara

whose fingers touched the window on Ridge

Road “There’s a lot of Bastards out there.”

Bunting stands on a marble floor, my *Kaddish*?

“Too many words ...”

Sd the *Newcastle Times* Financial Editor

on marble lobby floor

“Salutations dear Bunting, I’m leaving for yr

Istanbool”

So, blond hair to shoulder, Newcastle Tom

Pickardsnapped his photo

— *ca. April 1984*

Published in: *Unmuzzled Ox*, vol. 12, no. 2 (issue 24) (1986), p. 17.

[Rose Is Gone](#)

Rose is gone

from Stuyvesant Town

died when I was away

92 years old —

my mother’s Communist friend

Rose Savage

— died a couple years ago
When I was teaching in Buddhaland —
She had Man Ray paintings
on her wall
and my mother Naomi screamed for her
at 288 Graham Avenue in 1937
thinking the Murderers were
at large
— Then I got mad at her defending Stalin
when she was old half deaf, her voice cracked
white handed in her apartment —
vegetables, nuts, bananas and carrots —
a little boiled chicken — in her ice box
She couldn't get around after 1978
couldn't walk to the Safeway.

//

II

Where's Rose? Where's Naomi?
Where's our old apartment
on East 7th Street?

—June 24, 1984

Published in: *Camp Kerouac Summer '84* (Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics Summer Writing Program/Naropa Institute, July 1984), p. 40.

[Poem]

3'd day down Yangtze River, yesterday

passed vast mountain gorges and hairpin
river-bends, mist sun and cement factory
soft coal dust everywhere, all China
got a big allergic cold. Literary delegation
homebound after 3 weeks, now I'm
traveling separately like I used to — except
everywhere omnipresent kindly Chinese
Bureaucracy meets me at airports & boats
& takes me to tourist hotels & orders meals. I'm
trying to figure a way out — envious of 2
bearded hippies traveling 4th class in
steerage eating tangerines & bananas —
sleepers in passageways on mats, Chinese
voyagers playing checkers. Saw Beijing,
Great Wall, tombs & palaces, Suchow's

Tang gardens, Hangchow's West Lake walkway
dyke to hold the giant water in years of drought
built up by governors Tsu-Tung-Po and Po-Chu-I.
Saw Cold Mt. Temple w/ Snyder who'd
head its bell echo across ocean.

— *China, November 11, 1984*

Published in: *Big Scream*, no. 20 (February 15, 1985), p. 4.

[African Spirituality Will Save the Earth](#)

Seattle Gospel Chorus

clap hands

raise your voice

shake your ass

save the earth

Bluefields Moravian church amazing

the whiteheaded virgins dissolve in three-chord

harmony

Praise The Lord!

Wrap around the May Pole

tears in your eyes

freedom of the body

trust the Lord the heart energy
clap your hands
have a dream in Bluefields
bow down to the imperial crown
the lone May King
too old to dance except shuffle the streets
just at the right time
nods approval, applauds the chorus
break down your empire O armed victor
animosity
— *Bluefields, Nicaragua, January 29, 1986*

Unpublished.

[Face to Face](#)

Face to face
with silent grace
Take your place
in the old rat race

— *ca. February 1986*

Published in: *Poetry Project Newsletter*, no. 119 (February 1986), p. 7.

[Who's Gone?](#)

Edith Sitwell's gone
and Frances Waldman too
Cyril Connolly you know who
Tom Driberg far away
Lionel Trilling's gone
so's Mark Van Doren
Raymond Weaver and Professor Andrew Shapp
Kerouac Cassady Lew Welch
Poor Bobby Kaufman who lived upstairs on Second
Street
John Lennon and Robert Kennedy
several presidents I never met
my mother Naomi, my father Louie
W.H. Auden and Chester his lover Kallman
Cannastra and Dorothy Day
Catholic Workers gone underground where worms
make hay
many others
Rose Savage, Man Ray,
my Aunt Rose, sad Lady Day

Charlie Parker, Thelonious Monk and Martin Luther

King still young

Ahh David Kennedy gone

Ahh Hibiscus

Kenneth Rexroth, Kenneth Patchen

young John Hoffman

so long ago, what he looked like I don't know

all these gone, I'll be gone too

Going where my old Dean McKnight went

Dwight Macdonald, and Joan Vollmer and Tom

O'Bedlam

Ian Sommerville and Michael Portman

Jimi Hendrix and Howard Alk

if they went out how could I balk?

Jim Morrison, Janis Joplin

I never met with Charlie Chaplin

Bertrand Russell sent me a letter

I got sick and felt even better

I've tried honesty boiled in oil

digested by ego loving gargoyle

Enough, I gotta go to sleep at night all alone
I've no wife my eyes closed without the moon
I've stayed up midnight till afternoon.

— *Naropa, Boulder, CO, ca. May 22, 1986*

Unpublished.

