

Classic Poetry Series

Jack Kerouac
- poems -

Publication Date:
2012

Publisher:
Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

Jack Kerouac(12 March 1922 - 21 October 1969)

Jean-Louis "Jack" Kerouac was an American novelist and poet. He is considered a literary iconoclast and, alongside [William S. Burroughs](http://www.poemhunter.com/william-burroughs/) and [Allen Ginsberg](http://www.poemhunter.com/allen-ginsberg/), a pioneer of the Beat Generation. Kerouac is recognized for his spontaneous method of writing, covering topics such as Catholic spirituality, jazz, promiscuity, Buddhism, drugs, poverty, and travel. His writings have inspired other writers, including Ken Kesey, Bob Dylan, Eddie Vedder, Richard Brautigan, Curtis Meador, Thomas Pynchon, Lester Bangs, Tom Robbins, Will Clarke, Ben Gibbard, Haruki Murakami, Jacquelyn Landgraf. Kerouac became an underground celebrity and, with other beats, a progenitor of the hippie movement, although he remained antagonistic toward some of its politically radical elements. In 1969, at age 47, Kerouac died from internal bleeding due to long-standing abuse of alcohol. Since his death Kerouac's literary prestige has grown and several previously unseen works have been published. All of his books are in print today, among them: *On the Road*, *Doctor Sax*, *The Dharma Bums*, *Mexico City Blues*, *The Subterraneans*, *Desolation Angels*, *Visions of Cody* and *Big Sur*.

Biography

Adolescence

Jack Kerouac was born in Lowell, Massachusetts, to French-Canadian parents, Léo-Alcide Kéroack and Gabrielle-Ange Lévesque, of St-Hubert-de-Riviere-du-Loup in the province of Quebec, Canada. There is some confusion surrounding his original name, partly due to variations on the spelling of Kerouac, and partly because of Kerouac's own promotion of his name as Jean-Louis Lebris de Kerouac. His reason for doing so seems to be linked to an old family legend that the Kerouacs had descended from Baron François Louis Alexandre Lebris de Kerouac. Kerouac's baptism certificate lists his name simply as Jean Louis Kirouac, and indeed Kirouac is the most common spelling of the name in Quebec. Kerouac claimed he descended from a Breton nobleman, granted land after the Battle of Quebec, whose sons all married Native Americans. Research has shown that Kerouac's roots were indeed in Brittany, and he was descended from a middle-class merchant colonist, Urbain-François Le Bihan, Sieur de Kervoac, whose sons married French Canadians. Kerouac's own father had been born to a family of potato farmers in the village of Saint-Hubert-de-Rivière-du-Loup. He also had various stories on the etymology of his surname, usually tracing it to Irish, Breton, or other Celtic roots. In one interview he claimed it was the name

of a dead Celtic language and in another said it was from the Irish for "language of the water" and related to Kerwick. Kerouac, derived from Kervoach, is the name of one hamlet situated in Brittany in Lanmeur, near Morlaix.

The Kirouack family was living there in 1926 when Jack's big brother Gerard died of rheumatic fever at the age of nine. Jack was four at the time, and would later say that Gerard followed him in life as a guardian angel. This is the Gerard of Kerouac's novel *Visions of Gerard*.

Despite the future elaborations, around the house during his childhood, Kerouac was referred to as Ti Jean or little John. Kerouac spoke the French-Canadian dialect called Joul until he learned English at age six, not speaking it confidently until his late teens. He was a serious child who was devoted to his mother who played an important role in his life. She was a devout Catholic, instilling this into both her sons; this can be seen throughout his works. Kerouac would later go on to say that his mother was the only woman he ever loved. When he was four, he was profoundly affected by the death of his nine-year-old brother, Gérard, from rheumatic fever, an event later described in his novel *Visions of Gerard*. His mother sought solace in her faith, while his father abandoned it wallowing in drinking, gambling and smoking. Some of Kerouac's poetry was written in French, and in letters written to friend Allen Ginsberg towards the end of his life, he expressed his desire to speak his parents' native tongue again. Recently, it was discovered that Kerouac first started writing *On the Road* in French, a language in which he also wrote two unpublished novels. The writings are in dialectal Quebec French.

On May 17, 1928, while six years old, Kerouac had his first Sacrament of Confession. For penance he was told to say a rosary, during the meditation of which he could hear God tell him that he had a good soul, that he would suffer in his life and die in pain and horror, but would in the end have salvation. This experience, along with his dying brother's vision of the Virgin Mary, and the nuns' fawning over the dying boy, convinced that he was a saint, incorporated with later found Buddhism and ongoing commitment to Christ, solidified into his worldview which informs his work.

There were few black people in Lowell, so the young Kerouac was not raised in an environment of racial hatred as many were at the time. Kerouac once recalled to Ted Berrigan, in an interview with the *Paris Review*, an incident from the 1940s, in which his mother and father were walking together in a Jewish neighborhood in the Lower East Side of New York, saying "And here comes a whole bunch of rabbis walking arm in arm... teedah- teedah - teedah... and they wouldn't part for this Christian man and his wife. So my father went POOM! and

knocked a rabbi right in the gutter." His father, after the death of his child and apostasy, had treated a priest with similar contempt, angrily throwing him out of the house after an invitation by Gabrielle.

Kerouac's athletic skills as a running back in American football for Lowell High School earned him scholarship offers from Boston College, Notre Dame and Columbia University. He entered Columbia University after spending a year at Horace Mann School, where he earned the requisite grades to matriculate to Columbia. Kerouac cracked a tibia playing football during his freshman season, and he argued constantly with Coach Lou Little who kept him benched. While at Columbia, Kerouac wrote several sports articles for the student newspaper, the Columbia Daily Spectator and joined the fraternity of Phi Gamma Delta. He also studied at The New School.

Early Adulthood

When his football career at Columbia soured, Kerouac dropped out of the university. He continued to live for a period on New York City's Upper West Side with his girlfriend, Edie Parker. It was during this time that he met the people—now famous—with whom he would always be associated, the subjects injected into many of his novels: the so-called Beat Generation, including Allen Ginsberg, Neal Cassady, John Clellon Holmes, Herbert Huncke and William S. Burroughs.

Kerouac joined the United States Merchant Marine in 1942, and in 1943 joined the United States Navy, but he served only eight days of active duty before arriving on the sick list. According to his medical report, Jack Kerouac said he "asked for an aspirin for his headaches and they diagnosed me Dementia Praecox and sent me here." The medical examiner reported Jack Kerouac's military adjustment was poor, quoting Kerouac: "I just can't stand it; I like to be by myself". Two days later he was honorably discharged on psychiatric grounds (he was of "indifferent character" with a diagnosis of "schizoid personality").

After serving briefly as a US Merchant Marine, Kerouac authored his first novel, *The Sea is My Brother*. Although written in 1942, the book was not published until 2011, some 42 years after Kerouac's death, and 70 years after the book was written. Although Kerouac described the work as being about "man's simple revolt from society as it is, with the inequalities, frustration, and self-inflicted agonies", Kerouac reputedly viewed the work as a failure, reportedly calling it a "crock [of shit] as literature" and never actively sought publication of the book.

In 1944, Kerouac was arrested as a material witness in the murder of David

Kammerer, who had been stalking Kerouac's friend Lucien Carr since Carr was a teenager in St. Louis. William Burroughs was a native of St. Louis, and it was through Carr that Kerouac came to know both Burroughs and Allen Ginsberg. According to Carr, Kammerer's obsession with Carr turned aggressive, causing Carr to stab him to death in self-defense. After turning to Kerouac for help, together they disposed of evidence. Afterwards, as advised by Burroughs, they turned themselves in to the police. Kerouac's father, unwilling and unable, refused to pay his bail. Kerouac then agreed to marry Edie Parker if she'd pay the bail. Their marriage was annulled a year later, and Kerouac and Burroughs briefly collaborated on a novel about the Kammerer killing titled *And the Hippos Were Boiled in Their Tanks*. Though the book was not published during the lifetimes of either Kerouac or Burroughs, an excerpt eventually appeared in *Word Virus: A William S. Burroughs Reader* (and as noted below, the novel was finally published late 2008). Kerouac also later wrote about the killing in his novel *Vanity of Duluo*.

