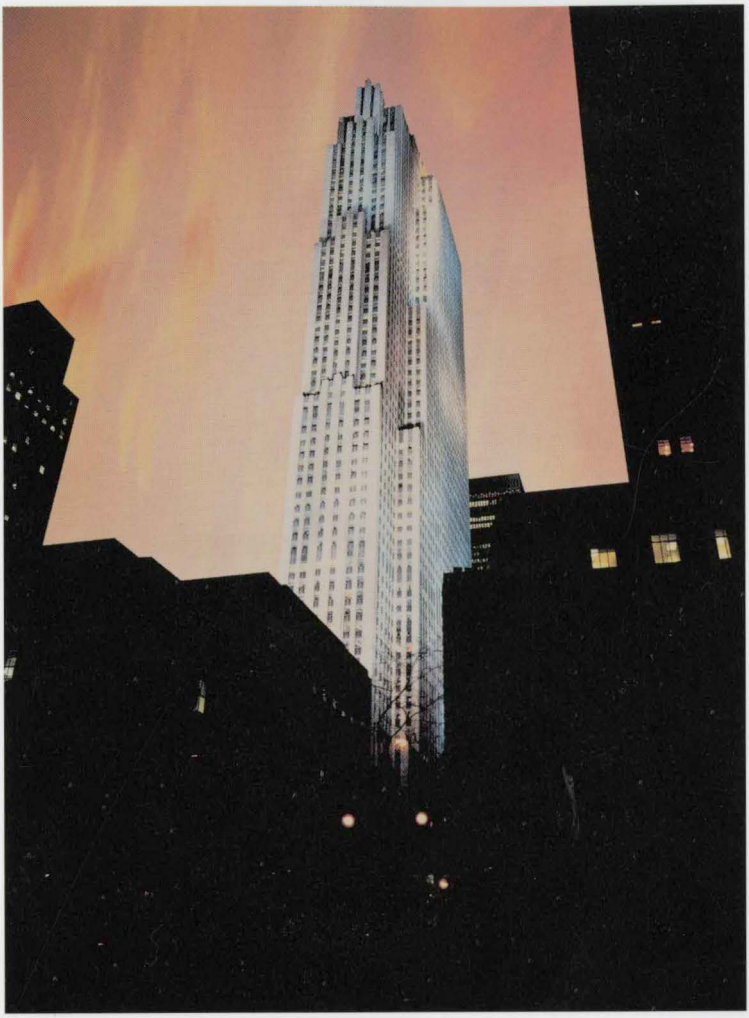
Soundings East

25th Anniversary Issue



Volume 21/Number 2
Spring/Summer 1998

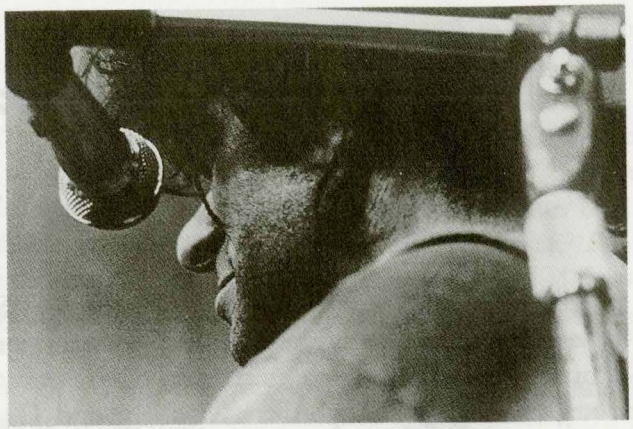
$5.00

The Kerouac Festival Remembered

In April of 1973 a two-day event was held at Salem State College to honor the life and literary contributions of Jack Kerouac. The following pages contain edited transcripts of a poetry reading given by Allen Ginsberg and Gregory Corso, including poems by Kerouac, Ginsberg, and Corso; edited transcripts of a panel discussion involving Ginsberg, Corso, Peter Orlovsky, John Clellon Holmes, Aaron Latham (a Kerouac scholar), Stanley Twardowicz (an artist and friend of Kerouac), Charles Jarvis (University of Lowell, Professor) and John McHale (Salem State Professor and organizer of the event); and other materials generated by the event.

1973 also marked the first year of publication for the Salem State College literary magazine *Gone Soft* (now known as *Soundings East*), and portions of what appear here were first printed in Vol. 1, No. 3. The entire panel discussion appeared as one issue in *Soundings East* Vol. 2, No. 2 Fall/Winter 1979.

The materials here are meant to capture the feeling and intent of the Kerouac Symposium and are reprinted in honor of its 25th Anniversary.



Gregory Corso at the poetry reading.

Guitarist Larry Kiley (left), Allen Ginsberg (center), and Peter Orlovsky (right) performing a mantra to begin the poetry reading.

John McHale

An Open-Hearted Symposium

"The Kerouac symposium at Salem State College, Massachusetts organized by Prof. John McHale marked a watershed in academic recognition: 1973." [Gerald Nicosia, author of *Memory Babe: A Critical Biography of Jack Kerouac*]

On October 21, 1969, Jack Kerouac at age 47 died in St. Petersburg, Florida. At the time I was teaching English at Salem State College, but I neither attended his wake nor his funeral in Lowell, Massachusetts, a mere thirty-five miles away.

I was no stranger to Lowell. In fact, both Kerouac and I were born there, and some of his teachers had been my teachers, and a couple of Kerouac's classmates and fellow athletes were my teachers and coaches. We both attended the Bartlett Jr. High School and were graduates of Lowell High School, he in 1939 and I in 1958.

In September 1957, my senior year, Kerouac's *On The Road* came out and several of my classmates noted that some guy named Jack Kerouac, who had played football and ran track at Lowell High and had served in the merchant marines during World War II, had just published a best seller and was being hailed as the writer who coined the term "Beat Generation." However, the most widely read and discussed book that year at Lowell High was not *On the Road* but Peyton Place (1956) by another New Englander, Grace Melalious.

In the intervening years since Kerouac's death, I regretted not being in Lowell for his funeral that had attracted a host of nationally known writers and friends of Kerouac. Even

worse I had only read one of Kerouac's books, *Visions of Gerard* (1963) and had not even read *On the Road.*

During my undergraduate days (1959-63) as an English major at St. Anselm's College, only one professor ever mentioned Kerouac, and that was because he knew that I was also from Lowell. He wanted to know if I had ever met Kerouac. The answer was, "No." In graduate school, I do not recall any discussion of Kerouac or the Beat Writers. But then again, I was immersed in my study of far more remote authors such as Dante, Chaucer, and Shakespeare. I did take a class on modern poetry, but the Beats were not mentioned there either. It seemed that Truman Capote's assessment of Kerouac held sway in academia. In a 1959 televised interview with David Susskind, Capote said that Kerouac's work was "not writing at all; it's typing."

Haikuouac

Truman Capote
Had a frog in his throat
His name was Kerouac.

By the time I began teaching at Salem State College in the fall of 1966, Kerouac's reputation was sullied and at its lowest ebb. None of my colleagues held him in high esteem, and he was being portrayed as a drunken bum and a cartoon character who made professors uncomfortable. Moreover, he had typed *On the Road* in three weeks and without revision on a teletype roll. How good could it be?