[Bob Dylan Touring with Grateful Dead](#)

Bob Dylan Touring with the Grateful Dead
acid crowd federal narcs in the capitol, alert alert, Now's their chance
Boy George already forgotten in headline video
pleads new songs even in pain
indifferent yuppie high school tank topped athletes
shudder blonde bodies vomiting in the back seat
car crashed into an Iowa lamp pole
better not get high in the Detroit stadium naked for the narcs, a bust, a bust
the agricultural poet drunk in his red bikini in the
Buddhist garden
if I feel dread, what feels he alone with his family crazy in outer Long
Island?
Where can he go with alcohol and the landlord's
eviction notice comes to us all?
gentrification will oust us from our nest

where put books and file cabinets heavy with paper gold?
Wake, smoke another cigarette with aching back
the last in breath through cancered throat
too late to go back to college a smokeless virgin
lead a purist spotless life of commercial crime
unfair, an 80-year old stepmother's bride broods in her garden apartment
who'll change the light bulb,
climb up on the ladder and fix the triumph of death on the wall?
Have I learned the *Book Of The Dead* in time?
breathing Manhattan's springtime
bomb Libya,
Ukrainian wheat crop poisoned by radioactive burst
whispers in the UN corridors 70th floor
the Secretary General sees a black cloud approach
over Queens and Brooklyn in a hundred years
down the street Gregory takes a joint by Dag
Hammarskjöld's private bus stop
the driver smelt incense, out into the kiosk he whispered to the supervisor
What's that smell? Is that a police patrol by the fire hydrant?
Where will the drunken farmer go if they kick him out of the Buddhist
retreat?

the sky turned black

dread heaven over Columbia Library dome

and later in the bookstore, animal clerks glared

wounded behind the cash register

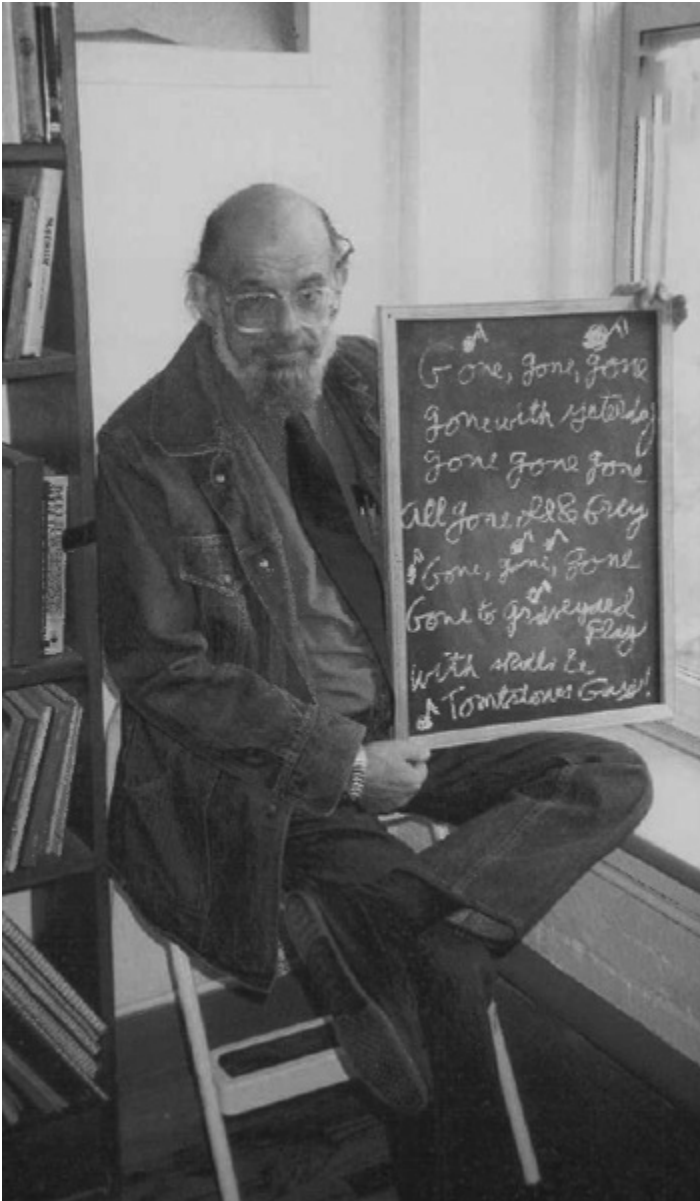
skeletons standing in place behind the counters and

shelves

filled with Plotinus and Sir Thomas Aquinas.

— *ca. May 22, 1986*

Unpublished.



1990s

Asia Minor for Gregory.

Sunset, a marble tea table on Kusadasi's
hotel yacht harbor, I remembered
a stork flapped wings upward meeting atop one
ragged column

left of old Cybele's Artemisium at Ephesus, favorable omen;
Halicarnassus' mausoleum a wonder vanished from
Bodrum's coast
a million glass shards left over, shipwrecked six
Moslem centuries past;
The Pythian Oracle's Divinity fled Didyma to
Earth's bowels early in the last millennium,
At sunset Apollo's columns echo with
the bawl of one God;
Looking for words at Pergamum, only
a one-walled shell
stands on a peaktop over plain,
Hippocrates' library shipped to Alexandria long
ago
Zeus and Diana's marble loins raptured to
London Paris & Berlin;
Musician & poet sit silent on a long stone
bench in fig tree shade
with Croesus above Aphrodesia's weedy
Stadium

Go roar thru sulphurous dawn's rosy haze
heavenward over Homer's odorous Smyrna
to meet United States of America's Jewish
Ambassador to Ankara.

— 8 a.m., June 29, 1990

Unpublished.

[Poem]

[The moon in the dewdrop is the real moon](#)

The moon in the sky's an illusion

Which Madhyamaka school does that represent?

—Rocky Mountain Dharma Center, CO, August 1991

Published in: *Shambhala Sun*, vol. 1, no. 5 (January/February 1993), p. 57.