Jack Kerouac lived with his parents for a time above a corner drug store in Ozone Park (now this flower shop), while writing some of his earliest work.

Later, he lived with his parents in the Ozone Park neighborhood of Queens, after they also moved to New York. He wrote his first published novel, *The Town and the City*, and began the famous *On the Road* around 1949 while living there. His friends jokingly called him "The Wizard of Ozone Park," alluding to Thomas Edison's nickname, "the Wizard of Menlo Park" and to the film *The Wizard of Oz*.

Early career: 1950–1957

Kerouac wrote constantly, carrying a notebook with him everywhere. Letters to friends and family members tended to be long and rambling, including great detail about his daily life and thoughts. Prior to becoming a writer, he tried a varied list of careers. He was a sports reporter for *The Lowell Sun*; a temporary worker in construction and food service; a United States Merchant Marine and he joined the United States Navy twice.

The Town and the City was published in 1950 under the name "John Kerouac" and, though it earned him a few respectable reviews, the book sold poorly. Heavily influenced by Kerouac's reading of Thomas Wolfe, it reflects on the generational epic formula and the contrasts of small town life versus the multi-dimensional, and larger, city. The book was heavily edited by Robert Giroux; some 400 pages were taken out.

For the next six years, Kerouac continued to write regularly. Building upon previous drafts tentatively titled "The Beat Generation" and "Gone on the Road," Kerouac completed what is now known as *On the Road* in April 1951, while living

at 454 West 20th Street in Manhattan with his second wife, Joan Haverty. The book was largely autobiographical and describes Kerouac's road-trip adventures across the United States and Mexico with Neal Cassady in the late-40s, as well as his relationships with other Beat writers and friends. He completed the first version of the novel during a three-week extended session of spontaneous confessional prose. Kerouac wrote the final draft in 20 days, with Joan, his wife, supplying him bowls of pea soup and mugs of coffee to keep him going. Before beginning, Kerouac cut sheets of tracing paper into long strips, wide enough for a type-writer, and taped them together into a 120-foot (37 m) long roll he then fed into the machine. This allowed him to type continuously without the interruption of reloading pages. The resulting manuscript contained no chapter or paragraph breaks and was much more explicit than what would eventually be printed. Though "spontaneous," Kerouac had prepared long in advance before beginning to write. In fact, according to his Columbia professor and mentor Mark Van Doren, he had outlined much of the work in his journals over the several preceding years.

Though the work was completed quickly, Kerouac had a long and difficult time finding a publisher. Before *On the Road* was accepted by Viking Press, Kerouac got a job as a "railroad brakesman and fire lookout" traveling between the East and West coasts of America to collect money, so he could live with his mother. During this period of travel, he conspired what was to be "his life's work", "The Legend of Duluo."z."

Publishers rejected *On the Road* because of its experimental writing style and its sympathetic tone towards minorities and marginalized social groups of post-War America. Many editors were also uncomfortable with the idea of publishing a book that contained what were, for the era, graphic descriptions of drug use and homosexual behavior—a move that could result in obscenity charges being filed, a fate that later befell Burroughs' *Naked Lunch* and Ginsberg's *Howl*.

According to Kerouac, *On the Road* "was really a story about two Catholic buddies roaming the country in search of God. And we found him. I found him in the sky, in Market Street San Francisco (those 2 visions), and Dean (Neal) had God sweating out of his forehead all the way. THERE IS NO OTHER WAY OUT FOR THE HOLY MAN: HE MUST SWEAT FOR GOD. And once he has found Him, the Godhood of God is forever Established and really must not be spoken about." According to his authorized biographer, historian Douglas Brinkley, *On the Road* has been misinterpreted as a tale of companions out looking for kicks, but the most important thing to comprehend is that Kerouac was an American Catholic author - for example, virtually every page of his diary bore a sketch of a crucifix, a prayer, or an appeal to Christ to be forgiven.

In late 1951, Joan Haverty left and divorced Kerouac while pregnant. In February 1952, she gave birth to Kerouac's only child, Jan Kerouac, though he refused to acknowledge her as his own until a blood test confirmed it 9 years later. For the next several years Kerouac continued writing and traveling, taking extensive trips throughout the U.S. and Mexico and often fell into bouts of depression and heavy drug and alcohol use. During this period he finished drafts for what would become 10 more novels, including *The Subterraneans*, *Doctor Sax*, *Tristessa*, and *Desolation Angels*, which chronicle many of the events of these years.

In 1954, Kerouac discovered Dwight Goddard's *A Buddhist Bible* at the San Jose Library, which marked the beginning of his immersion into Buddhism. However, Kerouac had taken an interest in Eastern thought in 1946 when he read Heinrich Zimmer's *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization*. Kerouac's stance on eastern texts then differed from when he took it up again in the early to mid-1950s. In 1955 Kerouac wrote a biography of Siddhartha Gautama, titled *Wake Up*, which was unpublished during his lifetime but eventually serialised in *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review*, 1993–95. It was published by Viking in September 2008.

Politically, Kerouac found enemies on both sides of the spectrum, the right disdaining his association with drugs and sexual libertinism and the left contemptuous of his anti-communism and Catholicism; characteristically he watched the 1954 Senate McCarthy hearings smoking cannabis and rooting for the anti-communist crusader, Senator Joe McCarthy. In *Desolation Angels* he wrote, "when I went to Columbia all they tried to teach us was Marx, as if I cared" (considering Marxism, like Freudianism, to be an illusory tangent). In 1957, after being rejected by several other firms, *On the Road* was finally purchased by Viking Press, which demanded major revisions prior to publication. Many of the more sexually explicit passages were removed and, fearing libel suits, pseudonyms were used for the book's "characters". These revisions have often led to criticisms of the alleged spontaneity of Kerouac's style.

Later career: 1957–1969

In July 1957, Kerouac moved to a small house at 1418½ Clouser Avenue in the College Park section of Orlando, Florida, to await the release of *On the Road*. Weeks later, a review appeared in *The New York Times* proclaiming Kerouac the voice of a new generation. Kerouac was hailed as a major American writer. His friendship with Allen Ginsberg, William S. Burroughs and Gregory Corso, among others, became a notorious representation of the Beat Generation. The term "Beat Generation" was invented by Kerouac during a conversation held with

fellow novelist Herbert Huncke. His fame came as an unmanageable surge that would ultimately be his undoing.

Kerouac's novel is often described as the defining work of the post-World War II Beat Generation and Kerouac came to be called "the king of the beat generation," a term that he never felt comfortable with. He once observed, "I'm not a beatnik, I'm a Catholic", showing the reporter a painting of Pope Paul VI and saying, "You know who painted that? Me."

The success of *On the Road* brought Kerouac instant fame. His celebrity status brought publishers desiring unwanted manuscripts which were previously rejected before its publication. After nine months, he no longer felt safe in public. He was badly beaten by three men outside the San Remo Bar at 189 Bleecker Street in New York City one night. Neal Cassady, possibly as a result of his new notoriety as the central character of the book, was set up and arrested for selling marijuana.

In response, Kerouac chronicled parts of his own experience with Buddhism, as well as some of his adventures with [Gary Snyder](http://www.poemhunter.com/gary-snyder/) and other San Francisco-area poets, in *The Dharma Bums*, set in California and Washington and published in 1958. It was written in Orlando between November 26 and December 7, 1957. To begin writing *Dharma Bums*, Kerouac typed onto a ten-foot length of teleprinter paper, to avoid interrupting his flow for paper changes, as he had done six years previously for *On the Road*.

Kerouac was demoralized by criticism of *Dharma Bums* from such respected figures in the American field of Buddhism as Zen teacher Ruth Fuller Sasaki and Alan Watts. He wrote to Snyder, referring to a meeting with D. T. Suzuki, that "even Suzuki was looking at me through slitted eyes as though I was a monstrous imposter." He passed up the opportunity to reunite with Snyder in California, and explained to Whalen, "I'd be ashamed to confront you and Gary now I've become so decadent and drunk and don't give a shit. I'm not a Buddhist any more."

Kerouac also wrote and narrated a "Beat" movie titled *Pull My Daisy* (1959), directed by Robert Frank and Alfred Leslie. Originally to be called *The Beat Generation*, the title was changed at the last moment when MGM released a film by the same name in July 1959 which sensationalized "beatnik" culture.

