



Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg: The Letters

By Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg

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"[An] essential Beat masterpiece." --*The Village Voice*.

Perhaps one of the last great dual correspondences of the twentieth century, *Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg: The Letters* reveals not only the process of creation of the two most celebrated members of the Beat Generation, but also the unfolding of a remarkable friendship of immense pathos and spiritual depth. Through this exhilarating exchange of letters, two-thirds of which have never been published before, Kerouac and Ginsberg emerge first and foremost as writers of artistic passion, innovation, and genius. Vivid and enthralling, the letters, which date from their first meeting in 1944 to Kerouac's untimely death in 1969, chronicle the endless struggle, anguish, and sacrifice involved in giving form to their literary visions.

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Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg: The Letters By Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. At times loving, at others blistering, sarcastic, often uncomfortably self-lacerating and intimate, these 200 letters, collected in a heroic editorial effort by Ginsberg biographer Morgan and independent editor Stanford, cover the years 1944–1963, the most fertile in the creative lives of Kerouac and Ginsberg. A disbelieving Ginsberg writes to Kerouac in 1952 that *On the Road* is unpublishable, while Kerouac asks Ginsberg to treat his magnum opus as the next *Ulysses*. Kerouac immediately praises *Howl* in 1955, and in return Ginsberg gives Kerouac the manuscript while recounting, like any hopeful author, how freebies have gone to Eliot, Pound, Faulkner. Throughout, the sometimes sporadic letter writing is filled with fragments of works in progress and pungent observations on the authors and publishing people who influenced them, from Dante and Gide to Malcolm Cowley and Sterling Lord. There also is plenty of gossip about Peter Orlovsky, William Burroughs, and others in the circle. A growing rift concludes the 1950s, as literary fame mixed with alcohol weighs on Kerouac, though these soul brothers reunite through letters of the early 1960s. On receiving Ginsberg's work, Thelonius Monk exclaimed, "It makes sense." In its strange way, so does this intense and offbeat correspondence.

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From [Booklist](#)

In August 1944, Allen Ginsberg sends a letter to his close friend Jack Kerouac in care of the Bronx County Jail, where he's incarcerated as a material witness in a murder case. So begins a profound 20-year correspondence about books, spiritual quests, sex, love, and the struggle for recognition. Morgan, author of *The Typewriter Is Holy: The Complete, Uncensored History of the Beat Generation* (2010), and editor Stanford showcase 200 high-voltage letters, most never before published, that embody the energy and psychic hunger that fueled the creativity of these giants of American literature. Ginsberg and Kerouac frolic and dive in the ocean of language, trading urgent confessions, bracing criticism, and mutual inspiration, using their passionate missives as proving grounds for their radical writing, core beliefs, and personal dilemmas. Here are intense inquiries into art, truth, and Buddhism; wild tales of narcotics, world travels, and their brother Beats, especially William Burroughs and Neal Cassady; and fresh insights into such seminal works as Ginsberg's *Howl* and Kerouac's *On the Road*. This incandescent collection deepens our understanding of an essential literary revolution. --Donna Seaman

Review

"The Kerouac-Ginsberg letters are marvelous and lively. The exchange ranks among the best examples of completely engaged literary correspondence we know in the past 50 years."

-The Philadelphia Inquirer

"Open-hearted and richly detailed. . . Rich in news about fellow Beat writers, including John Clellon Holmes, William Burroughs, and Gregory Corso, among others, their correspondence provides a bird's-eye view of what went into the making and marketing of the Beat Generation. The publication of these letters between two of America's leading 20th-century authors is an extraordinary event in American literature, particularly welcome in this era of chat and Twitter."

-Library Journal

"Documenting the adventures of "Old Bean" (Allen) and "Jackiboo" from their days at Columbia through October 1969, weeks before Kerouac's death, the letters form a kind of essential Beat masterpiece, and offer

hilarious behind-the-scenes commentary on all the "mad ones" involved."

-*The Village Voice*

"[E]ditors Stanford and Morgan showcase 200 high-voltage letters, most never before published, that embody the energy and psychic hunger that fueled the creativity of these giants of American literature . . . This incandescent collection deepens our understanding of an essential literary revolution."

-*Booklist*

"The collection reads like a Dostoyevsky novel"

-*The New York Observer*

"In the seductive collection they've called *Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg: The Letters*, the editors Bill Morgan and David Stanford stake out a distinct piece of literary turf. They do this despite the fact that Kerouac and Ginsberg were expansive letter writers, that each wrote to many correspondents, and that reams of these other letters have already shown up elsewhere."

-*The New York Times* (Daily Review)

"The depth of their [Kerouac and Ginsberg's] development as friends but especially as writers has never been shown more clearly than in this stunning new collection, *Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg: The Letters*. . . . Ginsberg biographer Bill Morgan and David Stanford, a longtime editor at Viking, provide readers with a volume as illuminating as it is indispensable for understanding these writers and their work."

-*The Los Angeles Times*

"*Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg: The Letters* is destined to become an indispensable item on any fan's bookshelf. . . . The collected Kerouac-Ginsberg correspondence is pure literary gold that fans and scholars will mine for decades."

-*San Francisco Chronicle*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Calvin Baker:

As people who live in the modest era should be upgrade about what going on or info even knowledge to make all of them keep up with the era and that is always change and move ahead. Some of you maybe may update themselves by examining books. It is a good choice to suit your needs but the problems coming to a person is you don't know what type you should start with. This *Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg: The Letters* is our recommendation so you keep up with the world. Why, because this book serves what you want and need in this era.

Benjamin Hoffman:

The knowledge that you get from *Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg: The Letters* may be the more deep you rooting the information that hide inside the words the more you get enthusiastic about reading it. It doesn't mean that this book is hard to know but *Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg: The Letters* giving you thrill feeling of reading. The author conveys their point in specific way that can be understood simply by anyone who read that because the author of this publication is well-known enough. That book also makes your

vocabulary increase well. It is therefore easy to understand then can go with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We recommend you for having this Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg: The Letters instantly.

Jose Higham:

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