So, when Kerouac died in 1969, I did not attend the wake or the funeral. I felt quite above it. Yet here I was, teaching English at Salem State College, and I had not fully explored our common traits. We were both from Lowell, both former athletes, and both involved with literature, he as a writer and I as a teacher. Writing, like teaching, is a singular and somewhat solitary endeavor. We had that in common, too. And I knew

Lowell. Was I missing out on a rare aesthetic experience by not immersing myself in Kerouac as a writer who portrayed my native city in five of his novels?

Guilt over my neglect of Kerouac kept nagging at me. As fate would have it, I had to spend ten days attending to family matters in Lowell during the summer of 1972, so I read Kerouac's first novel, *The Town and the City* (1950). In it the town, Galloway, is Lowell, and I recognized many of the characters in the book as people I knew.

I also spent some time with an old high school friend, Dick Ouellette, who knew Kerouac's brother-in-law, Tony Sampas. One evening we went to Nicky's Bar, which was Kerouac's hangout for a couple of years before he moved away from Lowell for the last time in November, 1968. Tony managed the bar for his brother and tried to manage Kerouac, whose drinking was out of control.

Tony was very accommodating. He fed my curiosity with stories about Kerouac, and he knew many of Kerouac's Lowell friends from his high school days to the present. Moreover, he had all sorts of memorabilia including old and recent photos, newspaper clippings, magazine articles, and letters to members of the Sampas family, which Kerouac knew from the mid 1930's. Tony's brother, Sebastian, who died in World War II, was a high school friend and poetic inspiration for Kerouac. He was one of the first people who encouraged Kerouac to become a writer. Tony also showed me some unpublished Kerouac manuscripts. I began to realize that Lowell, its people and places, was replete with untapped resources on Kerouac.

I began thinking that maybe the time was right to offer a Kerouac course at Salem State College. In September 1973, I discussed the idea with Dr. Michael Antonakes, Chair of the English Department. I related my summer experiences in Lowell, and said I felt that Kerouac was being seriously neglected by the academic community. Antonakes saw that a

unique opportunity had arisen to offer an innovative course which might anticipate a Kerouac revival. Antonakes knew that Kerouac's last novel, *Vanity of Duluoz* (1968), had sold poorly, but he liked my idea, endorsed the course, and encouraged me onward. Thus I began an extensive effort to read everything I could by and about Kerouac and the Beat writers. The course would be first offered as an elective in January, 1973.

As I began planning the course, my thoughts kept harkening back to the previous summer in Lowell and my talks with Tony Sampas. Many of Kerouac's Lowell friends were still on the scene. In addition, writers like John Clellon Holmes, Gregory Corso, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and Allen Ginsberg, all of whom appear as thinly disguised characters in Kerouac's work, were active in literary circles. The possibility of inviting some of Kerouac's fellow writers and friends to the college began to intrigue me. I felt that an unprecedented opportunity had arisen to evaluate the creativity, imagination, and artistry of Jack Kerouac.

In the autumn of 1972, I asked two students, Steve Salvo and Brian Joyce, coordinators of the annual Salem State College Spring Arts Festival if they would be interested in sponsoring a "Kerouac Symposium" which would coincide with my teaching the course. Without the slightest hesitation, they enthusiastically agreed and set out to secure the necessary funding. The seed had been planted

Then came the question of whom to invite. I recalled seeing a photograph of John Clellon Holmes, Allen Ginsberg, and Gregory Corso at Kerouac's funeral.

John Holmes, whose book *Nothing More to Declare* (1967) contains excellent commentary on the Beat Writers, was the first to be contacted. He expressed great delight and also suggested that we invite Aaron Latham who was working on a Kerouac biography. Ann Charters' biography had not yet been published. Latham accepted our invitation.

Then Gregory Corso came to mind. Few people were familiar with him or his poetry, and I thought an invitation would draw him out of obscurity. However, we had no idea how to reach him. Holmes suggested that the best way to contact Corso was to write to him in care of Allen Ginsberg, in Cherry Valley, New York, and we did. Little did I know how much flavor he would add to the occasion.

Ginsberg was not invited. I did not think we could afford him, and, in all honesty, I was a bit intimidated by his high profile and notoriety. When Ginsberg became aware of our plans, he was disappointed. He called the college and was connected to the office of the Program Council. Coincidentally, I happened to be walking into the lobby of the Ellison Campus Center when a student came running down the stairs and said that Ginsberg was on the phone and wanted to talk with me. Ginsberg was very upset. He told me that he was one of Kerouac's closest friends and considered himself Kerouac's literary guardian. He could not understand why he had not been invited. I started to explain that I didn't think we could afford him because he was a person of national prominence, and I presumed that he would demand a lot of money. Ginsberg was quick to say that money was no problem—something suitable could be arranged. Moreover, he would bring along his long-time friend and minor Beat poet, Peter Orlovsky, who also knew Kerouac. And so it was done.

Stanley Twardowicz, a noted painter, whom I had met through some friends in Northport, Long Island, was also invited not only because he knew Kerouac while he lived in Northport from 1958-1964, but also because he had rare audio tapes of Kerouac and paintings by him. He generously offered to bring them to the symposium.

Professor Charles Jarvis from the University of Lowell (formerly Lowell Technological Institute) was invited. He knew many of Kerouac's friends from high school, including

Sebastian Sampas and Kerouac's wife, Stella. I had read his unpublished manuscript, "Jack Kerouac--Angel Goof," in the Lowell Public Library, and I was aware that he had associated with Kerouac in Lowell during the late sixties. In 1962, Kerouac was interviewed by Jarvis on his WCAP Lowell radio program. Jarvis would add a Lowell perspective and would read his essay prior to the panel discussion.

I also invited Tony Sampas. Being a shy and private person, Tony respectfully declined the offer to be part of the panel discussion, but he was in the audience during the entire two-day conference.

I had no idea how these people would interact. Holmes, Ginsberg, Corso, and Orlovsky had not been together since Kerouac's funeral. As the event approached, I was starting to feel as though I had walked into a minefield, but thanks to two students, Steven Whitten and Frank Minnelli, who kept badgering me with questions to ask and passages to cite, my anxiety gradually diminished, and I began to feel confident that something interesting would emerge, as indeed it did.

Then, and with almost no warning, between the initial planning of the "Kerouac Symposium" and the occurrence of the event, somebody rubbed a magic lamp marked "Kerouac," and a genie was let loose. A Kerouac and Beat revival began. The October 12, 1972, issue of *Rolling Stone* featured a story by Gena Berriault in which Neal Cassady's second wife, Carolyn, discussed her sexual relationship with both Neal and Kerouac. In December, McGraw-Hill published Kerouac's *Visions of Cody* posthumously. On December 2, 1972, the *New Republic* published "Reconsideration: Jack Kerouac" by Crawford Woods, and on the same date Allen Ginsberg's "Introduction to *Visions of Cody*" was published in *The Saturday Review*. Reviews of *Visions of Cody* appeared in major national magazines and newspapers from January through April, the month of the symposium. Almost simultaneously with the publication of *Visions of Cody*,

the first biography *Kerouac* (384 pages) by Ann Charters was published by Straight Arrow. Reviews were everywhere and an excerpt of it was published in *Rolling Stone* on March 29, 1973, one week before the symposium. In addition, the February issue of *Playboy* featured "Gone in October," an account of Kerouac's funeral by John Clellon Holmes, who, as luck would have it, was coming to Salem. To add to this mix, Allen Young published an interview with Allen Ginsberg in the January 1973 issue of *Gay Sunshine* in which Ginsberg discusses his sexual relationship with Kerouac. It was republished in Boston's *The Real Paper* on March 28, 1973, and the April issue of *Esquire* had an article by Gerald Clarke interviewing Ginsberg about his love of Kerouac.