The CBS Television series *Route 66* (1960–64), featuring two untethered young men "on the road" in a Corvette seeking adventure and fueling their travels by

apparently plentiful temporary jobs in the various U.S. locales framing the anthology styled stories, gave the impression of being a commercially sanitized misappropriation of Kerouac's "On The Road" story model. Even the leads, Buz and Todd, bore a resemblance to the dark, athletic Kerouac and the blonde Cassady/Moriarty, respectively. Kerouac felt he'd been conspicuously ripped off by Route 66 creator Stirling Silliphant and sought to sue him, CBS, the Screen Gems TV production company, and sponsor Chevrolet, but was somehow counseled against proceeding with what looked like a very potent cause of action.

John Antonelli's 1985 documentary *Kerouac, the Movie* begins and ends with footage of Kerouac reading from *On the Road* and *Visions of Cody* on *The Tonight Show* with Steve Allen in 1957. Kerouac appears intelligent but shy. "Are you nervous?" asks Steve Allen. "Naw," says Kerouac, sweating and fidgeting.

Kerouac developed something of a friendship with the scholar Alan Watts (renamed Dave Wayne in Kerouac's novel *Big Sur*, and Alex Aums in *Desolation Angels*). Kerouac moved to Northport, New York in March 1958, six months after releasing *On the Road*., to care for his aging mother Gabrielle and to hide from his new-found celebrity status.

In 1968, he appeared on the television show *Firing Line* produced and hosted by William F. Buckley. The visibly drunk Kerouac talked about the 1960s counterculture in what would be his last appearance on television.

Death

On 20 October 1969, around 11 in the morning, Kerouac was sitting in his favorite chair, drinking whiskey and malt liquor, trying to scribble notes for a book about his father's print shop in Lowell, Mass. He suddenly felt sick to his stomach, which was nothing unusual, and headed for the bathroom. He began to throw up large amounts of blood, and yelled to his wife, "Stella, I'm bleeding." Eventually he was persuaded to go to the hospital and was taken by ambulance to St. Anthony's in St. Petersburg. Blood continued to pour from his mouth and he underwent several transfusions. That evening he underwent surgery in an attempt to tie off all the burst blood vessels, but his damaged liver prevented his blood from clotting. Kerouac died at 5:15 the following morning, 21 October 1969, never having regained consciousness after the operation.

His death, at the age of 47, was determined to be due to an internal hemorrhage (bleeding esophageal varices) caused by cirrhosis, the result of a lifetime of heavy drinking, along with complications from an untreated hernia and a bar fight he had been involved in weeks prior to his demise. Kerouac is buried at

Edson Cemetery in his hometown of Lowell and was honored posthumously with a Doctor of Letters degree from his hometown University of Massachusetts Lowell on June 2, 2007.

At the time of his death, he was living with his third wife, Stella Sampas Kerouac, and his mother, Gabrielle. Kerouac's mother inherited most of his estate and when she died in 1973, Stella inherited the rights to his works under a will purportedly signed by Gabrielle. Family members challenged the will and, on July 24, 2009, a judge in Pinellas County, Florida ruled that the will of Gabrielle Kerouac was fake, citing that Gabrielle Kerouac would not have been physically capable of providing her own signature on the date of the signing. However, such ruling has no effect on the copyright ownership of Jack's literary works, since in 2004 a Florida Probate Court ruled that "any claim against any assets or property which were inherited or received by any of the SAMPAS respondents through the Estate of Stella Sampas Kerouac, Deceased, is barred by reason of the provisions of the Florida Statute §733.710(1989)."

In 2007, to coincide with the 50th anniversary of *On the Road*'s publishing, Viking issued two new editions: *On the Road: The Original Scroll*, and *On the Road: 50th Anniversary Edition*. By far the more significant is *Scroll*, a transcription of the original draft typed as one long paragraph on sheets of tracing paper which Kerouac taped together to form a 120-foot (37 m) scroll. The text is more sexually explicit than Viking allowed to be published in 1957, and also uses the real names of Kerouac's friends rather than the fictional names he later substituted. Indianapolis Colts owner Jim Irsay paid \$2.43 million for the original scroll and allowed an exhibition tour that concluded at the end of 2009. The other new issue, *50th Anniversary Edition*, is a reissue of the 40th anniversary issue under an updated title.

The Kerouac/Burroughs manuscript, *And the Hippos Were Boiled in Their Tanks* was published for the first time on November 1, 2008 by Grove Press. Previously, a fragment of the manuscript had been published in the Burroughs compendium, *Word Virus*.

Works

Style

Kerouac is generally considered to be the father of the Beat movement, although he actively disliked such labels. Kerouac's method was heavily influenced by the prolific explosion of Jazz, especially the Bebop genre established by Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, and others. Later, Kerouac

would include ideas he developed from his Buddhist studies that began with Gary Snyder. He often referred to his style as spontaneous prose, a literary technique akin to nothing. Although Kerouac's prose was spontaneous and purportedly without edits, he primarily wrote autobiographical novels (or Roman à clef) based upon actual events from his life and the people with whom he interacted.

Many of his books exemplified this approach, including *On the Road*, *Visions of Cody*, *Visions of Gerard*, *Big Sur*, and *The Subterraneans*. The central features of this writing method were the ideas of breath (borrowed from Jazz and from Buddhist meditation breathing), improvising words over the inherent structures of mind and language, and not editing a single word (much of his work was edited by Donald Merriam Allen, a major figure in Beat Generation poetry who edited some of Ginsberg's work as well). Connected with his idea of breath was the elimination of the period, preferring to use a long, connecting dash instead. As such, the phrases occurring between dashes might resemble improvisational jazz licks. When spoken, the words might take on a certain kind of rhythm, though none of it pre-meditated.

Kerouac greatly admired Gary Snyder, many of whose ideas influenced him. *The Dharma Bums* contains accounts of a mountain climbing trip Kerouac took with Snyder, and also whole paragraphs from letters Snyder had written to Kerouac. While living with Snyder outside Mill Valley, California in 1956, Kerouac was working on a book centering around Snyder, which he was thinking of calling *Visions of Gary*. (This eventually became *Dharma Bums*, which Kerouac described as "mostly about [Snyder].") That summer, Kerouac took a job as a fire lookout on Desolation Peak in the North Cascades in Washington, after hearing Snyder's and Philip Whalen's accounts of their own lookout stints. Kerouac described the experience in his novel *Desolation Angels*.

He would go on for hours, often drunk, to friends and strangers about his method. Allen Ginsberg, initially unimpressed, would later be one of its great proponents, and indeed, he was apparently influenced by Kerouac's free flowing prose method of writing in the composition of his masterpiece "Howl". It was at about the time that Kerouac wrote *The Subterraneans* that he was approached by Ginsberg and others to formally explicate his style. Among the writings he set down specifically about his Spontaneous Prose method, the most concise would be *Belief and Technique for Modern Prose*, a list of 30 "essentials".

"The only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn, like fabulous yellow Roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars, and in the middle,

you see the blue center-light pop, and everybody goes ahh..."

""

On the Road

Some believed that at times Kerouac's writing technique did not produce lively or energetic prose. Truman Capote famously said about Kerouac's work, "That's not writing, it's typing". Despite such criticism, it should be kept in mind that what Kerouac said about writing and how he wrote are sometimes seen to be separate. According to Carolyn Cassady, and other people who knew him, he rewrote and rewrote. However, it should be taken into account that throughout most of the '50s Kerouac was constantly trying to have his work published, and consequently he often revised and re-arranged manuscripts in an often futile attempt to interest publishers, as is clearly documented in his collected letters (which are in themselves examples of his style).

