



Collected Poems 1947-1997

By Allen Ginsberg

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Collected Poems 1947-1997 By Allen Ginsberg

Here, for the first time, is a volume that gathers the published verse of Allen Ginsberg in its entirety, a half century of brilliant work from one of America's great poets. The chief figure among the Beats, Ginsberg changed the course of American poetry, liberating it from closed academic forms with the creation of open, vocal, spontaneous, and energetic postmodern verse in the tradition of Walt Whitman, Guillaume Apollinaire, Hart Crane, Ezra Pound, and William Carlos Williams. Ginsberg's classics *Howl*, *Reality Sandwiches*, *Kaddish*, *Planet News*, and *The Fall of America* led American (and international) poetry toward uncensored vernacular, explicit candor, the ecstatic, the rhapsodic, and the sincere—all leavened by an attractive and pervasive streak of common sense. Ginsberg's raw tones and attitudes of spiritual liberation also helped catalyze a psychological revolution that has become a permanent part of our cultural heritage, profoundly influencing not only poetry and popular song and speech, but also our view of the world.

The uninterrupted energy of Ginsberg's remarkable career is clearly revealed in this collection. Seen in order of composition, the poems reflect on one another; they are not only works but also a work. Included here are all the poems from the earlier volume *Collected Poems 1947-1980*, and from Ginsberg's subsequent and final three books of new poetry: *White Shroud*, *Cosmopolitan Greetings*, and *Death & Fame*. Enriching this book are illustrations by Ginsberg's artist friends; unusual and illuminating notes to the poems, inimitably prepared by the poet himself; extensive indexes; as well as prefaces and various other materials that accompanied the original publications.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Counterculture icon, beat apostle, Buddhist chanter, heir to William Blake, unapologetic explorer of intoxicating substances, world traveler, political protest leader, celebrant of gay sex, chronicler of New Jersey Jewish heritage and of Lower East Side post-hippie bohemians, Ginsberg (1926–1997) became by the midpoint of his career the most famous American poet of his era. At first hardworking and tormented, later on a spontaneous, welcoming mentor, the writer who in *Howl* (1956) "saw the best minds of my generation starving hysterical naked," and who mourned his psychotic mother in the wrenching title poem of *Kaddish* (1960) kept creating entertaining (if not quite so innovative) poems, for almost three decades after he rose to fame. This first complete collection of Ginsberg's work reproduces his 1980 *Collected Poems*—including all the extensive notes: here are "Howl" and "Kaddish" and the great anti-Vietnam War poem "Wichita Vortex Sutra"; here too are the poems about Prague and Cornwall, Benares and Shanghai and the Australian outback, the songs and chants in quatrains (with sheet music) and the unashamed odes to beautiful young men. This complete edition adds *White Shroud* (1986), *Cosmopolitan Greetings* (1994) and the aptly titled *Death and Fame: Last Poems* (2000). A hefty, vivid and important tome, it should remind us just how much Ginsberg accomplished. (Oct.)

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Review

"A...brilliant volume that shows Ginsberg...to be not only a legendary protest writer but also a lyric poet."
(New York Times)

"If you want to read Ginsberg's poetry, you should go straight to the source. COLLECTED POEMS 1947-1997 gathers everything." (Los Angeles Times)

"Taken all together, Ginsberg's poems are X-rays of a considerable part of American society during the last four decades." (The New Yorker)

"The mammoth new COLLECTED POEMS, 1947-1997 places Ginsberg firmly among the most prolific poets of the age." (Washington Post Book World)

"There's a lot to like...the current volume testifies to the poet's scope and indefatigable energy." (Chicago Sun-Times)

"Sooner or later, anyone interested in American poetry must embrace Allen Ginsberg." (Houston Chronicle)

"The COLLECTED POEMS" are the ultimate statement on Ginsberg's art." (Chicago Tribune)

"he wrote any number of splendid, singular poems that no other American poet of our age was capable of penning..." (San Diego Union-Tribune)

"The volume gathers for the first time all the published verse of...poet Ginsberg...A history...of a turbulent time." (Salt Lake City Tribune)

"Essential...COLLECTED POEMS...is easily the best of the bunch...Some 50 years later, Ginsberg's talent still glows on paper." (The Post and Courier)

“Ginsberg’s poems are reminders that those who face a culture’s disapproval can approve themselves.” (The Progressive)

About the Author

Allen Ginsberg was a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters as well as a winner of the National Book Award for Poetry. He was born in Newark, New Jersey, in 1926, and died in New York City in 1997.

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