[**New Years Greeting**](#)

(for Ron Padgett)

It is a beauteous evening calm and free

Spanish voices on Our Lady Help of Xtians steps

a new year's come, eternity & I can't eat baloney

& avoiding any salt probably can't drink Schweppes.

You got to hand it to the Doctor's Hospital

Your heart your liver kidneys and arteriosclerosis

Fortunately sick going in I came out well
Before my time the threat of Death a nosy gnosis
This can't go on forever short of breath weak heart
Wasn't my fault don't drink don't drive don't smoke
don't stir sugar in my coffee don't you start
up with me 'bout eating bacon sniffing coke
I could have suffocated didn't but live on
upon this earth I walk and eat and write this poem to Ron.

—*New York, 2 a.m., January 4, 1992*

Published in: *The Northern Centinel*, vol. 205, no. 4 (Fall 1993), p. 8.

[Hermaphrodite Market](#)

I bought a
pretty boy
at the hermaphrodite
market and
lived happily
ever after.

I sold a
sweet thing
at the hermaphrodite

market &
went home
happy.

—*May 2, 1994*

Published in: *Ma!*, no. 7 (ca. 1994), front cover.

Last Conversation with Carl or In Memoriam

[re: Twin Towers Explosion on TV]

Carl: It's a real turn-on
to be well and functioning
in the middle of the mess.
It's hard to find
anything real because
the physical thing
changes so quickly
you don't know which way to turn
because ... I'm incontinent
... don't know the proper way
to behave ...
I hope my suffering
doesn't last too long.

So maybe pneumonia
will do it in like my mom
Pain I haven't had
to deal with much
lately ... they've got
me on the anti pain ...
and they also insist
on the oxygen which
is no longer too meaningful
to me. No longer
effective
I feel like my mother's
way — go off into pneumonia
and heart failure ... but
my heart is too damn
strong ...

Allen: What do

you think death is?

Carl: Death is a fading away —
which I'd like to go easily

like my mother ... imitate
my mother ... this last
year of grace has been
excessive — I just want
to get it over with —
I just want to say a
few words about (the literary scene
of) Kerouac Burroughs
There's not much more
for me to say anyway, but
it's been a lot of fun
At that time it was
very exciting to me —
I wasn't that mad,
I was intellectually adventurous
and interested myself in Artaud and
I was a loner — even
in my own family circles
I was a loner — intellectual
eccentric — How much

recognition I got from

my family? I got very little

I guess. (coughing)

It's like strangulation ...

As who'll take me back to my room

For a while I was very

serious about surrealism —

It was just another movement

I was serious about these

movements —

Allen: Do you feel I did the wrong

thing putting the spotlight on you

by using your name in “Howl”?

Carl: You gave me my first

outlet in *Neurotica* — for

some recognition ... I guess

it went to my head

The life I spent was all right

I'm dying of lung cancer

an unusual thing — can't

bother to figure it out.

Too bad if I was foolish,

it won't matter much much

longer. I hope I

get out without too

much agony. For my mother

it was nice, she just waved

waved good-by.

I was there before

she died ... (then) they notified

me about my mother

Then I felt my repson—

sibility was really over.

I spent the next year

just wandering about ...

until this

It was a wonderful

year — wonderful and

meaningless with

my mother gone ... I had

no responsibility ... I had
a girlfriend Elaine ... now
she claims she loves me ...
marry me, all kinds of
things —

**Allen: Kerouac stuck by his
mother**

Carl: “Boys and their mothers”

The beats were kind of a
Cosmopolitan grouping, some from
the suburbs, some from the
inner city, and some people
wanted to be beats, some were
real beats, some made believe they
were and they weren't.

A mid-century

Cold War hang-up ...

So I'm still somewhat
reluctant to say good-bye —

I don't know why I'm

hanging on so desperately ...

It's just hard to let

go ... you hang on

with a kind of bulldog

rapacity ... I suppose

like people being executed ...

the animal in it is still

there

Carl to Allen: except

... you're really

looking good ...

You look younger

to me — spirits are young —

Rabbi was here — He said

he'd pray for me ... That's

about it ... The Jewish

thing is OK — I let it

pass ... This is a formal

social status — against

which I make no challenge ...

Back in room, with oxygen
mask.

Allen: Does it help?

Carl: it relieves me a little,
makes it a little better.

(Carl volunteered) ... One thing that
still interests me is sex

(gestures towards his lap)

I looked at him grizzled
and thin, but calm, seemed to've
gained strength, up on pillow
bed head raised a bit so he
wasn't flat, a bed by window
in a two man room, other bed
leathery and empty.

**Allen: You mean even now, you have
enuf strength to be interested
in that?**

Carl: Yes ... my last sex was with ...
8 months ago — I had

the strength & acquitted
myself adequately. So I feel
I'd fulfilled my last responsibility.

— *VA Hospital, Bronx, NY, February 26, 1993*

Published in: *Poetry Project Newsletter*, vol. 149 (April/May 1993), pp. 6–7.

[Dream of Carl Solomon](#)

I meet Carl Solomon.

“What’s it like in the afterworld?”

“It’s just like in the mental hospital.

You get along if you follow the rules.”

“What are the rules?”

“The first rule is: Remember you’re dead.

The second rule is: Act like you’re dead.”

— *ca. 1996*

Published in: Marc Olmsted, *Don’t Hesitate: Knowing Al en Ginsberg* (Beatdom Books, 2004).