Although the body of Kerouac's work has been published in English, recent research has suggested that, aside from already known correspondence and letters written to friends and family, he also wrote unpublished works of fiction in French. A manuscript entitled *Sur le Chemin* (On the road) was discovered in 2008 by Québécois journalist Gabriel Anctil. The novella, completed in five days in Mexico during December 1952, is a telling example of Kerouac's attempts at writing in Joual, a dialect typical of the French-Canadian working class of the time. It can be summarized as a form of expression utilising both old patois and modern French mixed with modern English words (windshield being a modern English expression used casually by some French Canadians even today). Set in 1935, mostly on the American east coast, the short manuscript (50 pages) explores some of the recurring themes of Kerouac's literature by way of a narrative very close to, if not identical to, the spoken word. It tells the story of a group of men who agree to meet in New York, including a young 13-year-old Kerouac whom he refers to as Ti-Jean. Ti-Jean and his father Leo (Kerouac's father's real name) leave Boston by car, traveling to assist friends looking for a place to stay in the city. The story actually follows two cars and their passengers, one driving out of Denver and the other from Boston, until they eventually meet in a dingy bar in New York's Chinatown. In it, Kerouac's "French" is written in a form which has little regard for grammar or spelling, relying often on phonetics in order to render an authentic reproduction of his French-Canadian vernacular. The novel starts: Dans l'mois d'Octobre 1935, y'arriva une machine du West, de Denver, sur le chemin pour New York. Dans la machine était Dean Pomeray, un soûlon; Dean Pomeray Jr., son ti fils de 9 ans et Rolfe Glendiver, son step son, 24. C'était un vieille Model T Ford, toutes les trois avaient leux yeux attachez sur le chemin dans la nuit à travers la windshield. Even though this work shares the

same title as one of his best known English novels, it is rather the original French version of a short text that would later become *Old bull in the Bowery* (also unpublished) once translated to English prose by Kerouac himself. *Sur le Chemin* is Kerouac's second known French manuscript, the first being *La nuit est ma Femme* written in early 1951 and completed a few days before he began the original English version of *On the Road*, as revealed by journalist Gabriel Anctil in the Montreal daily *Le Devoir*.

Influences

Kerouac's early writing, particularly his first novel *The Town and the City*, was more conventional, and bore the strong influence of Thomas Wolfe. The technique Kerouac developed that later made Kerouac famous was heavily influenced by Jazz, especially Bebop, and later, Buddhism, as well as the famous "Joan Anderson letter" authored by Neal Cassady. The Diamond Sutra was the most important Buddhist text for Kerouac, and "probably one of the three or four most influential things he ever read". In 1955, he began an intensive study of this sutra, in a repeating weekly cycle, devoting one day to each of the six Paramitas, and the seventh to the concluding passage on Samadhi. This was his sole reading on Desolation Peak, and he hoped by this means to condition his mind to emptiness, and possibly to have a vision.

However, often overlooked but perhaps his greatest literary influence may be that of James Joyce whose work he alludes to, by far, more than any other author. Kerouac had the highest esteem for Joyce, emulated and expanded on his techniques. Regarding *On the Road*, he wrote in a letter to Ginsberg, "I can tell you now as I look back on the flood of language. It is like *Ulysses* and should be treated with the same gravity." Indeed, *Old Angel Midnight* has been called "the closest thing to *Finnegans Wake* in American literature."

In his book "*Light My Fire: My Life with The Doors*", Ray Manzarek (keyboard player of *The Doors*) wrote "I suppose if Jack Kerouac had never written *On the Road*, *The Doors* would never have existed."

In 1974 the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics was opened in his honor by Allen Ginsberg and Anne Waldman at Naropa University, a private Buddhist university in Boulder, Colorado. The school offers a BA in Writing and Literature, MFAs in Writing & Poetics and Creative Writing, and a summer writing program. From 1978 to 1992, Joy Walsh published 28 issues of a magazine devoted to Kerouac, *Moody Street Irregulars*.

Kerouac's French Canadian origins inspired a 1987 National Film Board of Canada

docudrama Jack Kerouac's Road - A Franco-American Odyssey, directed by Acadian filmmaker Herménégilde Chiasson.

In 1997, the house on Clouser Avenue where The Dharma Bums was written was purchased by a newly formed non-profit group, The Jack Kerouac Writers in Residence Project of Orlando, Inc. This group provides opportunities for aspiring writers to live in the same house in which Kerouac was inspired, with room and board covered for three months.

In 2007, Kerouac was awarded a posthumous honorary degree from the University of Massachusetts Lowell.

In 2009, the movie One Fast Move or I'm Gone - Kerouac's Big Sur was released. It chronicles the time in Kerouac's life that led to his novel Big Sur, with actors, writers, artists, and close friends giving their insight into the book. The movie also describes the people and places on which Kerouac based his characters and settings, including the cabin in Bixby Canyon. An album released to accompany the movie, "One Fast Move or I'm Gone", features Benjamin Gibbard (Death Cab for Cutie) and Jay Farrar (Son Volt) performing songs based on Kerouac's Big Sur.

In 2010, during the first weekend of October, the 25th anniversary of the literary festival "Lowell Celebrates Kerouac" was held in Kerouac's birthplace of Lowell, Massachusetts. It featured walking tours, literary seminars, and musical performances focused on Kerouac's work and that of the Beat Generation. Independent filmmaker Michael Polish is directing Big Sur, based on the novel, with Jean-Marc Barr cast as Kerouac. Filming was done in and around Big Sur. The film is set for release in 2012.

10th Chorus Mexico City Blues

The great hanging weak teat of India
on the map

The Fingernail of Malaya

The Wall of China

The Korea Ti-Pousse Thumb

The Salamander Japan

the Okinawa Moon Spot

The Pacific

The Back of Hawaiian Mountains

coconuts

Kines, balconies, Ah Tarzan-

And D W Griffith

the great American Director

Strolling down disgruntled

Hollywood Lane

- to toot Nebraska,

Indian Village New York,

Atlantis, Rome,

Peleus and Melisander,

And

swans of Balls

Spots of foam on the ocean

Jack Kerouac

149th Chorus

I keep falling in love
with my mother,
I dont want to hurt her
-Of all people to hurt.

Every time I see her
she's grown older
But her uniform always
amazes me
For its Dutch simplicity
And the Doll she is,
The doll-like way
she stands
Bowlegged in my dreams,
Waiting to serve me.

And I am only an Apache
Smoking Hashi
In old Cabashy
By the Lamp.

Jack Kerouac

1st Chorus Mexico City Blues

Butte Magic of Ignorance
Butte Magic
Is the same as no-Butte
All one light
Old Rough Roads
One High Iron
Mainway

Denver is the same
'The guy I was with his uncle was
the governor of Wyoming'
'Course he paid me back'
Ten Days
Two Weeks
Stock and Joint

'Was an old crook anyway'

The same voice on the same ship
The Supreme Vehicle
S.S. Excalibur
Maynard
Mainline
Mountain
Merudvhaga
Mersion of Missy

Jack Kerouac

211th Chorus

The wheel of the quivering meat
conception
Turns in the void expelling human beings,
Pigs, turtles, frogs, insects, nits,
Mice, lice, lizards, rats, roan
Racinghorses, poxy bucolic pigtics,
Horrible unnameable lice of vultures,
Murderous attacking dog-armies
Of Africa, Rhinos roaming in the
jungle,
Vast boars and huge gigantic bull
Elephants, rams, eagles, condors,
Pones and Porcupines and Pills-
All the endless conception of living
beings
Gnashing everywhere in Consciousness
Throughout the ten directions of space
Occupying all the quarters in & out,
From supermicroscopic no-bug
To huge Galaxy Lightyear Borell
Illuminating the sky of one Mind-

Poor!
I wish I was free
of that slaving meat wheel
and safe in heaven dead.

Jack Kerouac

241st Chorus

And how sweet a story it is
When you hear Charley Parker
tell it,
Either on records or at sessions,
Or at official bits in clubs,
Shots in the arm for the wallet,
Gleefully he Whistled the
perfect
horn
Anyhow, made no difference.

Charley Parker, forgive me-
Forgive me for not answering your eyes-
For not having made in indication
Of that which you can devise-
Charley Parker, pray for me-
Pray for me and everybody
In the Nirvanas of your brain
Where you hide, indulgent and huge,
No longer Charley Parker
But the secret unsayable name
That carries with it merit
Not to be measured from here
To up, down, east, or west-
-Charley Parker, lay the bane,
off me, and every body

Jack Kerouac

2nd Chorus Mexico City Blues

Man is not worried in the middle

Man in the Middle
Is not Worried
He knows his Karma
Is not buried

But his Karma,
Unknown to him,
May end -

Which is Nirvana

Wild Men
Who Kill
Have Karmas
Of ill

Good Men
Who Love
Have Karmas
Of dove

Snakes are Poor Denizens of Hell
Have come surreptitioning
Through the tall grass
To face the pool of clear frogs

Jack Kerouac

3rd Chorus Mexico City Blues

Describe fires in riverbottom
sand, and the cooking;
the cooking of hot dogs
spitted in whittled sticks
over flames of woodfire
with grease dropping in smoke
to brown and blacken
the salty hotdogs,
and the wine,
and the work on the railroad.

