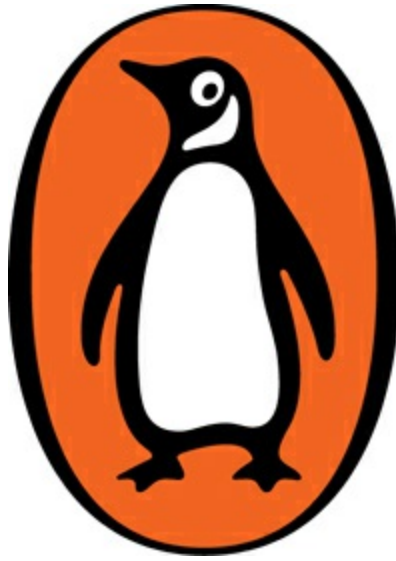


Allen  
Ginsberg  
Howl, Kaddish  
and Other  
Poems

MODERN CLASSICS





Allen Ginsberg

---

HOWL, KADDISH AND OTHER POEMS



# Contents

*'Howl' for Carl Solomon: Introduction by William Carlos Williams*

*Howl*

*Footnote to Howl*

*A Supermarket in California*

*Transcription of Organ Music*

*Sunflower Sutra*

*America*

*In the Baggage Room at Greyhound*

*Earlier Poems:*

*An Asphodel*

*Song*

*Wild Orphan*

*In Back of the Real*

*Kaddish: Proem, narrative, hymmn, lament, litany & fugue*

*Poem Rocket*

*Europe! Europe!*

*To Lindsay*

*Message*

*To Aunt Rose*

*At Apollinaire's Grave*

*The Lion for Real*

*Ignu*

*Death to Van Gogh's Ear!*

*Laughing Gas*

*Mescaline*

*Lysergic Acid*

*Magic Psalm*

*The Reply*

*The End*

*Frontmatter from Original Editions*

*Follow Penguin*

PENGUIN MODERN CLASSICS

HOWL, KADDISH AND OTHER POEMS

Allen Ginsberg was born in Newark, New Jersey in 1926. As a Columbia College student in the 1940s he began close friendships with William S. Burroughs and Jack Kerouac, forming the core of the Beat Generation, and, while living in California in the mid 1950s, befriended, among others, San Francisco Renaissance poets Gary Snyder and Michael McClure. It was in California, in 1956, that he published his first volume, *Howl and Other Poems*. 'Howl' overcame censorship trials to become one of the most widely read poems of the century. A member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Allen Ginsberg was awarded the medal of Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres by the French Minister of Culture in 1993, honoured as Harvard Phi Beta Kappa Poet 1994 and co-founded the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics at the Naropa Institute, the first Accredited Buddhist college in the western world. Ginsberg died in New York, where he lived for most of his life, on 5 April 1997. He continued to write until the last few days of his life and died surrounded by his friends and family. His publications include the annotated *Howl*, *White Shroud: Poems 1980–1985*, *Cosmopolitan Greetings*, *Journals Mid-Fifties: 1954–1958*, *Collected Poems 1947–1995*. Rhino Records released his four-CD box *Holy Soul Jelly Roll: Poems & Songs 1949–1993*.

## ‘Howl’ for Carl Solomon

When he was younger, and I was younger, I used to know Allen Ginsberg, a young poet living in Paterson, New Jersey, where he, son of a well-known poet, had been born and grew up. He was physically slight of build and mentally much disturbed by the life which he had encountered about him during those first years after the First World War as it was exhibited to him in and about New York City. He was always on the point of ‘going away’, where it didn’t seem to matter; he disturbed me, I never thought he’d live to grow up and write a book of poems. His ability to survive, travel, and go on writing astonishes me. That he has gone on developing and perfecting his art is no less amazing to me.

Now he turns up fifteen or twenty years later with an arresting poem. Literally he has, from all the evidence, been through hell. On the way he met a man named Carl Solomon with whom he shared among the teeth and excrement of this life something that cannot be described but in the words he has used to describe it. It is a howl of defeat. Not defeat at all for he has gone through defeat as if it were an ordinary experience, a trivial experience. Everyone in this life is defeated but a man, if he be a man, is not defeated.

It is the poet, Allen Ginsberg, who has gone, in his own body, through the horrifying experiences described from life in these pages. The wonder of the thing is not that he has survived but that he, from the very depths, has found a fellow whom he can love, a

love he celebrates without looking aside in these poems. Say what you will, he proves to us, in spite of the most debasing experiences that life can offer a man, the spirit of love survives to ennoble our lives if we have the wit and the courage and the faith – and the art! to persist.

It is the belief in the art of poetry that has gone hand in hand with this man into his Golgotha, from that charnel house, similar in every way, to that of the Jews in the past war. But this is in our own country, our own fondest purlieus. We are blind and live our blind lives out in blindness. Poets are damned but they are not blind, they see with the eyes of the angels. This poet sees through and all around the horrors he partakes of in the very intimate details of his poem. He avoids nothing but experiences it to the hilt. He contains it. Claims it as his own – and, we believe, laughs at it and has the time and affrontery to love a fellow of his choice and record that love in a well-made poem. Hold back the edges of your gowns, Ladies, we are going through hell.

William Carlos Williams

# Howl

*For Carl Solomon*

## I

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving  
hysterical naked,  
dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking for an angry  
fix,  
angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly connection to the  
starry dynamo in the machinery of night,  
who poverty and tatters and hollow-eyed and high sat up smoking in the  
supernatural darkness of cold-water flats floating across the tops of cities  
contemplating jazz,  
who bared their brains to Heaven under the El and saw Mohammedan angels  
staggering on tenement roofs illuminated,  
who passed through universities with radiant cool eyes hallucinating  
Arkansas and Blake-light tragedy among the scholars of war,  
who were expelled from the academies for crazy & publishing obscene odes  
on the windows of the skull,  
who cowered in unshaven rooms in underwear, burning their money in  
wastebaskets and listening to the Terror through the wall,  
who got busted in their pubic beards returning through Laredo with a belt of  
marijuana for New York,  
who ate fire in paint hotels or drank turpentine in Paradise Alley, death, or  
purgatoried their torsos night after night  
with dreams, with drugs, with waking nightmares, alcohol and cock and  
endless balls,

incomparable blind streets of shuddering cloud and lightning in the mind  
leaping toward poles of Canada & Paterson, illuminating all the motionless  
world of Time between,  
Peyote solidities of halls, backyard green tree cemetery dawns, wine  
drunkenness over the rooftops, storefront boroughs of teahead joyride neon  
blinking traffic light, sun and moon and tree vibrations in the roaring  
winter dusks of Brooklyn, ashcan rantings and kind king light of mind,  
who chained themselves to subways for the endless ride from Battery to holy  
Bronx on benzedrine until the noise of wheels and children brought them  
down shuddering mouth-wracked and battered bleak of brain all drained of  
brilliance in the drear light of Zoo,  
who sank all night in submarine light of Bickford's floated out and sat  
through the stale beer afternoon in desolate Fugazzi's, listening to the  
crack of doom on the hydrogen jukebox,  
who talked continuously seventy hours from park to pad to bar to Bellevue to  
museum to the Brooklyn Bridge,  
a lost battalion of platonic conversationalists jumping down the stoops off  
fire escapes off windowsills off Empire State out of the moon,  
yacketayakking screaming vomiting whispering facts and memories and  
anecdotes and eyeball kicks and shocks of hospitals and jails and wars,  
whole intellects disgorged in total recall for seven days and nights with  
brilliant eyes, meat for the Synagogue cast on the pavement,  
who vanished into nowhere Zen New Jersey leaving a trail of ambiguous  
picture postcards of Atlantic City Hall,  
suffering Eastern sweats and Tangerian bone-grindings and migraines of  
China under junk-withdrawal in Newark's bleak furnished room,  
who wandered around and around at midnight in the railroad yard wondering  
where to go, and went, leaving no broken hearts,  
who lit cigarettes in boxcars boxcars boxcars racketing through snow toward  
lonesome farms in grandfather night,  
who studied Plotinus Poe St John of the Cross telepathy and bop kabbalah  
because the cosmos instinctively vibrated at their feet in Kansas,  
who loned it through the streets of Idaho seeking visionary indian angels who  
were visionary indian angels,  
who thought they were only mad when Baltimore gleamed in supernatural  
ecstasy,

who jumped in limousines with the Chinaman of Oklahoma on the impulse of  
winter midnight streetlight smalltown rain,  
who lounged hungry and lonesome through Houston seeking jazz or sex or  
soup, and followed the brilliant Spaniard to converse about America and  
Eternity, a hopeless task, and so took ship to Africa,  
who disappeared into the volcanoes of Mexico leaving behind nothing but the  
shadow of dungarees and the lava and ash of poetry scattered in fireplace  
Chicago,  
who reappeared on the West Coast investigating the F.B.I. in beards and  
shorts with big pacifist eyes sexy in their dark skin passing out  
incomprehensible leaflets,  
who burned cigarette holes in their arms protesting the narcotic tobacco haze  
of Capitalism,  
who distributed Supercommunist pamphlets in Union Square weeping and  
undressing while the sirens of Los Alamos wailed them down, and wailed  
down Wall, and the Staten Island ferry also wailed,  
who broke down crying in white gymnasiums naked and trembling before the  
machinery of other skeletons,  
who bit detectives in the neck and shrieked with delight in policecars for  
committing no crime but their own wild cooking pederasty and  
intoxication,  
who howled on their knees in the subway and were dragged off the roof  
waving genitals and manuscripts,  
who let themselves be fucked in the ass by saintly motorcyclists, and  
screamed with joy,  
who blew and were blown by those human seraphim, the sailors, caresses of  
Atlantic and Caribbean love,  
who balled in the morning in the evenings in rosegardens and the grass of  
public parks and cemeteries scattering their semen freely to whomever  
come who may,  
who hiccuped endlessly trying to giggle but wound up with a sob behind a  
partition in a Turkish Bath when the blond & naked angel came to pierce  
them with a sword,  
who lost their loveboys to the three old shrews of fate the one eyed shrew of  
the heterosexual dollar the one eyed shrew that winks out of the womb and

the one eyed shrew that does nothing but sit on her ass and snip the intellectual golden threads of the craftsman's loom,  
who copulated ecstatic and insatiate with a bottle of beer a sweetheart a package of cigarettes a candle and fell off the bed, and continued along the floor and down the hall and ended fainting on the wall with a vision of ultimate cunt and come eluding the last gyzym of consciousness,  
who sweetened the snatches of a million girls trembling in the sunset, and were red eyed in the morning but prepared to sweeten the snatch of the sunrise, flashing buttocks under barns and naked in the lake,  
who went out whoring through Colorado in myriad stolen night-cars, N.C., secret hero of these poems, cocksman and Adonis of Denver—joy to the memory of his innumerable lays of girls in empty lots & diner backyards, moviehouses' rickety rows, on mountaintops in caves or with gaunt waitresses in familiar roadside lonely petticoat upliftings & especially secret gas-station solipsisms of johns, & hometown alleys too,  
who faded out in vast sordid movies, were shifted in dreams, woke on a sudden Manhattan, and picked themselves up out of basements hungover with heartless Tokay and horrors of Third Avenue iron dreams & stumbled to unemployment offices,  
who walked all night with their shoes full of blood on the snowbank docks waiting for a door in the East River to open to a room full of steamheat and opium,  
who created great suicidal dramas on the apartment cliff-banks of the Hudson under the wartime blue floodlight of the moon & their heads shall be crowned with laurel in oblivion,  
who ate the lamb stew of the imagination or digested the crab at the muddy bottom of the rivers of Bowery,  
who wept at the romance of the streets with their pushcarts full of onions and bad music,  
who sat in boxes breathing in the darkness under the bridge, and rose up to build harpsichords in their lofts,  
who coughed on the sixth floor of Harlem crowned with flame under the tubercular sky surrounded by orange crates of theology,  
who scribbled all night rocking and rolling over lofty incantations which in the yellow morning were stanzas of gibberish,  
who cooked rotten animals lung heart feet tail borsht & tortillas dreaming of

the pure vegetable kingdom,  
who plunged themselves under meat trucks looking for an egg,  
who threw their watches off the roof to cast their ballot for Eternity outside of  
Time, & alarm clocks fell on their heads every day for the next decade,  
who cut their wrists three times successively unsuccessfully, gave up and  
were forced to open antique stores where they thought they were growing  
old and cried,  
who were burned alive in their innocent flannel suits on Madison Avenue  
amid blasts of leaden verse & the tanked-up clatter of the iron regiments of  
fashion & the nitroglycerine shrieks of the fairies of advertising & the  
mustard gas of sinister intelligent editors, or were run down by the drunken  
taxicabs of Absolute Reality,  
who jumped off the Brooklyn Bridge this actually happened and walked  
away unknown and forgotten into the ghostly daze of Chinatown soup  
alleyways & firetrucks, not even one free beer,  
who sang out of their windows in despair, fell out of the subway window,  
jumped in the filthy Passaic, leaped on negroes, cried all over the street,  
danced on broken wineglasses barefoot smashed phonograph records of  
nostalgic European 1930s German jazz finished the whiskey and threw up  
groaning into the bloody toilet, moans in their ears and the blast of colossal  
steam-whistles,  
who barreled down the highways of the past journeying to each other's  
hotrod-Golgotha jail-solitude watch or Birmingham jazz incarnation,  
who drove crosscountry seventytwo hours to find out if I had a vision or you  
had a vision or he had a vision to find out Eternity,  
who journeyed to Denver, who died in Denver, who came back to Denver &  
waited in vain, who watched over Denver & brooded & loned in Denver  
and finally went away to find out the Time, & now Denver is lonesome for  
her heroes,  
who fell on their knees in hopeless cathedrals praying for each other's  
salvation and light and breasts, until the soul illuminated its hair for a  
second,  
who crashed through their minds in jail waiting for impossible criminals with  
golden heads and the charm of reality in their hearts who sang sweet blues  
to Alcatraz,  
who retired to Mexico to cultivate a habit, or Rocky Mount to tender Buddha

or Tangiers to boys or Southern Pacific to the black locomotive or Harvard  
to Narcissus to Woodlawn to the daisychain or grave,  
who demanded sanity trials accusing the radio of hypnotism & were left with  
their insanity & their hands & a hung jury,  
who threw potato salad at CCNY lecturers on Dadaism and subsequently  
presented themselves on the granite steps of the madhouse with shaven  
heads and harlequin speech of suicide, demanding instantaneous lobotomy,  
and who were given instead the concrete void of insulin Metrazol electricity  
hydrotherapy psychotherapy occupational therapy pingpong & amnesia,  
who in humorless protest overturned only one symbolic ping-pong table,  
resting briefly in catatonia,  
returning years later truly bald except for a wig of blood, and tears and  
fingers, to the visible madman doom of the wards of the madtowns of the  
East,  
Pilgrim State's Rockland's and Greystone's foetid halls, bickering with the  
echoes of the soul, rocking and rolling in the midnight solitude-bench  
dolmen-realms of love, dream of life a night-mare, bodies turned to stone  
as heavy as the moon,  
with mother finally \*\*\*\*\*, and the last fantastic book flung out of the  
tenement window, and the last door closed at 4 A.M. and the last telephone  
slammed at the wall in reply and the last furnished room emptied down to  
the last piece of mental furniture, a yellow paper rose twisted on a wire  
hanger in the closet, and even that imaginary, nothing but a hopeful little  
bit of hallucination—  
ah, Carl, while you are not safe I am not safe, and now you're really in the  
total animal soup of time—  
and who therefore ran through the icy streets obsessed with a sudden flash of  
the alchemy of the use of the ellipse the catalog the meter & the vibrating  
plane,  
who dreamt and made incarnate gaps in Time & Space through images  
juxtaposed, and trapped the archangel of the soul between 2 visual images  
and joined the elemental verbs and set the noun and dash of consciousness  
together jumping with sensation of Pater Omnipotens Aeterna Deus  
to recreate the syntax and measure of poor human prose and stand before you  
speechless and intelligent and shaking with shame, rejected yet confessing

out the soul to conform to the rhythm of thought in his naked and endless head,  
the madman bum and angel beat in Time, unknown, yet putting down here  
what might be left to say in time come after death,  
and rose reincarnate in the ghostly clothes of jazz in the goldhorn shadow of  
the band and blew the suffering of America's naked mind for love into an  
eli eli lamma lamma sabacthani saxophone cry that shivered the cities  
down to the last radio  
with the absolute heart of the poem of life butchered out of their own bodies  
good to eat a thousand years.

## II

What sphinx of cement and aluminum bashed open their skulls and ate up  
their brains and imagination?  
Moloch! Solitude! Filth! Ugliness! Ashcans and unobtainable dollars!  
Children screaming under the stairways! Boys sobbing in armies! Old men  
weeping in the parks!  
Moloch! Moloch! Nightmare of Moloch! Moloch the loveless! Mental  
Moloch! Moloch the heavy judger of men!  
Moloch the incomprehensible prison! Moloch the crossbone soulless  
jailhouse and Congress of sorrows! Moloch whose buildings are judgment!  
Moloch the vast stone of war! Moloch the stunned governments!  
Moloch whose mind is pure machinery! Moloch whose blood is running  
money! Moloch whose fingers are ten armies! Moloch whose breast is a  
cannibal dynamo! Moloch whose ear is a smoking tomb!  
Moloch whose eyes are a thousand blind windows! Moloch whose  
skyscrapers stand in the long streets like endless Jehovahs! Moloch whose  
factories dream and croak in the fog! Moloch whose smokestacks and  
antennae crown the cities!  
Moloch whose love is endless oil and stone! Moloch whose soul is electricity  
and banks! Moloch whose poverty is the specter of genius! Moloch whose  
fate is a cloud of sexless hydrogen! Moloch whose name is the Mind!  
Moloch in whom I sit lonely! Moloch in whom I dream Angels! Crazy in  
Moloch! Cocksucker in Moloch! Lacklove and manless in Moloch!