The issue of Kerouac's sexual proclivities was about to be debated for the first time in public. Ginsberg's revelations would be discussed with Kerouac's friends and colleagues. Some of Kerouac's in-laws would be in the audience.

The "Kerouac Symposium" took place over two days. It began in the morning of April 4, 1973, with a showing of Robert Frank's *Pull My Daisy* (1959), a black and white film on the Beat Generation which had become an underground classic. In it, Kerouac speaks the parts for all the characters including Ginsberg, Corso, and Orlovsky, all of whom were in the audience during this showing. In the evening, Corso and Ginsberg gave a poetry reading of works they had written about Kerouac and of some poems they admired by Kerouac. Orlovsky was also on stage, and during the reading, an interesting dialogue developed. A transcription of some of their remarks was published in the Salem State College literary magazine, *Gone Soft* (Spring 1974), now known as *Soundings East.*

The morning of April 5 we presented Kerouac memorabilia, which included an audio tape of Kerouac at a party in Twardowicz's studio loft, paintings by Kerouac, and a kinescope of Kerouac's 1959 appearance on the *Steve Allen*

Show. This rare television clip was made available by Aaron Latham. In it, a charming and handsome Jack Kerouac sheepishly reads, with Allen's piano accompaniment, from *Visions of Cody* while pretending to read from *On the Road*, which he only used at the end. He was "goofing." He was goofing on the audience. He was goofing on his host Steve Allen, and he was goofing on himself. He was in total control and was just goofing around.

Then, in the afternoon, and before an overflow crowd in Veterans' Hall of the Ellison Campus Center, the panel discussion began. Ironically, but not surprisingly, only ten of about thirty-five members of the English Department attended. Some thought they were quite above it -- this hippie/beat literary masquerade.

I gave a short introduction that equated the 1950's Beat era, when Eisenhower was President, to the 1970's and Nixon's presidency: "Another era is yawning." I went on to compare Thoreau's calm pastoral Walden Pond experiences to the frenzied life of Kerouac, as symbolized by Lowell's fast flowing Merrimack River. Jarvis read his essay next and then the panel discussion began. [Transcribed in *Soundings East* (Winter/Fall) 1979].

Afterwards, almost everyone from the panel and their guests went to the Sail Loft in Marblehead for a drink. Ginsberg, Corso, Orlovsky, Twardowicz, my student Frank Minnelli, English Professor George Groesbeck, and I went upstairs to eat. Orlovsky was on a health kick and wanted nothing to do with an establishment that allowed smoking and drinking or, most of all, one that served red meat. He departed to wait in his old run-down car that was in the parking lot at the end of State Street. Orlovsky was clad in a jacket, jeans, and a tee shirt inscribed with slogans protesting "Nixon's War" in Vietnam. The temperature was in the forties, but he refused to waste fossil fuel to heat the car.

Every so often he would jump out of the car and run a few laps around the parking lot in order to keep himself warm.

With the bearded and nationally know Allen "Legalize Marijuana" Ginsberg dining upstairs in the Sail Loft, his broken leg propped on a chair; with the toothless and raucous beatnik, Gregory Corso, writing poems on food order pads and giving them to kids in the restaurant; and with Peter "Stop the War" Orlovsky running laps around State Street, Marbleheaders were afforded a first-hand, 1973 revised edition of the Beat Generation.

After the meal, I invited the group to my apartment down the road. When we arrived, Ginsberg said that he wanted to visit the poet, Larry Eigner, in Swampscott. Eigner was well known to the early Beat writers. He had attended the poetry reading the night before but, because of his confinement to a wheel chair, was unable to attend the panel discussion. Selections of Eigner's poetry had been published in Donald Allen's anthology *The New American Poetry* (1960), an important collection of poetry by post-World War II writers. The book includes works by Kerouac, Ginsberg, Corso, Orlovsky, Ferlinghetti, LeRoi Jones, Denise Levertov, Gary Snyder, and others. Ginsberg wanted to visit Eigner's aging parents to acknowledge their son's influence and importance as a poet. Professor Groesbeck was an aide to Eigner who, because he was palsied at birth, needed assistance with his correspondence and manuscripts. So Groesbeck escorted Ginsberg and Orlovsky to the Eigner home while Corso and others stayed at my apartment, listened to jazz and Verdi's "Requiem," which Corso said was his favorite piece of music.

When Ginsberg returned, he spent an hour reciting, on tape, Kerouac's *Mexico City Blues*. I told him I was having great difficulty picking up Kerouac's rhythm in the poetry, so Ginsberg read several selections in the manner that he was taught to read them by Kerouac himself. Then my

distinguished guests said their goodbyes and drove off to Cambridge.

Since that April of 1973, Kerouac's celebrity and influence have steadily grown. He is one of the most written about authors of the past twenty-five years. His life and literature are the subject of dozens of books and at least five comprehensive biographies, along with video films, plays, and compact disc recordings; and his writing has slowly seeped into college classes.

In the summer of 1982, Ginsberg organized a ten-day conference in Boulder, Colorado, to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the publication of *On the Road*. Affectionately dubbed, "Kamp Kerouac," the event attracted almost every living Beat writer, many of their associates, the major biographers and critics, as well as countless scholars, devotees of Kerouac's work, and me. At last I was able to purge my nagging guilt for not having attended Kerouac's funeral thirteen years earlier.

In June 1988, in the heart of downtown Lowell at the junction of Merrimack Street and French Street Extension, a memorial was dedicated to Kerouac. Designed by Houston sculptor, Ben Woitena, it is in the pattern of a mandala and consists of reddish-brown granite panels inscribed with excerpts from Kerouac's Lowell novels and other works. At the dedication, I recognized only two members from the Lowell High School class of 1958. One was Paul Tsongas, the late and distinguished senator from Massachusetts and an important force behind the project. The other was my oldest friend, Michael Sokolowski, an English teacher at Lowell High School who had attended the 1973 poetry reading at Salem State with two of his students, one of whom, Raymond Foye, went on to become Allen Ginsberg's aide-de-camp. Not only did Foye help organize Ginsberg's correspondence and manuscripts, but he also helped Ginsberg organize his personal collection of photographs of the beat generation.

This resulted in several gallery showings and the book *Snapshot Poetics* (1993).

Today almost all of Kerouac's works are in print. In 1997, *Some of the Dharma* was published nearly thirty years after his death, and Kerouac is among such authors as Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Hawthorne, and James Joyce to be included in the Viking Portable Library series. Salem State College offers only two English courses designated by an author's name. One author is William Shakespeare; the other is Jack Kerouac.

Every year "Lowell Celebrates Kerouac! Inc." sponsors events and conferences on Kerouac. No less than the National Park Service, the Lowell Heritage State Park, and the Lowell Historic Preservation Commission have been involved with Kerouac activities.

Yet, through it all, Kerouac continues to be a subterranean, almost cult figure. He is still not fully accepted by traditional academicians. Despite being linked somewhat surreptitiously with commercials, his reputation is generally spread by word of mouth, and those who read him generally consider themselves part of a private club with an interest in something that has not been fully absorbed by the sponge-like public media. His grave in Lowell is like a shrine. People visit, leave poems, drop flowers, and pour wine (coals to Newcastle) on his grave.

