

FINALLY FRIDAY!

4/19

**Well, Well,
Well...**

**Look what
finally decided
to show up.**

HELLO FRIDAY

Agenda:

**The Beats
Ginsberg**

You'll Need:

**Your English
Notebook**



“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, ...[who] burn, burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars.” -Jack Kerouac (On the Road).

THE BEAT GENERATION

THE BEATS

Bohemian

- The practice of an unconventional lifestyle

Celebrated non-conformity and spontaneous creativity

Focused on performance, which later inspired 'Slam Poetry'

Drew a lot of inspiration from Romanticism

- Thoreau, Emerson, Whitman, Poe, Dickinson

FOUNDERS

Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997)

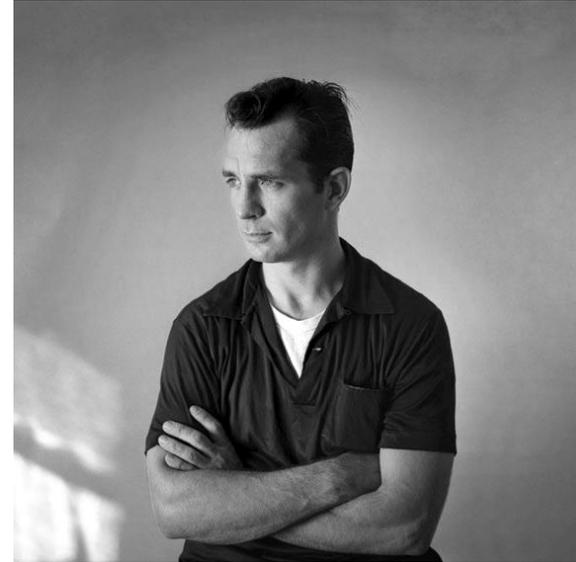
- *Howl, America*
- Mostly Poetry
- Opposed **militarism, materialism and sexual repression**

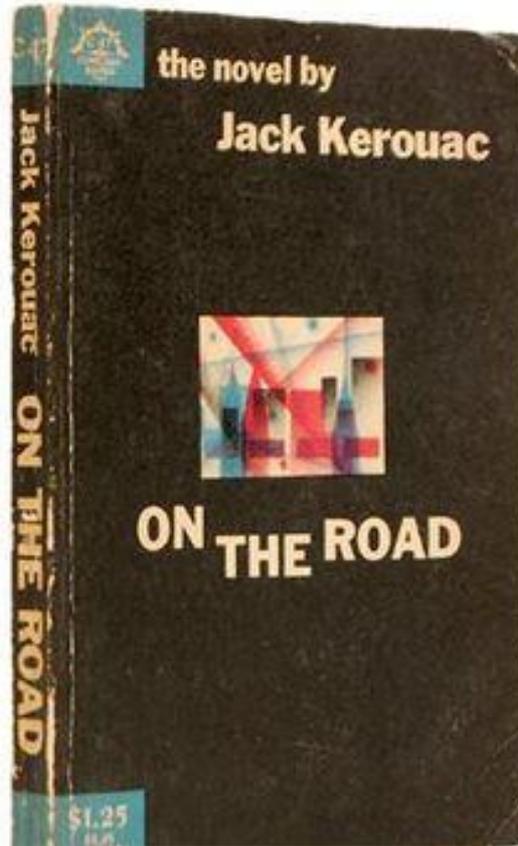
Jack Kerouac (1922-1969)

- *On the Road* (1957)
- Buddhism, Catholic spirituality, jazz, drugs, sexuality and travel
- Wanted to write 'the next Great American Novel'

William S. Burroughs (1917-1997)

- *Naked Lunch* (1959)
- Almost predicted future (AIDS, crack pandemic, liposuction)
- Semi-autobiographical work
 - Former heroin addict, traveler, convicted of manslaughter (wife in 1951), depression
 - Novels, novellas, short stories, essays