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And last but not never least, Judy Matz has remained steadfast in her support of this work and this editor for more than forty years. To her I dedicate this and all my efforts.

Notes

1940s

Rep Gordon Canfield

In the fall of 1942 Republican incumbent Gordon Canfield (1898–1972) ran for reelection in New Jersey’s Eight Congressional District. It was Ginsberg’s home district and the sixteen-year-old Allen helped campaign for the Democratic nominee, Irving Abramson, who lost to Canfield.

We leave the youthful pennants and the books,

This poem was selected as the class poem for Ginsberg’s Eastside High School in Paterson, New Jersey. At his twenty-fifth high school reunion in 1968 Ginsberg read his poem again and commented: “Oh well, there it is. Doesn’t seem to be much change in the world after twenty-five years.”

A Night in the Village

After Ginsberg arrived at Columbia College in 1943 he began to frequent Greenwich Village with his new friends: Lucien Carr, William S. Burroughs, David Kammerer, and Jack Kerouac.

This poem may reflect on common moments they shared as they visited the neighborhood bars looking for new experiences.

As Robert Genter wrote in “‘I’m Not His Father’: Lionel Trilling, Allen Ginsberg, and the Contours of Literary Modernism” in *College Literature*, vol. 31, no. 2 (Spring 2004): “In poems such as ‘A Night in the Village’ Ginsberg paid strict attention to the length of his poetic line and the closeness of his rhymes. But while he followed the New Critics in their concern with the ideological and political claims attached to poetry by liberals and communists alike and the theoretical arrogance of science

which subordinated the little details of human existence to the strictures of categorical claims, Ginsberg began to reject their intense focus on form as the only source of the poetic transcendence of everyday life.”

Epitaph for a Suicide; Epitaph for a Poet

Only a week after Lucien Carr (1925–2005), a close friend of Ginsberg, killed his gay stalker, David Kammerer (1911–1944), Allen wrote these two poems. Originally the first poem was titled “Epitaph for David Kammerer,” but to hide the identities of the people involved Ginsberg renamed it “Epitaph for a Suicide” even though his death was far from suicide. This is the first time the two poems have been published together.

Behold! The Swinging Swan

This poem was included in a letter Ginsberg wrote to his friend Jack Kerouac. Some of the lines later turned up in a collaborative poem the two wrote called “Pull My Daisy.”

1950s

Her Engagement

Following William Carlos Williams’s suggestion that he look to his prose for poetic inspiration, Ginsberg went back to his journals, rearranging many passages into verse. This prose journal description of a dream was created in 1952, but reappeared as a poem in 1955.

What’s buzzing

This poem was written while Ginsberg was living in San Jose with Carolyn and Neal Cassady.

Unbeknownst to Carolyn was the fact that Allen and Neal were having a sexual relationship behind her back.

Thus on a Long Bus Ride; *We rode on a lonely bus*

In late December 1954, Ginsberg met Peter Orlovsky (1933–2010), the young man who became his life's companion. While living in San Francisco the two took many bus trips together, one of which must have occasioned this earlier memory. Allen liked it enough to include it in a letter to Jack Kerouac, and then reworked it for publication in *Yugen*. Both versions are included here.

There's nobody here

Carolyn Cassady kicked Ginsberg out of the house when she caught him in bed with her husband, but Neal frequently visited Ginsberg in his San Francisco apartment at 1010

Montgomery Street in North Beach.

On Nixon; Chain Poem

Richard Nixon was vice president under Dwight D. Eisenhower from 1953 until 1961. This poem was a collaborative effort by Ginsberg, Corso, and Kerouac. Later, in May 1979, Allen wrote the following about the poem. "This poem was written in a bar on Broadway near 110th Street Manhattan, soon after the Vice-President's celebrated Checkers Speech, at a time when Kerouac was besieged by *Esquire*, *Vogue* or other slick magazines to write "timely"

articles on subjects editors thought modish. On this visit he had refused to write a "critique of American women," and said with a wry world-weary cry, "We ought to make 1500 dollars right now, write a big attack on American Women!" By applying some literary detective work, it appears that this poem must have been written either in late 1956 when the three were in Mexico City or in early 1957 before Corso left for Europe. Nixon's Checkers speech was given in 1952, but Allen didn't meet Lafcadio until 1955, so Allen has mistaken the date.

The Real Distinguished Thing

Ginsberg was given the anesthesia laughing gas or nitrous oxide on several visits to the dentist during the late 1950s. He said that it was the first time

he really felt that life was just an illusion. In later years he said that laughing gas helped turn him into a Buddhist.

1960s

To Frank O'Hara & John Ashbery & Kenneth Koch

While on a trip to South America, Ginsberg tried to interest Lawrence Ferlinghetti in publishing some of the New York School poets he knew. Here he composed a poem in their style.

***Ayahuasca*—**

Ginsberg defined ayahuasca (*yagé* or *soga del muerto*, a *Banisteriopsis caapi* vine infusion used by Amazon *curanderos*) as a spiritual potion, used for medicine and sacred vision.

Walt Whitman

Ginsberg excerpted this poem from what he called “a longer poem on politics.”

Tokyo Tower

After a lengthy trip to India, Ginsberg stopped to visit Gary Snyder and Joanne Kyger in Kyoto, Japan. On his way back to America he passed through Tokyo and spent a few days enjoying all the luxuries he had missed during his year and a half in India.