Moloch who entered my soul early! Moloch in whom I am a consciousness  
without a body! Moloch who frightened me out of my natural ecstasy!  
Moloch whom I abandon! Wake up in Moloch! Light streaming out of the  
sky!

Moloch! Moloch! Robot apartments! invisible suburbs! skeleton treasuries!  
blind capitals! demonic industries! spectral nations! invincible mad  
houses! granite cocks! monstrous bombs!

They broke their backs lifting Moloch to Heaven! Pavements, trees, radios,  
tons! lifting the city to Heaven which exists and is everywhere about us!  
Visions! omens! hallucinations! miracles! ecstasies! gone down the American  
river!

Dreams! adorations! illuminations! religions! the whole boatload of sensitive  
bullshit!

Breakthroughs! over the river! flips and crucifixions! gone down the flood!  
Highs! Epiphanies! Despairs! Ten years' animal screams and suicides!  
Minds! New loves! Mad generation! down on the rocks of Time!

Real holy laughter in the river! They saw it all! the wild eyes! the holy yells!  
They bade farewell! They jumped off the roof! to solitude! waving!  
carrying flowers! Down to the river! into the street!

### III

Carl Solomon! I'm with you in Rockland  
where you're madder than I am

I'm with you in Rockland  
where you must feel very strange

I'm with you in Rockland  
where you imitate the shade of my mother

I'm with you in Rockland  
where you've murdered your twelve secretaries

I'm with you in Rockland  
where you laugh at this invisible humor

I'm with you in Rockland  
where we are great writers on the same dreadful typewriter

I'm with you in Rockland

where your condition has become serious and is reported on the radio

I'm with you in Rockland

where the faculties of the skull no longer admit the worms of the senses

I'm with you in Rockland

where you drink the tea of the breasts of the spinsters of Utica

I'm with you in Rockland

where you pun on the bodies of your nurses the harpies of the Bronx

I'm with you in Rockland

where you scream in a straightjacket that you're losing the game of the actual pingpong of the abyss

I'm with you in Rockland

where you bang on the catatonic piano the soul is innocent and immortal it should never die ungodly in an armed madhouse

I'm with you in Rockland

where fifty more shocks will never return your soul to its body again from its pilgrimage to a cross in the void

I'm with you in Rockland

where you accuse your doctors of insanity and plot the Hebrew socialist revolution against the fascist national Golgotha

I'm with you in Rockland

where you will split the heavens of Long Island and resurrect your living human Jesus from the superhuman tomb

I'm with you in Rockland

where there are twenty-five-thousand mad comrades all together singing the final stanzas of the Internationale

I'm with you in Rockland

where we hug and kiss the United States under our bedsheets the United States that coughs all night and won't let us sleep

I'm with you in Rockland

where we wake up electrified out of the coma by our own souls' airplanes roaring over the roof they've come to drop angelic bombs the hospital illuminates itself imaginary walls collapse O skinny legions run outside O starry-spangled shock of mercy the eternal war is here O victory forget your underwear we're free

I'm with you in Rockland

in my dreams you walk dripping from a sea-journey on the highway across  
America in tears to the door of my cottage in the Western night

*San Francisco 1955–56*

## Footnote to Howl

Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy!  
Holy! Holy! Holy!

The world is holy! The soul is holy! The skin is holy! The nose is holy! The  
tongue and cock and hand and asshole holy!

Everything is holy! everybody's holy! everywhere is holy! everyday is in  
eternity! Everyman's an angel!

The bum's as holy as the seraphim! the madman is holy as you my soul are  
holy!

The typewriter is holy the poem is holy the voice is holy the hearers are holy  
the ecstasy is holy!

Holy Peter holy Allen holy Solomon holy Lucien holy Kerouac holy Huncke  
holy Burroughs holy Cassady holy the unknown bugged and suffering  
beggars holy the hideous human angels!

Holy my mother in the insane asylum! Holy the cocks of the grandfathers of  
Kansas!

Holy the groaning saxophone! Holy the bop apocalypse! Holy the jazzbands  
marijuana hipsters peace peyote pipes & drums!

Holy the solitudes of skyscrapers and pavements! Holy the cafeterias filled  
with the millions! Holy the mysterious rivers of tears under the streets!

Holy the lone juggernaut! Holy the vast lamb of the middle class! Holy the  
crazy shepherds of rebellion! Who digs Los Angeles IS Los Angeles!

Holy New York Holy San Francisco Holy Peoria & Seattle Holy Paris Holy  
Tangiers Holy Moscow Holy Istanbul!

Holy time in eternity holy eternity in time holy the clocks in space holy the  
fourth dimension holy the fifth International holy the Angel in Moloch!

Holy the sea holy the desert holy the railroad holy the locomotive holy the  
visions holy the hallucinations holy the miracles holy the eyeball holy the

abyss!  
Holy forgiveness! mercy! charity! faith! Holy! Ours! bodies! suffering!  
magnanimity!  
Holy the supernatural extra brilliant intelligent kindness of the soul!

*Berkeley, 1955*

# A Supermarket in California

What thoughts I have of you tonight, Walt Whitman, for I walked down the sidestreets under the trees with a headache self-conscious looking at the full moon.

In my hungry fatigue, and shopping for images, I went into the neon fruit supermarket, dreaming of your enumerations!

What peaches and what penumbras! Whole families shopping at night! Aisles full of husbands! Wives in the avocados, babies in the tomatoes!—and you, García Lorca, what were you doing down by the watermelons?

I saw you, Walt Whitman, childless, lonely old grubber, poking among the meats in the refrigerator and eyeing the grocery boys.

I heard you asking questions of each: Who killed the pork chops? What price bananas? Are you my Angel?

I wandered in and out of the brilliant stacks of cans following you, and followed in my imagination by the store detective.

We strode down the open corridors together in our solitary fancy tasting artichokes, possessing every frozen delicacy, and never passing the cashier.

Where are we going, Walt Whitman? The doors close in an hour. Which way does your beard point tonight?

(I touch your book and dream of our odyssey in the supermarket and feel absurd.)

Will we walk all night through solitary streets? The trees add shade to shade, lights out in the houses, we'll both be lonely.

Will we stroll dreaming of the lost America of love past blue automobiles in driveways, home to our silent cottage?

Ah, dear father, graybeard, lonely old courage-teacher, what America did you have when Charon quit poling his ferry and you got out on a smoking

bank and stood watching the boat disappear on the black waters of Lethe?

*Berkeley, 1955*

## Transcription of Organ Music

The flower in the glass peanut bottle formerly in the kitchen crooked to take a place in the light,  
the closet door opened, because I used it before, it kindly stayed open waiting for me, its owner.

I began to feel my misery in pallet on floor, listening to music, my misery,  
that's why I want to sing.

The room closed down on me, I expected the presence of the Creator, I saw  
my gray painted walls and ceiling, they contained my room, they contained me  
as the sky contained my garden,  
I opened my door

The rambler vine climbed up the cottage post, the leaves in the night still  
where the day had placed them, the animal heads of the flowers where they  
had arisen  
to think at the sun

Can I bring back the words? Will thought of transcription haze my mental  
open eye?

The kindly search for growth, the gracious desire to exist of the flowers,  
my near ecstasy at existing among them

The privilege to witness my existence—you too must seek the sun ...  
My books piled up before me for my use  
waiting in space where I placed them, they haven't disappeared, time's left  
its remnants and qualities for me to use—my words piled up, my texts, my  
manuscripts, my loves.

I had a moment of clarity, saw the feeling in the heart of things, walked out to the garden crying.

Saw the red blossoms in the night light, sun's gone, they had all grown, in a moment, and were waiting stopped in time for the day sun to come and give them ...

Flowers which as in a dream at sunset I watered faithfully not knowing how much I loved them.

I am so lonely in my glory—except they too out there—I looked up—those red bush blossoms beckoning and peering in the window waiting in blind love, their leaves too have hope and are upturned top flat to the sky to receive—all creation open to receive—the flat earth itself.

The music descends, as does the tall bending stalk of the heavy blossom, because it has to, to stay alive, to continue to the last drop of joy.

The world knows the love that's in its breast as in the flower, the suffering lonely world.

The Father is merciful.

The light socket is crudely attached to the ceiling, after the house was built, to receive a plug which sticks in it alright, and serves my phonograph now ...

The closet door is open for me, where I left it, since I left it open, it has graciously stayed open.

The kitchen has no door, the hole there will admit me should I wish to enter the kitchen.

I remember when I first got laid, H.P. graciously took my cherry, I sat on the docks of Provincetown, age 23, joyful, elevated in hope with the Father, the door to the womb was open to admit me if I wished to enter.

There are unused electricity plugs all over my house if I ever need them.

The kitchen window is open, to admit air ...

The telephone—sad to relate—sits on the floor—I haven't the money to get it connected—

I want people to bow as they see me and say he is gifted with poetry, he has seen the presence of the Creator.

And the Creator gave me a shot of his presence to gratify my wish, so as not to cheat me of my yearning for him.

*Berkeley, September 8, 1955*

## Sunflower Sutra

I walked on the banks of the tincan banana dock and sat down under the huge shade of a Southern Pacific locomotive to look at the sunset over the box house hills and cry.

Jack Kerouac sat beside me on a busted rusty iron pole, companion, we thought the same thoughts of the soul, bleak and blue and sad-eyed, surrounded by the gnarled steel roots of trees of machinery.

The oily water on the river mirrored the red sky, sun sank on top of final Frisco peaks, no fish in that stream, no hermit in those mounts, just ourselves rheumy-eyed and hungover like old bums on the riverbank, tired and wily.

Look at the Sunflower, he said, there was a dead gray shadow against the sky, big as a man, sitting dry on top of a pile of ancient sawdust—

—I rushed up enchanted—it was my first sunflower, memories of Blake—my visions—Harlem

and Hells of the Eastern rivers, bridges clanking Joes Greasy Sandwiches, dead baby carriages, black treadless tires forgotten and unretreaded, the poem of the riverbank, condoms & pots, steel knives, nothing stainless, only the dank muck and the razor-sharp artifacts passing into the past—

and the gray Sunflower poised against the sunset, crackly bleak and dusty with the smut and smog and smoke of olden locomotives in its eye—  
corolla of bleary spikes pushed down and broken like a battered crown, seeds fallen out of its face, soon-to-be-toothless mouth of sunny air, sunrays obliterated on its hairy head like a dried wire spiderweb,

leaves stuck out like arms out of the stem, gestures from the sawdust root, broke pieces of plaster fallen out of the black twigs, a dead fly in its ear, Unholy battered old thing you were, my sunflower O my soul, I loved you then!

The grime was no man's grime but death and human locomotives,  
all that dress of dust, that veil of darkened railroad skin, that smog of cheek,  
that eyelid of black mis'ry, that sooty hand or phallus or protuberance of  
artificial worse-than-dirt—industrial—modern—all that civilization  
spotting your crazy golden crown—  
and those blear thoughts of death and dusty loveless eyes and ends and  
withered roots below, in the home-pile of sand and sawdust, rubber dollar  
bills, skin of machinery, the guts and innards of the weeping coughing car,  
the empty lonely tincans with their rusty tongues alack, what more could I  
name, the smoked ashes of some cock cigar, the cunts of wheelbarrows  
and the milky breasts of cars, wornout asses out of chairs & sphincters of  
dynamamos—all these  
entangled in your mummied roots—and you there standing before me in the  
sunset, all your glory in your form!  
A perfect beauty of a sunflower! a perfect excellent lovely sunflower  
existence! a sweet natural eye to the new hip moon, woke up alive and  
excited grasping in the sunset shadow sunrise golden monthly breeze!  
How many flies buzzed round you innocent of your grime, while you cursed  
the heavens of the railroad and your flower soul?  
Poor dead flower? when did you forget you were a flower? when did you  
look at your skin and decide you were an impotent dirty old locomotive?  
the ghost of a locomotive? the specter and shade of a once powerful mad  
American locomotive?  
You were never no locomotive, Sunflower, you were a sunflower!  
And you Locomotive, you are a locomotive, forget me not!  
So I grabbed up the skeleton thick sunflower and stuck it at my side like a  
scepter,  
and deliver my sermon to my soul, and Jack's soul too, and anyone who'll  
listen,  
—We're not our skin of grime, we're not our dread bleak dusty imageless  
locomotive, we're all beautiful golden sunflowers inside, we're blessed by  
our own seed & golden hairy naked accomplishment-bodies growing into  
mad black formal sunflowers in the sunset, spied on by our eyes under the  
shadow of the mad locomotive riverbank sunset Frisco hilly tincan evening  
sitdown vision.

*Berkeley, 1955*

# America

America I've given you all and now I'm nothing.  
America two dollars and twentyseven cents January 17, 1956.  
I can't stand my own mind.  
America when will we end the human war?  
Go fuck yourself with your atom bomb.  
I don't feel good don't bother me.  
I won't write my poem till I'm in my right mind.  
America when will you be angelic?  
When will you take off your clothes?  
When will you look at yourself through the grave?  
When will you be worthy of your million Trotskyites?  
America why are your libraries full of tears?  
America when will you send your eggs to India?  
I'm sick of your insane demands.  
When can I go into the supermarket and buy what I need with my good  
looks?  
America after all it is you and I who are perfect not the next world.  
Your machinery is too much for me.  
You made me want to be a saint.  
There must be some other way to settle this argument.  
Burroughs is in Tangiers I don't think he'll come back it's sinister.  
Are you being sinister or is this some form of practical joke?  
I'm trying to come to the point.  
I refuse to give up my obsession.  
America stop pushing I know what I'm doing.  
America the plum blossoms are falling.

I haven't read the newspapers for months, everyday somebody goes on trial  
for murder.

America I feel sentimental about the Wobblies.

America I used to be a communist when I was a kid I'm not sorry.

I smoke marijuana every chance I get.

I sit in my house for days on end and stare at the roses in the closet.

When I go to Chinatown I get drunk and never get laid.

My mind is made up there's going to be trouble.

You should have seen me reading Marx.

My psychoanalyst thinks I'm perfectly right.

I won't say the Lord's Prayer.

I have mystical visions and cosmic vibrations.

America I still haven't told you what you did to Uncle Max after he came  
over from Russia.

I'm addressing you.

Are you going to let your emotional life be run by Time Magazine?

I'm obsessed by Time Magazine.

I read it every week.

Its cover stares at me every time I slink past the corner candy-store.

I read it in the basement of the Berkeley Public Library.

It's always telling me about responsibility. Businessmen are serious. Movie  
producers are serious. Everybody's serious but me.

It occurs to me that I am America.

I am talking to myself again.

Asia is rising against me.

I haven't got a chinaman's chance.

I'd better consider my national resources.

My national resources consist of two joints of marijuana millions of genitals  
an unpublishable private literature that goes 1400 miles an hour and  
twenty-five-thousand mental institutions.

I say nothing about my prisons nor the millions of underprivileged who live  
in my flowerpots under the light of five hundred suns.

I have abolished the whorehouses of France, Tangiers is the next to go.

My ambition is to be President despite the fact that I'm a Catholic.

America how can I write a holy litany in your silly mood?  
I will continue like Henry Ford my strophes are as individual as his  
automobiles more so they're all different sexes.  
America I will sell you strophes \$2500 apiece \$500 down on your old strophe  
America free Tom Mooney  
America save the Spanish Loyalists  
America Sacco & Vanzetti must not die  
America I am the Scottsboro boys.  
America when I was seven momma took me to Communist Cell meetings  
they sold us garbanzos a handful per ticket a ticket costs a nickel and the  
speeches were free everybody was angelic and sentimental about the  
workers it was all so sincere you have no idea what a good thing the party  
was in 1835 Scott Nearing was a grand old man a real mensch Mother  
Bloor the Silk-strikers' Ewig-Weibliche made me cry I once saw the  
Yiddish orator Israel Amter plain. Everybody must have been a spy.  
America you don't really want to go to war.  
America it's them bad Russians.  
Them Russians them Russians and them Chinamen. And them Russians.  
The Russia wants to eat us alive. The Russia's power mad. She wants to take  
our cars from out our garages.  
Her wants to grab Chicago. Her needs a *Red Readers' Digest*. Her wants our  
auto plants in Siberia. Him big bureaucracy running our fillingstations.  
That no good. Ugh. Him make Indians learn read. Him need big black  
niggers. Hah. Her make us all work sixteen hours a day. Help.  
America this is quite serious.  
America this is the impression I get from looking in the television set.  
America is this correct?  
I'd better get right down to the job.  
It's true I don't want to join the Army or turn lathes in precision parts  
factories, I'm nearsighted and psychopathic anyway.  
America I'm putting my queer shoulder to the wheel.

