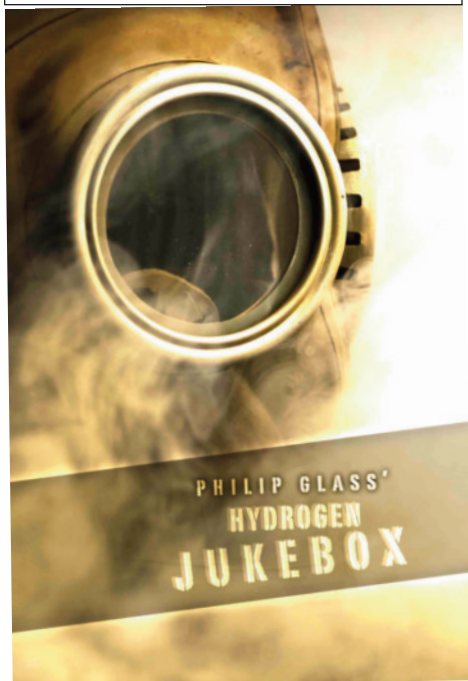


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**IN THIS ISSUE**



### Poetry of Allen Ginsberg Music by Philip Glass

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#### AUDIENCE GUIDE

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HYDROGEN JUKEBOX is the fascinating result of the collaboration between avant-garde composer Philip Glass and Beat poet Allen Ginsberg. Glass and Ginsberg met by chance at St. Mark's bookshop in New York in 1988. Glass had just been asked to perform at a benefit for the Vietnam Veteran Theater, and asked Ginsberg to join him. At the performance, Ginsberg read his poem WICHITA VORTEX SUTRA to music composed by Glass. Enthusiastic about the prospect of further collaboration, Glass and Ginsberg embarked on the project which became HYDROGEN JUKEBOX.

The duo envisioned a theatrical portrait of America from the '50s to the '80s. The libretto is a selection of Ginsberg poems that range in content from highly personal poems to his reflection on social issues: the anti-war movement, the sexual revolution, drugs, Eastern philosophy and environmental awareness; all issues that seemed "counter-cultural" in their day.

In an interview, Ginsberg said this of the title: "[It] comes from a verse in the poem HOWL: '...listening to the crack of doom on the hydrogen jukebox...' It signifies a state of hypertrophic high-tech, a psychological state in which people are at the limit of their sensory input with civilization's military jukebox, a loud industrial roar, or a music that begins to shake the bones and penetrate the nervous system as a hydrogen bomb may do someday, reminder of apocalypse."

The work was originally staged using six vocal parts to represent six archetypal American characters- a waitress, a policewoman, a businessman, a priest, a mechanic and a cheerleader. A version of the piece first appeared at the 1990 American Music Theater Festival in Philadelphia; the premiere of the finished work was given at the Spoleto Festival in South Carolina later that same year. A Washington Post reviewer praised the work for its "fully focused, deeply communicative and artistically integrated concept." The Washington Times called HYDROGEN JUKEBOX "a meeting of two unmistakably American sensibilities."

#### Part one

- Song #1:** *Iron Horse*  
 "Lightning's blue glare fills the Oklahoma plains"
- Song #2:** *Iron Horse*  
 "Who's the enemy, year after year?"
- Song #3:** *Jahweh and Allah Battle*  
 "Jahweh with Atom Bomb"
- Song #4:** *Consulting I Ching smoking pot listening to the Fugs sing Blake*  
 "That which pushes upward"
- Song #5:** *Marijuana Notation*  
 "How sick I am!"
- Song #6:** *Patna-Benares Express*  
 "Whatever it may be whoever it may be"  
*Last night in Calcutta*  
 "Still night the old clock ticks"
- Song #7:** *To P.O.*  
 "The whitewashed room,"
- Song #8:** *Last Night in Calcutta*  
 "...And the vast starry space"
- Song #9:** *Crossing Nation*  
 "Under silver wing"  
*Over Denver Again*  
 "Grey clouds blot sunglare, mountains float west, plane"  
*Going to Chicago*  
 "22,000 feet over hazed square vegetable plant"
- Song #10:** *Wichita Vortex Sutra: Pt II*  
 "I'm an old man now, and a lonesome man in Kansas but not afraid"

