

Howl

For Carl Solomon

by Allen Ginsberg



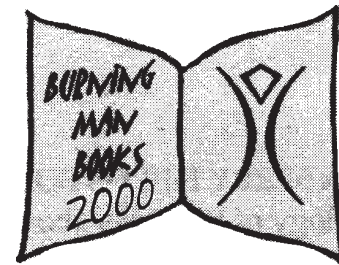
Edited by
Ray Soulard, Jr.

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NUMBER ELEVEN

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I

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,
who poverty and tatters and hollow-eyed and high sat up smoking
in the supernatural darkness of cold-water flats floating
across the tops of cities contemplating jazz,
who bared their brains to Heaven under the El and saw Moham-
medan angels staggering on tenement roofs illuminated,
who passed through universities with radiant cool eyes hallucinat-
ing Arkansas and Blake-light tragedy among the scholars of
war,
who were expelled from the academies for crazy & publishing
obscene odes on the windows of the skull,
who cowered in unshaven rooms in underwear, burning their
money in wastebaskets and listening to the Terror through
the wall,
who got busted in their pubic beards returning through Laredo
with a belt of marijuana for New York,
who ate fire in paint hotels or drank turpentine in Paradise Alley,
death, or purgatoried their torsos night after night
with dreams, with drugs, with waking nightmares, alcohol and
cock and endless balls,
incomparable blind; streets of shuddering cloud and lightning in
the mind leaping toward poles of Canada & Paterson,
illuminating all the motionless world of Time between,
Peyote solidities of halls, backyard green tree cemetery dawns,
wine drunkenness over the rooftops, storefront boroughs of
teahead joyride neon blinking traffic light, sun and moon

and tree vibrations in the roaring winter dusks of Brooklyn,
 ashcan rantings and kind king light of mind,
 who chained themselves to subways for the endless ride from
 Battery to holy Bronx on benzedrine until the noise of
 wheels and children brought them down shuddering
 mouth-wracked and battered bleak of brain all drained of
 brilliance in the drear light of Zoo,
 who sank all night in submarine light of Bickford's floated out and
 sat through the stale beer after noon in desolate Fugazzi's,
 listening to the crack of doom on the hydrogen jukebox,
 who talked continuously seventy hours from park to pad to bar to
 Bellevue to museum to the Brooklyn Bridge,
 lost battalion of platonic conversationalists jumping down the
 stoops off fire escapes off windowsills off Empire State out
 of the moon,
 yacketayakking screaming vomiting whispering facts and memo-
 ries and anecdotes and eyeball kicks and shocks of hospitals
 and jails and wars,
 whole intellects disgorged in total recall for seven days and nights
 with brilliant eyes, meat for the Synagogue cast on the
 pavement,
 who vanished into nowhere Zen New Jersey leaving a trail of
 ambiguous picture postcards of Atlantic City Hall,
 suffering Eastern sweats and Tangerian bone-grindings and mi-
 graines of China under junk-withdrawal in Newark's bleak
 furnished room,
 who wandered around and around at midnight in the railroad yard
 wondering where to go, and went, leaving no broken hearts,
 who lit cigarettes in boxcars boxcars boxcars racketing through
 snow toward lonesome farms in grandfather night,
 who studied Plotinus Poe St. John of the Cross telepathy and bop
 kabbalah because the cosmos instinctively vibrated at their
 feet in Kansas,
 who loned it through the streets of Idaho seeking visionary indian
 angels who were visionary indian angels,
 who thought they were only mad when Baltimore gleamed in
 supernatural ecstasy,
 who jumped in limousines with the Chinaman of Oklahoma on the
 impulse of winter midnight street light smalltown rain,

who lounged hungry and lonesome through Houston seeking jazz
 or sex or soup, and followed the brilliant Spaniard to con-
 verse about America and Eternity, a hopeless task, and so
 took ship to Africa,
 who disappeared into the volcanoes of Mexico leaving behind
 nothing but the shadow of dungarees and the lava and ash
 of poetry scattered in fire place Chicago,
 who reappeared on the West Coast investigating the F.B.I. in beards
 and shorts with big pacifist eyes sexy in their dark skin
 passing out incomprehensible leaflets,
 who burned cigarette holes in their arms protesting the narcotic
 tobacco haze of Capitalism,
 who distributed Supercommunist pamphlets in Union Square
 weeping and undressing while the sirens of Los Alamos
 wailed them down, and wailed down Wall, and the Staten
 Island ferry also wailed,
 who broke down crying in white gymnasiums naked and trem-
 bling before the machinery of other skeletons,
 who bit detectives in the neck and shrieked with delight in
 policecars for committing no crime but their own wild
 cooking pederasty and intoxication,
 who howled on their knees in the subway and were dragged off the
 roof waving genitals and manuscripts,
 who let themselves be fucked in the ass by saintly motorcyclists,
 and screamed with joy,
 who blew and were blown by those human seraphim, the sailors,
 caresses of Atlantic and Caribbean love,
 who balled in the morning in the evenings in rose gardens and the
 grass of public parks and cemeteries scattering their semen
 freely to whomever come who may,
 who hiccuped endlessly trying to giggle but wound up with a sob
 behind a partition in a Turkish Bath when the blond &
 naked angel came to pierce them with a sword,
 who lost their loveboys to the three old shrews of fate the one eyed
 shrew of the heterosexual dollar the one eyed shrew that
 winks out of the womb and the one eyed shrew that does
 nothing but sit on her ass and snip the intellectual golden
 threads of the craftsman's loom,