*Berkeley, January 17, 1956*

# In the Baggage Room at Greyhound

## I

In the depths of the Greyhound Terminal  
sitting dumbly on a baggage truck looking at the sky waiting for the Los  
Angeles Express to depart  
worrying about eternity over the Post Office roof in the nighttime red  
downtown heaven,  
staring through my eyeglasses I realized shuddering these thoughts were not  
eternity, nor the poverty of our lives, irritable baggage clerks,  
nor the millions of weeping relatives surrounding the buses waving goodbye,  
nor other millions of the poor rushing around from city to city to see their  
loved ones,  
nor an indian dead with fright talking to a huge cop by the Coke machine,  
nor this trembling old lady with a cane taking the last trip of her life,  
nor the red-capped cynical porter collecting his quarters and smiling over the  
smashed baggage,  
nor me looking around at the horrible dream,  
nor mustached negro Operating Clerk named Spade, dealing out with his  
marvelous long hand the fate of thousands of express packages,  
nor fairy Sam in the basement limping from leaden trunk to trunk,  
nor Joe at the counter with his nervous breakdown smiling cowardly at the  
customers,  
nor the grayish-green whale's stomach interior loft where we keep the  
baggage in hideous racks,  
hundreds of suitcases full of tragedy rocking back and forth waiting to be  
opened,  
nor the baggage that's lost, nor damaged handles, nameplates vanished,  
busted wires & broken ropes, whole trunks exploding on the concrete

floor,  
nor seabags emptied into the night in the final warehouse.

## II

Yet Spade reminded me of Angel, unloading a bus,  
dressed in blue overalls black face official Angel's workman cap,  
pushing with his belly a huge tin horse piled high with black baggage,  
looking up as he passed the yellow light bulb of the loft  
and holding high on his arm an iron shepherd's crook.

## III

It was the racks, I realized, sitting myself on top of them now as is my wont  
at lunchtime to rest my tired foot,  
it was the racks, great wooden shelves and stanchions posts and beams  
assembled floor to roof jumbled with baggage,  
—the Japanese white metal postwar trunk gaudily flowered & headed for  
Fort Bragg,  
one Mexican green paper package in purple rope adorned with names for  
Nogales,  
hundreds of radiators all at once for Eureka,  
crates of Hawaiian underwear,  
rolls of posters scattered over the Peninsula, nuts to Sacramento,  
one human eye for Napa,  
an aluminum box of human blood for Stockton and a little red package of  
teeth for Calistoga –  
it was the racks and these on the racks I saw naked in electric light the night  
before I quit,  
the racks were created to hang our possessions, to keep us together, a  
temporary shift in space,  
God's only way of building the rickety structure of Time,  
to hold the bags to send on the roads, to carry our luggage from place to place  
looking for a bus to ride us back home to Eternity where the heart was left  
and farewell tears began.

#### IV

A swarm of baggage sitting by the counter as the transcontinental bus pulls in.

The clock registering 12:15 a.m., May 9, 1956, the second hand moving forward, red.

Getting ready to load my last bus.—Farewell, Walnut Creek Richmond Vallejo Portland Pacific Highway

Fleet-footed Quicksilver, God of transience.

One last package sits lone at midnight sticking up out of the Coast rack high as the dusty fluorescent light.

The wage they pay us is too low to live on. Tragedy reduced to numbers. This for the poor shepherds. I am a communist.

Farewell ye Greyhound where I suffered so much, hurt my knee and scraped my hand and built my pectoral muscles big as vagina.

*May 9, 1956*

# An Asphodel

O dear sweet rosy  
    unattainable desire  
... how sad, no way  
    to change the mad  
cultivated asphodel, the  
    visible reality ...

and skin's appalling  
    petals—how inspired  
to be so lying in the living  
    room drunk naked  
and dreaming, in the absence  
    of electricity ...  
over and over eating the low root  
    of the asphodel,  
gray fate ...

    rolling in generation  
on the flowery couch  
    as on a bank in Arden—  
my only rose tonite's the treat  
    of my own nudity.

*Fall, 1953*

# Song

The weight of the world  
is love.

Under the burden  
of solitude,  
under the burde  
of dissatisfaction

the weight,  
the weight we carry  
is love.

Who can deny?  
In dreams  
it touches  
the body,  
in thought  
constructs  
a miracle,  
in imagination  
anguishes  
till born  
in human—

looks out of the heart  
burning with purity—  
for the burden of life  
is love,

but we carry the weight  
warily,  
and so must rest  
in the arms of love  
at last,  
must rest in the arms  
of love.

No rest  
without love,  
no sleep  
without dreams  
of love—  
be mad or chill  
obsessed with angels  
or machines,  
the final wish  
is love  
—cannot be bitter,  
cannot deny,  
cannot withhold  
if denied:

the weight is too heavy

—must give  
for no return  
as thought  
is given  
in solitude  
in all the excellence  
of its excess.

The warm bodies  
shine together  
in the darkness,

the hand moves  
to the center  
of the flesh,  
the skin trembles  
in happiness  
and the soul comes  
joyful to the eye—

yes, yes,  
that's what  
I wanted,  
I always wanted,  
I always wanted,  
to return  
to the body  
where I was born.

*San Jose, 1954*

# Wild Orphan

Blandly mother  
takes him strolling  
by railroad and by river  
—he's the son of the absconded  
hot rod angel—  
and he imagines cars  
and rides them in his dreams,

so lonely growing up among  
the imaginary automobiles  
and dead souls of Tarrytown

to create  
out of his own imagination  
the beauty of his wild  
forebears—a mythology  
he cannot inherit.

Will he later hallucinate  
his gods? Waking  
among mysteries with  
an insane gleam  
of recollection?

The recognition—  
something so rare  
in his soul,

met only in dreams  
—nostalgias  
of another life.

A question of the soul.  
And the injured  
losing their injury  
in their innocence  
—a cock, a cross,  
an excellence of love.

And the father grieves  
in flophouse  
complexities of memory  
a thousand miles  
away, unknowing  
of the unexpected  
youthful stranger  
bumming toward his door.

*New York, April 13, 1952*

## In Back of the Real

railroad yard in San Jose  
I wandered desolate  
in front of a tank factory  
and sat on a bench  
near the switchman's shack.

A flower lay on the hay on  
the asphalt highway  
—the dread hay flower  
I thought—It had a  
brittle black stem and  
corolla of yellowish dirty  
spikes like Jesus' inchlong  
crown, and a soiled  
dry center cotton tuft  
like a used shaving brush  
that's been lying under  
the garage for a year.

Yellow, yellow flower, and  
flower of industry,  
tough spiky ugly flower,  
flower nonetheless,  
with the form of the great yellow  
Rose in your brain!  
This is the flower of the World.

*San Jose, 1954*

# Kaddish

*For*  
*Naomi Ginsberg 1894–1956*

## I

Strange now to think of you, gone without corsets & eyes, while I walk on  
the sunny pavement of Greenwich Village.  
downtown Manhattan, clear winter noon, and I've been up all night, talking,  
talking, reading the Kaddish aloud, listening to Ray Charles blues shout  
blind on the phonograph  
the rhythm the rhythm—and your memory in my head three years after—And  
read Adonais' last triumphant stanzas aloud—wept, realizing how we  
suffer—  
And how Death is that remedy all singers dream of, sing, remember,  
prophesy as in the Hebrew Anthem, or the Buddhist Book of Answers—  
and my own imagination of a withered leaf—at dawn—  
Dreaming back thru life, Your time—and mine accelerating toward  
Apocalypse,  
the final moment—the flower burning in the Day—and what comes after,  
looking back on the mind itself that saw an American city  
a flash away, and the great dream of Me or China, or you and a phantom  
Russia, or a crumpled bed that never existed—  
like a poem in the dark—escaped back to Oblivion—  
No more to say, and nothing to weep for but the Beings in the Dream, trapped  
in its disappearance,  
sighing, screaming with it, buying and selling pieces of phantom,  
worshipping each other,

worshipping the God included in it all—longing or inevitability?—while it lasts, a Vision—anything more?

It leaps about me, as I go out and walk the street, look back over my shoulder, Seventh Avenue, the battlements of window office buildings shouldering each other high, under a cloud, tall as the sky an instant—and the sky above—an old blue place.

or down the Avenue to the South, to—as I walk toward the Lower East Side—where you walked 50 years ago, little girl—from Russia, eating the first poisonous tomatoes of America—frightened on the dock—

then struggling in the crowds of Orchard Street toward what?—toward Newark—

toward candy store, first home-made sodas of the century, hand-churned ice cream in backroom on musty brown floor boards—

Toward education marriage nervous breakdown, operation, teaching school, and learning to be mad, in a dream—what is this life?

Toward the Key in the window—and the great Key lays its head of light on top of Manhattan, and over the floor, and lays down on the sidewalk—in a single vast beam, moving, as I walk down First toward the Yiddish Theater—and the place of poverty

you knew, and I know, but without caring now—Strange to have moved thru Paterson, and the West, and Europe and here again,

with the cries of Spaniards now in the doorstoops doors and dark boys on the street, fire escapes old as you

—Tho you're not old now, that's left here with me—

Myself, anyhow, maybe as old as the universe—and I guess that dies with us—enough to cancel all that comes—What came is gone forever every time

—  
That's good! That leaves it open for no regret—no fear radiators, lacklove, torture even toothache in the end—

Though while it comes it is a lion that eats the soul—and the lamb, the soul, in us, alas, offering itself in sacrifice to change's fierce hunger—hair and teeth—and the roar of bonepain, skull bare, break rib, rot-skin, braintricked Implacability.

Ai! ai! we do worse! We are in a fix! And you're out, Death let you out, Death had the Mercy, you're done with your century, done with God, done

with the path thru it—Done with yourself at last—Pure—Back to the Babe  
dark before your Father, before us all—before the world—  
There, rest. No more suffering for you. I know where you've gone, it's good.  
No more flowers in the summer fields of New York, no joy now, no more  
fear of Louis,  
and no more of his sweetness and glasses, his high school decades, debts,  
loves, frightened telephone calls, conception beds, relatives, hands—  
No more of sister Elanor,—she gone before you—we kept it secret—you  
killed her—or she killed herself to bear with you—an arthritic heart—But  
Death's killed you both—No matter—  
Nor your memory of your mother, 1915 tears in silent movies weeks and  
weeks—forgetting, agrieve watching Marie Dressler address humanity,  
Chaplin dance in youth,  
or Boris Godounov, Chaliapin's at the Met, halling his voice of a weeping  
Czar—by standing room with Elanor & Max—watching also the  
Capitalists take seats in Orchestra, white furs, diamonds,  
with the YPSL's hitch-hiking thru Pennsylvania, in black baggy gym skirts  
pants, photograph of 4 girls holding each other round the waste, and  
laughing eye, too coy, virginal solitude of 1920  
all girls grown old, or dead, now, and that long hair in the grave—lucky to  
have husbands later—  
You made it—I came too—Eugene my brother before (still grieving now and  
will gream on to his last stiff hand, as he goes thru his cancer—or kill—  
later perhaps—soon he will think—)  
And it's the last moment I remember, which I see them all, thru myself, now  
—tho not you  
I didn't foresee what you felt—what more hideous gape of bad mouth came  
first—to you—and were you prepared?  
To go where? In that Dark—that—in that God? a radiance? A Lord in the  
Void? Like an eye in the black cloud in a dream? Adonoi at last, with you?  
Beyond my remembrance! Incapable to guess! Not merely the yellow skull in  
the grave, or a box of worm dust, and a stained ribbon—Deathshead with  
Halo? can you believe it?  
Is it only the sun that shines once for the mind, only the flash of existence,  
than none ever was?  
Nothing beyond what we have—what you had—that so pitiful—yet Triumph,

to have been here, and changed, like a tree, broken, or flower—fed to the ground—but mad, with its petals, colored, thinking Great Universe, shaken, cut in the head, leaf stript, hid in an egg crate hospital, cloth wrapped, sore—freaked in the moon brain, Naughtless.

No flower like that flower, which knew itself in the garden, and fought the knife—lost

Cut down by an idiot Snowman's icy—even in the Spring—strange ghost thought—some Death—Sharp icicle in his hand—crowned with old roses—a dog for his eyes—cock of a sweatshop—heart of electric irons.

All the accumulations of life, that wear us out—clocks, bodies, consciousness, shoes, breasts—begotten sons—your Communism—'Paranoia' into hospitals.

You once kicked Elanor in the leg, she died of heart failure later. You of stroke. Asleep? within a year, the two of you, sisters in death. Is Elanor happy?

Max grieves alive in an office on Lower Broadway, lone large mustache over midnight Accountings, not sure. His life passes—as he sees—and what does he doubt now? Still dream of making money, or that might have made money, hired nurse, had children, found even your Immortality, Naomi? I'll see him soon. Now I've got to cut through—to talk to you—as I didn't when you had a mouth.

Forever. And we're bound for that, Forever—like Emily Dickinson's horses—headed to the End.

They know the way—These Steeds—run faster than we think—it's our own life they cross—and take with them.

Magnificent, mourned no more, marred of heart, mind behind, married dreamed, mortal changed—Ass and face done with murder.

In the world, given, flower maddened, made no Utopia, shut under pine, almed in Earth, balmed in Lone, Jehovah, accept.

Nameless, One Faced, Forever beyond me, beginningless, endless, Father in death. Tho I am not there for this Prophecy, I am unmarried, I'm hymnless, I'm Heavenless, headless in bliss-hood I would still adore

Thee, Heaven, after Death, only One blessed in Nothingness, not light or darkness, Dayless Eternity—

Take this, this Psalm, from me, burst from my hand in a day, some of my Time, now given to Nothing—to praise Thee—But Death

This is the end, the redemption from Wilderness, way for the Wonderer, House sought for All, black handkerchief washed clean by weeping—page beyond Psalm—Last change of mine and Naomi—to God’s perfect Darkness—Death, stay thy phantoms!

## II

Over and over—refrain—of the Hospitals—still haven’t written your history—leave it abstract—a few images

run thru the mind—like the saxophone chorus of houses and years—remembrance of electrical shocks.

By long nites as a child in Paterson apartment, watching over your nervousness—you were fat—your next move—

By that afternoon I stayed home from school to take care of you—once and for all—when I vowed forever that once man disagreed with my opinion of the cosmos, I was lost—

By my later burden—vow to illuminate mankind—this is release of particulars—(mad as you)—(sanity a trick of agreement)—

But you stared out the window on the Broadway Church corner, and spied a mystical assassin from Newark,

So phoned the Doctor—‘OK go way for a rest’—so I put on my coat and walked you downstreet—On the way a grammarschool boy screamed, unaccountably—‘Where you goin Lady to Death’? I shuddered—

and you covered your nose with motheaten fur collar, gas mask against poison sneaked into downtown atmosphere, sprayed by Grandma—

And was the driver of the cheesebox Public Service bus a member of the gang? You shuddered at his face, I could hardly get you on—to New York, very Times Square, to grab another Greyhound—

where we hung around 2 hours fighting invisible bugs and jewish sickness—breeze poisoned by Roosevelt—

out to get you—and me tagging along, hoping it would end in a quiet room in a victorian house by a lake.

Ride 3 hours thru tunnels past all American industry, Bayonne preparing for World War II, tanks, gas fields, soda factories, diners, locomotive roundhouse fortress—into piney woods New Jersey Indians—calm towns—long roads thru sandy tree fields—

Bridges by deerless creeks, old wampum loading the streambed—down there a tomahawk or Pocahontas bone—and a million old ladies voting for Roosevelt in brown small houses, roads off the Madness highway—

perhaps a hawk in a tree, or a hermit looking for an owl-filled branch—

All the time arguing—afraid of strangers in the forward double seat, snoring regardless—what busride they snore on now?

‘Allen, you don’t understand—it’s—ever since those 3 big sticks up my back—they did something to me in Hospital, they poisoned me, they want to see me dead—3 big sticks, 3 big sticks—

‘The Bitch! Old Grandma! Last week I saw her, dressed in pants like an old man, with a sack on her back, climbing up the brick side of the apartment

‘On the fire escape, with poison germs, to throw on me—at night—maybe Louis is helping her—he’s under her power—

‘I’m your mother, take me to Lakewood’ (near where Graf Zeppelin had crashed before, all Hitler in Explosion) ‘where I can hide.’

We got there—Dr Whatzis rest home—she hid behind a closet—demanded a blood transfusion.

We were kicked out—tramping with Valise to unknown shady lawn houses—dusk, pine trees after dark—long dead street filled with crickets and poison ivy—

I shut her up by now—big house REST HOME ROOMS—gave the landlady her money for the week—carried up the iron valise—sat on bed waiting to escape—

Neat room in attic with friendly bedcover—lace curtains—spinning wheel rug—Stained wallpaper old as Naomi. We were home.

I left on the next bus to New York—lay my head back in the last seat, depressed—the worst yet to come?—abandoning her, rode in torpor—I was only 12.

Would she hide in her room and come out cheerful for breakfast? Or lock her door and stare thru the window for side-street spies? Listen at keyholes for Hitlerian invisible gas? Dream in a chair—or mock me, by—in front of a mirror, alone?

