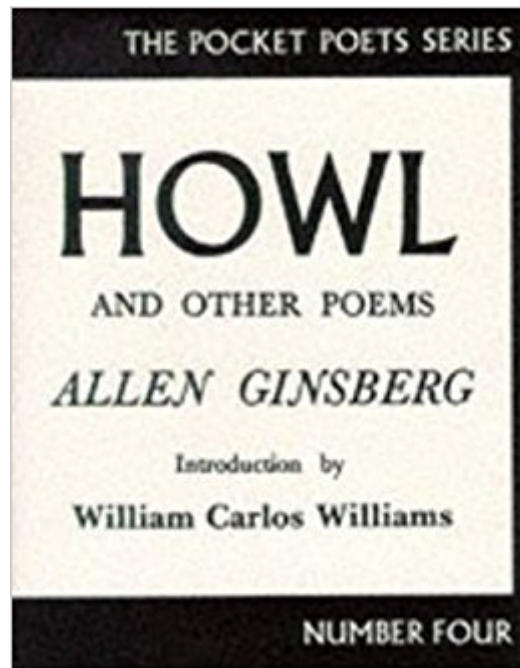




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Howl And Other Poems (City Lights Pocket Poets, No. 4)



Synopsis

Allen Ginsberg's *Howl and Other Poems* was originally published by City Lights Books in the Fall of 1956. Subsequently seized by U.S. customs and the San Francisco police, it was the subject of a long court trail at which a series of poets and professors persuaded the court that the book was not obscene. *Howl & Other Poems* is the single most influential poetic work of the post-World War II era, with over 1,000,000 copies now in print. "Howl was Allen's metamorphosis from quiet, brilliant, burning bohemian scholar trapped by his flames and repressions to epic vocal bard." —Michael McClure "It is the poet, Allen Ginsberg, who has gone, in his own body, through the horrifying experiences described from life in these pages." —William Carlos Williams "At the height of his bardic powers, Allen Ginsberg could terrify the authorities with the mere utterance of the syllable — as he led street throngs of citizens protesting the Vietnam War. Ginsberg reigned as the raucous poet of American hippiedom and as a literary pioneer whose freewheeling masterwork — *Howl* — prevailed against government censorship in a landmark obscenity trial 50 years ago." — *New York Times* "Fifty years ago, on October 3, Judge Clayton Horn ruled that Allen Ginsberg's great epic Beat-era poem *HOWL* was not obscene but instead, a work of literary and social merit. This ruling allowed for the publication of *HOWL* and exonerated the poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti, who faced jail time and a fine 50 years ago for publishing 'HOWL.'" — *Pacifica.org* Allen Ginsberg was born June 3, 1926, the son of Naomi Ginsberg, Russian — émigré —, and Louis Ginsberg, lyric poet and schoolteacher, in Paterson, New Jersey. To these facts Ginsberg adds: "High school in Paterson till 17, Columbia College, merchant marine, Texas and Denver copyboy, Times Square, amigos in jail, dishwashing, book reviews, Mexico City, market research, Satori in Harlem, Yucatan and Chiapas 1954, West Coast 3 years. Later Arctic Sea trip, Tangier, Venice, Amsterdam, Paris, read at Oxford Harvard Columbia Chicago, quit, wrote Kaddish 1959, made tape to leave behind & fade in Orient awhile. Carl Solomon to whom *Howl* is addressed, is a intuitive Bronx dadaist and prose-poet."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The epigraph for *Howl* is from Walt Whitman: "Unscrew the locks from the doors!/Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!" Announcing his intentions with this ringing motto, Allen Ginsberg published a volume of poetry which broke so many social taboos that copies were impounded as obscene, and the publisher, poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti, was arrested. The court case that followed found for Ginsberg and his publisher, and the publicity made both the poet and the book famous. Ginsberg went on from this beginning to become a cultural icon of sixties radicalism. This work's seminal place in the culture is indicated in Czeslaw Milosz's poetic tribute to Ginsberg: "Your blasphemous howl still resounds in a neon desert where the human tribe wanders, sentenced to unreality". --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Lately, Ginsberg hasn't always been in top form, but "*Howl*" remains a masterpiece. *White Shroud* is the best of his later works. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Buyer beware, do not buy this for your Kindle. The letters are bunched up and overlap each other. At its worst, it looks like someone typed a letter, and then went back to that letter and typed another letter over it, and then another. It is a major distraction to say the least. *Howl* has to step up its game with its digital poetry books. The bad formatting is what makes poets shy away from e-books, and this is a clear example.

If you even use the word trigger warning in your vocabulary. Be warned. The entire thing is a trigger. I bought it knowing this. I suffer bipolar type 1, PTSD from rape trauma and severe social phobia. I don't believe much in triggers (much Bc I know that there are some but I also educate myself) this book is more of a "ahhh I understand and I'm not alone" reminder. Plus. It's amazing his recall through such manic episodes. His empathy for others (as most bpd and PTSD sufferers can relate to) and love the style. It is a rough read. There Are tough subjects tackled head on. I had to put it down

and come back at later times. But so worth the read.