who copulated ecstatic and insatiate with a bottle of beer a sweet-
 heart a package of cigarettes a candle and fell off the bed,
 and continued along the floor and down the hall and ended
 fainting on the wall with a vision of ultimate cunt and come
 eluding the last gyzym of consciousness,
 who sweetened the snatches of a million girls trembling in the
 sunset, and were red eyed in the morning but prepared to
 sweeten the snatch of the sun rise, flashing buttocks under
 barns and naked in the lake,
 who went out whoring through Colorado in myriad stolen night-
 cars, N.C., secret hero of these poems, cocksman and Adonis
 of Denver-joy to the memory of his innumerable lays of girls
 in empty lots & diner backyards, moviehouses' rickety
 rows, on mountaintops in caves or with gaunt waitresses in
 familiar roadside lonely petticoat upliftings & especially
 secret gas-station solipsisms of johns, & hometown alleys
 too,
 who faded out in vast sordid movies, were shifted in dreams, woke
 on a sudden Manhattan, and picked themselves up out of
 basements hung over with heartless Tokay and horrors of
 Third Avenue iron dreams & stumbled to unemployment
 offices,
 who walked all night with their shoes full of blood on the snow-
 bank docks waiting for a door in the East River to open to a
 room full of steamheat and opium,
 who created great suicidal dramas on the apartment cliff-banks of
 the Hudson under the wartime blue floodlight of the moon
 & their heads shall be crowned with laurel in oblivion,
 who ate the lamb stew of the imagination or digested the crab at the
 muddy bottom of the rivers of Bowery,
 who wept at the romance of the streets with their pushcarts full of
 onions and bad music,
 who sat in boxes breathing in the darkness under the bridge, and
 rose up to build harpsichords in their lofts,
 who coughed on the sixth floor of Harlem crowned with flame
 under the tubercular sky surrounded by orange crates of
 theology,
 who scribbled all night rocking and rolling over lofty incantations
 which in the yellow morning were stanzas of gibberish,

who cooked rotten animals lung heart feet tail borsht & tortillas
 dreaming of the pure vegetable kingdom,
 who plunged themselves under meat trucks looking for an egg,
 who threw their watches off the roof to cast their ballot for Eternity
 outside of Time, & alarm clocks fell on their heads every day
 for the next decade,
 who cut their wrists three times successively unsuccessfully, gave
 up and were forced to open antique stores where they
 thought they were growing old and cried,
 who were burned alive in their innocent flannel suits on Madison
 Avenue amid blasts of leaden verse & the tanked-up clatter
 of the iron regiments of fashion & the nitroglycerine shrieks
 of the fairies of advertising & the mustard gas of sinister
 intelligent editors, or were run down by the drunken taxi-
 cabs of Absolute Reality,
 who jumped off the Brooklyn Bridge this actually happened and
 walked away unknown and forgotten into the ghostly daze
 of Chinatown soup alley ways & firetrucks, not even one
 free beer,
 who sang out of their windows in despair, fell out of the subway
 window, jumped in the filthy Passaic, leaped on negroes,
 cried all over the street, danced on broken wineglasses
 barefoot smashed phonograph records of nostalgic Euro-
 pean 1930s German jazz finished the whiskey and threw up
 groaning into the bloody toilet, moans in their ears and the
 blast of colossal steam whistles,
 who barreled down the highways of the past journeying to each
 other's hotrod-Golgotha jail-solitude watch or Birmingham
 jazz incarnation,
 who drove crosscountry seventytwo hours to find out if I had a
 vision or you had a vision or he had a vision to find out
 Eternity,
 who journeyed to Denver, who died in Denver, who came back to
 Denver & waited in vain, who watched over Denver &
 brooded & loned in Denver and finally went away to find
 out the Time, & now Denver is lonesome for her heroes,
 who fell on their knees in hopeless cathedrals praying for each
 other's salvation and light and breasts, until the soul illumi-
 nated its hair for a second,