#### Part two

- Song #11:** *Howl: Moloch (Section II)*  
 "What sphinx of cement and aluminum bashed open their skulls and ate up their brains and imagination?"
- Song #12:** *Manhattan Thirties Flash*  
 "Long stone streets inanimate..."
- Song #13:** *Cabin in the Rockies*  
 "Sitting on a tree stump with half cup of tea"
- Song #14:** *Nagasaki Days VI: Numbers in Red Notebook*  
 "2,000,000 killed in Vietnam"
- Song #15:** *To Aunt Rose*  
 "Aunt Rose-now-might I see you"
- Song #16:** *The Green Automobile*  
 "If I had a green Automobile"
- Song #17:** *Violence*  
 "Mexicity drugstore table, giant,"  
*CIA Dope Calypso*  
 "Richard Secord and Oliver North"
- Song #18:** *Nagasaki Days IV*  
 "I walked outside and the bomb'd"
- Song #19:** *Ayers Rock/Uluru Song*  
 "When the red pond fills fish appear"
- Song #20:** *Throw out the Yellow Journalists of Bad Grammar*  
 "Out! Out! into the Buddhafields"
- Song #21:** *Father Death Blues*  
 "Hey, Father Death, I'm flying home"

**The Beat Generation**

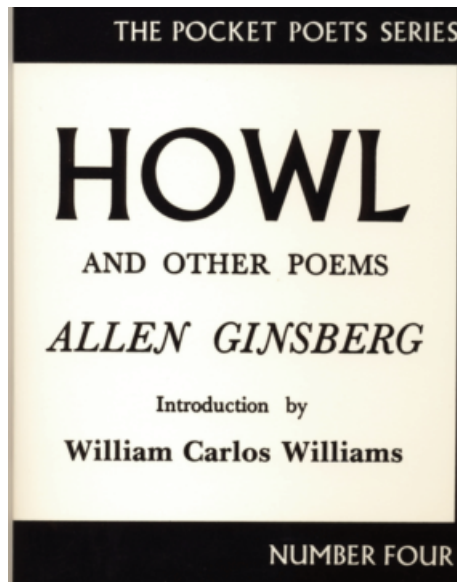
The Beat Generation was a group of American post-World War II writers who came to prominence in the 1950s, as well as the cultural phenomena that they both documented and inspired. Central elements of "Beat" culture included rejection of established standards, innovations in style, experimentation with drugs, alternative sexualities, an interest in Eastern religion and a rejection of materialism.

After World War II (1939-1945), American lifestyles and attitudes changed. The world was forever changed after witnessing the Holocaust and the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, known as the GI Bill of Rights, gave veterans one year of unemployment compensation, financial assistance for job training and education and low-interest loans to buy homes and businesses. This aid helped nearly one-quarter of the population and stimulated the economy.

After 1945, marriage rates soared, and there was a sharp rise in the birthrate, known as the Baby Boom, which created a generation that reshaped the American family and culture for decades to come. The average family had a ranch or split-level house, a car, and 2.5 children.

These years also saw a reappraisal of conventional society. Just as the post-war economic boom was taking hold, students in universities were beginning to question the rampant materialism of their society. The Beat Generation was a product of this questioning. They saw runaway capitalism as destructive to the human spirit and antithetical to social equality. In addition to their dissatisfaction with consumer culture, the Beats saw the stifling prudery of their parents' generation and the taboos against frank discussions of sexuality as unhealthy and possibly damaging to the psyche.

The Beat Generation developed a reputation as new bohemian hedonists, who celebrated non-conformity and spontaneous creativity. In the world of literature and art, the Beats stood in opposition to the clean,



almost antiseptic formalism of the early twentieth century Modernists. They fashioned a literature that was more straightforward and expressive than anything that had come before.

Allen Ginsberg's *HOWL* (1956), William S. Burroughs's *NAKED LUNCH* (1959) and Jack Kerouac's *ON THE ROAD* (1957) are among the best known examples of Beat literature. Both *HOWL* and *NAKED LUNCH* were the focus of obscenity trials that helped to liberalize publishing in the United States.

The "founders" of the Beat Generation met at Columbia University in the early 1940s. Writers Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg formed the core of this initial group. It was Kerouac who coined the term "Beat Generation". The adjective "beat" could mean "tired" or "beaten down," but Kerouac appropriated the image and altered the meaning to include the connotations "upbeat," "beatific," and the musical association of being "on the beat."

The Beat Generation pulled from a variety of source materials to construct their particular vision of literature and culture. Several of the originators cite Romantic poets such as Percy Bysshe Shelley and William Blake as major influences on their work. Interspersed with their Romantic influences were surrealist and absurdist tendencies.

At the same time, the American Transcendental Movement of the nineteenth century was an inspiration for the politics of the Beats. Henry David Thoreau was revered as a symbol of protest. It was the Beats, in fact, who played a large role in rehabilitating Thoreau's reputation and elevating his book *WALDEN* to the status that it holds today.