Kerouac, the man, is filled with contradictions, and maybe that is part of the appeal. In a review of John Antonelli's film *Kerouac*, the critic Michael Wilmington writes, "The keys to Kerouac probably lie in . . . oppositions: wanderer-homebody; conservative-anarchist; gay-straight; hobo-success; devout-drunk; lout-literature. In him one sees both sides of America: sunlight and shadow, rebellion and establishment. These naked contradictions are the sources of his dynamism."

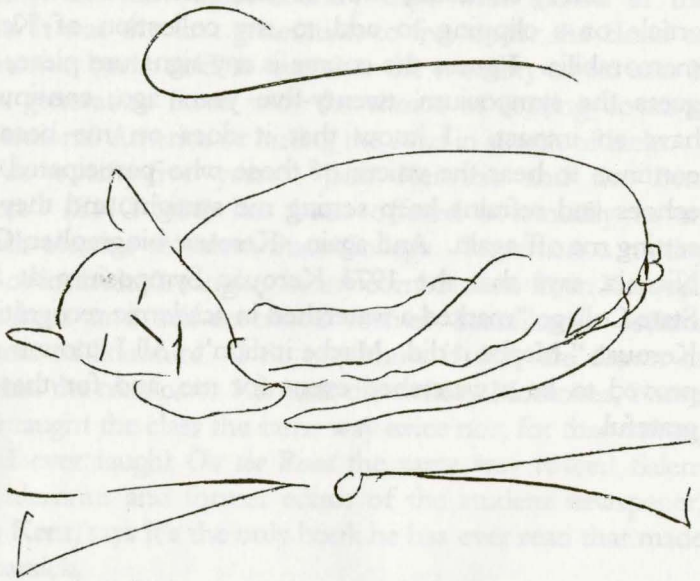
Kerouac, the artist, is unique, and maybe that is part of the appeal, too. Before the advent of the portable tape recorder, home movies, and the videocam, Kerouac went on the road as a writer determined to capture the spirit of his generation. It was a generation that had lived through the trauma of World War II. It was a generation with great mobility: the car. Cross-country trips with $25.00 in the wallet! It was the first generation to live under the cloud of the atomic bomb and to question the morality of its use. It was a generation faced with the choice of settling down in conventional America or hitting the road in search of kicks.

For twenty-five years, "Jack Kerouac and the Beat Writers" (ENG 486) has been offered bi-annually as an English elective at Salem State College. It attracts a motley array of individuals ranging in any combination from Kerouac wannabees and self-described former beatniks to serious students of literature. I do not know if they are drawn to Kerouac the man or to Kerouac the writer. Moreover, I have never taught the class the same way twice nor, for that matter, have I ever taught *On the Road* the same way twice. Salem State alumnus and former editor of the student newspaper, Chris Kent, says it's the only book he has ever read that made him carsick.

In December 1997, the Boston Athenaeum literary discussion group met in the Trustees' Room to discuss *On the Road* as part of their theme: "Journey to the Inner Hero." It attracted about fifteen members ranging from thirty to over seventy years of age, and nobody left the room during the hour-and-a-half discussion. Their takes of *On the Road* were vast and varied. One thought it was an adventure book; another thought it was about prolonged adolescence. One thought it was sad; another thought it was joyful. One was upset over the portrayal of women; another said it was an example of bop-jazz writing. I said it was about a generation with post-World War II jitters.

As I drove home that night, I thought about the discussion, and how everyone has something different to say about the book. I was not alone, nor am I the only one who finds the book to be elusive. Nobody reads it the same way. Maybe that is why *On the Road* is an American classic, underground perhaps, but an American classic nonetheless.

Every semester, without fail, someone sends me an article or a clipping to add to my collection of Kerouac memorabilia. I guess the course is my signature piece, and I guess the symposium, twenty-five years ago, continues to have an impact. I know that it does on me because I continue to hear the voices of those who participated. The echoes and refrains keep setting me straight, and they keep setting me off again. And again. Kerouac biographer, Gerald Nicosia, says that the 1973 Kerouac Symposium at Salem State College "marked a watershed in academic recognition of Kerouac." Maybe it did. Maybe it didn't. All I know is that it proved to be a watershed event for me, and for that I am grateful.



Whatever it is, I quit
- Now I'll let my
breath out —

Poetry Reading
A Tribute to Jack Kerouac

College Auditorium — April 4, 1973
Salem State College — 7:30 PM
Salem MA

Poetry read by Allen Ginsberg and Gregory Corso with occasional comments by Peter Orlovsky: Marblehead musician Larry Kiley on guitar accompaniment.

Ginsberg: . . . the first mantra I ever heard was this, "Three Refuges" sung by Kerouac in a Frank Sinatra mode.

Ginsberg and Orlovsky: (Chanting)
Buddham saranam gocchami (I take refuge in Buddha)
Dhammam saranam gocchami (I take refuge in the truth)
Sangham saranam gocchami (I take refuge in the church)

Corso: You know, Allen, Buddha sucks, really. It doesn't make it no more, Buddha. He don't.

Ginsberg: Om Ah Hum. Why? Tell me, Gregory, why does Buddha suck?

Corso: Allen, this was Jack's shot, right? Jack brought Zen Buddhism to this country. All right? Why, he didn't take the dumb ass Buddha shot. Buddha sat forty years under a tree trying to find out what death was, and he suddenly realizes after forty years, "Ah! Life is the cause of death." That dumb ass took forty years for that shot. Right? Jack hit Zen with a sharper number that through the years got refined. Right? How you handle yourself in life and all that. That's what it is, Zen Buddhism. Right? That's what he brought over . . ..

Orlovsky chastises Corso and the audience for smoking and drinking then Corso follows with a discussion of sex and longevity. Next he acknowledges Beat novelist John Clellon Holmes.

Corso: [To Holmes] Hey, John, how do you like your green-armpit-imagery-Gregory? The first time I met John Clellon Holmes I showed him my poetry. He said, "Green-armpit imagery." Oh, good God! There was a lot of that, though, in those days.

Nationally known Swampscott poet Larry Eigner exchanges comments from the audience with Corso concerning the fragility of the planet and how its survival is being threatened.

"The Town and the City Sonnet," by Kerouac. Recited by Ginsberg.
"The Shrouded Stranger," by Ginsberg. Recited by Ginsberg.
"Pull My Daisy," by Ginsberg, Kerouac, and Neal Cassady. Sung by Ginsberg.

Ginsberg: What I'll be doing is reading poems relating to Kerouac or mentioning his name, or written with him in mind, from early times on.

"Malest Cornifici Tuo Catullo," by Ginsberg. Recited by Ginsberg.
"Dream Record: June 8, 1955," by Ginsberg. Recited by Ginsberg:

...Jack still jumps
with the same beat genius as
before,
notebooks filled with Buddha.

"Sunflower Sutra," by Ginsberg. Recited by Ginsberg.

Corso: Al, should I read some? Should we break it up? . . . Because we don't rehearse nothing. Right? The things I'll do are the things that Jack Kerouac dug of mine and the elegy I wrote for him upon his demise.

From "Mexican Impressions," by Corso. Recited by Corso.
"Sea Chanty," by Corso. Recited by Corso.

Corso: It's ["Sea Chanty"] a heavy. Well, anything that goes into the ocean comes back. Right? It returns back to the shore. Well, anyway, that's a sixteen-year-old heavy.

Ginsberg: What year was that?