12 riding the bus at nite thru New Jersey, have left Naomi to Parcae in Lakewood's haunted house—left to my own fate bus—sunk in a seat—all violins broken—my heart sore in my ribs—mind was empty—Would she were safe in her coffin—

Or back at Normal School in Newark, studying up on America in a black skirt—winter on the street without lunch—a penny a pickle—home at night to take care of Elanor in the bedroom—

First nervous breakdown was 1919—she stayed home from school and lay in a dark room for three weeks—something bad—never said what—every noise hurt—dreams of the creaks of Wall Street—

Before the grey Depression—went upstate New York—recovered—Lou took photo of her sitting crossleg on the grass—her long hair wound with flowers—smiling—playing lullabies on mandoline—poison ivy smoke in left-wing summer camps and me in infancy saw trees—

or back teaching school, laughing with idiots, the backward classes—her Russian specialty—morons with dreamy lips, great eyes, thin feet & sicky fingers, swaybacked, rachitic—

great heads pendulous over Alice in Wonderland, a blackboard full of C A T.

Naomi reading patiently, story out of a Communist fairy book—Tale of the Sudden Sweetness of The Dictator—Forgiveness of Warlocks—Armies Kissing—

Deathsheads Around the Green Table—The King & the Workers—Paterson Press printed them up in the 30's till she went mad, or they folded, both.

O Paterson! I got home late that nite. Louis was worried. How could I be so—didn't I think? I shouldn't have left her. Mad in Lakewood. Call the Doctor. Phone the home in the pines. Too late.

Went to bed exhausted, wanting to leave the world (probably that year newly in love with R—my high school mind hero, jewish boy who came a doctor later—then silent neat kid—

I later laying down life for him, moved to Manhattan—followed him to college—Prayed on ferry to help mankind if admitted—vowed, the day I journeyed to Entrance Exam—

by being honest revolutionary labor lawyer—would train for that—inspired by Sacco Vanzetti, Norman Thomas, Debs, Altgeld, Sandburg, Poe

—Little Blue Books. I wanted to be President, or Senator.

ignorant woe—later dreams of kneeling by R's shocked knees declaring my love of 1941—What sweetness he'd have shown me, tho, that I'd wished him & despaired—first love—a crush—

Later a mortal avalanche, whole mountains of homosexuality, Matterhorns of cock, Grand Canyons of asshole—weight on my melancholy head—

meanwhile I walked on Broadway imagining Infinity like a rubber ball without space beyond—what's outside?—coming home to Graham Avenue still melancholy passing the lone green hedges across the street, dreaming after the movies—)

The telephone rang at 2AM—Emergency—she'd gone mad—Naomi hiding under the bed screaming bugs of Mussolini—Help! Louis! Buba! Fascists! Death!—the landlady frightened—old fag attendant screaming back at her—

Terror, that woke the neighbors—old ladies on the second floor recovering from menopause—all those rags between thighs, clean sheets, sorry over lost babies—husbands ashen—children sneering at Yale, or putting oil in hair at CCNY—or trembling in Montclair State Teachers College like Eugene—

Her big leg crouched to her breast, hand outstretched Keep Away, wool dress on her thighs, fur coat dragged under the bed—she barricaded herself under bedspring with suitcases.

Louis in pyjamas listening to phone, frightened—do now?—Who could know?—my fault, delivering her to solitude?—sitting in the dark room on the sofa, trembling, to figure out—

He took the morning train to Lakewood, Naomi still under bed—thought he brought poison Cops—Naomi screaming—Louis what happened to your heart then? Have you been killed by Naomi's ecstasy?

Dragged her out, around the corner, a cab, forced her in with valise, but the driver left them off at drugstore. Bus stop, two hours' wait.

I lay in bed nervous in the 4-room apartment, the big bed in living room, next to Louis' desk—shaking—he came home that nite, late, told me what happened.

Naomi at the prescription counter defending herself from the enemy—racks of children's books, douche bags, aspirins, pots, blood—'Don't come near me—murderers! Keep away! Promise not to kill me!'

Louis in horror at the soda fountain—with Lakewood girlscouts—coke

addicts—nurses—busmen hung on schedule—Police from country precinct, dumber—and a priest dreaming of pigs on an ancient cliff?

Smelling the air—Louis pointing to emptiness?— Customers vomiting their cokes—or staring—Louis humiliated—Naomi triumphant—The Announcement of the Plot. Bus arrives, the drivers won't have them on trip to New York.

Phonecalls to Dr Whatzis, 'She needs a rest,' The mental hospital—State Greystone Doctors—'Bring her here, Mr Ginsberg.'

Naomi, Naomi—sweating, bulge-eyed, fat, the dress unbuttoned at one side—hair over brow, her stocking hanging evilly on her legs—screaming for a blood transfusion—one righteous hand upraised—a shoe in it—barefoot in the Pharmacy—

The enemies approach—what poisons? Tape recorders? FBI? Zhdanov hiding behind the counter? Trotsky mixing rat bacteria in the back of the store? Uncle Sam in Newark, plotting deathly perfumes in the Negro district? Uncle Ephraim, drunk with murder in the politician's bar, scheming of Hague? Aunt Rose passing water thru the needles of the Spanish Civil War?

till the hired \$35 ambulance came from Red Bank— Grabbed her arms—strapped her on the stretcher—moaning, poisoned by imaginaries, vomiting chemicals thru Jersey, begging mercy from Essex County to Morristown—

And back to Greystone where she lay three years—that was the last breakthrough, delivered her to Madhouse again—

On what wards—I walked there later, oft—old catatonic ladies, grey as cloud or ash or walls—sit crooning over floorspace—Chairs—and the wrinkled hags acreep, accusing—begging my 13-year-old mercy—

'Take me home'—I went alone sometimes looking for the lost Naomi, taking Shock—and I'd say, 'No, you're crazy Mama,—Trust the Drs.'—

And Eugene, my brother, her elder son, away studying Law in a furnished room in Newark—

came Paterson-ward next day—and he sat on the broken-down couch in the living room—'We had to send her back to Greystone'—

—his face perplexed, so young, then eyes with tears— then crept weeping all over his face—'What for?' wail vibrating in his cheekbones, eyes closed up, high voice—Eugene's face of pain.

Him faraway, escaped to an Elevator in the Newark Library, his bottle daily milk on windowsill of \$5 week furn room downtown at trolley tracks—

He worked 8 hrs. a day for \$20/wk—thru Law School years—stayed by himself innocent near negro whorehouses.

Unlaid, poor virgin—writing poems about Ideals and politics letters to the editor Pat Eve News—(we both wrote, denouncing Senator Borah and Isolationists—and felt mysterious toward Paterson City Hall—

I sneaked inside it once—local Moloch tower with phallus spire & cap o' ornament, strange gothic Poetry that stood on Market Street—replica Lyons' Hotel de Ville—

wings, balcony & scrollwork portals, gateway to the giant city clock, secret map room full of Hawthorne—dark Debs in the Board of Tax—Rembrandt smoking in the gloom—

Silent polished desks in the great committee room— Aldermen? Bd of Finance? Mosca the hairdresser aplot—Crapp the gangster issuing orders from the john—The madmen struggling over Zone, Fire, Cops & Backroom Metaphysics—we're all dead—outside by the bus-stop Eugene stared thru childhood—

where the Evangelist preached madly for 3 decades, hard-haired, cracked & true to his mean Bible—chalked Prepare to Meet Thy God on civic pave—

or God is Love on the railroad overpass concrete—he raved like I would rave, the lone Evangelist—Death on City Hall—)

But Gene, young,—been Montclair Teachers College 4 years—taught half year & quit to go ahead in life—afraid of Discipline Problems—dark sex Italian students, raw girls getting laid, no English, sonnets disregarded—and he did not know much—just that he lost—

so broke his life in two and paid for Law—read huge blue books and rode the ancient elevator 13 miles away in Newark & studied up hard for the future

just found the Scream of Naomi on his failure doorstep, for the final time, Naomi gone, us lonely—home—him sitting there—

Then have some chicken soup, Eugene. The Man of Evangel wails in front of City Hall. And this year Lou has poetic loves of suburb middle-age—in secret—music from his 1937 book—Sincere—he longs for beauty—

No love since Naomi screamed—since 1923?—now lost in Greystone ward—new shock for her—Electricity, following the 40 Insulin.

And Metrasol had made her fat.

So that a few years later she came home again—we'd much advanced and planned—I waited for that day—my Mother again to cook &—play the piano—sing at mandoline—Lung Stew, & Stenka Razin, & the communist line on the war with Finland—and Louis in debt—suspected to be poisoned money—mysterious capitalisms

—& walked down the long front hall & looked at the furniture. She never remembered it all. Some amnesia. Examined the doilies—and the dining room set was sold—

the Mahogany table—20 years love—gone to the junk man—we still had the piano—and the book of Poe—and the Mandolin, tho needed some string, dusty—

She went to the backroom to lay down in bed and ruminate, or nap, hide—I went in with her, not leave her by herself—lay in bed next to her—shades pulled, dusky, late afternoon—Louis in front room at desk, waiting—perhaps boiling chicken for supper—

'Don't be afraid of me because I'm just coming back home from the mental hospital—I'm your mother—'

Poor love, lost—a fear—I lay there—Said, 'I love you Naomi,'—stiff, next to her arm. I would have cried, was this the comfortless lone union?—Nervous, and she got up soon.

Was she ever satisfied? And—by herself sat on the new couch by the front windows, uneasy—cheek leaning on her hand—narrowing eye—at what fate that day—

Picking her tooth with her nail, lips formed an O, suspicion—thought's old worn vagina—absent sideglance of eye—some evil debt written in the wall, unpaid—& the aged breasts of Newark come near—

May have heard radio gossip thru the wires in her head, controlled by 3 big sticks left in her back by gangsters in amnesia, thru the hospital—caused pain between her shoulders—

Into her head—Roosevelt should know her case, she told me—Afraid to kill her, now, that the government knew their names—traced back to Hitler—wanted to leave Louis' house forever.

One night, sudden attack—her noise in the bathroom—like croaking up her soul—convulsions and red vomit coming out of her mouth—diarrhea water exploding from her behind—on all fours in front of the toilet—urine running

between her legs—left retching on the tile floor smeared with her black feces—unfainted—

At forty, varicosed, nude, fat, doomed, hiding outside the apartment door near the elevator calling Police, yelling for her girl-friend Rose to help—

Once locked herself in with razor or iodine—could hear her cough in tears at sink—Lou broke through glass green-painted door, we pulled her out to the bedroom.

Then quiet for months that winter—walks, alone, nearby on Broadway, read Daily Worker—Broke her arm, fell on icy street—

Began to scheme escape from cosmic financial murder plots—later she ran away to the Bronx to her sister Elanor. And there's another saga of late Naomi in New York.

Or thru Elanor or the Workman's Circle, where she worked, addressing envelopes, she made out—went shopping for Campbell's tomato soup—saved money Louis mailed her—

Later she found a boyfriend, and he was a doctor—Dr Isaac worked for National Maritime Union—now Italian bald and pudgy old doll—who was himself an orphan—but they kicked him out—Old cruelties—

Sloppier, sat around on bed or chair, in corset dreaming to herself—'I'm hot—I'm getting fat—I used to have such a beautiful figure before I went to the hospital—You should have seen me in Woodbine—' This in a furnished room around the NMU hall, 1943.

Looking at naked baby pictures in the magazine—baby powder advertisements, strained lamb carrots—'I will think nothing but beautiful thoughts.'

Revolving her head round and round on her neck at window light in summertime, in hypnotize, in doven-dream recall—

'I touch his cheek, I touch his cheek, he touches my lips with his hand, I think beautiful thoughts, the baby has a beautiful hand.'—

Or a No-shake of her body, disgust—some thought of Buchenwald—some insulin passes thru her head—a grimace nerve shudder at Involuntary (as shudder when I piss)—bad chemical in her cortex—'No don't think of that. He's a rat.'

Naomi: 'And when we die we become an onion, a cabbage, a carrot, or a squash, a vegetable.' I come downtown from Columbia and agree. She reads

the Bible, thinks beautiful thoughts all day.

‘Yesterday I saw God. What did he look like? Well, in the afternoon I climbed up a ladder—he has a cheap cabin in the country, like Monroe, NY the chicken farms in the wood. He was a lonely old man with a white beard.

‘I cooked supper for him. I made him a nice supper— lentil soup, vegetables, bread & butter—miltz—he sat down at the table and ate, he was sad.

‘I told him, Look at all those fightings and killings down there, What’s the matter? Why don’t you put a stop to it?

‘I try, he said—That’s all he could do, he looked tired. He’s a bachelor so long, and he likes lentil soup.’

Serving me meanwhile, a plate of cold fish—chopped raw cabbage dript with tapwater—smelly tomatoes—week-old health food—grated beets & carrots with leaky juice, warm—more and more disconsolate food—I can’t eat it for nausea sometimes—the Charity of her hands stinking with Manhattan, madness, desire to please me, cold undercooked fish—pale red near the bones. Her smells—and oft naked in the room, so that I stare ahead, or turn a book ignoring her.

One time I thought she was trying to make me come lay her—flirting to herself at sink—lay back on huge bed that filled most of the room, dress up round her hips, big slash of hair, scars of operations, pancreas, belly wounds, abortions, appendix, stitching of incisions pulling down in the fat like hideous thick zippers—ragged long lips between her legs—What, even, smell of asshole? I was cold—later revolted a little, not much—seemed perhaps a good idea to try—know the Monster of the Beginning Womb—Perhaps—that way. Would she care? She needs a lover.

Yisborach, v’yistabach, v’yispoar, v’yisroman, v’yisnaseh, v’yishador, v’yishalleh, v’yishallol, sh’meh d’kudsho, b’rich hu.

And Louis reestablishing himself in Paterson grimy apartment in negro district—living in dark rooms—but found himself a girl he later married, falling in love again—tho sere & shy—hurt with 20 years Naomi’s mad idealism.

Once I came home, after longtime in N.Y., he’s lonely— sitting in the bedroom, he at desk chair turned round to face me—weeps, tears in red eyes under his glasses—

That we’d left him—Gene gone strangely into army— she out on her own

in NY, almost childish in her furnished room. So Louis walked downtown to postoffice to get mail, taught in highschool—stayed at poetry desk, forlorn—ate grief at Bickford's all these years—are gone.

Eugene got out of the Army, came home changed and lone—cut off his nose in jewish operation—for years stopped girls on Broadway for cups of coffee to get laid—Went to NYU, serious there, to finish Law.—

And Gene lived with her, ate naked fishcakes, cheap, while she got crazier—He got thin, or felt helpless, Naomi striking 1920 poses at the moon, half-naked in the next bed.

bit his nails and studied—was the weird nurse-son—Next year he moved to a room near Columbia—though she wanted to live with her children—

'Listen to your mother's plea, I beg you'—Louis still sending her checks—I was in bughouse that year 8 months— my own visions unmentioned in this here Lament—

But then went half mad—Hitler in her room, she saw his mustache in the sink—afraid of Dr Isaac now, suspecting that he was in on the Newark plot—went up to Bronx to live near Elanor's Rheumatic Heart—

And Uncle Max never got up before noon, tho Naomi at 6 AM was listening to the radio for spies—or searching the windowsill,

for in the empty lot downstairs, an old man creeps with his bag stuffing packages of garbage in his hanging black overcoat.

Max's sister Edie works—17 years bookkeeper at Gimbels— lived downstairs in apartment house, divorced—so Edie took in Naomi on Rochambeau Ave—

Woodlawn Cemetery across the street, vast dale of graves where Poe once—Last stop on Bronx subway—lots of communists in that area.

Who enrolled for painting classes at night in Bronx Adult High School—walked alone under Van Corlandt Elevated line to class—paints Naomiisms—

Humans sitting on the grass in some Camp No-Worry summers yore—saints with droopy faces and long-ill-fitting pants, from hospital—

Brides in front of Lower East Side with short grooms— lost El trains running over the Babylonian apartment rooftops in the Bronx—

Sad paintings—but she expressed herself. Her mandolin gone, all strings broke in her head, she tried. Toward Beauty? or some old life Message?

But started kicking Elanor, and Elanor had heart trouble— came upstairs

and asked her about Spydom for hours,—Elanor frazzled. Max away at office, accounting for cigar stores till at night.

‘I am a great woman—am truly a beautiful soul—and because of that they (Hitler, Grandma, Hearst, the Capitalists, Franco, Daily News, the 20’s, Mussolini, the living dead) want to shut me up—Buba’s the head of a spider network—’

Kicking the girls, Edie & Elanor—Woke Edie at midnite to tell her she was a spy and Elanor a rat. Edie worked all day and couldn’t take it—She was organizing the union.—And Elanor began dying, upstairs in bed.

The relatives call me up, she’s getting worse—I was the only one left—Went on the subway with Eugene to see her, ate stale fish—

‘My sister whispers in the radio—Louis must be in the apartment—his mother tells him what to say—LIARS!—I cooked for my two children—I played the mandolin—’

Last night the nightingale woke me/ Last night when all was still/ it sang in the golden moonlight/ from on the wintry hill. She did.

I pushed her against the door and shouted ‘DON’T KICK ELANOR!’—she stared at me—Contempt—die—disbelief her sons are so naive, so dumb—‘Elanor is the worst spy! She’s taking orders!’

‘—No wires in the room!’—I’m yelling at her—last ditch, Eugene listening on the bed—what can he do to escape that fatal Mama—‘You’ve been away from Louis years already— Grandma’s too old to walk—’

We’re all alive at once then—even me & Gene & Naomi in one mythological Cousinesque room—screaming at each other in the Forever—I in Columbia jacket, she half undressed.