B.C. [Bob Creeley]

This poem was written shortly after Ginsberg had participated in the Vancouver Poetry Conference organized by Robert Creeley. Attached to the manuscript was a note from Allen to Creeley saying, “Battered that out last night, trying to approximate your style, the middle stanza almost makes it no?, but the last line sing-songs bad ...”

War Is Black Magic

On October 30, 1963, Ginsberg joined several hundred picketers who were protesting a visit to San Francisco by Madame Nhu, the powerful wife of South Vietnam's secret police chief.

Allen composed this poem then put it on a poster that he carried all day in what was his first of many demonstrations against the Vietnam War.

Journals November 22, '63

President John F. Kennedy was killed by an assassin's bullet in Dallas on November 22, 1963.

Ginsberg, like most Americans, followed the events on television and wrote this poem.

Line 6: Robert McNamara (1916–2009) was the U.S. secretary of defense at the time.

In a Shaking Hand

This poem was composed while riding on Ken Kesey's bus "Furthur" back to New York City from Millbrook, New York, where they had been visiting Timothy Leary at the Hitchcock family mansion. Neal Cassady was driving the Day-Glo-colored psychedelic school bus and Allen titled it "Shaking — because the bus shook me."

Line 5: Shabda yoga is a spiritual form of yoga concerned with the power of words, sounds, and music.

Little Flower M.M. [Marianne Moore]

Ginsberg was asked to write a poem in honor of Marianne Moore's seventy-seventh birthday.

At the time she was living at 260 Cumberland Street in Brooklyn, hence the references to the bridges, the Navy Yard, etc.

New York to San Fran

During the mid-sixties Ginsberg began to compose poetry while he was in the process of traveling. He often carried a portable tape recorder with him to record on the spot. “New York to San Fran” was composed in a notebook during one of his cross-country flights. It is one of the best results of that process but he never collected it into a book, perhaps due to the length.

Line 7: Adlai Stevenson II (1900–1965) was a politician who ran for president in 1952 and again in 1956. He died in London while on a diplomatic trip.

Line 58: Hudson River.

Line 99: Mauna Loa is a volcano in Hawaii.

Line 194: Otto Klemperer (1885–1973) was a German composer and conductor of classical music.

Line 204: *The Satan Bug* (1965) was the in-flight movie shown on this trip. It dealt with the theft of a dangerous virus by terrorists.

Line 239: Herbert Huncke (1915–1996), a writer and longtime friend of Ginsberg’s, grew up in Chicago.

Line 274: The *Mainliner* was the airline’s complimentary magazine.

Line 284: While in Benares, India, Ginsberg lived near the Dasawamedh Ghat, the steps that led down to the Ganges, frequented by pious Hindus and beggars alike.

Line 288: During the Vietnam War, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, was used by North Vietnamese troops as a staging area.

Line 299: Joliet, Illinois, is the home of a well-known prison.

Line 322: Reference to the poet Hart Crane (1899–1932).

Lines 363–64: Reagan and Dr. Baxter were characters in the film *The Satan Bug* that he was watching on the plane.

Line 368: Although Adlai Stevenson was born in California, he was closely identified with

Illinois and Ginsberg probably believed that he had been born there.

Line 389–98: Random quotes from *The Satan Bug*.

Line 485: References to the Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko (b. 1932) and Lubyanka, which was the headquarters of the KGB in Moscow and served as its prison as well.

Line 486: Spoleto was the location in Italy of an international festival of the arts.

Line 492: Democrat/Republican.

Line 500: Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, is the site of a maximum security American prison.

Line 505: At one time the Potala Palace was the residence of the Dalai Lama in Lhasa, Tibet.

Line 511: John Wieners (1934–2002) was an American poet and author of *The Hotel Wentley Poems*.

Line 574: San Francisco, where Ginsberg had once lived.

Line 598: The Belvedere was a complex of Baroque buildings in Vienna.

Line 615: Charles Olson (1910–1970) was an American poet and the author of *The Maximus Poems*.

Line 650: Mount Tamalpais is the highest mountain peak in the San Francisco Bay area.

Liverpool Muse

After being expelled from Prague, Ginsberg arrived in England, saw Bob Dylan perform, and was immediately swallowed up by the music scene

surrounding groups like the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. He began to quote a paraphrasing of Plato, “When the mode of the music changes, the walls of the city shake.” The new music gave him hope that things were changing in the world for the better.

Line 3: The Sink Club was a Liverpool jazz club that featured the Motown sound.

Line 16: The Yoruba are an African people.

Entering Kansas City High

In early 1966 Ginsberg and Peter Orlovsky drove back home to New York from California via Kansas where their friend and poet Charles Plymell had lined up several readings for them.

Busted

On June 14, 1966, Ginsberg testified about his own drug use before a special subcommittee of the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary. This poem reflects some of the opinions that he shared with them.

Nashville April 8

Ginsberg and civil rights activists Martin Luther King Jr. and Stokely Carmichael spoke at the 1967 IMPACT Symposium held at Vanderbilt University on April 8.

After Wales Visitacione July 29 1967

“Wales Visitation” is considered to be one of Ginsberg’s greatest poems of the period. This is a

continuation of that poem written at the same time and under the effects of LSD.

Line 19: The Llanthony Valley is in southeast Wales.

Lines 50,52: Both Lord Hereford's Knob and Capel-y-ffin are in southern Wales.