The original members of the Beat Generation used a number of different drugs, including alcohol, marijuana, benzedrine, morphine and later psychedelic drugs including peyote and LSD. Much of this usage was "experimental," in that they were initially unfamiliar with the effects of these drugs. They were inspired by intellectual interest, as well as simple hedonism. Claims that some of these drugs could enhance creativity, insight or productivity were quite common.

The publication of Allen Ginsberg's *HOWL* in 1956 marks a turning point in both Beat literature and American literature in general. The long-form poem is intended to be read aloud, almost chanted, a sort of return to an oral tradition that had been neglected in literature for a long time. The content of the poem raised eyebrows, and sparked an obscenity trial which challenged the definition of pornography in America. Ginsberg won, and the judgment more or less ensured that poetry and fiction would from then on be immune to the kind of censorship that still plagued other genres of art.

With *HOWL*, Ginsberg takes the reader/listener on a tour of the underside of America. There are drug-addicts, drifters, prostitutes and swindlers. There is a visceral rage against the system that requires conformity. Foul language, slang, drug use and criminality are common throughout the work. All of these things were shocking in the 1950s.

The Beat Generation was never a large movement in terms of numbers, but in influence and cultural status they were more visible than any other artistic movement of the time.

Among the leading voices of the Beat Generation was William Burroughs (1914-1997). His novel, *NAKED LUNCH* is a difficult and even terrifying novel, and readers continue to be drawn to it for its innovative style and use of language. Burroughs embodied the spirit of reckless abandon of the Beat Generation. For instance, in Mexico City, on a drunken spree, Burroughs accidentally shot his first wife, Jane Vollmer, in the head. The only reason he was in Mexico was to avoid possible imprisonment in the United States.

His greatest contribution to literary technique was what he called the "cut-up," a form which borrowed more from collage and cubism than traditional linear narrative. The disregard for narrative mirrored Burroughs' mental state, as he struggled with alcohol and drug addictions.



No Beat Generation novelist garnered more attention and adulation than Jack Kerouac (1922-1969; above) and none of their personal lives were more filled with conflict and crippling depression. His single greatest success was *ON THE ROAD*, a philosophical travel narrative which blends stream of consciousness, drug visions and observations into a generational statement that resonates to this day.

The elder statesman of the Beat Generation was the poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti (born 1919). Ferlinghetti was in the Navy during World War II and settled in San Francisco after the war. He opened the City Lights Bookstore, a hub of Beat Generation literati and started a publishing business, bringing

both lesser known and established poets to the mainstream.

An important influence on the Beat Generation was William Carlos Williams (1883-1963), an American poet closely associated with modernism and imagism. He was also a pediatrician who "worked harder at being a writer than he did at being a physician," but excelled at both.

Williams' major poetry collections are *SPRING AND ALL* (1923), *DESERT MUSIC AND OTHER POEMS* (1954), *PICTURES FROM BRUEGHEL AND OTHER POEMS* (1962) and *PATERSON* (1963). One of his most anthologized poems is *This is Just to Say* (below), an example of the Imagist movement's style.

I have eaten  
the plums  
that were in  
the icebox  
  
and which  
you were probably  
saving  
for breakfast  
  
Forgive me  
they were delicious  
so sweet  
and so cold

Williams had a significant influence on many of the American literary movements of the 1950s, including the Beat movement, the San Francisco Renaissance, the Black Mountain school and the New York School. His most important mentorship was with fellow New Jersey poet Allen Ginsberg.

Criticism of the Beat Generation's aesthetics and behavior came from many corners of society. The academic community derided the Beats as anti-intellectual and unrefined. Mainstream America was horrified by their sexual and drug references.

Politicians such as Joseph McCarthy identified elements of Beat ideology as Communist and a threat to the nation's security. The Beat Generation's relatively short time in the cultural spotlight could be attributed to the amount of scorn heaped upon them.

The Beat Generation made a lasting impact on the structure of modern American society. With Ginsberg's *HOWL*, the notion of what was acceptable literature was broadened im-

**William Burroughs**



**NAKED LUNCH**

PUB. DATE: Nov. 20, 1962/\$6.00/GROVE PRESS, INC.

ensely. Censorship as a force for controlling public discourse ended.

Perhaps more importantly, the Beats propelled discussions of ecology and environmentalism into the mainstream. Before the 1950s, environmentalism as it is understood today did not really exist. The Beat Generation's infatuation with Native American and Eastern philosophies contributed to the genesis of modern environmental ethics, at least as a byproduct. Modern poetry underwent a relaxation of structure and style that basically allowed for anyone to express themselves in whatever fashion they chose.