I banging against her head which saw Radios, Sticks, Hitlers—the gamut of Hallucinations—for real—her own universe—no road that goes elsewhere—to my own—No America, not even a world—

That you go as all men, as Van Gogh, as mad Hannah, all the same—to the last doom—Thunder, Spirits, Lightning!

I’ve seen your grave! O strange Naomi! My own—cracked grave! Shema Y’Israel—I am Svul Avrum—you—in death?

Your last night in the darkness of the Bronx—I phone-called—thru hospital to secret police.

That came, when you and I were alone, shrieking at Elanor in my ear—  
who breathed hard in her own bed, got thin—

Nor will forget, the doorknock, at your fright of spies,— Law advancing,  
on my honor—Eternity entering the room— you running to the bathroom  
undressed, hiding in protest from the last heroic fate—

staring at my eyes, betrayed—the final cops of madness rescuing me—  
from your foot against the broken heart of Elanor,

your voice at Edie weary of Gimbels coming home to broken radio—and  
Louis needing a poor divorce, he wants to get married soon—Eugene  
dreaming, hiding at 125 St., suing negroes for money on crud furniture,  
defending black girls—

Protests from the bathroom—Said you were sane— dressing in a cotton  
robe, your shoes, then new, your purse and newspaper clippings—no—your  
honesty—

as you vainly made your lips more real with lipstick, looking in the mirror  
to see if the Insanity was Me or a carful of police.

or Grandma spying at 78—Your vision—Her climbing over the walls of  
the cemetery with political kidnapper's bag—or what you saw on the walls of  
the Bronx, in pink nightgown at midnight, staring out the window on the  
empty lot—

Ah Rochambeau Ave—Playground of Phantoms—last apartment in the  
Bronx for spies—last home for Elanor or Naomi, here these communist  
sisters lost their revolution—

'All right—put on your coat Mrs.—let's go—We have the wagon  
downstairs—you want to come with her to the station?'

The ride then—held Naomi's hand, and held her head to my breast, I'm  
taller—kissed her and said I did it for the best—Elanor sick—and Max with  
heart condition—Needs—

To me—'Why did you do this?'—'Yes Mrs., your son will have to leave  
you in an hour'—The Ambulance

came in a few hours—drove off at 4 AM to some Bellevue in the night  
downtown—gone to the hospital forever. I saw her led away—she waved,  
tears in her eyes.

Two years, after a trip to Mexico—bleak in the flat plain near Brentwood,  
scrub brush and grass around the unused RR train track to the crazyhouse—

new brick 20 story central building—lost on the vast lawns of madtown on Long Island—huge cities of the moon.

Asylum spreads out giant wings above the path to a minute black hole—the door—entrance thru crotch—

I went in—smelt funny—the halls again—up elevator— to a glass door on a Woman's Ward—to Naomi—Two nurses buxom white—They led her out, Naomi stared—and I gaspt— She'd had a stroke—

Too thin, shrunk on her bones—age come to Naomi— now broken into white hair—loose dress on her skeleton—face sunk, old! withered—cheek of crone—

One hand stiff—heaviness of forties & menopause reduced by one heart stroke, lame now—wrinkles—a scar on her head, the lobotomy—ruin, the hand dipping downwards to death—

O Russian faced, woman on the grass, your long black hair is crowned with flowers, the mandolin is on your knees—

Communist beauty, sit here married in the summer among daisies, promised happiness at hand—

holy mother, now you smile on your love, your world is born anew, children run naked in the field spotted with dandelions,

they eat in the plum tree grove at the end of the meadow and find a cabin where a white-haired negro teaches the mystery of his rainbarrel—

blessed daughter come to America, I long to hear your voice again, remembering your mother's music, in the Song of the Natural Front—

O glorious muse that bore me from the womb, gave suck first mystic life & taught me talk and music, from whose pained head I first took Vision—

Tortured and beaten in the skull—What mad hallucinations of the damned that drive me out of my own skull to seek Eternity till I find Peace for Thee, O Poetry—and for all humankind call on the Origin

Death which is the mother of the universe!—Now wear your nakedness forever, white flowers in your hair, your marriage sealed behind the sky—no revolution might destroy that maidenhood—

O beautiful Garbo of my Karma—all photographs from 1920 in Camp Nicht-Gedeiget here unchanged—with all the teachers from Newark—Nor Elanor be gone, nor Max await his specter—nor Louis retire from this High School—

Back! You! Naomi! Skull on you! Gaunt immortality and revolution come  
—small broken woman—the ashen indoor eyes of hospitals, ward greyness  
on skin—

‘Are you a spy?’ I sat at the sour table, eyes filling with tears—‘Who are  
you? Did Louis send you?—The wires—’

in her hair, as she beat on her head—‘I’m not a bad girl— don’t murder  
me!—I hear the ceiling—I raised two children—’

Two years since I’d been there—I started to cry—She stared—nurse broke  
up the meeting a moment—I went into the bathroom to hide, against the toilet  
white walls

‘The Horror’ I weeping—to see her again—‘The Horror’—as if she were  
dead thru funeral rot in—‘The Horror!’

I came back she yelled more—they led her away—‘You’re not Allen—’ I  
watched her face—but she passed by me, not looking—

Opened the door to the ward,—she went thru without a glance back, quiet  
suddenly—I stared out—she looked old—the verge of the grave—‘All the  
Horror!’

Another year, I left NY—on West Coast in Berkeley cottage dreamed of  
her soul—that, thru life, in what form it stood in that body, ashen or manic,  
gone beyond joy—

near its death—with eyes—was my own love in its form, the Naomi, my  
mother on earth still—sent her long letter— & wrote hymns to the mad—  
Work of the merciful Lord of Poetry.

that causes the broken grass to be green, or the rock to break in grass—or  
the Sun to be constant to earth—Sun of all sunflowers and days on bright iron  
bridges—what shines on old hospitals—as on my yard—

Returning from San Francisco one night, Orlovsky in my room—Whalen  
in his peaceful chair—a telegram from Gene, Naomi dead—

Outside I bent my head to the ground under the bushes near the garage—  
knew she was better—

at last—not left to look on Earth alone—2 years of solitude—no one, at  
age nearing 60—old woman of skulls—once long-tressed Naomi of Bible—

or Ruth who wept in America—Rebecca aged in Newark—David  
remembering his Harp, now lawyer at Yale or Svul Avrum—Israel Abraham

—myself—to sing in the wilderness toward God—O Elohim!—so to the end  
—2 days after her death I got her letter—

Strange Prophecies anew! She wrote—‘The key is in the window, the key  
is in the sunlight at the window—I have the key—Get married Allen don’t  
take drugs—the key is in the bars, in the sunlight in the window.

Love,  
your mother’

which is Naomi—

### HYMMNN

In the world which He has created according to his will Blessed Praised  
Magnified Lauded Exalted the Name of the Holy One Blessed is He!  
In the house in Newark Blessed is He! In the madhouse Blessed is He! In the  
house of Death Blessed is He!  
Blessed be He in homosexuality! Blessed be He in Paranoia! Blessed be He  
in the city! Blessed be He in the Book!  
Blessed be He who dwells in the shadow! Blessed be He! Blessed be He!  
Blessed be you Naomi in tears! Blessed be you Naomi in fears! Blessed  
Blessed Blessed in sickness!  
Blessed be you Naomi in Hospitals! Blessed be you Naomi in solitude! Blest  
be your triumph! Blest be your bars! Blest be your last years’ loneliness!  
Blest be your failure! Blest be your stroke! Blest be the close of your eye!  
Blest be the gaunt of your cheek! Blest be your withered thighs!  
Blessed be Thee Naomi in Death! Blessed be Death! Blessed be Death!  
Blessed be He Who leads all sorrow to Heaven! Blessed be He in the end!  
Blessed be He who builds Heaven in Darkness! Blessed Blessed Blessed be  
He! Blessed be He! Blessed be Death on us All!

### III

Only to have not forgotten the beginning in which she drank cheap sodas in  
the morgues of Newark,  
only to have seen her weeping on grey tables in long wards of her universe  
only to have known the weird ideas of Hitler at the door, the wires in her

head, the three big sticks  
rammed down her back, the voices in the ceiling shrieking out her ugly early  
lays for 30 years,  
only to have seen the time-jumps, memory lapse, the crash of wars, the roar  
and silence of a vast electric shock,  
only to have seen her painting crude pictures of Elevateds running over the  
rooftops of the Bronx  
her brothers dead in Riverside or Russia, her lone in Long Island writing a  
last letter—and her image in the sunlight at the window  
‘The key is in the sunlight at the window in the bars the key is in the  
sunlight,’  
only to have come to that dark night on iron bed by stroke when the sun gone  
down on Long Island  
and the vast Atlantic roars outside the great call of Being to its own  
to come back out of the Nightmare—divided creation—with her head lain on  
a pillow of the hospital to die  
—in one last glimpse—all Earth one everlasting Light in the familiar  
blackout—no tears for this vision—  
But that the key should be left behind—at the window—the key in the  
sunlight—to the living—that can take  
that slice of light in hand—and turn the door—and look back see  
Creation glistening backwards to the same grave, size of universe,  
size of the tick of the hospital’s clock on the archway over the white door—

#### IV

O mother  
what have I left out  
O mother  
what have I forgotten  
O mother  
farewell  
with a long black shoe  
farewell  
with Communist Party and a broken stocking

farewell

with six dark hairs on the wen of your breast

farewell

with your old dress and a long black beard around the vagina

farewell

with your sagging belly

with your fear of Hitler

with your mouth of bad short stories

with your fingers of rotten mandolines

with your arms of fat Paterson porches

with your belly of strikes and smokestacks

with your chin of Trotsky and the Spanish War

with your voice singing for the decaying overbroken workers

with your nose of bad lay with your nose of the smell of the pickles of

Newark

with your eyes

with your eyes of Russia

with your eyes of no money

with your eyes of false China

with your eyes of Aunt Elanor in an oxygen tent

with your eyes of starving India

with your eyes pissing in the park

with your eyes of America taking a fall

with your eyes of your failure at the piano

with your eyes of your relatives in California

with your eyes of Ma Rainey dying in an ambulance

with your eyes of Czechoslovakia attacked by robots

with your eyes going to painting class at night in the Bronx

with your eyes of the killer Grandma you see on the horizon from the Fire-

Escape

with your eyes running naked out of the apartment screaming into the hall

with your eyes being led away by policemen to an ambulance

with your eyes strapped down on the operating table

with your eyes with the pancreas removed

with your eyes of appendix operation

with your eyes of abortion

with your eyes of ovaries removed  
with your eyes of shock  
with your eyes of lobotomy  
with your eyes of divorce  
with your eyes of stroke  
with your eyes alone  
with your eyes  
with your eyes  
with your Death full of Flowers

V

Caw caw caw crows shriek in the white sun over grave stones in Long Island  
Lord Lord Lord Naomi underneath this grass my halflife and my own as hers  
caw caw my eye be buried in the same Ground where I stand in Angel  
Lord Lord great Eye that stares on All and moves in a black cloud  
caw caw strange cry of Beings flung up into sky over the waving trees  
Lord Lord O Grinder of giant Beyonds my voice in a boundless field in Sheol  
Caw caw the call of Time rent out of foot and wing an instant in the universe  
Lord Lord an echo in the sky the wind through ragged leaves the roar of  
memory  
caw caw all years my birth a dream caw caw New York the bus the broken  
shoe the vast highschool caw caw all Visions of the Lord  
Lord Lord Lord caw caw caw Lord Lord Lord caw caw caw Lord

*Paris, December 1957 – New York 1959*



What monstrous new ecclesiastical design on the entire universe unfolds in  
the dying Pope's brain?

Scientist alone is true poet he gives us the moon  
he promises the stars he'll make us a new universe if it comes to that  
O Einstein I should have sent you my flaming mss.  
O Einstein I should have pilgrimaged to your white hair!

O fellow travellers I write you a poem in Amsterdam in the Cosmos  
where Spinoza ground his magic lenses long ago  
I write you a poem long ago  
already my feet are washed in death  
Here I am naked without identity  
with no more body than the fine black tracery of pen mark on soft paper  
as star talks to star multiple beams of sunlight all the same myriad thought  
in one fold of the universe where Whitman was  
and Blake and Shelley saw Milton dwelling as in a starry temple  
brooding in his blindness seeing all—

Now at last I can speak to you beloved brothers of an unknown moon  
real Yous squatting in whatever form amidst Platonic Vapors of Eternity  
I am another Star.

Will you eat my poems or read them  
or gaze with aluminum blind plates on sunless pages?  
do you dream or translate & accept data with indifferent droopings of  
antennae?  
do I make sense to your flowery green receptor eyesockets? do you have  
visions of God?

Which way will the sunflower turn surrounded by millions of suns?  
This is my rocket my personal rocket I send up my message Beyond  
Someone to hear me there

My immortality  
without steel or cobalt basalt or diamond gold or mercurial fire  
without passports filing cabinets bits of paper warheads  
without myself finally  
pure thought  
message all and everywhere the same  
I send up my rocket to land on whatever planet awaits it

preferably religious sweet planets no money  
fourth dimensional planets where Death shows movies  
plants speak (courteously) of ancient physics and poetry itself is  
    manufactured by the trees  
the final Planet where the Great Brain of the Universe sits waiting for a poem  
    to land in His golden pocket  
joining the other notes mash-notes love-sighs complaints-musical shrieks of  
    despair and the million unutterable thoughts of frogs  
I send you my rocket of amazing chemical  
more than my hair my sperm or the cells of my body  
the speeding thought that flies upward with my desire as instantaneous as the  
    universe and faster than light  
and leave all other questions unfinished for the moment to turn back to sleep  
    in my dark bed on earth.

*Amsterdam, October 4, 1957*

# Europe! Europe!

World world world  
I sit in my room  
imagine the future  
sunlight falls on Paris  
I am alone there is no  
one whose love is perfect  
man has been mad man's  
love is not perfect I  
have not wept enough  
my breast will be heavy  
till death the cities  
are specters of cranks  
of war the cities are  
work & brick & iron &  
smoke of the furnace of  
selfhood makes tearless  
eyes red in London but  
no eye meets the sun

Flashed out of sky it  
hits Lord Beaverbrook's  
white modern solid  
paper building leaned  
in London's street to  
bear last yellow beams  
old ladies absently gaze  
thru fog toward heaven  
poor pots on windowsills

snake flowers to street  
Trafalgar's fountains splash  
on noon-warmed pigeons  
Myself beaming in ecstatic  
wilderness on St Paul's dome  
seeing the light on London  
or here on a bed in Paris  
sunglow through the high  
window on plaster walls

Meek crowd underground  
saints perish creeps  
streetwomen meet lacklove  
under gaslamp and neon  
no woman in house loves  
husband in flower unity  
nor boy loves boy soft  
fire in breast politics  
electricity scares downtown  
radio screams for money  
police light on TV screens  
laughs at dim lamps in  
empty rooms tanks crash  
thru bombshell no dream  
of man's joy is made movie  
think factory pushes junk  
autos tin dreams of Eros  
mind eats its flesh in  
geekish starvation and no  
man's fuck is holy for  
man's work is most war

Bony China hungers brain  
wash over power dam and  
America hides mad meat  
in refrigerator Britain

cooks Jerusalem too long  
France eats oil and dead  
salad arms & legs in Africa  
loudmouth devours Arabia  
negro and white warring  
against the golden nuptial  
Russia manufacture feeds  
millions but no drunk can  
dream Mayakovsky's suicide  
rainbow over machinery  
and backtalk to the sun

I lie in bed in Europe  
alone in old red under  
wear symbolic of desire  
for union with immortality  
but man's love's not perfect  
in February it rains  
as once for Baudelaire  
one hundred years ago  
planes roar in the air  
cars race thru streets  
I know where they go  
to death but that is OK  
it is that death comes  
before life that no man  
has loved perfectly no one  
gets bliss in time new  
mankind is not born that  
I weep for this antiquity  
and herald the Millennium  
for I saw the Atlantic sun  
rayed down from a vast cloud  
at Dover on the sea cliffs  
tanker size of ant heaved  
up on ocean under shining

cloud and seagull flying  
thru sun light's endless  
ladders streaming in Eternity  
to ants in the myriad fields  
of England to sun flowers  
bent up to eat infinity's  
minute gold dolphins leaping  
thru Mediterranean rainbow  
White smoke and steam in Andes  
Asia's rivers glittering  
blind poets deep in lone  
Apollonic radiance on hillsides  
littered with empty tombs

*Paris, February 29, 1958*

## To Lindsay

Vachel, the stars are out  
dusk has fallen on the Colorado road  
a car crawls slowly across the plain  
in the dim light the radio blares its jazz  
the heartbroken salesman lights another cigarette  
In another city 27 years ago  
I see your shadow on the wall  
you're sitting in your suspenders on the bed  
the shadow hand lifts up a Lysol bottle to your head  
your shade falls over on the floor

*Paris, May 1958*

# Message

Since we had changed  
rogered spun worked  
wept and pissed together  
I wake up in the morning  
with a dream in my eyes  
but you are gone in NY  
remembering me Good  
I love you I love you  
& your brothers are crazy  
I accept their drunk cases  
It's too long that I have been alone  
it's too long that I've sat up in bed  
without anyone to touch on the knee, man  
or woman I don't care what anymore, I  
want love I was born for I want you with me now  
Ocean liners boiling over the Atlantic  
Delicate steelwork of unfinished skyscrapers  
Back end of the dirigible roaring over Lakehurst  
Six women dancing together on a red stage naked  
The leaves are green on all the trees in Paris now  
I will be home in two months and look you in the eyes

*Paris, May 1958*

## To Aunt Rose

Aunt Rose—now—might I see you  
with your thin face and buck tooth smile and pain  
of rheumatism—and a long black heavy shoe  
for your bony left leg  
limping down the long hall in Newark on the running carpet  
past the black grand piano  
in the day room  
where the parties were  
and I sang Spanish loyalist songs  
in a high squeaky voice  
(hysterical) the committee listening  
while you limped around the room  
collected the money—  
Aunt Honey, Uncle Sam, a stranger with a cloth arm  
in his pocket  
and huge young bald head  
of Abraham Lincoln Brigade

—your long sad face  
your tears of sexual frustration  
(what smothered sobs and bony hips  
under the pillows of Osborne Terrace)  
—the time I stood on the toilet seat naked  
and you powdered my thighs with calamine  
against the poison ivy—my tender  
and shamed first black curled hairs

what were you thinking in secret heart then

knowing me a man already—  
and I an ignorant girl of family silence on the thin pedestal  
of my legs in the bathroom—Museum of Newark.