Corso: 1964 . . . That's before I went to prison, Allen. A lot of people think I went to prison to learn. Bullshit. I had it before I went . . . That was the first one I ever wrote . . . He [Kerouac] dug this one ["The Mad Yak"]. Because Jack, like I said, brought the Zen Buddhism thing, and when he did, this what inspired me for it. I said, "Oh, if these Buddhists are so great in Tibet, why do they fuck up the yak so much? That poor yak. They use it for everything." So what I learned about this poem, it's called "The Mad Yak," I put myself as being that mad yak, but I made myself a female yak. [Laughter] Here we go.

"The Mad Yak," by Corso. Recited by Corso.
"This Was My Meal," by Corso. Recited by Corso.
"The Last Gangster," by Corso. Recited by Corso.

. . .

"Fragment 1956," by Ginsberg. Recited by Ginsberg.

From Mexico City Blues, *by Kerouac. Read by Corso. "230th Chorus," "19th Chorus," and "74th Chorus."*

Ginsberg: "Ignu" is a word invented by Kerouac who used it in general currency around 1946 or '49. I think he uses it in *Mexico City Blues* for a Gnostic ignoramus, a great bullshit artist, girls. A Gnostic ignoramus, someone who is suffering in the dark night of the soul and the great cloud of unknowing. Someone like Harpo Marx or [Neal] Cassady or the Three Stooges – ignus.

"Ignu," by Ginsberg. Recited by Ginsberg.

Corso: I want to be real sharp and nice with all of this gentlemen. Right? . . . What I got to lay down is a heavy here. This I wrote is called "Elegiac Feelings American" -- for the dear memory of John Kerouac.

Last stanza of "Elegiac Feelings American," by Corso. Recited by Corso:

In Hell angels sing too
and they sang to behold anew
those who followed the first Christ-bearer
left hell and beheld a world anew
yet with guns and Bibles came they
and soon their new settlement became old
and once again hell held quay
The Archangel Raphael was I to you
And I put the Cross of the Lord of Angels
upon you... there
on the eve of a new world to explore
And you were flashed upon the old and darkling day
a Beat-Christ boy... bearing the gentle roundness of things
insisting the soul was round not square

And soon... behind thee
there came a-following
the children of flowers

. . .

Ginsberg: "A Scripture of the Golden Eternity," by Kerouac: a direct description of his own transcendental experience. Number "64." (He reads.)

I was smelling flowers in the yard, and when
I stood up I took a deep breath and the blood all
rushed to my brain and I woke up dead on my
back in the grass. I had apparently fainted,
or died, for about sixty seconds. My neighbor
saw me but he thought I had just suddenly
thrown myself on the grass to enjoy the sun.
During that timeless moment of unconsciousness
I saw the golden eternity. I saw heaven. In it
nothing had ever happened, the events of a
million years ago were just as phantom and
ungraspable as the events of now or of a million
years from now, or the events of the next ten
minutes. It was perfect, the golden solitude, the
golden emptiness, Something-Or-Other, something
surely humble. There was a rapturous ring of
silence abiding perfectly. There was no question
of being alive or not being alive, of likes and
dislikes, of near or far, no question of giving
or gratitude, no question of mercy or judgement,
or of suffering or its opposite or anything.
It was the womb itself, aloneness, alaya vijnana
the universal store, the Great Free Treasure, the
Great Victory, infinite completion, the joyful

mysterious essence of Arrangement. It seemed
like one smiling smile, one adorable adoration,
one gracious and adorable charity, everlasting
safety, refreshing afternoon, roses, infinite
brilliant immaterial golden ash, the Golden Age.
The 'golden' came from the sun in my eyelids,
and the 'eternity' came from my sudden instant
realization as I woke up that I had just
been where it all came from and where it
was all returning, the everlasting So, and
so never coming or going; therefore I call it
the golden eternity but you can call it anything
you want. As I regained consciousness I felt so sorry
I had a body and a mind suddenly realizing I
didnt even have a body and a mind and nothing
had ever happened and everything is alright
forever and forever and forever, O thank you
thank you thank you.

Ginsberg: Based on that [Kerouac's] experience, a poem referring to a parallel experience: "The Lion for Real." Again addressed to Kerouac: "The Lion for Real," a golden lion.

"The Lion for Real," by Ginsberg. Recited by Ginsberg.

Ginsberg: Afternoon, Warsaw. Called "The Moments Return" -- referring to a myth in Kerouac's Duluoz legend of Sebastian, Sebastian Sampas by real name, who was his Shelleyan poet friend in Lowell High School, who was killed in World War II on Anzio beachhead and who mailed Kerouac from Italy a recording back in '42 or '43-- I guess of Sebastian sending him greetings in October and reading Shelley's "Adonais"-- which has a line, "I weep for Adonais -- he is dead!"-- which was like a key signal of poetry for

Kerouac in later years in New York.

"The Moment's Return," by Ginsberg. Recited by Ginsberg.
"Why Is God Love, Jack?" by Ginsberg. Recited by Ginsberg.

Ginsberg: "Memory Gardens," which is like notes coming from Kerouac's funeral in Lowell, leaving for the funeral, passing Memory Gardens Cemetery near Albany. [Kerouac died on October 21, 1969, and was buried in Lowell, Massachusetts on October 24.]

Last stanza of "Memory Gardens," by Ginsberg. Recited by Ginsberg:

Well, while I'm here I'll
    do the work --
and what's the work?
    To ease the pain of living.
Everything else, drunken
    dumbshow.

Written October 22-29, 1969.

Ginsberg: Do you know where is that paper that had that "Blues"?

Orlovsky: What "Blues"?

Ginsberg: The "Sweet Jesus." When we pulled all the stuff forward I think I lost it. Unless it be in here. Well, there was one "Blues" that I had composed in memory of Kerouac which I remember much of so I'll sing it from memory and improvise.

"Prayer Blues," by Ginsberg. Sung by Ginsberg.

When you break your bones
There's no place to stand on
Break your bones
There's no place to stand on
Break your bones
There's no place to stand on
Break up your body
No place to be

Jesus Christ
No place to be
Jesus Christ
Show me
Jesus Christ
Show me the way to go home
Jesus Christ
Show mercy to me

Jesus Christ
Didn't they break your bones
Jesus Christ
Didn't you weep & you groan
Up on the cross
Didn't you feel alone?
O sacred heart
Didn't sweet Jesus moan?

Jesus is His name
As good as any
Yes, Jackie dear Jesus is his name
As good as any

When your body's in pain
And your heart is empty
O crown of thorns
One God is plenty

Lord Jesus come
Come in my heart
Lord Jesus come
Come in my heart
Oh Jesus come
Come in my heart
Lord Jesus
Come in my heart

Milarepa come
Come in my heart
Milarepa come
Come in my heart
Milarepa come
Come in my heart
Milarepa
Come in my heart

Sweet Marpa come
Come in my heart
Naropa come
Come in my heart
Tilopa come
Come in my heart
Vajradhara come
Come in my heart

There ain't nobody left I can
Come to in my bones
Ain't nobody left

I can come to in my bones
Ain't nobody left
I can come to in my bones
Ain't nobody left
I can come to in my bones

Get rid of it all fast
Credit cards in the sun
Unload Unload!
Your books everyone
Sell it all! Give it all away.
your farm is no fun
Dump your ego, honey
& ruin Wall Street's money!

Shift the load to the lord
Let Him lay back Jack's bones
Shift the load to God
I can't fight anymore!
Shift the load to the Lord
Let Him worry about the war
Shift the load to Heaven
I can't fight anymore!

Jesus Christ
Take away my pain
Jesus Lord
Forgive me again
Oh sweet Jesus
You can have my Fame
JOD HE VOV HE
I submit to your name.