SCROLL OF *ON THE ROAD*

Based on the travels of Kerouac and his friends across the USA

Considered the defining work of Postwar Beat and Counterculture movements

Typed out on a continuous reel of paper during three weeks in 1951

120 ft long, sheets he cut & taped together himself

Typed single spaced, without margins or paragraphs

Gary Snyder

- The “Thoreau of the Beats”
- Rural background & wilderness experience
- Moved to Japan, Zen Buddhism

Met in New York City, ended up in San Francisco in the mid-1950s

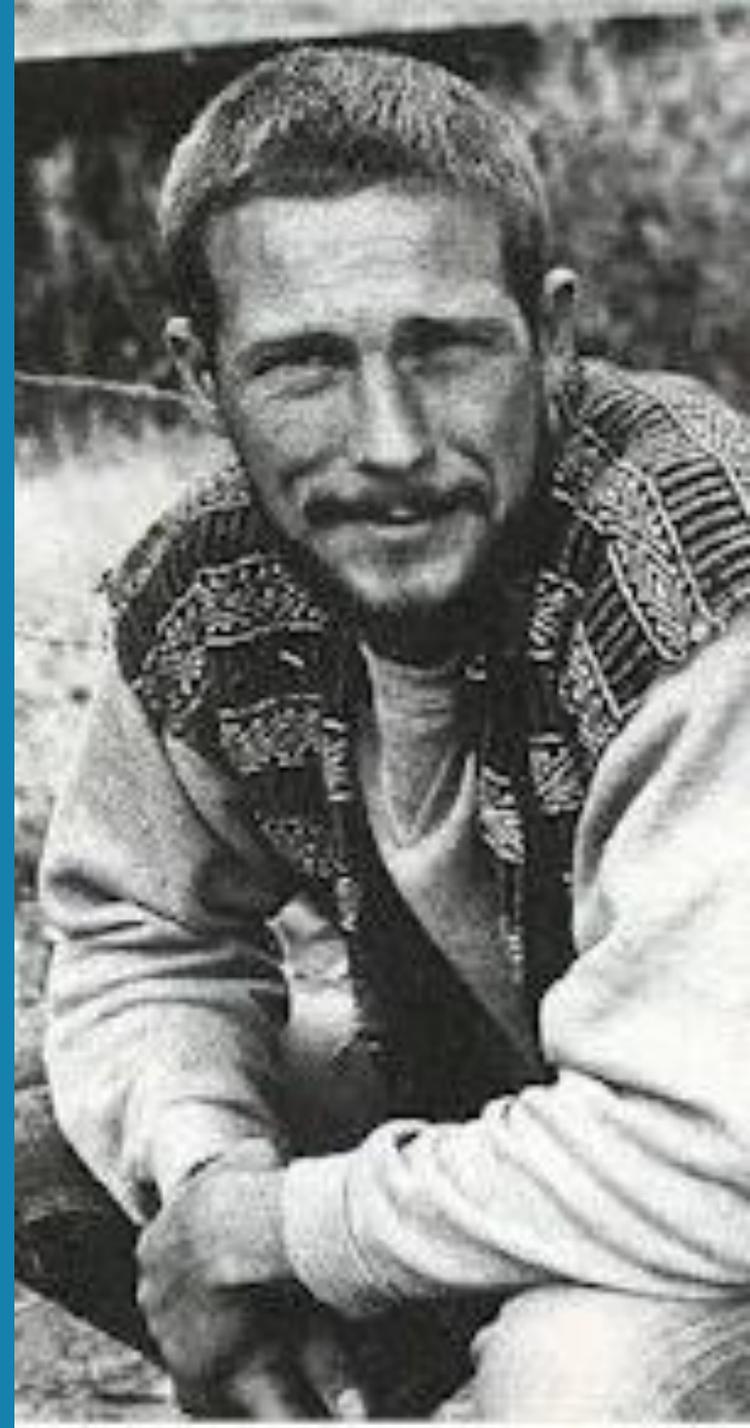
Name was coined by Kerouac, dual meanings of both being “tired” or “beaten down” and “upbeat” “beatific”

- This was directly in response to a casual conversation about Fitzgerald and the Lost Generation of the American 1920s

Largely middle-class, white, definitely a ‘boys club’

PNW (!!)