Aunt Rose

Hitler is dead, Hitler is in Eternity; Hitler is with  
Tamburlane and Emily Brontë

Though I see you walking still, a ghost on Osborne Terrace  
down the long dark hall to the front door  
limping a little with a pinched smile  
in what must have been a silken  
flower dress  
welcoming my father, the Poet, on his visit to Newark  
—see you arriving in the living room  
dancing on your crippled leg  
and clapping hands his book  
had been accepted by Liveright

Hitler is dead and Liveright's gone out of business  
*The Attic of the Past* and *Everlasting Minute* are out of print  
Uncle Harry sold his last silk stocking  
Claire quit interpretive dancing school  
Buba sits a wrinkled monument in Old  
Ladies Home blinking at new babies

last time I saw you was the hospital  
pale skull protruding under ashen skin  
blue veined unconscious girl  
in an oxygen tent  
the war in Spain has ended long ago  
Aunt Rose

*Paris, June 1958*

# At Apollinaire's Grave

*... voici le temps  
Où l'on connaîtra l'avenir  
Sans mourir de connaissance*

## I

I visited Père Lachaise to look for the remains of Apollinaire  
the day the U.S. President appeared in France for the grand conference of  
heads of state  
so let it be the airport at blue Orly a springtime clarity in the air over Paris  
Eisenhower winging in from his American graveyard  
and over the froggy graves at Père Lachaise an illusory mist as thick as  
marijuana smoke  
Peter Orlovsky and I walked softly thru Père Lachaise we both knew we  
would die  
and so held temporary hands tenderly in a citylike miniature eternity  
roads and streetsigns rocks and hills and names on everybody's house  
looking for the lost address of a notable Frenchman of the Void  
to pay our tender crime of homage to his helpless menhir  
and lay my temporary American Howl on top of his silent Calligramme  
for him to read between the lines with Xray eyes of Poet  
as he by miracle had read his own death lyric in the Seine  
I hope some wild kidmonk lay his pamphlet on my grave for God to read me  
on cold winter nights in heaven  
already our hands have vanished from that place my hand writes now in a  
room in Paris Git-Le-Coeur  
Ah William what grit in the brain you had what's death

I walked all over the cemetery and still couldn't find your grave  
what did you mean by that fantastic cranial bandage in your poems  
O solemn stinking deathshad what've you got to say nothing and that's  
barely an answer

You can't drive autos into a sixfoot grave tho the universe is mausoleum big  
enough for anything

the universe is a graveyard and I walk around alone in here  
knowing that Apollinaire was on the same street 50 years ago  
his madness is only around the corner and Genet is with us stealing books  
the West is at war again and whose lucid suicide will set it all right  
Guillaume Guillaume how I envy your fame your accomplishment for  
American letters

your Zone with its long crazy line of bullshit about death  
come out of the grave and talk thru the door of my mind  
issue new series of images oceanic haikus blue taxicabs in Moscow negro  
statues of Buddha

pray for me on the phonograph record of your former existence with a long  
sad voice and strophes of deep sweet music sad and scratchy as World War  
I

I've eaten the blue carrots you sent out of the grave and Van Gogh's ear and  
maniac peyote of Artaud

and will walk down the streets of New York in the black cloak of French  
poetry

improvising our conversation in Paris at Père Lachaise  
and the future poem that takes its inspiration from the light bleeding into your  
grave

## II

Here in Paris I am your guest O friendly shade  
the absent hand of Max Jacob

Picasso in youth bearing me a tube of Mediterranean  
myself attending Rousseau's old red banquet I ate his violin  
great party at the Bateau Lavoir not mentioned in the textbooks of Algeria

Tzara in the Bois de Boulogne explaining the alchemy of the machineguns of  
the cookoos  
he weeps translating me into Swedish  
well dressed in a violet tie and black pants  
a sweet purple beard which emerged from his face like the moss hanging  
from the walls of Anarchism  
he spoke endlessly of his quarrels with André Breton  
whom he had helped one day trim his golden mustache  
old Blaise Cendrars received me into his study and spoke wearily of the  
enormous length of Siberia  
Jacques Vaché invited me to inspect his terrible collection of pistols  
poor Cocteau saddened by the once marvellous Radiguet at his last thought I  
fainted  
Rigaut with a letter of introduction to Death  
and Gide praised the telephone and other remarkable inventions  
we agreed in principle though he gossiped of lavender underwear  
but for all that he drank deeply of the grass of Whitman and was intrigued by  
all lovers named Colorado  
princes of America arriving with their armfuls of shrapnel and baseball  
Oh Guillaume the world so easy to fight seemed so easy  
did you know the great political classicists would invade Montparnasse  
with not one sprig of prophetic laurel to green their foreheads  
not one pulse of green in their pillows no leaf left from their wars—  
Mayakovsky arrived and revolted

### III

Came back sat on a tomb and stared at your rough menhir  
a piece of thin granite like an unfinished phallus  
a cross fading into the rock 2 poems on the stone one Coeur Renversée  
other Habitez-vous comme moi A ces prodiges que j'annonce Guillaume  
Apollinaire de Kostrowitsky  
someone placed a jam bottle filled with daisies and a 5&10¢ surrealist typist  
ceramic rose  
happy little tomb with flowers and overturned heart

under a fine mossy tree beneath which I sat snaky trunk  
summer boughs and leaves umbrella over the menhir and nobody there  
Et quelle voix sinistre ulule Guillaume qu'es-tu devenu  
his nextdoor neighbor is a tree  
there underneath the crossed bones heaped and yellow cranium perhaps  
and the printed poems Alcools in my pocket his voice in the museum  
Now middleage footsteps walk the gravel  
a man stares at the name and moves toward the crematory building  
same sky rolls over thru clouds as Mediterranean days on the Riviera during  
war  
drinking Apollo in love eating occasional opium he'd taken the light  
One must have felt the shock in St. Germain when he went out Jacob &  
Picasso coughing in the dark  
a bandage unrolled and the skull left still on a bed outstretched pudgy fingers  
the mystery and ego gone  
a bell tolls in the steeple down the street birds warble in the chestnut trees  
Famille Bremont sleeps nearby Christ hangs big chested and sexy in their  
tomb  
my cigarette smokes in my lap and fills the page with smoke and flames  
an ant runs over my corduroy sleeve the tree I lean on grows slowly  
bushes and branches upstarting through the tombs one silky spiderweb  
gleaming on granite  
I am buried here and sit by my grave beneath a tree

*Paris, Winter – Spring 1958*

# The Lion for Real

*‘Soyez muette pour moi, Idole contemplative ...’*

I came home and found a lion in my living room  
Rushed out on the fire-escape screaming Lion! Lion!  
Two stenographers pulled their brunette hair and banged the window shut  
I hurried home to Paterson and stayed two days.

Called up my old Reichian analyst  
who’d kicked me out of therapy for smoking marijuana  
‘It’s happened’ I panted ‘There’s a Lion in my room’  
‘I’m afraid any discussion would have no value’ he hung up.

I went to my old boyfriend we got drunk with his girlfriend  
I kissed him and announced I had a lion with a mad gleam in my eye  
We wound up fighting on the floor I bit his eyebrow & he kicked me out  
I ended masturbating in his jeep parked in the street moaning ‘Lion.’

Found Joey my novelist friend and roared at him ‘Lion!’  
He looked at me interested and read me his spontaneous ignu high poetries  
I listened for lions all I heard was Elephant Tiglon Hippogryph Unicorn Ants  
But figured he really understood me when we made it in Ignaz Wisdom’s  
bathroom.

But next day he sent me a leaf from his Smokey Mountain retreat  
‘I love you little Bo-Bo with your delicate golden lions  
But there being no Self and No Bars therefore the Zoo of your dear Father  
hath no Lion

You said your mother was mad don’t expect me to produce the Monster for  
your Bridegroom.’

Confused dazed and exalted bethought me of real lion starved in his stink in  
Harlem

Opened the door the room was filled with the bomb blast of his anger  
He roaring hungrily at the plaster walls but nobody could hear him outside  
thru the window

My eye caught the edge of the red neighbor apartment building standing in  
deafening stillness

We gazed at each other his implacable yellow eye in the red halo of fur  
Waxed rheumy on my own but he stopped roaring and bared a fang greeting.  
I turned my back and cooked broccoli for supper on an iron gas stove  
boiled water and took a hot bath in the old tub under the sink board.

He didn't eat me, tho I regretted him starving in my presence.

Next week he wasted away a sick rug full of bones wheaten hair falling out  
enraged and reddening eye as he lay aching huge hairy head on his paws  
by the egg-crate bookcase filled up with thin volumes of Plato, & Buddha.

Sat by his side every night averting my eyes from his hungry motheaten face  
stopped eating myself he got weaker and roared at night while I had  
nightmares

Eaten by lion in bookstore on Cosmic Campus, a lion myself starved by  
Professor Kandisky, dying in a lion's flophouse circus,  
I woke up mornings the lion still added dying on the floor—'Terrible  
Presence!' I cried 'Eat me or die!'

It got up that afternoon—walked to the door with its paw on the wall to  
steady its trembling body

Let out a soul rending creak from the bottomless roof of his mouth  
thundering from my floor to heaven heavier than a volcano at night in  
Mexico

Pushed the door open and said in a gravelly voice 'Not this time Baby—but I  
will be back again.'

Lion that eats my mind now for a decade knowing only your hunger  
Not the bliss of your satisfaction O roar of the Universe how am I chosen  
In this life I have heard your promise I am ready to die I have served  
Your starved and ancient Presence O Lord I wait in my room at your Mercy.

*Paris, March 1958*

# Ignu

On top of that if you know me I pronounce you an ignu  
Ignu knows nothing of the world  
a great ignoramus in factories though he may own or inspire them or even be  
production manager  
Ignu has knowledge of the angel indeed ignu is angel in comical form  
W. C. Fields Harpo Marx ignus Whitman an ignu  
Rimbaud a natural ignu in his boy pants  
The ignu may be queer though like not kind ignu blows archangels for the  
strange thrill  
a gnostic women love him Christ overflowed with trembling semen for many  
a dead aunt  
He's a great cocksman most beautiful girls are worshipped by ignu  
Hollywood dolls or lone Marys of Idaho long-legged publicity women and  
secret housewives  
have known ignu in another lifetime and remember their lover  
Husbands also are secretly tender to ignu their buddy  
oldtime friendship can do anything cuckold bugger drunk trembling and  
happy  
Ignu lives only once and eternally and knows it  
he sleeps in everybody's bed everyone's lonesome for ignu ignu knew  
solitude early  
So ignu's a primitive of cock and mind  
equally the ignu has written liverish tomes personal metaphysics abstract  
images that scratch the moon 'lightningflash-flintspark' naked lunch fried  
shoes adios king  
The shadow of the angel is waving in the opposite direction  
dawn of intelligence turns the telephones into strange animals

he attacks the rose garden with his mystical shears snip snip snip  
Ignu has painted Park Avenue with his own long melancholy  
and ignu giggles in a hard chair over tea in Paris bald in his decaying room a  
black hotel

Ignu with his wild mop walks by Colosseum weeping  
he plucks a clover from Keats' grave & Shelley's a blade of grass  
knew Coleridge they had slow hung-up talks at midnight over tables of  
mahogany in London  
sidestreet rooms in wintertime rain outside fog the cabman blows his hand  
Charles Dickens is born ignu hears the wail of the babe  
Ignu goofs nights under bridges and laughs at battleships  
ignu is a battleship without guns in the North Sea lost O the floweriness of the  
moment

he knows geography he was there before he'll get out and die already  
reborn a bearded humming Jew of Arabian mournful jokes  
man with a star on his forehead and halo over his cranium  
listening to music musing happy at the fall of a leaf the moonlight of  
immortality in his hair  
table-hopping most elegant comrade of all most delicate mannered in the Sufi  
court

he wasn't even there at all  
wearing zodiacal blue sleeves and the long peaked cone hat of a magician  
harkening to the silence of a well at midnight under a red star  
in the lobby of Rockefeller Center attentive courteous bare-eyed enthusiastic  
with or without pants

he listens to jazz as if he were a negro afflicted with jewish melancholy and  
white divinity

Ignu's a natural you can see it when he pays the cabfare abstracted  
pulling off the money from an impossible saintly roll  
or counting his disappearing pennies to give to the strange bus-driver whom  
he admires

Ignu has sought you out he's the seeker of God  
and God breaks down the world for him every ten years  
he sees lightning flash in empty daylight when the sky is blue  
he hears Blake's disembodied Voice recite the Sunflower in a room in  
Harlem

No woe on him surrounded by 700 thousand mad scholars moths fly out of  
his sleeve  
He wants to die give up go mad break through into Eternity  
live on and teach an aged saint or break down to an eyebrow clown  
All ignus know each other in a moment's talk and measure each other up at  
once  
as lifetime friends romantic winks and giggles across continents  
sad moment paying the cab goodbye and speeding away uptown  
One or two grim ignus in the pack  
one laughing monk in dungarees  
one delighted by cracking his eggs in an egg cup  
one chews gum to music all night long rock and roll  
one anthropologist cookoo in the Petén Rainforest  
one sits in jail all year and bets karmaic racetrack  
one chases girls down East Broadway into the horror movie  
one pulls out withered grapes and rotten onions from his pants  
one has a nannygoat under his bed to amuse visitors plasters the wall with his  
crap  
collects scorpions whiskies skies etc. would steal the moon if he could find it  
That would set fire to America but none of these make ignu  
it's the soul that makes the style the tender firecracker of his thought  
the amity of letters from strange cities to old friends  
and the new radiance of morning on a foreign bed  
A comedy of personal being his grubby divinity  
Eliot probably an ignu one of the few who's funny when he eats  
Williams of Paterson a dying American ignu  
Burroughs a purest ignu his haircut is a cream his left finger  
pinkey chopped off for early ignu reasons metaphysical spells love spells  
with psychoanalysts  
his very junkhood an accomplishment beyond a million dollars  
Céline himself an old ignu over prose  
I saw him in Paris dirty old gentleman of ratty talk  
with longhaired cough three wormy sweaters round his neck  
brown mould under historic fingernails  
pure genius his giving morphine all night to 1400 passengers on a sinking  
ship

'because they were all getting emotional'  
Who's amazing you is ignu communicate with me  
by mail post telegraph phone street accusation or scratching at my window  
and send me a true sign I'll reply special delivery  
DEATH IS A LETTER THAT WAS NEVER SENT  
Knowledge born of stamps words coins pricks jails seasons sweet ambition  
laughing gas  
history with a gold halo photographs of the sea painting a celestial din in the  
bright window  
one eye in a black cloud  
and the lone vulture on a sand plain seen from the window of a Turkish bus  
It must be a trick. Two diamonds in the hand one Poetry one Charity  
proves we have dreamed and the long sword of intelligence  
over which I constantly stumble like my pants at the age six— embarrassed.