The Beat Generation faded from view as quickly as it appeared. Quickly stepping into the void were the beatniks. Despite the similar sounding names, the beatniks had very little in common with the Beats. Instead of a movement and an ideology, the beatniks represented little more than a fashion. Specifically, the beatnik was the laid-back, poetry-reading, goateed man, usually dressed in black.

The hippie movement of the 1960s also owes a great debt to the Beats. However, the counterculture hippies generally lacked the intellectual backing that the Beats earned in the 1950s. The Beat Generation was more educated and sophisticated than they seemed at first glance. Their artistic rebellion was calculated, and informed with an understanding of what came before them.

**Allen Ginsberg**



Allen Ginsberg (1926 -1997) was an American poet and the central figure of the Beat Generation. He was born Irwin Allen Ginsberg in Newark, N.J. to a Russian-Jewish Communist mother, Naomi Livergant, and an American-Jewish Socialist father, Louis Ginsberg. The conflict between his parents' political beliefs gave Ginsberg a sharp awareness of politics at an early age.

Though Jewish by heritage, Ginsberg, and his older brother, Eugene, were raised without religion. Ginsberg's mother was frequently institutionalized with what we now know as paranoid schizophrenia. Ginsberg's memories of her illness and of visiting her in hospitals pervades much of his writing, including the famous poem, KADDISH. He also wrote extensively about his youthful homosexual fantasies that became fodder for some of his most notorious poetry.

In his application to Columbia University, he wrote that, if admitted, he would dedicate his life to helping the working class. In 1943 Ginsberg started at Columbia in a pre-law course. Ginsberg soon befriended Lucien Carr, a self-proclaimed "intellectual." Through Carr, Ginsberg met some of the most influential figures in his life: William Burroughs and Jack Kerouac.

In the beginning of 1945, Ginsberg lived with Burroughs, Kerouac and their friends, and the group's increasingly dangerous drug-induced lifestyle

later became the influence for some of Ginsberg's famous poem, HOWL.

Burroughs got involved in criminal behavior, dealing stolen goods and narcotics and he was soon addicted to opiates. His guide to the criminal underworld was small-time criminal and drug-addict Herbert Huncke. The Beats were drawn to Huncke, convinced that he had a worldly knowledge unavailable to them from their largely middle-class upbringings.

Ginsberg was arrested in 1949 when the police attempted to pull him over while he was driving with Huncke, in a car filled with stolen items Huncke planned to fence. Ginsberg crashed the car and escaped on foot, but left incriminating notebooks behind. He was given the option to plead insanity to avoid a jail term, and was committed for 90 days to Bellevue Hospital.

In 1955, Ginsberg completed his poem, HOWL, now considered to be one of the greatest works of American literature. The poem draws on much of Ginsberg's experience with the Beat poets, mental institutionalization, drug addiction, homosexuality and Buddhism. The rhythm of the poem is strongly influenced by the language of the American street.

Ginsberg's first reading of the poem at The Six Gallery in San Francisco marked his "metamorphosis from a quiet, brilliant bohemian scholar...to epic vocal bard," and made him a significant figure in the San Francisco Renaissance. It was during this time that Ginsberg met Peter Orlovsky, who would become his lifelong partner.

Ginsberg was hugely influential in the creation of the Beat Generation, having been a necessary force driving many of his friends, including Burroughs and Kerouac, to successful publication.

By the 1960s, Ginsberg's work became less explosive and he no longer had the energies that fueled him to produce his earlier work. He spent much of this time as a visiting scholar at numerous universities. The "estab-

lishment" that he turned his back on welcomed him into the fold with open arms.

Starting in the mid-1960s, Ginsberg traveled a great deal. One of the most important destinations for him was India, and the culture there helped form the foundation of Ginsberg's future interest in and practice of Buddhism and Krishnaism, themes that also resurface continually in his work.

His bibliography is extensive, including HOWLAND OTHER POEMS (1956), KADDISH AND OTHER POEMS (1961), REALITY SANDWICHES (1963), THE FALL OF AMERICA: POEMS OF THESE STATES (1973) which won the National Book Award in 1974, MIND BREATHS (1978), WHITE SHROUD POEMS: 1980-1985 (1986) and DELIBERATE PROSE: 1952-1995 (2000). Many of his private journals and letters have been published in collections. He also won numerous awards during his lifetime, and gave countless readings across the world.

On April 5, 1997 Ginsberg died of liver cancer in his New York apartment surrounded by friends and family. His last poem, THINGS I'LL NOT DO (NOSTALGIAS), was written less than a week before his death.