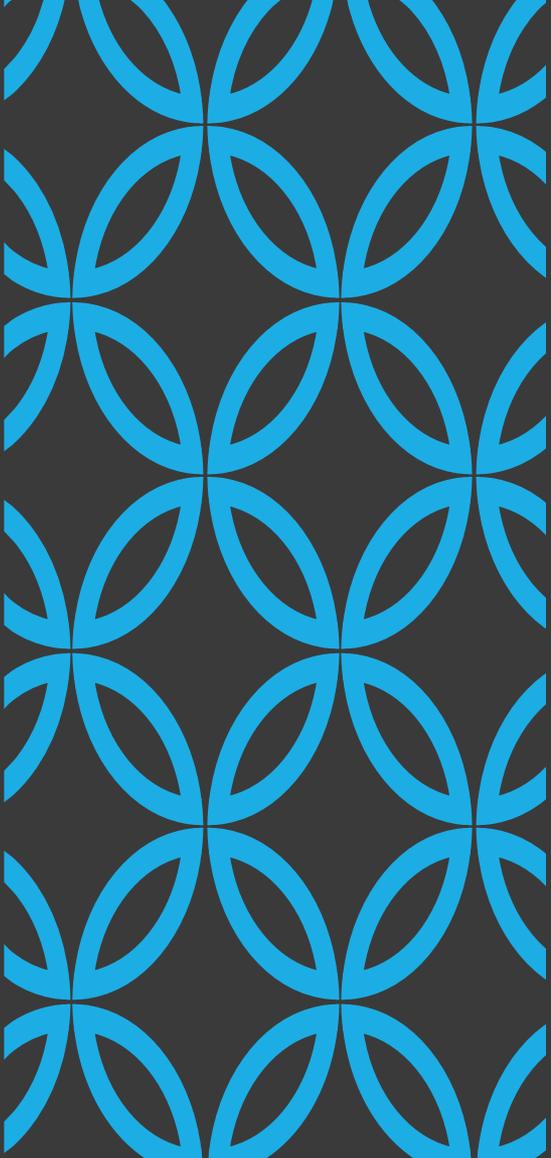
- Kerouac spent a bunch of time in the North Cascades
 - The Dharama Bums
 - On the Road
- Reed College (Portland, OR)