*New York, November, 1958*

# Death to Van Gogh's Ear!

POET is Priest

Money has reckoned the soul of America

Congress broken thru to the precipice of Eternity

the President built a War machine which will vomit and rear up Russia out of  
Kansas

The American Century betrayed by a mad Senate which no longer sleeps  
with its wife

Franco has murdered Lorca the fairy son of Whitman

just as Mayakovsky committed suicide to avoid Russia

Hart Crane distinguished Platonist committed suicide to cave in the wrong  
America

just as millions of tons of human wheat were burned in secret caverns under  
the White House

while India starved and screamed and ate mad dogs full of rain

and mountains of eggs were reduced to white powder in the halls of Congress

no godfearing man will walk there again because of the stink of the rotten  
eggs of America

and the Indians of Chiapas continue to gnaw their vitaminless tortillas

aborigines of Australia perhaps gibber in the eggless wilderness

and I rarely have an egg for breakfast tho my work requires infinite eggs to  
come to birth in Eternity

eggs should be eaten or given to their mothers

and the grief of the countless chickens of America is expressed

in the screaming of her comedians over the radio

Detroit has built a million automobiles of rubber trees and phantoms

but I walk, I walk, and the Orient walks with me, and all Africa walks

and sooner or later North America will walk

for as we have driven the Chinese Angel from our door he will drive us from  
the Golden Door of the future  
we have not cherished pity on Tanganyika  
Einstein alive was mocked for his heavenly politics  
Bertrand Russell driven from New York for getting laid  
immortal Chaplin driven from our shores with the rose in his teeth  
a secret conspiracy by Catholic Church in the lavatories of Congress has  
denied contraceptives to the unceasing masses of India.  
Nobody publishes a word that is not the cowardly robot ravings of a depraved  
mentality  
the day of the publication of the true literature of the American body will be  
day of Revolution  
the revolution of the sexy lamb  
the only bloodless revolution that gives away corn  
poor Genet will illuminate the harvesters of Ohio  
Marijuana is a benevolent narcotic but J. Edgar Hoover prefers his deathly  
scotch  
And the heroin of Lao-Tze & the Sixth Patriarch is punished by the electric  
chair  
but the poor sick junkies have nowhere to lay their heads  
fiends in our government have invented a cold-turkey cure for addiction as  
obsolete as the Defense Early Warning Radar System.  
I am the defense early warning radar system  
I see nothing but bombs  
I am not interested in preventing Asia from being Asia  
and the governments of Russia and Asia will rise and fall but Asia and Russia  
will not fall  
the government of America also will fall but how can America fall  
I doubt if anyone will ever fall anymore except governments  
fortunately all the governments will fall  
the only ones which won't fall are the good ones  
and the good ones don't yet exist  
But they have to begin existing they exist in my poems  
they exist in the death of the Russian and American governments  
they exist in the death of Hart Crane & Mayakovsky  
Now is the time for prophecy without death as a consequence

the universe will ultimately disappear  
Hollywood will rot on the windmills of Eternity  
Hollywood whose movies stick in the throat of God  
Yes Hollywood will get what it deserves  
Time  
Seepage of nerve-gas over the radio  
History will make this poem prophetic and its awful silliness a hideous  
spiritual music  
I have the moan of doves and the feather of ecstasy  
Man cannot long endure the hunger of the cannibal abstract  
War is abstract  
the world will be destroyed  
but I will die only for poetry, that will save the world  
Monument to Sacco & Vanzetti not yet financed to ennoble Boston  
natives of Kenya tormented by idiot con-men from England  
South Africa in the grip of the white fool  
Vachel Lindsay Secretary of the Interior  
Poe Secretary of Imagination  
Pound Secty. Economics  
and Kra belongs to Kra, and Pukti to Pukti  
crossfertilization of Blok and Artaud  
Van Gogh's Ear on the currency  
no more propaganda for monsters  
and poets should stay out of politics or become monsters  
I have become monstrous with politics  
the Russian poet undoubtedly monstrous in his secret notebook  
Tibet should be left alone  
These are obvious prophecies  
America will be destroyed  
Russian poets will struggle with Russia  
Whitman warned against this 'fabled Damned of nations'  
Where was Theodore Roosevelt when he sent out ultimatums from his castle  
in Camden  
Where was the House of Representatives when Crane read aloud from his  
prophetic books  
What was Wall Street scheming when Lindsay announced the doom of

Money

Were they listening to my ravings in the locker rooms of Bick-fords  
Employment Offices?

Did they bend their ears to the moans of my soul when I struggled with  
market research statistics in the Forum at Rome?

No they were fighting in fiery offices, on carpets of heartfailure, screaming  
and bargaining with Destiny

fighting the Skeleton with sabres, muskets, buck teeth, indigestion, bombs of  
larceny, whoredom, rockets, pederasty,

back to the wall to build up their wives and apartments, lawns, suburbs,  
fairydoms,

Puerto Ricans crowded for massacre on 114th St. for the sake of an imitation  
Chinese-Moderne refrigerator

Elephants of mercy murdered for the sake of an Elizabethan birdcage  
millions of agitated fanatics in the bughouse for the sake of the screaming  
soprano of industry

Money-chant of soapers—toothpaste apes in television sets— deodorizers on  
hypnotic chairs—

petroleum mongers in Texas—jet plane streaks among the clouds—  
sky writers liars in the face of Divinity—fanged butchers of hats and shoes,  
all Owners! Owners! Owners! with obsession on property and vanishing  
Selfhood!

and their long editorials on the fence of the screaming negro attacked by ants  
crawled out of the front page!

Machinery of a mass electrical dream! A war-creating Whore of Babylon  
bellowing over Capitols and Academies!

Money! Money! Money! shrieking mad celestial money of illusion! Money  
made of nothing, starvation, suicide! Money of failure! Money of death!

Money against Eternity! and eternity's strong mills grind out vast paper of  
Illusion!

*Paris, December 1957*

# Laughing Gas

*To Gary Snyder*

*The red tin begging cup you gave me,  
I lost it but its contents are undisturbed.*

I

High on Laughing Gas  
I've been here before  
the odd vibration of  
the same old universe

the nasal whine of the dentist's drill  
singing against the nostalgic  
piano Muzak in the wall  
insistent, familiar, penetrating  
the teeth, where've I heard that  
asshole jazz before?

The universe is a void  
in which there is a dreamhole  
The dream disappears  
the hold closes

It's the instant of going  
into or coming out of  
existence that is  
important—to catch on

to the secret of the magic  
box

Stepping outside the universe  
by means of Nitrous Oxide  
anesthetizing mind-consciousness

the chiasm was an impersonal dream—  
one of many, being mere dreams.

the sadness of birth  
and death, the sadness of  
changing from dream to dream,  
the constant farewell  
of forms ...  
saying ungoodby to what  
didn't exist

The many worlds that don't exist  
all which seem real  
all joke  
all lost cartoon

At that moment the whole goofy-spooky of the Universe WHAT?! Joke  
Being slips into Nothing like the tail of a lizard disappearing into a crack in  
the Wall with the final receding eyehole ending Loony Tunes accompanied  
by Woody Woodpecker's hindoo maniac laughter in the skull. Nobody gets  
hurt. They all disappear. They were never there. Beginningless perfection.

That's why Satori's accompanied by laughter  
and the Zenmaster rips up the Sutras in fury.  
And the pain of this contrariety  
The cycles of scream and laughter  
faces and asses Christs and Buddhas  
each with his own universe dragged  
over the snowy mental poles  
like a sack mad Santa Clauses

Worst pain in the dentist's chair comes true  
novocain also arrives in the cycle  
every hap will have its chance  
even God will come Once or Twice  
Satan will be my personal enemy

Relax and die—  
The process will repeat itself  
Be Born! Be Born!  
Back to the same old smiling  
dentist—

The Bloomfield police car  
with its idiot red light  
revolving on its head  
balefully at Eternity  
gone in an instant  
—simultaneous  
appearance of Bankrobbers  
at the Twentieth Century Bank  
The fire engines screaming  
toward an old lady's  
burned-in-her-bedroom  
today apocalypse  
tomorrow  
Mickey Mouse cartoons—

I'm disgusted! it's Unbelievable!  
What a funny horrible  
dirty joke!  
The whole universe a shaggy dog story!  
with a weird ending that begins again  
till you get the point  
'It was a dark and gloomy night ...'  
'in every direction in and  
out'

‘You take the high road  
and I’ll take the low’  
—everybody lost  
in Scotlands of mind-consciousness—

Adonoi Echad!  
It is not One, but Two,  
not two but Infinite—  
the universe be born and die  
in endless series in the mind!

Gary Snyder, Jack, Zen thinkers  
split open existence  
and laugh & Cry—  
what’s shock? what’s measure?  
when the Mind’s an irrational  
traffic light in  
Gobi—  
follow the blinking lights of contrariety!

What’s the use avoiding rats  
and horror, hiding from Cops  
and dentists’ drills?  
Somebody will invent  
a Buchenwald next door  
– an ant’s dream’s  
funnier than  
ours  
– he has more of them  
faster and seems  
to give less of  
a shit—

O waves of probable  
and improbable

Universes—  
Everybody's right

I'll finish this poem  
in my next life.

## II

.... with eye opening  
slowly to perceive  
that I be coming out  
of a trance—  
one look at the lipstick  
it's a nurse  
in a dentist's office

that first frog  
thought leaping out of  
the void

... a glimpse  
out of which the whole  
process unfolds this  
universe & logically  
and symmetrically next  
unbuilds it in exact  
reverse till you arrive  
back at the Nothing  
in which one chance  
note was originally  
struck ...

, the Czardas  
of Creation, the first banal chord  
establishing Music forever in  
its mechanical jukebox

... and the whole  
structure unfolds  
itself inevitably and  
folds back into  
Nothing again ...

—the same man  
crossing the street looking  
both ways watch out for  
the cars—

and each time, returning  
with a jerk of the face  
(’praps a dental touch)  
dictated by the sinking  
sensation, Oof! I’ve  
been hoodwinked—

again like  
someone in the Circus  
defying death, got thrown  
into the orchestra—  
Note the music blaring  
with an indifferent flourish of Triumph  
a nightmare Razz  
—as the acrobat leaps  
out into the void—  
Me! I made that Last Chance  
jump off the wire  
way high up in the Big Top  
long ago ...  
it’s happening again!  
I wake up dazed ...

it being the dream  
of someone in a dentist’s

chair in a Universe he  
imagines—coming out  
of gas—  
    it's only happening  
in the closed universe of  
    illusion

### III

A nice day in the Universe on Broad Street—sun shines today as it never shone before and never will again—stillness in the blue sky—the church's gold dome across the park sending and receiving flashes of light—I feel heart sick to destroy this all—

What hope have the children in their prams passing the white silent doors of the houses—only the Public Library knows.

Premonition in the dentist's chair—mechanical voices over the radio singing Destination Moon—mysterious sorrow for the moon of this forgotten universe—humans, singing, singing—of the moon—for money?—except it's the imbecilic canned voice of eternity rocking & rolling in Space making invisible announcements—

The Doc's agreed to the experiment—novacain, my mouth's begun to disappear first—like the Cheshire Cat.

BACK: Endless cycles of conflict happening in nothingness  
make it impossible to grasp for the perfection  
which does not exist  
but is not necessary  
so everything is final and occurs over & over again  
till we will finally blank out as expected.

The First Note of Creation:  
the only one there could be if there  
weren't nothing but  
an idea that there might  
not be nothing—

Sherman Adams will resign  
I'm holding my breath  
the shiver run thru my belly  
the nurse will be singing I love you  
between breaths the Buddhists are right  
a tear  
siffle in the cheek  
the possibility escape  
the eye glare thru glasses  
Nothing grasped at & ungrasped as its trance thought passes

I take my pen in hand  
The same old way sings Sinatra  
I'm writing to You give me understanding  
I pray sings Sinatra  
Can I never glimpse the round we have made?  
Write me as soon as able sings  
Sinatra O Lord burn me out of existence.

You've got a long body sings  
Sinatra I refuse to breathe and return to form  
I've seen every moment in advance before  
I've turned my neck a million times  
    & written this note  
    & been greeted with fire and cheers  
I refuse to stop  
    —thinking—  
What Perfection has escaped me?

An endless cycle of possibilities clashing in Nothing  
with each mistake in the writing inevitable from the beginning  
    of time  
The doctor's phone number is Pilgrim 1-0000  
Are you calling me, Nothing?

The universe be smashed  
to smithereens by the oncoming  
atomic explosions with  
Eisenhower as once President  
of a place called U.S.  
Gregory wrote the Bomb!  
Russians dream of Mars &  
when the cosmos goes and  
all consciousness after the  
final explosion of imagination  
in the void it won't have  
made any difference that it  
all both did and did not  
happen, whatever it was once  
thought to be so real—  
it will be—gone.

O that I might die on the spot  
I'll have to go back  
any prophecy might have been right  
it's all a great Exception  
My bus will arrive as foretold  
it's the end of another September  
war is on the radio ahead  
we are all going to the inevitable beauty of doom  
a firebox stands sentient before the library  
it's hot sun now I'm crazy scribbling  
—It began abstract and mindless nowhere  
planets of thought have passed  
it'll end where it began

I want to return to normal  
—but there is no changelessness  
but in Nirvana  
Or is there  
Ever Rest, Lord?—and what sages

know and sit.

I'm a spy  
in Bloomfield on a park bench  
—frightened by buses—

What's that bee doing hanging round my shoe? my borrowed and  
inevitable shoe?  
A vast red truck moving with boxes of dead television sets in the back

American flag waving over the library

On the bus I sit by a negress

This is an explosion

#### IV

Back in the same old black hole  
where Possibility closes the  
last door  
and the Great void remains  
... a glass  
in the dust reflecting the sun,  
fragment of a bottle  
that never knew it existed

... under a tree  
that sleeps all winter  
till it grows its eyes  
in May heat  
and flowers upward with a thousand  
green sensations  
dies, and forgets itself in Snow

... Phantom in Phantom

If we didn't exist, God  
would have to create this  
to leave no room for complaint  
by any of the birds & bees  
who might have missed their  
chance (to be)

Fate tells a big lie.

... And the big kind Dreamer  
is on the nod again  
God sleeps!  
He's in for a big surprise  
one of his dreams is going to come true  
He'll get the answer too  
He'll get the answer too

Just a flash in the cosmic pan  
—just an instant when there  
might have been a light  
had there been any pan  
to reflect it—

—we can lie on the bed and imagine  
ourselves away—

I'm afraid to stop breathing—  
first the pain in the  
body  
suffocation, then  
the Death.

V

The pain of gas flowing into the eye  
the crooked tooth-drills hanging like gallows

on a miniature Jupiter  
Thru the open window, spring frozen  
in the young tree  
the repeated bong of the doorbell  
opening elsewhere  
I've come back to the same medicine  
cabinet in the universe—Bong,  
I know I'm more real than the dentist!  
a serious embarrassment, having grasped to one Self  
though admittedly I'd seen it disappear  
over and over

#### TRACKLESS TRANSIT CORPORATION

runs a bus thru Bloomfield  
... blossoming  
in the bottom of an unborn daisy  
it will vanish into the Whist-not

History will keep repeating  
itself forever like the woman  
in the image on the Dutch Cleanser box

A way out of the mirror  
was found by the image  
that realized its existence  
was only ...  
a stranger completely like myself

A way out for ever! has not been found  
to enter the ground whence the images  
rise, and repeat themselves

---

The sadness is, that every leaf  
has fallen before—

At my feet an ant crawling  
    in the broken asphalt—  
and this exact white lollypop stick  
    & twig of branch  
lain next to that soggy match  
    near those few grassblades ...  
and I've sat here and took this note  
    before and tried to remember—  
and now I do—remember what  
I'm writing as I write it down  
I know when I'm going to stop  
I know when I'm forgetting and  
know when I  
    take a jump and change—  
    Impossible  
to do anything but right now in all  
    the universe at once—  
    which Art does, and  
the Insight of Laughing Gas?

Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha  
and the monk laughs  
at the moon—  
and everybody 10 miles round  
in all directions wonders  
why—he's just reminding  
them—of what—of  
the moon, the old dumb moon  
of a million lives.

*New York, Fall 1958*

# Mescaline

Rotting Ginsberg, I stared in the mirror naked today  
I noticed the old skull, I'm getting balder  
my pate gleams in the kitchen light under thin hair  
like the skull of some monk in old catacombs lighted by  
a guard with flashlight  
followed by a mob of tourists  
so there is death  
my kitten mews, and looks into the closet  
Boito sings on the phonograph tonight his ancient song of angels  
Antinoüs bust in brown photograph still gazing down from my wall  
a light burst from God's delicate hand sends down a wooden dove to the calm  
virgin  
Beato Angelico's universe  
the cat's gone mad and scraowls around the floor

What happens when the death gong hits rotting ginsberg on the head  
what universe do I enter  
death death death death death the cat's at rest  
are we ever free of—rotting ginsberg  
Then let it decay, thank God I know  
thank who  
thank who  
Thank you, O lord, beyond my eye  
the path must lead somewhere  
the path  
the path  
thru the rotting shit dump, thru the Angelico orgies  
Beep, emit a burst of babe and begone

perhaps that's the answer, wouldn't know till you had a kid  
I dunno, never had a kid never will at the rate I'm going

Yes, I should be good, I should get married

find out what it's all about

but I can't stand these women all over me

smell of Naomi

erk, I'm stuck with this familiar rotting ginsberg

can't stand boys even anymore

can't stand

can't stand

and who wants to get fucked up the ass, really?

Immense seas passing over

the flow of time

and who wants to be famous and sign autographs like a movie star

I want to know

*I want I want ridiculous to know to know* WHAT rotting ginsberg

I want to know what happens after I rot

because I'm already rotting

my hair's falling out I've got a belly I'm sick of sex

my ass drags in the universe I know too much

and not enough

I want to know what happens after I die

well I'll find out soon enough

do I really need to know now?

is that any use at all use use use

death death death death death

god god god god god god god the Lone Ranger

the rhythm of the typewriter

What can I do to Heaven by pounding on Typewriter

I'm stuck change the record Gregory ah excellent he's doing just that

and I am too conscious of a million ears

at present creepy ears, making commerce

too many pictures in the newspapers

faded yellowed press clippings

I'm going away from the poem to be a drak contemplative

trash of the mind  
trash of the world  
man is half trash  
all trash in the grave

What can Williams be thinking in Paterson, death so much on him  
so soon so soon

Williams, what is death?