February, 1973

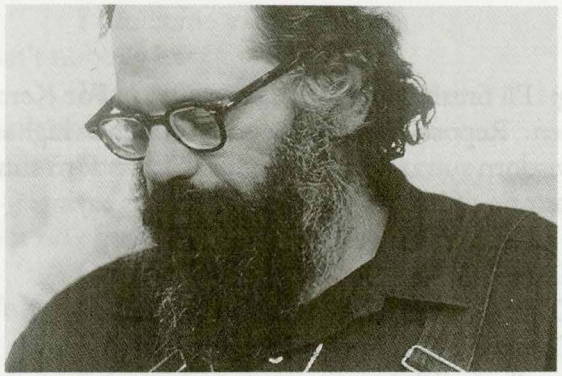
Ginsberg: I'll finish with Buddhist mantra.... For Kerouac's peace, then. Repose-*Requiescat in pace.* Buddhist highest perfect wisdom sutra; heart of the highest wisdom sutra, which was one of his favorite Buddhist texts saying:

Gone. Gone.
Completely gone to the other shore.
Completely, utterly gone to the other shore.
Intellect. Salutations.

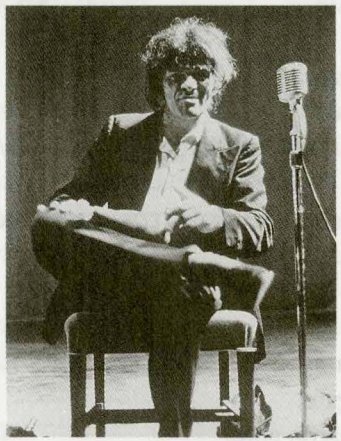
Gate. Gate.
Paragate.
Parasamgate.
Bodhi svaha.
--Chanted by Ginsberg and Orlovsky.

Ginsberg: In English equivalent as translated by one of Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters:

Gate. Gate.
Out the gate.
Out the same gate.
Buddy, shove off.



A contemplative Allen Ginsberg at the panel discussion.



Gregory Corso, Beatnik Extraordinaire

An Open-Hearted Symposium In Tribute to Jack Kerouac

Day Lounge, Student Union
Salem State College
Salem, MA

April 5, 1973
1:00 PM

"Congratulations on having had the foresight to arrange a prophetic conversation in 1973 which is of immediate interest in 1980 and will be even funnier in 1990 and 2010, all about what happened in people's minds... when they woke up from America and realized they were in the Heaven Eternity Dharmakaya Buddhafields Universe on Kerouac's poor mortal earth, totally appreciative of the flowingness of the moment."

Allen Ginsberg
Naropa Institute
January 30, 1980

...

From McHale's introduction to the panel discussion on April 5, 1973.

McHale: Let his words fill the empty rooms of America. Let his literary monologues replace the vacuum in our heads. Let his energy light fires in our souls. Let his work salvage our feelings of compassion.

Jack Kerouac makes words tap dance. The people he wrote about were models of liberation and mobility for the poodle-cut and petticoat generation in the 1950's. Jack Kennedy wore no hat during his inauguration, but Jack Kerouac was the wind blowing through his hair.

No prose writer in post-World War II America is as prolific and prophetic as Jack Kerouac. Without him we

would not have heard the voice of alter-America. Without him there would have been no spirit of the sixties.

So I thank Jack Kerouac for the literature that he gives us. And as Richard Nixon begins his second reign, I think back to 1968 when he was elected. I said to myself, "A new era is yawning." I thought back to when Eisenhower put us to sleep. And now we are paralyzed by a derivative of the Eisenhower drug, Richard Nixon.

. . . If ever it happened that our libraries were closed or books taken from bookshelves, you could be sure that someday an old rucksacker would appear on the highways of America. And tucked away in that rucksack would be a paperbound book by Jack Kerouac. And that means something while America sleeps.

. . .

Corso: Why did that man seem like he came through life to check it out?

Ginsberg: Why did he what?

Corso: He [Kerouac] seemed like he came through to write it all down. You know, when I left prison, the Old Mafia man, the big Man there, finally spoke to me when I left. And he said, "Gregory, if you see three people make sure you see four." In other words, dig yourself. Always keep in control. That man must have gone through life always digging himself and being in control.... That's all spooky.

Ginsberg: In a sense, this room is an extension of one of Kerouac's novels in which, I think, everybody here who appreciates Kerouac, sees himself as another personage in the novel of the universe; another strange angel sitting in the eternal place, discussing an archangel who proclaimed the

eternality of our presence together, which is the curious thing about this symposium – I think in a sense more open-hearted than most academic symposiums could be because the subject was one who proclaimed open-heart and consciousness of one's own divine presence in the place where we are....

Responding to a question he references a passage of On the Road, *read earlier by Professor Charles Jarvis.*

But what...where did the presumption of angelic presence come from? Where do we presume that we are angelic presences? The key is in the text that professor Jarvis read at the end, which is a description of an actual phenomenological experience that Kerouac had of an entry into the Ground of Being. An experience of satori. An actual experience. He was, I think, the first American novelist that I know of that actually in words attempted to present the profound, sublime, magical experience of Dharmakaya as it's called in Buddhism, or grace in Christian terms, to explain it in detail, propose it with physiological explanation of tingling feet, with metaphysical explanation, a ripple in a great void of knowledge, a ripple of activity which disperses itself again... so that the question is... how recognizable is his experience of the Ground of Being for everybody?

Audience: Could you have Mr. Jarvis read that again?

Ginsberg: Yeah. Could you read that again?

Jarvis: The last passage?

Ginsberg: That last passage of Kerouac. Because I think that's like the key to his consciousness and the key to what transformed American consciousness because he sounded

that one note of the very basic modality of consciousness which is at the base of everybody's knowledge, at the base of everybody's brain.

Holmes: Well one proof that it's there is that it's transferable.

Ginsberg: Yes.

Holmes: Transferable through his work, which is why we are all sitting here.

Ginsberg: Yes.

Jarvis reads a passage from On the Road *that he quoted in his essay "Jack Kerouac, Angel Goof" which was read after McHale's introductory remarks that began the symposium.*

Jarvis: And for just a moment I had reached the point of ecstasy that I always wanted to reach, which was the complete step across chronological time into timeless shadows, and wonderment in the bleakness of the mortal realm, and the sensation of death kicking at my heels to move on, with a phantom dogging its own heels, and myself hurrying to a plank where all the angels dove off and flew into the holy void of uncreated emptiness, the potent and inconceivable radiancies shining in bright Mind Essence, innumerable lotus lands falling open in the magic mothswarm of heaven. I could hear an indescribable seething roar which wasn't in my ear but everywhere and had nothing to do with sounds. I realized that I had died and been reborn numberless times but just didn't remember especially because the transitions from life to death and back to life are so ghostly easy, a magical action for naught, like falling asleep and waking up again a million times, the utter casualness and deep ignorance of it. I realized it was only because of the stability of the

intrinsic Mind that these ripples of birth and death took place, like the action of wind on a sheet of pure, serene, mirror-like water. I felt sweet, swinging bliss, like a big shot of heroin in the mainline vein; like a gulp of wine late in the afternoon and it makes you shudder; my feet tingled. I thought I was going to die the very next moment.

On the Road.

...

Ginsberg: The terminology he used in the great passages of visionary description, specific visionary description... the visionary incident that he had is described in *The Scripture of the Golden Eternity* which I read last night. And this is another paraphrase of same. I think.

...