\$275,000,000,000.00 in debt
says the Government
Two hundred and seventy five billion
dollars in debt
Like Unending
Heaven
And Unnumbered Sentient Beings
Who will be admitted -
Not-Numberable -
To the new Pair of Shoes
Of White Guru Fleece
O j o !
The Purple Paradise

Jack Kerouac

4th Chorus Mexico City Blues

Roosevelt was worth 6, 7 million dollars
He was Tight

Frog waits
Till poor fly
Flies by
And then they got him

The pool of clear rocks
Covered with vegetable scum
Covered the rocks
Clear the pool
Covered the warm surface
Covered the lotus
Dusted the watermelon flower
Aerial the Pad
Clean queer the clear
blue water

AND THEN THEY GOT HIM

The Oil of the Olive
Bittersweet taffies
Bittersweet cabbage
Cabbage soup made right
A hunk a grass
Sauerkraut let work
in a big barrel
Stunk but Good

Jack Kerouac

Bowery Blues

The story of man
Makes me sick
Inside, outside,
I don't know why
Something so conditional
And all talk
Should hurt me so.

I am hurt
I am scared
I want to live
I want to die
I don't know
Where to turn
In the Void
And when
To cut
Out

For no Church told me
No Guru holds me
No advice
Just stone
Of New York
And on the cafeteria
We hear
The saxophone
O dead Ruby
Died of Shot
In Thirty Two,
Sounding like old times
And de bombed
Empty decapitated
Murder by the clock.

And I see Shadows
Dancing into Doom
In love, holding
Tight the lovely asses

Of the little girls
In love with sex
Showing themselves
In white undergarments
At elevated windows
Hoping for the Worst.

I can't take it
Anymore
If I can't hold
My little behind
To me in my room

Then it's goodbye
Sangsara
For me
Besides
Girls aren't as good
As they look
And Samadhi
Is better
Than you think
When it starts in
Hitting your head
In with Buzz
Of glittergold
Heaven's Angels
Wailing

Saying

We've been waiting for you
Since Morning, Jack
Why were you so long
Dallying in the sooty room?
This transcendental Brilliance
Is the better part
(of Nothingness
I sing)

Okay.
Quit.

Mad.
Stop.

Jack Kerouac

Bus East

Society has good intentions Bureaucracy is like a friend
5 years ago - other furies other losses -

America's
trying to control the uncontrollable Forest fires, Vice

The essential smile In the essential sleep Of the children Of the essential mind

I'm
all thru playing the American
Now I'm going to live a good quiet life

The
world should be built for foot walkers

Oily
rivers Of spiney Nevady

I
am Jake Cake
Rake
Write like Blake

The
horse is not pleased Sight of his
gorgeous finery
in the dust Its silken
nostrils
did disgust

Cats
arent kind Kiddies anent sweet

April
in Nevada - Investigating Dismal Cheyenne Where the war parties
In fields
of straw
Aimed over oxen At Indian Chiefs
In wild headdress Pouring thru

the gap
In Wyoming plain
To make the settlers
Eat more dust than dust
was eaten In the States From East at Seacoast Where wagons made up To
dreadful
Plains
Of clazer vup

Saltry
settlers
Anxious to masturbate The Mongol Sea (I'm too tired in Cheyenne -
No sleep in 4 nights now, & 2 to go)

Jack Kerouac

Daydreams For Ginsberg

I lie on my back at midnight
hearing the marvelous strange chime
of the clocks, and know it's mid-
night and in that instant the whole
world swims into sight for me
in the form of beautiful swarm-
ing m u t t a worlds-
everything is happening, shining
Buhudda-lands,
bhuti

blazing in faith, I know I'm
forever right & all's I got to
do (as I hear the ordinary
extant voices of ladies talking
in some kitchen at midnight
oilcloth cups of cocoa
cardore to mump the
rinnegain in his
darlin drain-) i will write
it, all the talk of the world
everywhere in this morning, leav-
ing open parentheses sections
for my own accompanying inner
thoughts-with roars of me
all brain-all world
roaring-vibrating-I put
it down, swiftly, 1,000 words
(of pages) compressed into one second
of time-I'll be long
robed & long gold haired in
the famous Greek afternoon
of some Greek City
Fame Immortal & they'll
have to find me where they find
the t h n u p f t of my
shroud bags flying
flag yagging Lucien
Midnight back in their

mouths-Gore Vidal'll
be amazed, annoyed-
my words'll be writ in gold
& preserved in libraries like
Finnegans Wake & Visions of Neal

Jack Kerouac

Haiku (Birds Singing...)

Birds singing
in the dark
—Rainy dawn.

Jack Kerouac

Haiku (Holding Up My)

Holding up my
purring cat to the moon
I sighed.

Jack Kerouac

Haiku (The Low Yellow...)

The low yellow
moon above the
Quiet lamplit house.

Jack Kerouac

Haiku (The Taste...)

The taste
of rain
—Why kneel?

Jack Kerouac

Hitchhiker

'Tryna get to sunny Californy' -

Boom. It's the awful raincoat

making me look like a selfdefeated self-murdering imaginary gangster, an idiot in a rueful coat, how can they understand my damp packs - my mud packs -

„Look John, a hitchhiker'

„He looks like he's got a gun underneath that I. R. A. coat'

'Look Fred, that man by the road' „Some sexfiend got in print in 1938 in Sex Magazine' –

„You found his blue corpse in a greenshade edition, with axe blots'

Jack Kerouac

How To Meditate

-lights out-
fall, hands a-clasped, into instantaneous
ecstasy like a shot of heroin or morphine,
the gland inside of my brain discharging
the good glad fluid (Holy Fluid) as
i hap-down and hold all my body parts
down to a deadstop trance-Healing
all my sicknesses-erasing all-not
even the shred of a 'I-hope-you' or a
Loony Balloon left in it, but the mind
blank, serene, thoughtless. When a thought
comes a-springing from afar with its held-
forth figure of image, you spoof it out,
you spuff it off, you fake it, and
it fades, and thought never comes-and
with joy you realize for the first time
'thinking's just like not thinking-
So I don't have to think
any
more'

Jack Kerouac

In Vain

The stars in the sky

In vain

The tragedy of Hamlet

In vain

The key in the lock

In vain

The sleeping mother

In vain

The lamp in the corner

In vain

The lamp in the corner unlit

In vain

Abraham Lincoln

In vain

The Aztec empire

In vain

The writing hand: in vain

(The shoetrees in the shoes

In vain

The windowshade string upon
the hand bible

In vain—

The glitter of the greenglass
ashtray

In vain

The bear in the woods

In vain

The Life of Buddha

In vain)

Jack Kerouac

Nebraska

April doesnt hurt here
Like it does in New England
The ground
Vast and brown
Surrounds dry towns
Located in the dust
Of the coming locust
Live for survival, not for 'kicks'
Be a bangtail describer,
like of shrouded traveler
in Textile tenement & the birds fighting in yr ears-like Burroughs exact to
describe & gettin \$
The Angry Hunger
(hunger is anger)
who fears the
hungry feareth
the angry)
And so I came home
To Golden far away
Twas on the horizon
Every blessed day
As we rolled And we rolled
From Donner tragic Pass
Thru April in Nevada And out Salt City Way Into the dry Nebraskas And sad
Wyomings Where young girls And pretty lover boys
With Mickey Mantle eyes
Wander under moons
Sawing in lost cradle
And Judge O Fasterc
Passes whiggling by To ask of young love: „Was it the same wind Of April Plains
eve that ruffled the dress
Of my lost love
Louanna
In the Western
Far off night
Lost as the whistle
Of the passing Train
Everywhere West
Roams moaning

The deep basso
- Vom! Vom!
- Was it the same love
Notified my bones As mortify yrs now
Children of the soft
Wyoming April night?
Couldna been!
But was! But was!
And on the prairie
The wildflower blows
In the night For bees & birds And sleeping hidden Animals of life.
The Chicago
Spitters in the spotty street
Cheap beans, loop, Girls made eyes at me And I had 35 Cents in my jeans -
Then Toledo
Springtime starry
Lover night Of hot rod boys And cool girls A wandering
A wandering
In search of April pain A plash of rain
Will not dispel This fumigatin hell Of lover lane This park of roses Blue as bees
In former airy poses
In aerial O Way hoses
No tamarand And figancine Can the musterand Be less kind
Sol -
Sol -
Bring forth yr Ah Sunflower - Ah me Montana
Phosphorescent Rose
And bridge in
fairly land
I'd understand it all -

Jack Kerouac

On Tears

Tears is the break of my brow,
The moony tempestuous
Sitting down In dark railyards
When to see my mother's face
Recalling from the waking vision
I wept to understand
The trap mortality
And personal blood of earth
Which saw me in—Father father
Why hast thou forsaken me?
Mortality & unpleasure
Roam this city—
Unhappiness my middle name
I want to be saved,-
Sunk—can't be
Won't be
Never was made—
So retch!