**Composer Philip Glass**

Philip Glass has had an extraordinary and unprecedented impact upon the musical and intellectual life of our times. A prolific composer, he has written operas, musical theatre works, symphonies, concertos, solo works and a wide variety of chamber music. Three of his film scores have been nominated for Academy Awards. His music and his approach to creating it are thoroughly modern, even revolutionary, making him one of the most provocative, successful and controversial composers of his generation.

Born in Baltimore in 1937, Glass discovered music in his father's radio repair shop. In addition to servicing radios, Ben Glass carried a line of records and, when certain ones sold poorly, he would take them home and play them for his three children, trying to discover why they didn't appeal to customers. These happened to be recordings of the great chamber works, and the future composer became familiar with Beethoven, Schubert, Shostakovich and other music then considered "offbeat."

Glass began playing the violin at six and became serious about music when he took up the flute at eight. During his second year in high school, he enrolled at the University of Chicago, where he supported himself with part-time jobs waiting tables and loading airplanes at airports. He majored in mathematics and philosophy, and continued studying music.

After graduating at age 19, determined to become a composer, he moved to New York and attended the Juilliard School. By then he had abandoned the 12-tone techniques he had been using in Chicago and preferred American composers like Aaron Copland and William Schuman.

At the age of 25, Glass won the Ford Foundation Young Composer's Award, a school-based composer-in-residence job that based him in Pittsburgh. During this time he met and later married his first wife, the actress/director JoAnne Akalaitis, whose connection to theatre would later be influential in Glass' work.

In 1964 Glass and Akalaitis moved to Paris where he studied under legendary teacher Nadia Boulanger, who also taught Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson and Quincy Jones. In Paris, he was hired to transcribe the work of Indian sitar virtuoso and composer Ravi Shankar and in the process discovered the techniques of Indian music. Glass set out on a tour of North Africa, Central Asia, and India and the Himalayas. The culture there affected him more than artistically; to this day he is a practicing Buddhist.

When he returned to New York in 1967 he began applying eastern techniques to his own work with his newly formed Philip Glass Ensemble – seven musicians playing keyboards and a variety of woodwinds, amplified and fed through a mixer.

Much of his early work was based on the extended reiteration of brief, elegant melodic fragments that wove in and out of an aural tapestry. The new musical style that Glass was evolving was eventually dubbed "minimalism." Glass himself never liked the term and preferred to speak of himself as a composer of "music with repetitive structures."

By 1974, he had composed a large collection of new music, including *MUSIC IN 12 PARTS*, a 4-hour summation of his new music. In 1976, his alliance with the visual arts prompted collaboration with Robert Wilson, the painter, architect and leader in the world of avant-garde theatre, in the creation of *EINSTEIN ON THE BEACH*. One of Glass' best known works, the 4 hour epic is now seen as a landmark in 20th century music-theater. The enthusiastic reception of these works no doubt helped him gain some important attention.

Glass followed these works with other theater successes. *SATYAGRAHA* (1980), is based on the life of Gandhi sung in Sanskrit. In 1982, he released *GLASSWORKS*. It consisted of short pieces and was mixed specifically to take advantage of a new consumer electronic device called The Walkman. Glass continued composing numerous

works for opera and for choreographers Alvin Ailey and Jerome Robbins. He also collaborated again with Robert Wilson on another opera, *CIVIL WARS: A TREE IS BEST MEASURED WHEN IT IS DOWN*.

Other works that followed include *THE VOYAGE*, commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera; *ORPHÉE*, a chamber opera based on the film by Jean Cocteau; *THE MARRIAGES BETWEEN ZONES THREE, FOUR AND FIVE* with author Doris Lessing; *HEROES SYMPHONY*, written for choreographer Twyla Tharp and based on the music of David Bowie and Brian Eno; and a film score for the movie *KUNDUN*, directed by Martin Scorsese, for which he received both a Golden Globe Nomination and an Academy Award nomination for Best Score. In 1999, Glass won the Golden Globe Award for Best Score for the movie *THE TRUMAN SHOW*.

Glass continues to compose. He presents lectures, workshops and solo keyboard performances around the world, and continues to appear regularly with the Philip Glass Ensemble. He was made a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government in 1995 and has been awarded honorary degrees from Brandeis University, The University of the Arts in Philadelphia and The State University of New York in Buffalo.