Corso: Gentlemen, if that guy was so great, did he really hit the shot: what life's all about and what really goes down?

Ginsberg: Yes.

Corso: You think he did?

Ginsberg: Yes. In a few moments... and then preserved very clearly, and transmitted it. Transmitted it both by description of the incident and by application of that consciousness to his everyday life.

...

Corso: Let's get down to the nitty-gritty. Let's get down to the kitty-gritty. Who was that man? Who was that? Who was that?

Ginsberg: Who was what?

Corso: Who that guy? That's it.

Ginsberg: Who that guy? That guy was Bodhisattva then, I say. My impression of him in his coffin was of an extraordinary doll, made of meat, with no life in it. The intelligence had escaped and become generalized throughout the planet. He had literally appeared, somewhat as a magical figure, to have perception, transmit perception; transmit that one cosmic perception and, his work done, drank himself out. In other words I saw finally... I had one... I had one glimpse of Kerouac, for a moment, of having deliberately gone through a drunken dumb show in order to present just one major perception, clarify it, transmit it, sort of Buddha-like, Bodhisattva-like, and then disappear...

Corso: No way! He was poor simple human bones. A poor simple human being who did his shot. That's all.

Ginsberg: That passage he [Jarvis] read was not poor simple human bones. That was like elevated, sublime, super human bone. Heaven bone. That was heaven bone.

Corso: Heaven bone I won't take. I'll take super human bone. Or poor human bones. But heaven bone. Where heaven? Wo ist himmel? Wo ist himmel?

Ginsberg: ...Kerouac found something there at the end of the road... unlike the mythology of the yellow journalistic reviews of his work. He found something very definite there which transformed America, which was a great awareness – great mind, the ground of the universe itself, which is the vision he sought at the very beginning.

McHale: Bruce, did you want to ask a question? Go ahead Bruce.

Bruce: Kerouac's last piece was "After Me the Deluge" and you people, you and Gregory . . .

Corso: We people, huh. You better believe it. You see that whole beat generation was just five people...

Ginsberg: Let him talk, Gregory. Come on.

Corso: Well he said, "you people." That is like, you know...

McHale: He hasn't finished. And then you can respond.

Ginsberg: He hasn't finished his sentence even.

Corso: But I went fast I said.

McHale: Ladies and gentlemen, Bruce Dimm.

Corso: I'm not continuing.

Audience voice: Shut up!

McHale: Go ahead, Bruce.

Corso: Fuck you all, man.

Bruce: ...if you take the title of the article itself – the deluge is come and I feel, like a lot of people, that the deluge has died. So where does that leave you people?

Corso: You see? I tell you, it's bullshit all the way.

Ginsberg: Well, could you be a little more explicit about what you feel the deluge actually is that has come and died?

Bruce: All right. Well, the whole...

Ginsberg: 'Cause I don't understand you otherwise, literally speaking.

Corso: All right. What's died, baby?

Bruce: The whole literary movement that was...

Angry voice from audience: Who says it's DEAD?

Corso: Right. Who says it's a movement? Movement is made to die. Don't you know what motion is? Do you know what motion is? Motion is meant to stop.

Ginsberg: Let him define himself, Gregory.

Corso: I can't even talk. Everybody jumps on me every time I open my fucking mouth. It's true. You getting it folks? Every time I open my mouth, "Gregory, don't do this. Don't do that." Oh, bullshit. I'm going to break it.

Ginsberg: [With humor] Oh, you're just a big egotist.

Corso: Break it.

Ginsberg: Go on.

Corso: . . . All right. Movement was created when the Beat Generation came on. They called it that, the newspapers. They called it a "movement." Meaning: motion's got to stop. "You're going to be finished, boys." We're not finished. No way. It's a continuation. Change. That's the way she goes.

The man, you say, who die, he dead. We're live. That's the shot.

...

Ginsberg: The heaven that Kerouac described seeing is adamantine, unalterable, eternal, undisturbed, always there, always available. The movement is always in that direction.

McHale: Aaron Latham, could you comment on who you think the successors are to that group of people that were influenced by Jack Kerouac in the 50's and 60's.

Latham: Well, I was just thinking that as a social movement or if you see what Kerouac started as something like the hippie movement or some kind of social movement, I think that did peak somehow and is sinking down again. But actually, he never really considered himself the father of the hippie movement or...

Ginsberg: Right.

Latham: ... if he thought of himself as that he was very much the reluctant father. But I think of it in terms of a literary movement, which is how he thought of it mainly, it's not... I would say instead of having peaked, it's going up all the time. Jack Kerouac learned a lot from reading Thomas Wolfe and then the new Tom Wolfe learned a whole lot about writing from reading Kerouac. If there had not been a Kerouac, making those trips back and forth across the country with Neal Cassady, then even Ken Kesey himself says that he wouldn't have gotten in his bus and gone across the country in what was later described in Tom Wolfe's book, *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test.*

...

McHale: Could someone on the panel explain the tremendous influence that Wilhelm Reich had? .... Is there any connection with the theory of spontaneous prose and the theories of Wilhelm Reich?

Ginsberg: 1948 Burroughs was interested in Reich. Herbert Huncke, who was on the scene on Broadway and 96th Street, had some friends who were undergoing Reichian therapy – Vickie Armanger and, I think, two others – Norman Schnall, who were friends of Kerouac's and mine and Neal Cassady, who was in and out of the scene then, around '46 – 7 – 8? Anyway, very mid-40's. By '48 I went to a Reichian analyst also directly for the actual therapy. The general idea – Reich was preaching sexual revolution, by attention to full, complete, uninhibited, unchecked, orgasm, pointing out that the restriction on orgasm was a restriction on all consciousness. That was a striking idea, which everybody understood. The orgasm of prose consciousness... a restricted prose consciousness orgasm... was also like a restricted consciousness too. So Jack, I think, transferred the idea directly to the idea of writing. There was also the fact that the Reichians were getting all sorts of funny, vibratory physiological vibratory sensations – tinglings, actually kundalini tinglings, if you would like to use... to use ancient rhetoric. Those tinglings were also apprehended in high states like nail driving, or smoking grass, or listening to jazz and dancing...

.... So, now Kerouac has a phrase about a drummer drumming with his eyes lifted to heaven in "easy Reichianalyzed ecstasy." Quote: "easy Reichianalyzed ecstasy." Just simply a paraphrase of the conception that with total freedom there would be a complete relaxation and

a complete giving out of what was inside body or soul. Also, identity of body or soul. That mental anxiety was accompanied by physiological attachment, or undharmaring, was a very simple idea that hadn't been taken into account by intellectuals before. Body and soul are one. So it fitted in with the breakthrough. It was a break like... the phrase, also, finally... the Reichian phrase was "breakthrough." In the '40's that was the one area where the phrase was used most. "I had a breakthrough with my analyst last week." That phrase "breakthrough" was taken for like a breakthrough of cosmic consciousness described there. "Breakthrough" as a general term for... "Neal had a breakthrough – new understanding of the road or of driving – the other day."

McHale: It's like satori then.

Ginsberg: Yeah. A breakthrough to a new ground of understanding.

...

Latham: There were also some fairly traditional sources for Kerouac's idea of spontaneous prose. One of them was William Carlos Williams who had worked a good bit with Allen, but... and William Carlos Williams warned against too much re-writing... and the spontaneous phrase may be the best phrase.

Corso: William Carlos Williams blew it this way. He said when are we going to talk American? Didn't he know that the children of the immigrants would speak American?