Jack Kerouac

One Flower

One flower
on the cliffside
Nodding at the canyon

Jack Kerouac

Snow In My Shoe

Snow in my shoe

Abandoned

Sparrow's nest

Jack Kerouac

Tenorman

Sweet sad young tenor
Horn slumped around neck
Bearded full of junk
Slouches waiting
For Apocalypse,
Listens to the new
Negro raw trumpet kid
Tell him the wooden news;
And the beat of the bass
The bass—drives in
Drummer drops a bomb
Piano tinkle tackles
Sweet tenor lifting
All American sorrows
Raises mouthpiece to mouth
And blows to finger
The iron sounds

Jack Kerouac

The Scripture Of The Golden Eternity

1

Did I create that sky? Yes, for, if it was anything other than a conception in my mind I wouldnt have said 'Sky'-That is why I am the golden eternity. There are not two of us here, reader and writer, but one, one golden eternity, One-Which-It-Is, That-Which- Everything-Is.

2

The awakened Buddha to show the way, the chosen Messiah to die in the degradation of sentience, is the golden eternity. One that is what is, the golden eternity, or, God, or, Tathagata-the name. The Named One. The human God. Sentient Godhood. Animate Divine. The Deified One. The Verified One. The Free One. The Liberator. The Still One. The settled One. The Established One. Golden Eternity. All is Well. The Empty One. The Ready One. The Quitter. The Sitter. The Justified One. The Happy One.

3

That sky, if it was anything other than an illusion of my mortal mind I wouldnt have said 'that sky.' Thus I made that sky, I am the golden eternity. I am Mortal Golden Eternity.

4

I was awakened to show the way, chosen to die in the degradation of life, because I am Mortal Golden Eternity.

5

I am the golden eternity in mortal animate form.

6

Strictly speaking, there is no me, because all is emptiness. I am empty, I am non-existent. All is bliss.

7

This truth law has no more reality than the world.

8

You are the golden eternity because there is no me and no you, only one golden eternity.

9

The Realizer. Entertain no imaginations whatever, for the thing is a no-thing. Knowing this then is Human Godhood.

10

This world is the movie of what everything is, it is one movie, made of the same stuff throughout, belonging to nobody, which is what everything is.

11

If we were not all the golden eternity we wouldnt be here. Because we are here we cant help being pure. To tell man to be pure on account of the punishing angel that punishes the bad and the rewarding angel that rewards the good would be like telling the water 'Be Wet'-Never the less, all things depend on supreme reality, which is already established as the record of Karma earned-fate.

12

God is not outside us but is just us, the living and the dead, the never-lived and never-died. That we should learn it only now, is supreme reality, it was written a long time ago in the archives of universal mind, it is already done, there's no more to do.

13

This is the knowledge that sees the golden eternity in all things, which is us, you, me, and which is no longer us, you, me.

14

What name shall we give it which hath no name, the common eternal matter of the mind? If we were to call it essence, some might think it meant perfume, or gold, or honey. It is not even mind. It is not even discussible, groupable into words; it is not even endless, in fact it is not even mysterious or inscrutably inexplicable; it is what is; it is that; it is this. We could easily call the golden eternity 'This.' But 'what's in a name?' asked Shakespeare. The golden eternity by another name would be as sweet. A Tathagata, a God, a Buddha by another name, an Allah, a Sri Krishna, a Coyote, a Brahma, a Mazda, a Messiah, an Amida, an Aremedeia, a Maitreya, a Palalakonuh, 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 would be as sweet. The golden eternity is X, the golden eternity is A, the golden eternity is /\, the golden eternity is O, the golden eternity is [], the golden eternity is t-h-e-g-o-l-d-e-n-e-t-e-r- n-i-t-y. In the beginning was the word; before the beginning, in the beginningless infinite neverendingness, was the essence. Both the word 'god' and the essence of the word, are emptiness. The form of emptiness which is emptiness having taken the form of form, is what you see and hear and feel right now, and what you taste and smell and think as you read this. Wait awhile, close your eyes, let your breathing stop three seconds or so, listen to the inside silence

in the womb of the world, let your hands and nerve-ends drop, re-recognize the bliss you forgot, the emptiness and essence and ecstasy of ever having been and ever to be the golden eternity. This is the lesson you forgot.

15

The lesson was taught long ago in the other world systems that have naturally changed into the empty and awake, and are here now smiling in our smile and scowling in our scowl. It is only like the golden eternity pretending to be smiling and scowling to itself; like a ripple on the smooth ocean of knowing. The fate of humanity is to vanish into the golden eternity, return pouring into its hands which are not hands. The navel shall receive, invert, and take back what'd issued forth; the ring of flesh shall close; the personalities of long dead heroes are blank dirt.

16

The point is we're waiting, not how comfortable we are while waiting. Paleolithic man waited by caves for the realization of why he was there, and hunted; modern men wait in beautified homes and try to forget death and birth. We're waiting for the realization that this is the golden eternity.

17

It came on time.

18

There is a blessedness surely to be believed, and that is that everything abides in eternal ecstasy, now and forever.

19

Mother Kali eats herself back. All things but come to go. All these holy forms, unmanifest, not even forms, truebodies of blank bright ecstasy, abiding in a trance, 'in emptiness and silence' as it is pointed out in the Diamond-cutter, asked to be only what they are: GLAD.

20

The secret God-grin in the trees and in the teapot, in ashes and fronds, fire and brick, flesh and mental human hope. All things, far from yearning to be re-united with God, had never left themselves and here they are, Dharmakaya, the body of the truth law, the universal Thisness.

21

'Beyond the reach of change and fear, beyond all praise and blame,' the Lankavatara Scripture knows to say, is he who is what he is in time and time-

less-ness, in ego and in ego-less-ness, in self and in self-less-ness.

22

Stare deep into the world before you as if it were the void: innumerable holy ghosts, buddhies, and savior gods there hide, smiling. All the atoms emitting light inside wavehood, there is no personal separation of any of it. A hummingbird can come into a house and a hawk will not: so rest and be assured. While looking for the light, you may suddenly be devoured by the darkness and find the true light.

23

Things dont tire of going and coming. The flies end up with the delicate viands.

24

The cause of the world's woe is birth, The cure of the world's woe is a bent stick.

25

Though it is everything, strictly speaking there is no golden eternity because everything is nothing: there are no things and no goings and comings: for all is emptiness, and emptiness is these forms, emptiness is this one formhood.

26

All these selfnesses have already vanished. Einstein measured that this present universe is an expanding bubble, and you know what that means.

27

Discard such definite imaginations of phenomena as your own self, thou human being, thou'rt a numberless mass of sun-motes: each mote a shrine. The same as to your shyness of other selves, selfness as divided into infinite numbers of beings, or selfness as identified as one self existing eternally. Be obliging and noble, be generous with your time and help and possessions, and be kind, because the emptiness of this little place of flesh you carry around and call your soul, your entity, is the same emptiness in every direction of space unmeasurable emptiness, the same, one, and holy emptiness everywhere: why be selfy and unfree, Man God, in your dream? Wake up, thou'rt selfless and free. 'Even and upright your mind abides nowhere,' states Hui Neng of China. We're all in heaven now.