Huge fan of Allen Ginsberg and what this poem did was revolutionary! With that said, I must admit the poem at times is lengthy and has a bit of drag to it. Now calm down, I still love it and have a CD with Ginsberg reading it. The words and imagery created by "Howl" are a slam to the face at times. It is a very powerful poem and I feel the Eric Drooker illustration helps convey the essence of Ginsberg's words. Does it always go hand-in-hand - no, but it does help move the poem with a better flow than just reading it. Even without the poem, Drooker's work is great and can be judged separately. The illustration on page 12 that goes with the Introduction by Drooker is my favorite, and clearly demonstrates his ability. The illustration is of an eagle soaring over a collection of buildings that form a maze. The eagle is heading toward a setting sun. Wonderful imagery for a powerful poem. It is the kind of book you will pull down off your shelf and just gaze at the art work. It makes a great poem even better.

The Kindle version of this book is unreadable, with garbled, mashed up letters throughout.

Poem by Ginsberg graphics by Eric Drooker. I will have to say the graphics help pull you through the poem. A three read book 1: poem looking at graphics 2: just enjoy the wonderful graphics 3: read the poem without looking at graphics. If you don't want to think avoid at all cost.

(This is a review for the critique of the book "Howl: Original Draft Facsimile, Transcript, and Variant Versions, Fully Annotated by Author, with Contemporaneous Correspondence, Account of First Public...etc.", not about the book itself.) This book, at a whopping 208 pages, portrays the author, Allen Ginsberg in a cultural and artistic flux as both poet and as creator who's process is also in flux as well. It is also not for the faint of heart except for those who are true fans of the 4 page typewritten epic poem, Allen's first real foray at attempting what can only now be called true free-form poetry from 1956. The poem itself is full of life and is a ripped-open from the heart - and even his soul - portrayal of his own life; his view of his life from a mirror. This book breaks it down by the entire process - from the original typewritten version to the crossed-out edited parts, the many revisions, the "final" copies of different versions sent to friends who kept them for over 50 years (and luckily some of them, not all of them, reprinted here for the first time ever), to even letters corresponding back and forth from those same friends about it's then-impact, his subsequent secret agony in having opened up a Supreme Court type firestorm over the readings, and much much

more ephemera concerning it. It's a lot to take in, and it can't be done in one sitting. Almost everyone from that time period chimes in - Neal Cassidy, ex-lovers, Ferlinghetti, the publishers, and writings and thoughts by Ginsberg himself, who contributed unlimited access to his own personal papers among his other "scraps of paper," as he called them. (Sadly, Allen would never see this publication in its final form as he died right before it was published.) In a way, this is the final 'version' of the poem, to explain some of the more obscure references that have been argued for years, to make sense of the motivation behind some of the now legendary passages he was thinking about when he typed it up in that dingy one room apartment over 50 years ago. On a personal level as a poet (I have written several chapbooks of poetry and many pieces of fiction myself), this is overwhelming. You need to be a true scholar of obscure fiction and poetry to understand the real depth and level of commitment he made when he wrote this, knowing he was standing up to over 1,000 years of structured, unassuming, harmless poetry. He was the first daredevil of poetry, daring to howl (forgive the pun) and rage against any kind of formality. This was a new way of writing poetry, a style never really seen, and written with such honesty it surely shows. I read this, and re-read it, I went over the several dozen revisions, read every bit of notes written and typed and edited and scratched out to friends and lovers and editors, and well, I was mentally exhausted - there is a LOT to take in, but it is worth it. The book is broken down into several sections, from the many drafts to the annotations, the many appendixes and correspondences to Kerouac, Carl Solomon, Ezra Pound, accounts of the first reading, the legal battles, and finally tons and tons of pictures and facsimiles of the original poem, the edits, an offhandedly snapped picture of the actual room he wrote it in, pictures of friends and lovers and friends, and much much more. It's just too much here to list, but it will be worth it for you to open it up and see for yourself. If and when you read this, you will come to know the very essence of Allen's spirit, his thinking process, and finally you will not only be just a reader, but you will be drawn in and become part of something that happened once in a lifetime, a groundbreaking piece of writing has finally been given the proper dissection and criticism with the respect it deserves by not only many in his own circles but by Ginsberg himself. In the past I've written a few special things, but nothing can come close to a poem that was written before my birth, affected First Amendment law, brought together a special kind of writing community and changed forever the way we all approach poetry, and even literature itself. We have one man to thank, not only for writing it, but for having the kind of support and friendship of so many others whose voices were only heard from the sidelines who supported him enough to back him when the rest of the world did not. This book is a living statement, of how it was originally thought out, how it was born, and how it even now lives through those who may yet read it and see for themselves that this

singular poem, as a document, is as important to us as some who may revere the Liberty Bell, the Constitution and the American flag itself. To own this is to own a true piece of Americana itself, so do yourself a favor, pick it up, read it, and place it proudly on your shelf. (Thanks for reading - please check out my other hopefully not-too-syrupy critiques here on .)

While I was alive during the time that Ginsberg was living and writing HOWL, I was too young to have experienced this sort of life myself. And, based on his graphic depictions, I cringe to think I ever could have found myself in a similar situation. This is poetry. But it is not pretty. This is life. But it is not beautiful. Ginsberg writes a poem that is a cry from the soul, a view of his world through tired, sunken eyes. It is brutal in its honesty. But even as I read it, I was reminded of the Book of Job, and the rantings of Biblical prophets. Not just a should read, it is an integral volume of the Canon of Poetry, as necessary as anything by Homer, Keats, Shakespeare, Heaney, Plath: it belongs in your memory, and on your bookshelf.

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