Latham: Another very traditional source of his,

Kerouac's, idea of spontaneous prose was just Catholicism. I mean if he saw... To a certain extent his writings were confessionals and later on he began to believe and even say that the Holy Spirit or the Holy Ghost was speaking through him and, if God speaks, you don't re-write God. So there are some very traditional roots to this idea of spontaneous writing....

Mchale: Could you talk, John Holmes, how he came to that theory? Do you know it? Was it a letter from Neal Cassady that got him going?

Holmes: That was certainly a factor. I mean Neal wrote him a long letter...fifteen single spaced pages.... And Jack was sort of in a funk about his writing not going well. He was starting to try to write *On the Road* and it wasn't going. Neal had just blown--more or less a jazz musician would blow--chorus after chorus, and this impressed Jack, and he was desperate enough to try it; and it worked for him. He always leaned in that direction anyway.

...

Ginsberg: He [Kerouac] saw everybody as a phantom walking around in a dream-material palace. He saw the whole world as a giant dream... like a lightning flash--like a bubble--like a rose. He saw everybody gesturing like ghosts not realizing that they were ghosts that were going to disappear in the sunlight....

Ginsberg shares a story along those lines.

...Ken Kesey and Neal Cassady came cross-country during the sixty-four election with "A Vote for Goldwater Is a Vote for Fun" sign on the side of the bus. This was their

first pilgrimage to New York as a gang together, and Kesey felt very strong love for Kerouac as well as Burroughs, and so Neal said that he would drive a car out to Northport to get Jack and bring him in to see Kesey and the Merry Pranksters who were all, at that moment, that evening, high on acid in an apartment on Park Avenue which was heavily illuminated with electric... electronic bright lights, cameras going, many tape machines going, wires snaking all over the room – an ethereal scene, actually, with a lot of heavy metal around, a lot of electronics around, so giving a sense of robot re-echoings... robot re-duplications and mirror images receding past into infinity; and Neal arrived with Jack, who was brought in from Northport, who was already sick, who didn't want to come out or didn't want to leave the house 'cause he knew , if he went to the city, he'd be drinking and he'd wind up in pain . . .brought Jack in the room and me, also. He sent somebody else downtown to get me from East Second Street and bring me up to Park Avenue. So I sat quiet and watched. And everybody was eager to see what Kerouac would do in appreciation or how Kerouac would react to this transposition of *On the Road* into celestial, Day-Glo, cosmic, electronic environ. Jack was very shy; sat down on the couch, which was covered with American flags, and, but shyly, removed the flag and folded it up first.... That's what it boiled down to. But he wasn't sure who everybody was and why they were all there and what they were coming on. So there was an element of bewilderment and confusion in Kerouac. But more than that, like very deep sorrow, realizing that all these eager-beaver Pranksters were going through another stage of dumb show, another stage of idealistic nonsense, another attempt to make themselves real though they were all made of phantom stuff and they hadn't yet realized it. And in the course of that they were poisoning Cassady with amphetamine, as Jack was poisoning himself with alcohol. So Jack was down-mouthed, sad, reflective,

unresponsive to all their enthusiasm and actually forced electronic gaiety, brittle gaiety. Kesey was sort of like a very, very beautiful musing angel on the scene 'cause he was observant and trying to understand where Kerouac was. Some of the younger Pranksters were mocking of Kerouac – "What's the matter with him? Why isn't he jumping? Why isn't he enthusiastic? Why isn't he excited? Why isn't he ecstatic?" But his ecstasy was in the realization that they were all dead on the scene....

McHale: Maybe it's about time we started to sum up....

...

Holmes: I don't know if I could sum it up. But what I could say is that I knew him differently than Allen or Gregory, for instance, because I knew him as a novelist rather than as a poet. I learned a great deal from him. He was a, technically, much better writer than anyone gives him credit for. He knew an awful lot about literature. He was exceptionally well read and, as I said before, wonderfully intelligent. His importance to me was as a man. He was, I think, the most gentle and tender soul that I'd ever known. Sometimes this was encased in a pretty raucous body, but inside he was pure and beautiful. You don't meet many people like that and you value those you do.

...

Ginsberg: Kerouac's political, social, Americanist conclusion, I think, was prophetic: his rejection of the hippie wave--the hippie political wave--as new reasons for viciousness. We now have... a slow transformation and internalization in America of meditative consciousness by political people, which I think will lead to a new wave of Bodhisattva action

on a political level in America, but would have to come back to the Ground that Kerouac originally prescribed, which was:

Be kind.
No more anger
as a political weapon.
Anger –
not as a political weapon.
Viciousness –
not as a political weapon.
Only the most fleecy, Gerardian,
lamb-like, Bodhisattva actions
for political gestures.

That he would have accepted and gone along with. When violence was brought in as part of the hippie revolution, Kerouac opted out, and that's why he was seen as reactionary. Now that the whole hippie movement is coming back to a realization of the basic Ground of Common Consciousness – square and hippie as unified – Kerouac's original vision... of both square as angelic as well as hippie as angelic... that finally comes true and so his prophecy will finally be enacted in America. If there's any salvation for America, it'll be in that Ground of Consciousness, which HE laid out. [Applause]

...

Corso: Al, I'm glad you said that because that's what I was going to lay down. Check out your sources. You see, in the Fifties, this was the shot. Monsieur Kerouac, Monsieur Ginsberg, Corso, Orlovsky, Burroughs took them out of Egypt and took them to the Promised Land and they got stuck in the desert in the Sixties. In the Sixties the Golden Calf was your Bob Dylans and all those babies. And it was

beautiful – Golden Calf. Gold is beautiful. Now you got it. But they didn't move, you see. Didn't make the other shot...

...

All right, here it is clear. Clear is: THAT was a human being. We are human beings. And that's the one shot. You see, whatever you read – Copernicus, Galileo, Leonardo – it's all one. Kerouac. It's all one. Got it? You got it?

PO Box 582 Stuyvesant Station
NYC, NY 10009
29 Nov. 1973
Teton Village, Wyoming till Dec. 7, 83025

Dear Jay McHale,

Have been most of last 3 months in Buddhist Meditation Seminar here under Grand Tetons – was briefly in Boston for Dharma festival and met John Currier who gave me and Peter transcripts of part of discussion after poetry reading April '73 at Salem State – the text is pretty funny and climaxed by Peter O's tongue poem, reminds me of some of text of Pull My Daisy film. I'm glad I have it. Is there any more of the meetings transcribed? & did I ever get a copy of the tapes – I forgot if arrangement was made or not, I've been travelling.

It's allright for Currier and friends to publish whatever they can transcribe in *Gone Soft* – I think it's a good idea to have the material printed available somewhere like that – plenty of students/scholars ask me for posthumous opinions so I can redirect them to the script as transcribed.

Currier says you seem hesitant about letting them (*Gone Soft*) use material from the Kerouac Conference – if it's any question of my ok, go ahead + give them whatever they are willing to transcribe – it's a boon that they are willing to do the work. The sample they sent is fine. If you have other plans for the material that's ok too so long as it doesn't take decades, & I get to see it before I die of leprosy or cigarette cancer 1999 – 2080 – Peter too. But there must be enough to go around – endless pages of yakking.

Anyway it's fine by me if *Gone Soft* puts out what they want. If you have another or larger project in mind let me know. But meanwhile if no one's working on the tapes, *Gone Soft* is ok isn't it? Let me know.

Yours as ever
and thanks for the Kerouac party again

— Allen Ginsberg