Mabillon Noctambules

The title refers to a Paris metro station near where Ginsberg and his father stayed on the elder Ginsberg's first trip to Europe.

Line 1–2: Noctambules, Old Navy, and Lipp were Parisian cafés where Charles Baudelaire might have hung out.

Line 14: Guillaume Apollinaire's love affair with Marie Laurencin broke up on the Mirabeau Bridge.

Line 16: One of Tristan Tzara's favorite cafés was Deux Magots.

Line 18: Antonin Artaud (1896–1948) was a renowned French playwright and poet.

Line 19: Henri Michaux (1899–1984) was a Belgian-born poet who lived on Rue Segur.

Line 44: *Jamais*, French for “never.”

Line 54: The White Queen was a café near Ginsberg's hotel at the time.

Lines 56–60: La Cloiserie des Lilas was one of Hemingway's favorite cafés and the “Great Lesbians” must certainly refer to his friends Gertrude Stein and Alice Toklas.

Genocide

Line 1: LeRoi Jones (1934–2014) was an African American poet and friend of Ginsberg's who changed his name to Amiri Baraka a few years before this poem was written.

No Money, No War

For a decade the Vietnam War was paramount in Ginsberg's mind as it was for many Americans. At one point he decided to stop paying taxes toward that war and he urged others to do the same.

1970s

May King's Prophecy

On the fifth anniversary of Ginsberg's election as the King of May by the students of Prague he was in New Haven, Connecticut, in support of a strike organized by Yale students.

Hum! Hum! Hum!

In the winter of 1970–71 Ginsberg was asked to be one of the judges for the National Book Award for Poetry. He became enraged when his fellow judges selected Mona Van Duyn over Gregory Corso and he wrote this poem in protest.

The world's an illusion

When a group of New Jersey high school students asked Ginsberg to write a poem for their yearbook, it gave him an opportunity to exercise his wry sense of humor.

Reef Mantra

While on a reading tour to Australia with Lawrence Ferlinghetti, they stopped over in Fiji for a few days. Ginsberg composed several songs and a few short poems including this one and the next.

Postcard to D

While still in Fiji Ginsberg wrote this postcard to Bob Dylan, which took the form of a poem.

Inscribed in George Whitman's Guest Register

George Whitman (1913–2011) was the owner of Le Mistral Bookshop at 37 Rue de la Bûcherie, Paris, from 1951 until 1964. At that time he changed the name to Shakespeare and Company in honor of Sylvia Beach's bookstore of the same name.

Line 9: Jonathan Robbins was a young American poet and friend of Ginsberg.

Line 10: Brion Gysin (1916–1986) was an artist and the co-inventor with William S.

Burroughs of the cut-up method of writing.

On Farm

For several years Ginsberg lived on a farm near Cherry Valley, New York. This poem was part of a letter Allen wrote to the poet Gary Snyder.

Wyoming

This poem was written in Wyoming while Ginsberg was on a Buddhist retreat with his meditation teacher Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche.

Exorcism

This poem was really a curse on Nelson Rockefeller (1908–1979) who had been New York's wealthy governor from 1959 until December 18, 1973. His term ended just a few weeks before the poem was written.

Line 21: The Attica, New York, prison riot took place in September 1971. A total of thirteen guards and inmates were killed during the uprising. Rockefeller famously refused to visit the prison to negotiate a peaceful settlement.

Eyes Full of Pitchpine Smoke

Ginsberg owned land adjacent to Gary Snyder in the Sierra Mountains of California. Allen and Gary collaborated on this poem while Allen was building his own cabin there.

Line 6: The Greensfelders were neighbors.

Spring night four a.m.

In early May 1976, the Eighth Street Bookshop, owned by Ginsberg's friends Ted and Eli Wilentz, caught fire. A reporter taped Ginsberg's eulogy for the store, which became this poem.

Line 8: Amiri Baraka, aka LeRoi Jones.

Louis' First Night in Grave

When Ginsberg's father died he was buried in the family plot. The cemetery was in an industrial area near the Newark Airport.

Line 10: Rose Gaidemak was Allen's aunt.

Line 32: The Ginsberg family often spent summer holidays at the seaside resort of Belmar, New Jersey.

Line 58: Naomi Ginsberg was Allen's mother.

Line 73: Edith Ginsberg was Allen's stepmother and Louis Ginsberg's second wife.

Kidneystone Opium Traum

While taking medication for kidney stones Ginsberg recorded the following dream. The form of the poem was inspired by Michael Brownstein (b. 1943), a poet Allen knew from New York's Lower East Side.

Homage to Paris at the Bottom of the Barrel

Philip Lamantia (1927–2005) was a surrealist poet.

Ginsberg's poem was inspired by Lamantia's work.

Verses Included In *Howl* Reading Boston City Hall Occasionally Ginsberg tailored new lines for old poems for particular audiences. In 1978

he added these lines to his poem “Howl” for a reading he gave in Boston after the police arrested twenty-four men in Revere, Massachusetts, for making gay porn with underage boys.

No Way Back to the Past

This poem was another one based on Ginsberg’s childhood memories of the summers he spent in Belmar, New Jersey.

Line 48: Ginsberg’s mother, Naomi, spent a good deal of time as a mental patient in the Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital in Morris Plains, New Jersey.

A Brief Praise of Anne’s Affairs

Anne Waldman (b. 1945) is a poet and was co-director with Ginsberg of the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics, part of the Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado.