**Selected Poems from the Libretto: Act 1**

**SONG #1 *Iron Horse***

Lightning's blue glare fills Oklahoma plains,  
the train rolls east

    casting yellow shadow on grass

    Twenty years ago

approaching Texas

    I saw sheet lightning

    cover Heaven's corners

Feed Storage Elevators in gray rain mist,

    checkerboard light over sky-roof

same electric lightning South

    follows this train

    Apocalypse prophesied-

    the Fall of America

    signaled from Heaven-

Ninety nine soldiers in uniform paid by the

Government to Believe-

ninety nine soldiers escaping the draft for

an Army job,

ninety nine soldiers shaved

    with nowhere to go but where told,

ninety nine soldiers seeing lightning flash—

    a thousand years ago

Ten thousand Chinese marching on the

plains

all turned their heads to Heaven at once to  
see the Moon.

An old man catching fireflies on the porch

at night

watched the Herd Boy cross the Milky Way

    to meet the Weaving Girl...

How can we war against that?

How can we war against that?

Too late, too late

    the Iron Horse hurrying to war,

    too late for laments

    too late for warning-

I'm a stranger alone in my country again.

**SONG #5 *Marijuana Notation***

How sick I am!

    that thought always comes to me  
    with horror.

Is it this strange for everybody?

But such fugitive feelings

    have always been my métier.

Baudelaire-yet he had

    great joyful moments

    staring into space,

looking into the middle distance,

    contemplating his image in Eternity.

They were his moments of identity.

It is solitude that

produces these thoughts.

    It is December

almost, they are singing

    Christmas carols

in front of the department stores down the

block on Fourteenth Street.

**SONG #6 *Patna-Benares Express***

Whatever it may be whoever it may be

The bloody man all singing all just

However he die

He rode on railroad cars

He woke at dawn,

in the white light of a new universe

He couldn't do any different

He the skeleton with eyes

raised himself up from a wooden bench

felt different

looking at the fields and palm trees

no money in the bank of dust

no nation but inexpressible gray clouds

before sunrise

lost his identity cards in his wallet

in the bald rickshaw by the Maidan

in dry Patna

Later stared hopeless

waking from drunken sleep

dry mouthed in the RR station

among sleeping shoeshine men in loincloth

on the dirty concrete

Too many bodies thronging these cities

now

Still night. The old clock Ticks,

half past two. A ringing of crickets

awake in the ceiling. The gate is locked

on the street outside—sleepers, mustaches,

nakedness, but no desire.

Time sits solid in the four yellow walls.

No one is here,

emptiness filled with train whistles

& dog barks, answered a block away.

**SONG #9 *Crossing Nation***

Under silver wing

    San Francisco's towers sprouting

    thru thin gas clouds,

Tamalpais black-breasted

    above Pacific azure

Berkeley hills pine-covered below-

Dr. Leary in his brown house scribing

Independence Declaration

    typewriter at window

silver panorama in natural eyeball-

Sacramento valley rivercourse's Chinese

dragonflames licking green flats north-

hazed

State Capitol metallic rubble,

dry checkered fields

to Sierras-past Reno, Pyramid Lake's

blue Altar, pure water in Nevada sands'

brown wasteland scratched by tires

**OVER DENVER AGAIN**

Gray clouds blot sunglare,

mountains float west,

plane softly roaring over Denver-

Neal dead a year-

clean suburb yards,

fit boardinghouse for the homosexual

messenger's alleyway Lila a decade back

before the Atombomb.

Denver without Neal, eh?

Denver with orange sunsets &

giant airplanes winging silvery to

San Francisco-

watchtowers thru red cold planet light,

when the Earth Angel's dead

the dead material planet'll revolve robotlike

& insects hop back and forth between

metallic cities.

**GOING TO CHICAGO**

22,000 feet over Hazed square

Vegetable planet Floor

Approaching Chicago to Die

or flying over Earth another 40 years

to die-Indifferent, and Afraid, that the

bone-shattering bullet

be the same as the vast evaporation-of-

phenomena Cancer

Come true in an old man's bed.

Many chimneys smoldering,

city flats virus-linked along Delaware bays

under horizon-smog-

airplane drifting black vapor-filaments

above Wilmington-The iron habitations

endless from Manhattan to the Capitol.

Poe! D'jya prophesy this Smogland,

    this Infemo,

Didja Dream Baltimore'd Be Seen From

Heaven by Man Poet's eyes Astounded in

the Fire Haze, carbon Gas aghast!