28

Roaring dreams take place in a perfectly silent mind. Now that we know this, throw the raft away.

29

Are you tightwad and are you mean, those are the true sins, and sin is only a conception of ours, due to long habit. Are you generous and are you kind, those are the true virtues, and they're only conceptions. The golden eternity rests beyond sin and virtue, is attached to neither, is attached to nothing, is unattached, because the golden eternity is Alone. The mold has rills but it is one mold. The field has curves but it is one field. All things are different forms of the same thing. I call it the golden eternity-what do you call it, brother? for the blessing and merit of virtue, and the punishment and bad fate of sin, are alike just so many words.

30

Sociability is a big smile, and a big smile is nothing but teeth. Rest and be kind.

31

There's no need to deny that evil thing called GOOGOO, which doesn't exist, just as there's no need to deny that evil thing called Sex and Rebirth, which also doesn't exist, as it is only a form of emptiness. The bead of semen comes from a long line of awakened natures that were your parent, a holy flow, a succession of saviors pouring from the womb of the dark void and back into it, fantastic magic imagination of the lightning, flash, plays, dreams, not even plays, dreams.

32

'The womb of exuberant fertility,' Ashvaghosha called it, radiating forms out of its womb of exuberant emptiness. In emptiness there is no Why, no knowledge of Why, no ignorance of Why, no asking and no answering of Why, and no significance attached to this.

33

A disturbed and frightened man is like the golden eternity experimentally pretending at feeling the disturbed-and-frightened mood; a calm and joyous man, is like the golden eternity pretending at experimenting with that experience; a man experiencing his Sentient Being, is like the golden eternity pretending at trying that out too; a man who has no thoughts, is like the golden eternity pretending at being itself; because the emptiness of everything has no beginning and no end and at present is infinite.

34

'Love is all in all,' said Sainte Therese, choosing Love for her vocation and pouring out her happiness, from her garden by the gate, with a gentle smile, pouring roses on the earth, so that the beggar in the thunderbolt received of the endless offering of her dark void. Man goes a-beggaring into nothingness.

'Ignorance is the father, Habit-Energy is the Mother.' Opposites are not the same for the same reason they are the same.

35

The words 'atoms of dust' and 'the great universes' are only words. The idea that they imply is only an idea. The belief that we live here in this existence, divided into various beings, passing food in and out of ourselves, and casting off husks of bodies one after another with no cessation and no definite or particular discrimination, is only an idea. The seat of our Immortal Intelligence can be seen in that beating light between the eyes the Wisdom Eye of the ancients: we know what we're doing: we're not disturbed: because we're like the golden eternity pretending at playing the magic cardgame and making believe it's real, it's a big dream, a joyous ecstasy of words and ideas and flesh, an ethereal flower unfolding a folding back, a movie, an exuberant bunch of lines bounding emptiness, the womb of Avalokitesvara, a vast secret silence, springtime in the Void, happy young gods talking and drinking on a cloud. Our 32,000 chillicosms bear all the marks of excellence. Blind milky light fills our night; and the morning is crystal.

36

Give a gift to your brother, but there's no gift to compare with the giving of assurance that he is the golden eternity. The true understanding of this would bring tears to your eyes. The other shore is right here, forgive and forget, protect and reassure. Your tormenters will be purified. Raise thy diamond hand. Have faith and wait. The course of your days is a river rumbling over your rocky back. You're sitting at the bottom of the world with a head of iron. Religion is thy sad heart. You're the golden eternity and it must be done by you. And means one thing: Nothing-Ever-Happened. This is the golden eternity.

37

When the Prince of the Kalinga severed the flesh from the limbs and body of Buddha, even then the Buddha was free from any such ideas as his own self, other self, living beings divided into many selves, or living beings united and identified into one eternal self. The golden eternity isn't 'me.' Before you can know that you're dreaming you'll wake up, Atman. Had the Buddha, the Awakened One, cherished any of these imaginary judgments of and about things, he would have fallen into impatience and hatred in his suffering. Instead, like Jesus on the Cross he saw the light and died kind, loving all living things.

38

The world was spun out of a blade of grass: the world was spun out of a mind. Heaven was spun out of a blade of grass: heaven was spun out of a mind.

Neither will do you much good, neither will do you much harm. The Oriental unperturbed, is the golden eternity.

39

He is called a Yogi, his is called a Priest, a Minister, a Brahmin, a Parson, a Chaplain, a Rishi, a Laoshih, a Master, a Patriarch, a Pope, a Spiritual Commissar, a Counselor, and Adviser, a Bodhisattva-Mahasattva, an Old Man, a Saint, a Shaman, a Leader, who thinks nothing of himself as separate from another self, not higher nor lower, no stages and no definite attainments, no mysterious stigmata or secret holyhood, no wild dark knowledge and no venerable authoritativeness, nay a giggling sage sweeping out of the kitchen with a broom. After supper, a silent smoke. Because there is no definite teaching: the world is undisciplined. Nature endlessly in every direction inward to your body and outward into space.

40

Meditate outdoors. The dark trees at night are not really the dark trees at night, it's only the golden eternity.

41

A mosquito as big as Mount Everest is much bigger than you think: a horse's hoof is more delicate than it looks. An altar consecrated to the golden eternity, filled with roses and lotuses and diamonds, is the cell of the humble prisoner, the cell so cold and dreary. Boethius kissed the Robe of the Mother Truth in a Roman dungeon.

42

Do you think the emptiness of the sky will ever crumble away? Every little child knows that everybody will go to heaven. Knowing that nothing ever happened is not really knowing that nothing ever happened, it's the golden eternity. In other words, nothing can compare with telling your brother and your sister that what happened, what is happening, and what will happen, never really happened, is not really happening and never will happen, it is only the golden eternity. Nothing was ever born, nothing will ever die. Indeed, it didn't even happen that you heard about golden eternity through the accidental reading of this scripture. The thing is easily false. There are no warnings whatever issuing from the golden eternity: do what you want.

43

Even in dreams be kind, because anyway there is no time, no space, no mind. 'It's all not-born,' said Bankei of Japan, whose mother heard this from her son did what we call 'died happy.' And even if she had died unhappy, dying unhappy

is not really dying unhappy, it's the golden eternity. It's impossible to exist, it's impossible to be persecuted, it's impossible to miss your reward.

44

Eight hundred and four thousand myriads of Awakened Ones throughout numberless swirls of epochs appeared to work hard to save a grain of sand, and it was only the golden eternity. And their combined reward will be no greater and no lesser than what will be won by a piece of dried turd. It's a reward beyond thought.

45

When you've understood this scripture, throw it away. If you cant understand this scripture, throw it away. I insist on your freedom.

46

O everlasting Eternity, all things and all truth laws are no- things, in three ways, which is the same way: AS THINGS OF TIME they dont exist because there is no furthest atom than can be found or weighed or grasped, it is emptiness through and through, matter and empty space too. AS THINGS OF MIND they dont exist, because the mind that conceives and makes them out does so by seeing, hearing touching, smelling, tasting, and mentally-noticing and without this mind they would not be seen or heard or felt or smelled or tasted or mentally-noticed, they are discriminated that which they're not necessarily by imaginary judgments of the mind, they are actually dependent on the mind that makes them out, by themselves they are no-things, they are really mental, seen only of the mind, they are really empty visions of the mind, heaven is a vision, everything is a vision. What does it mean that I am in this endless universe thinking I'm a man sitting under the stars on the terrace of earth, but actually empty and awake throughout the emptiness and awakedness of everything? It means that I am empty and awake, knowing that I am empty and awake, and that there's no difference between me and anything else. It means that I have attained to that which everything is.

47

The-Attainer-To-That-Which-Everything-Is, the Sanskrit Tathagata, has no ideas whatever but abides in essence identically with the essence of all things, which is what it is, in emptiness and silence. Imaginary meaning stretched to make mountains and as far as the germ is concerned it stretched even further to make molehills. A million souls dropped through hell but nobody saw them or counted them. A lot of large people isnt really a lot of large people, it's only the golden eternity. When St. Francis went to heaven he did not add to heaven nor detract from earth. Locate silence, possess space, spot me the ego. 'From the

beginning,' said the Sixth Patriarch of the China School, 'not a thing is.'