Line 5: Angelos Sikelianos (1884–1951) was a Greek poet who was once nominated for the Nobel Prize.

Line 26: Waldman was also the director of the St. Mark’s Poetry Project in New York between 1968 and 1978.

Lines 48–49: Andrei Voznesensky (1933–2010) was a Russian poet and longtime friend; Chögyam Trungpa (1939–1987) was Ginsberg’s Buddhist meditation teacher and the head of the Naropa Institute.

Line 62: Ted Berrigan (1934–1983) was a poet and a friend of Ginsberg’s and Waldman’s.

Popeye and William Blake Fight to the Death

From time to time Ginsberg collaborated with other poets. On several occasions he and poet Kenneth Koch spontaneously exchanged improvised lines with one another on the stage at the St. Mark’s Poetry Project. On this particular occasion it was at the suggestion of poet Ron Padgett, as mentioned at the end of the poem.

Line 13: It would appear that Ginsberg incorrectly thought that William Blake's wife's name was Mary, perhaps confusing her with Mary Shelley. In fact William Blake was married to Catherine Sophia Boucher. The editor considered changing the name throughout the poem, but that would give a different syllable count to the lines, so a note will suffice. The form chosen was a ballad and each poet had to improvise alternate rhyming lines in real time in front of an audience.

Line 35: Thomas Stothard (1755–1834) was a British painter and engraver who worked with William Blake.

1980s

Second Spontaneous Collaboration Into the Air, Circa 23 May 1980

Line 5: Arlo Guthrie (b. 1947), Woody Guthrie's son, is also a musician.

Good God I got high bloodpressure answering

More and more frequently Ginsberg's declining health began to creep into his poetry and occupy his mind as the years passed.

Amnesiac Thirst for Fame

Following the murder of John Lennon on December 8, 1980, by a "fan," Ginsberg began to think about the price of fame, something that he had always sought.

A knock, look in the mirror

Following the assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan on March 30, 1981, Ginsberg asked his class to write a poem about the moment they heard the news. This was Allen's own contribution.

Thundering Undies

In 1981 Ginsberg and Ron Padgett wrote this chain poem together paraphrasing an ode by Catullus in imitation of a poem by Sappho.

Pinsk After Dark

At this time Ted Berrigan was helping to edit Peter Orlovsky's book of poetry entitled *Clean Asshole Poems and Smiling Vegetable Songs*. Berrigan was to die suddenly on July 4, 1983.

Two Scenes

Line 5: The Kiev was one of Ginsberg's favorite all-night diners. Now closed, it once served mushroom barley soup at Second Avenue and 7th Street in New York's East Village.

Listening to Susan Sontag

In 1982 writer Susan Sontag (1933–2004) spoke at Naropa as Ginsberg's guest. Here Allen referenced many specific Boulder sites such as the Chautauqua Meadows and the Flatiron Mountains.

You Want Money?

Ginsberg wrote this poem in response to a preface in a book about obtaining foundation grants.

I used to live in gay sad Paris!

In May 1982 the Dutch artist Karel Appel visited Naropa and collaborated with Ginsberg on several paintings. Allen wrote this poem on one of Appel's canvases.

Having bowed down my forehead on the pavement on Central Park West

Line 2: Ginsberg was once forced to take a cab that was waiting for Chögyam Trungpa.

Back to Wuppertal

Ginsberg wrote this poem and the following one "Am I a Spy from the Moon?" while on an extended reading tour through Europe. Peter Orlovsky was traveling with him and was experiencing severe drug- and alcohol-

induced outbursts. Even in the winter snow of Eastern Europe Peter preferred to wear shorts and go barefoot. Steven Taylor was Allen's musical accompanist for the trip and translator Jurgen Schmidt went to several German venues with them.

Line 11: Foulard is a necktie.

Grey clouds hang over

Line 2: The Flatirons were a range of mountains near Boulder, Colorado.

CXXV

This poem was written and titled in the tradition of Ezra Pound's *Cantos*.

Line 2: William Carlos Williams (1883–1963) lived on Ridge Road in Rutherford, New Jersey, when Ginsberg had visited him years earlier.

Line 8: Basil Bunting (1900–1985) was a British poet.

Line 13: Tom Pickard (b. 1946) is a British poet.

Rose Is Gone

Line 12: When Ginsberg was eleven years old he lived with his family in an apartment building at 288 Graham Avenue in Paterson, New Jersey.

Line 24: In 1952–53 Ginsberg lived in an apartment at 206 East 7th Street in New York where he snapped some of his most famous photographs of Kerouac, Burroughs, and Corso.

3'd day down Yangtze River, yesterday

Late in 1984 Ginsberg visited China with a delegation of American writers including Gary Snyder who is mentioned at the end of this poem. When the rest of the writers returned to the United States, Allen stayed on to teach until the end of the year.

African Spirituality Will Save the Earth

Near the end of January 1986, Ginsberg returned to Nicaragua at the invitation of poet Ernesto Cardenal (b. 1925). Allen had first visited in 1982 and he was interested to see what had happened to the Nicaraguans' revolutionary spirit in the intervening years.

Bob Dylan Touring with Grateful Dead

Line 10: These and later references to a drunken farmer refer to Peter Orlovsky.

Line 12: Around this time the rents in the East Village began to soar due to gentrification, but Ginsberg was able to keep his rent-controlled apartment for another ten years.

Line 28: Gregory Corso.