Blasts rip Newspaper Gray Mannahatta's

mid day Air Spires,

Plane roar over cloud, Sunlight on blue

fleece-mist,

I travel to die, fellow passengers silk-drest

& cocktailed burn oil NY to Chicago-

Blasting sky with big business,

billion bodied Poetry Commerce,

all Revolution & Consumption,

Manufacture 8c Communication

Bombburst, vegetable pie, rubber donut

sex accessory 8c brilliant TV Jetplane

CIA Joke Exorcism Fart Mantra

or electronic war Laos to AID gestapo train-

ing in Santo Domingo

equally masscare grass, exhaust flower

power in coal factory smokedust

**Selected poems from the libretto: Act 2**

**Note about SONG #11**

*Moloch is an ancient Ammonite god, associated with a particular kind of child sacrifice by parents. Moloch figures in the Book of Deuteronomy and in the Book of Leviticus as a form of idolatry. "Moloch" is used in HOWL to refer to a something demanding a costly sacrifice.*

**SONG #12 Manhattan Thirties Flash**

Long stone streets inanimate, repetitive  
machine Crash cookie-cutting  
dynamo rows of soulless replica Similitudes  
brooding tank-like in Army  
Depots  
Exactly the same exactly the same exactly  
the same with no purpose but  
grimness  
& overwhelming force of robot obsession,  
our slaves are not alive  
& we become their sameness as they sur-  
round us—the long stone streets  
inanimate,  
crowds of executive secretaries alighting  
from subway 8:30 a.m.  
bloodflow in cells thru elevator arteries &  
stairway glands to typewriter  
consciousness,  
Con Ed skyscraper clock-head gleaming  
gold-lit at sun dusk.

**SONG #14 Nagasaki Days VI:  
Numbers in Red Notebook**

Sitting on a tree stump with half cup of tea,  
sun down behind mountains—  
Nothing to do.  
Not a word! Not a Word!  
Flies do all my talking for me—  
and the wind says something else.  
Fly on my nose,  
I'm not the Buddha,  
There's no enlightenment here!  
In the half-light of dawn  
A few birds warble  
under the pleiades.  
An hour after dawn  
I haven't thought of Buddha once yet!  
walking back into the retreat house.

**SONG #16 The Green Automobile**

If I had a Green Automobile  
I'd go find my old companion  
in his house on the Western ocean.  
Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!  
I'd honk my horn at his manly gate,  
inside his wife and three  
children sprawl naked  
on the living room floor.  
He'd come running out  
to my car full of heroic beer  
and jump screaming at the wheel  
for he is the greater driver.  
We'd pilgrimage to the highest mount  
of our earlier Rocky Mountain visions  
laughing in each other's arms,  
delight surpassing the highest Rockies,  
and after old agony, drunk with new years,  
bounding toward the snowy horizon  
blasting the dashboard with original bop  
hot rod on the mountain  
we'd batter up the cloudy highway  
where angels of anxiety  
careen through the trees  
and scream out of the engine.  
We'd burn all night on the jackpine peak  
seen from Denver in the summer dark,  
forestlike unnatural radiance  
illuminating the mountaintop:  
childhood youthtime age & eternity  
would open like sweet trees  
in the nights of another spring  
and dumbfound us with love,  
for we can see together the beauty of souls  
hidden like diamonds  
in the clock of the world,  
like Chinese magicians can  
confound the immortals  
with our intellectuality  
hidden in the mist,  
in the Green Automobile  
which I have invented  
imagined and visioned  
on the roads of the world  
more real than the engine  
on a track in the desert  
purer than Greyhound and  
swifter than physical jetplane.

**SONG #18 Nagasaki Days IV**

I walked outside & the bomb'd  
dropped lots of plutonium  
all over the Lower East Side  
There weren't any buildings left just  
iron skeletons  
groceries burned, potholes open to  
stinking sewer waters  
There were people starving and crawling  
across the desert  
the Martian UFOs with blue  
Light destroyer rays  
passed over and dried up all the  
waters  
Charred Amazon palmtrees for  
hundreds of miles on both sides  
of the river

**SONG #19 Ayers Rock/Uluru Song**

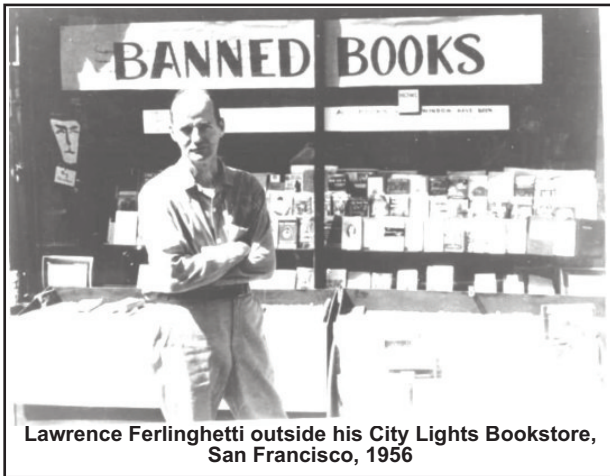
When the red pond fills fish appear  
When the red pond dries fish disappear.  
Everything built on the desert crumbles to  
dust.  
Electric cable transmission wires swept  
down.  
The lizard people came out of the rock.  
The red Kangaroo people forgot their own  
song.  
Only a man with four sticks can cross the  
Simpson Desert.  
One rain turns red dust green with leaves.  
One raindrop begins the universe.  
When the raindrop dries, worlds come to  
their end.