48

He who loves all life with his pity and intelligence isn't really he who loves all life with his pity and intelligence, it's only natural. The universe is fully known because it is ignored. Enlightenment comes when you don't care. This is a good tree stump I'm sitting on. You can't even grasp your own pain let alone your eternal reward. I love you because you're me. I love you because there's nothing else to do. It's just the natural golden eternity.

49

What does it mean that those trees and mountains are magic and unreal?- It means that those trees and mountains are magic and unreal. What does it mean that those trees and mountains are not magic but real?- it means that those trees and mountains are not magic but real. Men are just making imaginary judgments both ways, and all the time it's just the same natural golden eternity.

50

If the golden eternity was anything other than mere words, you could not have said 'golden eternity.' This means that the words are used to point at the endless nothingness of reality. If the endless nothingness of reality was anything other than mere words, you could not have said 'endless nothingness of reality,' you could not have said it. This means that the golden eternity is out of our word-reach, it refuses steadfastly to be described, it runs away from us and leads us in. The name is not really the name. The same way, you could not have said 'this world' if this world was anything other than mere words. There's nothing there but just that. They've long known that there's nothing to life but just the living of it. It Is What It Is and That's All It Is.

51

There's no system of teaching and no reward for teaching the golden eternity, because nothing has happened. In the golden eternity teaching and reward haven't even vanished let alone appeared. The golden eternity doesn't even have to be perfect. It is very silly of me to talk about it. I talk about it simply because here I am dreaming that I talk about it in a dream already ended, ages ago, from which I'm already awake, and it was only an empty dreaming, in fact nothing whatever, in fact nothing ever happened at all. The beauty of attaining the golden eternity is that nothing will be acquired, at last.

52

Kindness and sympathy, understanding and encouragement, these give: they are better than just presents and gifts: no reason in the world why not. Anyhow, be

nice. Remember the golden eternity is yourself. 'If someone will simply practice kindness,' said Gotama to Subhuti, 'he will soon attain highest perfect wisdom.' Then he added: 'Kindness after all is only a word and it should be done on the spot without thought of kindness.' By practicing kindness all over with everyone you will soon come into the holy trance, infinite distinctions of personalities will become what they really mysteriously are, our common and eternal blisstuff, the pureness of everything forever, the great bright essence of mind, even and one thing everywhere the holy eternal milky love, the white light everywhere everything, emptybliss, svaha, shining, ready, and awake, the compassion in the sound of silence, the swarming myriad trillionaire you are.

53

Everything's alright, form is emptiness and emptiness is form, and we're here forever, in one form or another, which is empty. Everything's alright, we're not here, there, or anywhere. Everything's alright, cats sleep.

54

The everlasting and tranquil essence, look around and see the smiling essence everywhere. How wily was the world made, Maya, not-even-made.

55

There's the world in the daylight. If it was completely dark you wouldnt see it but it would still be there. If you close your eyes you really see what it's like: mysterious particle-swarming emptiness. On the moon big mosquitos of straw know this in the kindness of their hearts. Truly speaking, unrecognizably sweet it all is. Don't worry about nothing.

56

Imaginary judgments about things, in the Nothing-Ever-Happened wonderful void, you dont even have to reject them, let alone accept them. 'That looks like a tree, let's call it a tree,' said Coyote to Earthmaker at the beginning, and they walked around the rootdrinker patting their bellies.

57

Perfectly selfless, the beauty of it, the butterfly doesnt take it as a personal achievement, he just disappears through the trees. You too, kind and humble and not-even-here, it wasnt in a greedy mood that you saw the light that belongs to everybody.

58

Look at your little finger, the emptiness of it is no different than the emptiness of infinity.

59

Cats yawn because they realize that there's nothing to do.

60

Up in heaven you wont remember all these tricks of yours. You wont even sigh 'Why?' Whether as atomic dust or as great cities, what's the difference in all this stuff. A tree is still only a rootdrinker. The puma's twisted face continues to look at the blue sky with sightless eyes, Ah sweet divine and indescribable verdurous paradise planted in mid-air! Caitanya, it's only consciousness. Not with thoughts of your mind, but in the believing sweetness of your heart, you snap the link and open the golden door and disappear into the bright room, the everlasting ecstasy, eternal Now. Soldier, follow me! - there never was a war. Arjuna, dont fight! - why fight over nothing? Bless and sit down.

61

I remember that I'm supposed to be a man and consciousness and I focus my eyes and the print reappears and the words of the poor book are saying, 'The world, as God has made it' and there are no words in my pitying heart to express the knowless loveliness of the trance there was before I read those words, I had no such idea that there was a world.

62

This world has no marks, signs, or evidence of existence, nor the noises in it, like accident of wind or voices or heehawing animals, yet listen closely the eternal hush of silence goes on and on throughout all this, and has been gong on, and will go on and on. This is because the world is nothing but a dream and is just thought of and the everlasting eternity pays no attention to it. At night under the moon, or in a quiet room, hush now, the secret music of the Unborn goes on and on, beyond conception, awake beyond existence. Properly speaking, awake is not really awake because the golden eternity never went to sleep; you can tell by the constant sound of Silence which cuts through this world like a magic diamond through the trick of your not realizing that your mind caused the world.

63

The God of the American Plateau Indian was Coyote. He says: 'Earth! those beings living on your surface, none of them disappearing, will all be transformed. When I have spoken to them, when they have spoken to me, from that moment on, their words and their bodies which they usually use to move about with, will all change. I will not have heard them.'

64

I was smelling flowers in the yard, and when I stood up I took a deep breath and the blood all rushed to my brain and I woke up dead on my back in the grass. I had apparently fainted, or died, for about sixty seconds. My neighbor saw me but he thought I had just suddenly thrown myself on the grass to enjoy the sun. During that timeless moment of unconsciousness I saw the golden eternity. I saw heaven. In it nothing had ever happened, the events of a million years ago were just as phantom and ungraspable as the events of now, or the events of the next ten minutes. It was perfect, the golden solitude, the golden emptiness, Something-Or- Other, something surely humble. There was a rapturous ring of silence abiding perfectly. There was no question of being alive or not being alive, of likes and dislikes, of near or far, no question of giving or gratitude, no question of mercy or judgment, or of suffering or its opposite or anything. It was the womb itself, aloneness, alaya vijnana the universal store, the Great Free Treasure, the Great Victory, infinite completion, the joyful mysterious essence of Arrangement. It seemed like one smiling smile, one adorable adoration, one gracious and adorable charity, everlasting safety, refreshing afternoon, roses, infinite brilliant immaterial gold ash, the Golden Age. The 'golden' came from the sun in my eyelids, and the 'eternity' from my sudden instant realization as I woke up that I had just been where it all came from and where it was all returning, the everlasting So, and so never coming or going; therefore I call it the golden eternity but you can call it anything you want. As I regained consciousness I felt so sorry I had a body and a mind suddenly realizing I didn't even have a body and a mind and nothing had ever happened and everything is alright forever and forever and forever, O thank you thank you thank you.

65

This is the first teaching from the golden eternity.

66

The second teaching from the golden eternity is that there never was a first teaching from the golden eternity. So be sure.

Jack Kerouac

The Taste

The taste
of rain
- Why kneel?

Jack Kerouac

To Harpo Marx

O Harpo! When did you seem like an angel
the last time?
and played the gray harp of gold?

When did you steal the silverware
and bug-spray the guests?

When did your brother find rain
in you sunny courtyard?

When did you chase your last blonde
across the Millionaires' lawn
with a bait hook on a line
protruding from your bicycle?

Or when last you powderpuffed
your white flour face
with fishbarrel cover?

Harpo! Who was that Lion
I saw you with?

How did you treat the midget
and Konk the Giant?

Harpo, in your recent nightclub appearance
in New Orleans were you old?
were you still chiding with your horn
in the cane at your golden belt?

Did you still emerge from your pockets
another Harpo, or screw on
new wrists?

Was your vow of silence an Indian Harp?

Jack Kerouac

Trees

But a tree has
a long suffering shape
Is spread in half
by 2 limbed fate
Rises from gray rain
pavements
To traffic in the bleak
brown air
Of cities radar television
nameless dumb & numb
mis connicumb
Throwing twigs the
color of ink
To white souled
heaven, with
A reality of its own uses

Jack Kerouac