Do you face the great question now each moment  
or do you forget at breakfast looking at your old ugly love in the face  
are you prepared to be reborn  
to give release to this world to enter a heaven  
or give release, give release  
and all be done—and see a lifetime—all eternity—gone over  
into naught, a trick question proposed by the moon to the answerless earth  
No Glory for man! No Glory for man! No glory for me!  
No me!

No point writing when the spirit doth not lead

*New York, 1959*

# Lysergic Acid

It is a multiple million eyed monster  
it is hidden in all its elephants and selves  
it hummeth in the electric typewriter  
it is electricity connected to itself, if it hath wires  
it is a vast Spiderweb  
and I am on the last millionth infinite tentacle of the spiderweb, a worrier  
lost, separated, a worm, a thought, a self  
one of the millions of skeletons of China  
one of the particular mistakes  
I allen Ginsberg a separate consciousness  
I who want to be God  
I who want to hear the infinite minutest vibration of eternal harmony  
I who wait trembling my destruction by that aethereal music in the fire  
I who hate God and give him a name  
I who make mistakes on the eternal typewriter  
I who am Doomed

But at the far end of the universe the million eyed Spyder that hath no name  
spinneth of itself endlessly  
the monster that is no monster approaches with apples, perfume, railroads,  
television, skulls  
a universe that eats and drinks itself  
blood from my skull  
Tibetan creature with hairy breast and Zodiac on my stomach this sacrificial  
victim unable to have a good time

My face in the mirror, thin hair, blood congested in streaks down beneath my  
eyes, cocksucker, a decay, a talking lust  
a snaep, a snarl, a tic of consciousness in infinity

a creep in the eyes of all Universes  
trying to escape my Being, unable to pass on to the Eye  
I vomit, I am in a trance, my body is seized in convulsion, my stomach  
crawls, water from my mouth, I am here in Inferno  
dry bones of myriad lifeless mummies naked on the web, the Ghosts, I am a  
Ghost

I cry out where I am in the music, to the room, to whomever near, you, Are  
you God?

No, do you want me to be God?

Is there no Answer?

Must there always be an Answer? you reply,  
and were it up to me to say Yes or No—

Thank God I am not God! Thank God I am not God!

But that I long for a Yes of Harmony to penetrate  
to every corner of the universe, under every condition whatsoever  
a Yes there Is ... a Yes I Am ... a Yes You Are ... a We

A We

and that must be an It, and a They, and a Thing with No nswer  
It creepeth, it waiteth, it is still, it is begun, it is the Horns of Battle it is  
Multiple Sclerosis

it is not my hope

it is not my death at Eternity

it is not my word, not poetry

beware my Word

It is a Ghost Trap, woven by priest in Sikkim or Tibet

a crossframe on which a thousand threads of differing color  
are strung, a spiritual tennis racket

in which when I look I see aethereal lightwaves radiate

bright energy passing round on the threads as for billions of years

the thread-bands magically changing hues one transformed to another as if  
the

Ghost Trap

were an image of the Universe in miniature

conscious sentient part of the interrelated machine.

making waves outward in Time to the Beholder

displaying its own image in miniature once for all  
repeated minutely downward with endless variations throughout all of itself  
it being all the same in every part

This image or energy which reproduces itself at the depths of space from the  
very Beginning  
in what might be an O or an Aum  
and trailing variations made of the same Word circles round itself in the same  
pattern as its original Appearance  
creating a larger Image of itself throughout depths of Time  
outward circling thru bands of faroff Nebulae & vast Astrologies  
contained, to be true to itself, in a Mandala painted on an Elephant's hide,  
or in a photograph of a painting on the side of an imaginary Elephant which  
smiles, the how the Elephant looks is an irrelevant joke—  
it might be a Sign held by a Flaming Demon, or Ogre of Transcience,  
or in a photograph of my own belly in the void  
or in my eye  
or in the eye of the monk who made the Sign  
or in its own Eye that stares on Itself at last and dies  
and tho an eye can die  
and tho my eye can die  
the billion-eyed monster, the Nameless, the Answerless, the Hidden-from-  
me, the endless Being  
one creature that gives birth to itself  
thrills in its minutest particular, sees out of all eyes differently at once  
One and not One moves on its own ways  
I cannot follow

And I have made an image of the monster here  
and I will make another  
it feels like Cryptozooids  
it creeps and undulates beneath the sea  
it is coming to take over the city  
it invades beneath every Consciousness  
it is delicate as the Universe  
it makes me vomit  
because I am afraid I will miss its appearance

it appears anyway  
it appears anyway in the mirror  
it washes out of the mirror like the sea  
it is myriad undulations  
it washes out of the mirror and drowns the beholder  
it drowns the world when  
it drowns the world  
it drowns in itself  
it floats outward like a corpse filled with music  
the noise of war in its head  
a babe laugh in its belly  
a scream of agony in the dark sea  
a smile on the lips of a blind statue  
it was there  
it was not mine  
I wanted to use it for myself  
to be heroic  
but it is not for sale to this consciousness  
it goes its own way forever  
it will complete all creatures  
it will be the radio of the future  
it will hear itself in time  
it wants a rest  
it is tired of hearing and seeing itself  
it wants another form another victim  
it wants me  
it gives me good reason  
it gives me reason to exist  
it gives me endless answers  
a consciousness to be separate and a consciousness to see  
I am beckoned to be One or the other, to say I am both and be neither  
it can take care of itself without me  
it is Both Answerless (it answers not to that name)  
it hummeth on the electric typewriter  
it types a fragmentary word which is  
a fragmentary word,

## MANDALA

Gods dance on their own bodies  
New flowers open forgetting Death  
Celestial eyes beyond the heartbreak of illusion  
I see the gay Creator  
Bands rise up in anthem to the worlds  
Flags and banners waving in transcendence  
One image in the end remains myriad-eyed in Eternity  
This is the Work! This is the Knowledge! This is the End of man!

*Palo Alto, June 2, 1959*

# Magic Psalm

Because this world is on the wing and what cometh no man can know  
O Phantom that my mind pursues from year to year descend from heaven to  
this shaking flesh  
catch up my fleeting eye in the vast Ray that knows no bounds—Inseparable  
—Master—

Giant outside Time with all its falling leaves—Genius of the Universe—  
Magician in Nothingness where appear red clouds—

Unspeakable King of the roads that are gone—Unintelligible Horse riding out  
of the graveyard—Sunset spread over Cordillera and insect—Gnarl Moth  
—

Griever—Laugh with no mouth, Heart that never had flesh to die—Promise  
that was not made—Reliever, whose blood burns in a million animals  
wounded—

O Mercy, Destroyer of the World, O Mercy, Creator of Breasted Illusions, O  
Mercy, cacophonous warmouthed doveling, Come,  
invade my body with the sex of God, choke up my nostrils with corruption's  
infinite caress,

transfigure me to slimy worms of pure sensate transcendency I'm still alive,  
croak my voice with uglier than reality, a psychic tomato speaking Thy  
million mouths,

Myriad-tongued my Soul, Monster or Angel, Lover that comes to fuck me  
forever—white gown on the Eyeless Squid—

Asshole of the Universe into which I disappear—Elastic Hand that spoke to  
Crane—Music that passes into the phonograph of years from another  
Millennium—Ear of the buildings of NY—

That which I believe—have seen—seek endlessly in leaf dog eye—fault  
always, lack—which makes me think—

Desire that created me, Desire I hide in my body, Desire all Man know  
Death, Desire surpassing the Babylonian possible world  
that makes my flesh shake orgasm of Thy Name which I don't know never  
will never speak—

Speak to Mankind to say the great bell tolls a golden tone on iron balconies in  
every million universe,

I am Thy prophet come home this world to scream an unbearable Name thru  
my 5 senses hideous sixth

that knows Thy Hand on its invisible phallus, covered with electric bulbs of  
death—

Peace, Resolver where I mess up illusion, Softmouth Vagina that enters my  
brain from above, Ark-Dove with a bough of Death.

Drive me crazy, God I'm ready for disintegration of my mind, disgrace me in  
the eye of the earth,

attack my hairy heart with terror eat my cock Invisible croak of deathfrog  
leap on me pack of heavy dogs salivating light,

devour my brain One flow of endless consciousness, I'm scared of your  
promise must make scream my prayer in fear—

Descend O Light Creator & Eater of Mankind, disrupt the world in its  
madness of bombs and murder,

Volcanos of flesh over London, on Paris a rain of eyes—truck-loads of  
angelhearts besmearing Kremlin walls—the skullcup of light to New York  
—

myriad jewelled feet on the terraces of Pekin—veils of electrical gas  
descending over India—cities of Bacteria invading the brain—the Soul  
escaping into the rubber waving mouths of Paradise—

This is the Great Call, this is the Tocsin of the Eternal War, this is the cry of  
Mind slain in Nebulae,

this is the Golden Bell of the Church that has never existed, this is the Boom  
in the heart of the sunbeam, this is the trumpet of the Worm at Death,

Appeal of the handless castrate grab Alm golden seed of Futurity thru the  
quake & volcan of the world—

Shovel my feet under the Andes, splatter my brains on the Sphinx, drape my  
beard and hair over Empire State Building,

cover my belly with hands of moss, fill up my ears with your lightning, blind  
me with prophetic rainbows  
That I taste the shit of Being at last, that I touch Thy genitals in the palmtree,  
that the vast Ray of Futurity enter my mouth to sound Thy Creation Forever  
Unborn, O Beauty invisible to my Century!  
that my prayer surpass my understanding, that I lay my vanity at Thy foot,  
that I no longer fear Judgement over Allen of this world  
born in Newark come into Eternity in New York crying again in Peru for  
human Tongue to psalm the Unspeakable,  
that I surpass desire for transcendency and enter the calm water of the  
universe  
that I ride out this wave, not drown forever in the flood of my imagination  
that I not be slain thru my own insane magic, this crime be punished in  
merciful jails of Death,  
men understand my speech out of their own Turkish heart, the prophets aid  
me with Proclamation,  
the Seraphim acclaim Thy Name, Thyself at once in one huge Mouth of  
Universe make meat reply.

*June 1960*

# The Reply

God answers with my doom! I am annulled  
    this poetry blanked from the fiery ledger  
    my lies be answered by the worm at my ear  
    my visions by the hand falling over my eyes to cover them  
        from sight of my skeleton  
my longing to be God by the trembling bearded jaw flesh  
    that covers my skull like monster-skin  
    Stomach vomiting out the soul-vine, cadaver on  
    the floor of a bamboo hut, body-meat crawling toward  
    its fate nightmare rising in my brain  
The noise of the drone of creation adoring its Slayer, the yowp  
    of birds to the Infinite, dogbarks like the sound  
    of vomit in the air, frogs croaking Death at trees  
I am a Seraph and I know not whither I go into the Void  
I am a man and I know not whither I go into Death——  
    Christ Christ poor hopeless  
    lifted on the Cross between Dimension——  
    to see the Ever-Unknowable!  
a dead gong shivers thru all flesh and a vast Being enters my  
    brain from afar that lives forever  
None but the Presence too mighty to record! the Presence  
    in Death, before whom I am helpless  
    makes me change from Allen to a skull  
Old One-Eye of dreams in which I do not wake but die——  
    hands pulled into the darkness by a frightful Hand  
    —the worm's blind wriggle, cut—the plough  
        is God himself

What ball of monster darkness from before the universe  
come back to visit me with blind command!  
and I can blank out this consciousness, escape back  
to New York love, and will  
Poor pitiable Christ afraid of the foretold Cross,  
Never to die—  
Escape, but not forever—the Presence will come, the hour  
will come, a strange truth enter the universe, death  
show its Being as before  
and I'll despair that *I forgot! forgot!* my fate return,  
tho die of it—

What's sacred when the Thing is all the universe?  
creeps to every soul like a vampire-organ singing behind  
moonlit clouds—

poor being come squat  
under bearded stars in a dark field in Peru  
to drop my load—I'll die in horror that I die!  
Not dams or pyramids but death, and we to prepare for that  
nakedness, poor bones sucked dry by His long mouth  
of ants and wind, & our souls murdered to prepare  
His Perfection!

The moment's come, He's made His will revealed forever  
and no flight into old Being further than the stars will not  
find terminal in the same dark swaying port  
of unbearable music

No refuge in Myself, which is on fire  
or in the World which is His also to bomb & Devour!  
Recognise His might! Loose hold  
of my hands—my frightened skull  
—for I had chose self-love—  
my eyes, my nose, my face, my cock, my soul—and now  
the faceless Destroyer!

A billion doors to the same new Being!  
The universe turns inside out to devour me!  
and the mighty burst of music comes from out the inhuman  
door—

*June 1960*

# The End

I am I, old Father Fisheye that begat the ocean, the worm at my own ear, the  
serpent turning around a tree,  
I sit in the mind of the oak and hide in the rose, I know if any wake up, none  
but my death,  
come to me bodies, come to me prophecies, come all foreboding, come spirits  
and visions,  
I receive all, I'll die of cancer, I enter the coffin forever, I close my eye, I  
disappear,  
I fall on myself in winter snow, I roll in a great wheel through rain, I watch  
fuckers in convulsion,  
car screech, furies groaning their basso music, memory fading in the brain,  
men imitating dogs,  
I delight in a woman's belly, youth stretching his breasts and thighs to sex,  
the cock sprung inward  
gassing its seed on the lips of Yin, the beasts dance in Siam, they sing opera  
in Moscow,  
my boys yearn at dusk on stoops, I enter New York, I play my jazz on a  
Chicago Harpsichord,  
Love that bore me I bear back to my Origin with no loss, I float over the  
vomiter  
thrilled with my deathlessness, thrilled with this endlessness I dice and bury,  
come Poet shut up eat my word, and taste my mouth in your ear.

*New York, 1960*

## Frontmatter from Original Editions

### Original Dedication to *Howl And Other Poems*:

To—

Jack Kerouac, new Buddha of American prose, who spit forth intelligence into eleven books written in half the number of years (1951–1956) – *On the Road*, *Visions of Neal*, *Dr Sax*, *Springtime Mary*, *The Subterraneans*, *San Francisco Blues*, *Some of the Dharma*, *Book of Dreams*, *Wake Up*, *Mexico City Blues*, and *Visions of Gerard* – creating a spontaneous bop prosody and original classic literature. Several phrases and the title of *Howl* are taken from him.

William Seward Burroughs, author of *Naked Lunch*, an endless novel which will drive everybody mad.

Neal Cassady, author of *The First Third*, an autobiography (1949) which enlightened Buddha.

All these books are published in Heaven.

### Original Dedication to *Kaddish and Other Poems*:

Dedicated  
to Peter Orlovsky  
in  
Paradise

*‘Taste my mouth in your ear’*

### Original epigraph from *Howl And Other Poems*:

*‘Unscrew the locks from the doors!  
Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!’*

Original epigraph from *Kaddish and Other Poems*:

‘– Die,  
If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek!’

Original author notes from *Kaddish and Other Poems*:

‘Magic Psalm’, ‘The Reply’ and ‘The End’ record visions experienced after drinking Ayahuasca, an Amazon spiritual potion. The message is: Widen the area of consciousness. – A. G.

Acknowledged, the established literary quarterlies of my day are bankrupt poetically thru their own hatred, dull ambition or loud-mouthed obtuseness. These poems were printed in *Yugen*, *Combustion*, *Liberation*, *Beatitude*, *Playboy*, *Big Table*, *Evergreen Review*, *Jargon 31*, *New Directions 17*, *The Outsider*, *New Departures*, *Jabberwock (Sidewalk)*, *Poetry London-NY* and strangely the *London Times Literary Supplement*. Most of these publications started in the last half-decade, two were begun by youths who quit editing university magazines to avoid academic censorship.

– A. G. (Dated 1961)



# THE BEGINNING

Let the conversation begin...

Follow the Penguin [Twitter.com@penguinukbooks](https://twitter.com/penguinukbooks)

Keep up-to-date with all our stories [YouTube.com/penguinbooks](https://www.youtube.com/penguinbooks)

Pin Penguin Books to your [Pinterest](https://www.pinterest.com/penguinbooks)

Like Penguin Books on [Facebook.com/penguinbooks](https://www.facebook.com/penguinbooks)

Find out more about the author and  
discover more stories like this at [Penguin.co.uk](https://www.penguin.co.uk)

## PENGUIN CLASSICS

Published by the Penguin Group

Penguin Books Ltd, 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England

Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014, USA

Penguin Group (Canada), 90 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 700, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4P 2Y3 (a division of Pearson Penguin Canada Inc.)

Penguin Ireland, 25 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, Ireland (a division of Penguin Books Ltd)

Penguin Group (Australia), 707 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3008, Australia (a division of Pearson Australia Group Pty Ltd)

Penguin Books India Pvt Ltd, 11 Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi – 110 017, India

Penguin Group (NZ), 67 Apollo Drive, Rosedale, North Shore 0632, New Zealand (a division of Pearson New Zealand Ltd)

Penguin Books (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd, Block D, Rosebank Office Park, 181 Jan Smuts Avenue, Parktown North, Gauteng 2193, South Africa

Penguin Books Ltd, Registered Offices: 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England

[www.penguin.com](http://www.penguin.com)

*Howl and Other Poems* first published 1956

*Kaddish and Other Poems* first published 1961

Published in this joint edition in Penguin Classics 2009

Copyright © Allen Ginsberg, 1956, 1961

All rights reserved

ISBN: 978-0-141-97646-4