Columbia
Greenwich
Village
San
Francisco

IMPORTANT
PLACES



CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BEAT CULTURE

Rejection of received standards

Innovations in style

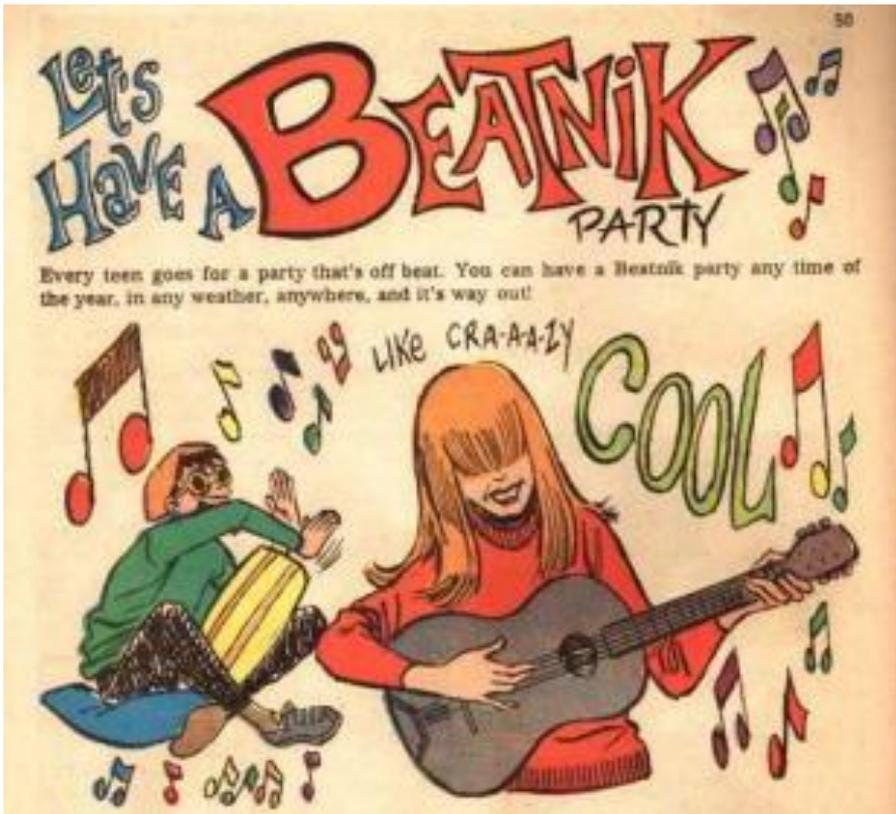
Use of illegal drugs

Alternative sexualities

An interest in examining religions

A rejection of materialism

Explicit portrayals of the human condition



BEATNIKS

The name suggested that Beats were

- Far out of the mainstream society
- Possibly pro-Communist

Used as a new stereotype

- Man with a goatee and a beret reciting nonsensical poetry and playing bongo drums

Became satirized and appeared in cartoons, movies, etc.

Some original Beats embraced the beatniks stereotypes, though many criticized them as inauthentic poseurs

- Original hipsters?

Later became Hippies



LEGACY & IMPACTS

The Obscenity Trials

- **Lawrence Ferlinghetti arrested for distributing “Howl” in 1957**

Spiritual liberation

Sexual revolution (or liberation)

Demystification and/or decriminalization of marijuana

Evolution of rhythm and blues into rock and roll as a high art form (*Bob Dylan, the Beatles, Janis Joplin, The Grateful Dead, The Rolling Stones, etc*)

Spread of ecological consciousness (Snyder)

Opposition to the military-industrial machine civilization

In the 1960s elements of the Beat movement were incorporated into the hippie and larger counterculture movements

CAUSALITIES OF THE BEATS

“Kerouac was a casualty too. And there were many other casualties that most people have never heard of, but were genuine casualties. Just as, in the 60s, when Allen and I for a period there were almost publicly recommending people to take acid. When I look back on that now I realize there were many casualties, responsibilities to bare.” – Gary Snyder

Much of the drug use that the Beats advocated for spiraled from an emphasis on opening creative spaces into a recreational dependence that bordered on (or outright was) dangerous

ALLEN GINSBERG



*“Follow your inner
moonlight; don't hide the
madness”*



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 . . .

—Allen Ginsberg,
“Howl”

GINSBURG BACKGROUND

Spent a short period of time in a mental institution (Bellevue) after being accused of a crime (pled insanity, not guilt)

Father – high school English teacher in New Jersey

Mother – loyal communist, battled mental illness throughout her life, attempted suicides

Gay, Jewish, no strongly-declared political affiliation (*though definitely left-leaning*)



“AMERICA”

WHILE LISTENING, CIRCLE ALL
ALLUSIONS THAT YOU DO NOT
UNDERSTAND.

Written 1956,
soon after the
McCarthy Red
Scare

Somewhat
rambling,
stream-of-
consciousness

Political, and
also personal

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Does this poem's focus on a past historical period, with all its historical references, make it less relevant to a modern audience?

Is the speaker more hopeful about the prospects for America's future? Or more pessimistic? How can you tell?

Based on his complaints and desires that we learn about in the poem, what, specifically, do you think the speaker plans on doing when he "[puts his] queer shoulder to the wheel"?

PARTNER UP
W/SOMEONE
@ YOUR
TABLE

1) You'll Need Your
Phone:

- Look up 4 allusions and annotate their meaning on your copy of the poem.

2) You'll Need One
Piece of Paper Between
the Two of You.

YOUR PARTNER “AMERICA”

You and a partner must create your own “America”, which comments on the state of our country as you see it now...

You must decide: **Are you hopeful?**

Mimic Ginsberg’s use of **allusions**

- **Think current events! (Mueller Report, mass shootings, #metoo, immigration, Brexit, Syria, etc...)**

Get creative!

Disclaimer: Profanity must be sparse and VERY intentional

Must be **@ least 10 lines** in length.