1990s

Asia Minor for Gregory

Gregory Corso had a great love for the ancient world, and while Ginsberg was touring Greek ruins in the Aegean with his friend and musical collaborator Philip Glass he wrote this poem for him.

Line 1: Kusadasi was a resort town in Turkey.

Line 8: Bodrum is the contemporary name for the ancient port city Halicarnassus.

The moon in the dewdrop is the real moon

Line 3: Madhyamaka refers to the Mahayana school of Buddhist philosophy.

New Years Greeting

Line 2: Mary Help of Christians Church, torn down in 2013, stood across the street from Ginsberg's apartment on East 12th Street near Avenue A.

Last Conversation with Carl or In Memoriam

On February 26, 1993, a terrorist's bomb exploded in the garage underneath the World Trade Center. That same day Ginsberg visited his old friend Carl Solomon (1928–1993) in the hospital and they watched the television news together. Allen made notes on their conversation, which he later arranged into verse. Solomon died on February 26, 1993, and Ginsberg read this poem at his funeral.

Line 50: Antonin Artaud (1896–1948) was one of Solomon's favorite French
Line 69: *Neurotica* was a little magazine published by Jay Landesman (1919–2011) during the early 1950s. Both Ginsberg and Solomon were contributors.

Notes on the Photographs

1940s. Allen Ginsberg graduated from Eastside High School in Paterson, New Jersey, in 1943 and went on to attend Columbia University. This photograph captures him at his youthful best, eager to experience college life and possibly become a labor lawyer. Before long he would meet Jack Kerouac, William S. Burroughs, and Lucien Carr, and his life would change dramatically. ([Page 1](#)) *Photo credit: © Al en Ginsberg LLC*

1950s. On their first trip to Europe in 1957, Ginsberg & Peter Orlovsky stopped in Venice to visit an old friend, Alan Ansen, and took several trips around Italy from there. Here, Ginsberg poses in front of a torso in the Forum in Rome. He and Orlovsky stayed in Venice for a few months before heading on to visit Gregory Corso in Paris. ([Page 13](#)) *Photo credit: ©*

Peter Orlovsky

1960s. After spending nearly a year and a half in India, Ginsberg stopped in Kyoto, Japan, to visit his friends Joanne Kyger and Gary Snyder. There he had his first training in Buddhist meditation with the help of Snyder, before moving on to the Vancouver Poetry Conference in the summer of 1963. ([Page 29](#)) *Photo credit: © Gary Snyder* **1970s.** In 1973, while visiting Elsa Dorfman at her home in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Ginsberg posed for this picture as he sat on her living room sofa. Allen had known Dorfman since

the late fifties when she worked for Grove Press and later, as a well-known photographer, she made numerous portraits of Allen and Peter Orlovsky. ([Page 97](#)) *Photo credit: © Elsa Dorfman 2016, All rights reserved.*

1980s. In the fall of 1985, Ginsberg visited Vilnius, Lithuania, as the guest of the Soviet Writers' Union. Allen's mother had been born nearby so the area held a special interest for him. While in his hotel room he snapped this self-portrait in the bathroom mirror. ([Page 151](#)) *Photo credit: © Allen Ginsberg LLC*

1990s. In early 1997, Richard Nagler visited Ginsberg in his new loft space above East Fourteenth Street, New York City, where he snapped this photo of him holding his poem

"Gone Gone Gone." ([Page 193](#)) *Photo credit: © Richard Nagler, 1996, 2016. All rights reserved.*

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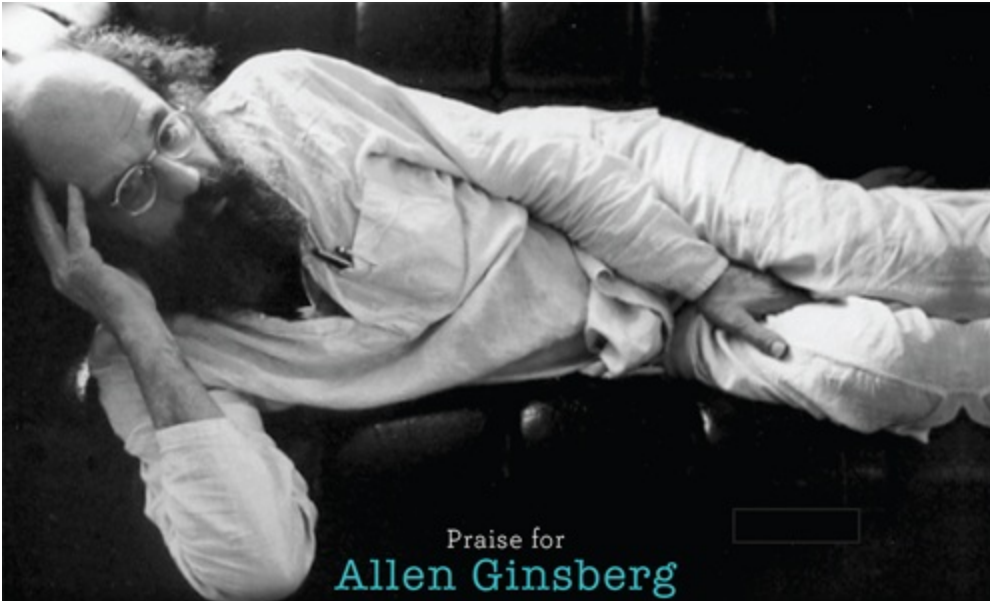
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