**SONG #21 Father Death Blues**

1. Hey Father Death, I'm flying home  
Hey poor man, you're all alone  
Hey old daddy, I know where I'm going  
2. Father Death, Don't cry any more  
Moma's there, underneath the floor  
Brother Death, please mind the store  
3. Old Auntie Death Don't hide your bones  
Old Uncle Death I hear your groans  
O Sister Death how sweet your moans  
4. O Children Deaths go breathe your  
breaths  
Sobbing breasts'll ease your Deaths  
Pain is gone, tears take the rest  
5. Genius Death your art is done  
Lover Death your body's gone  
Father Death I'm coming home  
6. Guru Death your words are true  
Teacher Death I do thank you  
For inspiring me to sing this Blues  
7. Buddha Death, I wake with you  
Dharma Death, your mind is new  
Sangha Death, we'll work it through  
8. Suffering is what was born  
Ignorance made me forlorn  
Tearful truths I cannot scorn  
9. Father Breath once more farewell  
Birth you gave was no thing ill  
My heart is still, as time will tell.

In 1982, Allen Ginsberg published a summary of "the essential effects" of the Beat Generation:

- Spiritual liberation, sexual "revolution" or "liberation."
- Liberation from censorship.
- Demystification and/or decriminalization of cannabis and other drugs.
- The evolution of rhythm and blues into rock and roll as a high art form, as evidenced by the Beatles, Bob Dylan, Janis Joplin and other popular musicians influenced in the fifties and sixties by Beat generation poets' and writers' works.
- The spread of ecological consciousness, the notion of a "Fresh Planet."
- Opposition to the military-industrial complex, as emphasized in writings of Burroughs, Ginsberg and Kerouac.
- Attention to what Kerouac called a "second religiousness" developing within an advanced civilization.
- Return to an appreciation of idiosyncrasy as against state regimentation.
- Respect for land and indigenous peoples and creatures, as proclaimed by Kerouac in his slogan from ON THE ROAD: "The Earth is an Indian thing."



Lawrence Ferlinghetti outside his City Lights Bookstore, San Francisco, 1956



Costume designs by Jason Orlenko



Since its founding in 1920, the ACLU has opposed censorship in all its forms. From books and radio to film, television, and the Internet, we have consistently fought to make sure Americans have the right to say, think, read, and write whatever they want, without fear of government reprisal.

Legendary Beat poet and publisher Lawrence Ferlinghetti had the foresight to contact the ACLU before publishing Allen Ginsberg's poem HOWL, anticipating the possibility it would be censored. Sure enough, in 1957, U.S. Customs officials seized the books, stating, "You wouldn't want your children to come across it."

Ferlinghetti wrote at the time, "It is not the poet but what he observes which is revealed as obscene. The great obscene wasters of HOWL are the sad wastes of the mechanized world, lost among atom bombs and insane nationalisms."

In 1997, Ferlinghetti joined our case, *Reno v. ACLU*, which held that Internet speech is entitled to full First Amendment protection. It was relevant to HOWL because, in his words, "This new law to censor the Internet would have a chilling effect on the First Amendment. It's upsetting and it's also un-American. HOWL was judged not obscene in a landmark trial, but we fear that the book could now be at risk again, 40 years later."

On the 50th anniversary of a court ruling that deemed Allen Ginsberg's HOWL not obscene, the ACLU lamented an ironic reversal of First Amendment rights. A New York public

radio station chose not to air the poem in its news story commemorating the decision, fearful of massive FCC fines that would have effectively shut down the station. Station WBAI instead posted the poem online, out of the reach of the FCC.

ACLU Legislative Counsel Marv Johnson said at the time, "A radio station cannot possibly celebrate the First Amendment by being forced to gag its announcers and point to a website. HOWL captured the essence of a society on the brink of explosion, and the HOWL obscenity decision marked a forward march toward greater free speech. If the FCC and our lawmakers want to repeat the repression of the 1950s, they should remember that even then the country was inching toward more freedom, not less."

*Learn more about the ACLU and its Wisconsin affiliate at [aclu.org](http://aclu.org) and [aclu-wi.org](http://aclu-wi.org).*