who crashed through their minds in jail waiting for impossible
 criminals with golden heads and the charm of reality in
 their hearts who sang sweet blues to Alcatraz,
 who retired to Mexico to cultivate a habit, or Rocky Mount to
 tender Buddha or Tangiers to boys or Southern Pacific to the
 black locomotive or Harvard to Narcissus to Woodlawn to
 the daisychain or grave,
 who demanded sanity trials accusing the radio of hypnotism &
 were left with their insanity & their hands & a hung jury,
 who threw potato salad at CCNY lecturers on Dadaism and subse-
 quently presented themselves on the granite steps of the
 madhouse with shaven heads and harlequin speech of
 suicide, demanding instantaneous lobotomy,
 and who were given instead the concrete void of insulin Metrazol
 electricity hydrotherapy psychotherapy occupational
 therapy pingpong & amnesia,
 who in humorless protest overturned only one symbolic pingpong
 table, resting briefly in catatonia,
 returning years later truly bald except for a wig of blood, and tears
 and fingers, to the visible mad man doom of the wards of
 the madtowns of the East,
 Pilgrim State's Rockland's and Greystone's foetid halls, bickering
 with the echoes of the soul, rocking and rolling in the mid-
 night solitude-bench dolmen-realms of love, dream of life a
 nightmare, bodies turned to stone as heavy as the moon,
 with mother finally ***** and the last fantastic book flung out of
 the tenement window, and the last door closed at 4 A.M.
 and the last telephone slammed at the wall in reply and the
 last furnished room emptied down to the last piece of
 mental furniture, a yellow paper rose twisted on a wire
 hanger in the closet, and even that imaginary, nothing but a
 hopeful little bit of hallucination
 ah, Carl, while you are not safe I am not safe, and now you're really
 in the total animal soup of time
 and who therefore ran through the icy streets obsessed with a
 sudden flash of the alchemy of the use of the ellipse the
 catalog the meter & the vibrating plane,
 who dreamt and made incarnate gaps in Time & Space through
 images juxtaposed, and trapped the archangel of the soul

between 2 visual images and joined the elemental verbs and
 set the noun and dash of consciousness together jumping
 with sensation of Pater Omnipotens Aeterna Deus
 to recreate the syntax and measure of poor human prose and stand
 before you speechless and intelligent and shaking with
 shame, rejected yet confessing out the soul to conform to the
 rhythm of thought in his naked and endless head,
 the madman bum and angel beat in Time, unknown, yet putting
 down here what might be left to say in time come after
 death,
 and rose reincarnate in the ghostly clothes of jazz in the goldhorn
 shadow of the band and blew the suffering of America's
 naked mind for love into an eli eli lamma lamma sabacthani
 saxophone cry that shivered the cities down to the last radio
 with the absolute heart of the poem of life butchered out of their
 own bodies good to eat a thousand years.

II

What sphinx of cement and aluminum bashed open their skulls
 and ate up their brains and imagination?
 Moloch! Solitude! Filth! Ugliness! Ashcans and unobtainable
 dollars! Children screaming under the stairways! Boys
 sobbing in armies! Old men weeping in the parks!
 Moloch! Moloch! Nightmare of Moloch! Moloch the loveless!
 Mental Moloch! Moloch the heavy judger of men!
 Moloch the incomprehensible prison! Moloch the crossbone soul-
 less jailhouse and Congress of sorrows! Moloch whose
 buildings are judgment! Moloch the vast stone of war!
 Moloch the stunned governments!
 Moloch whose mind is pure machinery! Moloch whose blood is
 running money! Moloch whose fingers are ten armies!
 Moloch whose breast is a cannibal dynamo! Moloch whose
 ear is a smoking tomb!
 Moloch whose eyes are a thousand blind windows! Moloch whose
 skyscrapers stand in the long streets like endless Jehovahs!
 Moloch whose factories dream and croak in the fog! Moloch
 whose smokestacks and antennae crown the cities!

Moloch whose love is endless oil and stone! Moloch whose soul is
 electricity and banks! Moloch whose poverty is the specter
 of genius! Moloch whose fate is a cloud of sexless hydrogen!
 Moloch whose name is the Mind!
 Moloch in whom I sit lonely! Moloch in whom I dream Angels!
 Crazy in Moloch! Cocksucker in Moloch! Lacklove and
 manless in Moloch!
 Moloch who entered my soul early! Moloch in whom I am a con-
 sciousness without a body! Moloch who frightened me out
 of my natural ecstasy! Moloch whom I abandon! Wake up in
 Moloch! Light streaming out of the sky!
 Moloch! Moloch! Robot apartments! invisible suburbs! skeleton
 treasures! blind capitals! demonic industries! spectral
 nations! invincible mad houses! granite cocks! monstrous
 bombs!
 They broke their backs lifting Moloch to Heaven! Pavements, trees,
 radios, tons! lifting the city to Heaven which exists and is
 everywhere about us!
 Visions! omens! hallucinations! miracles! ecstasies! gone down the
 American river!
 Dreams! adorations! illuminations! religions! the whole boatload of
 sensitive bullshit!
 Breakthroughs! over the river! flips and crucifixions! gone down the
 flood! Highs! Epiphanies! Despairs! Ten years' animal
 screams and suicides! Minds! New loves! Mad generation!
 Down on the rocks of Time!
 Real holy laughter in the river! They saw it all! the wild eyes! the
 holy yells! They bade farewell! They jumped off the roof! to
 solitude! waving! carrying flowers! Down to the river! into
 the street!

III

Carl Solomon! I'm with you in Rockland where you're madder than
 I am
 I'm with you in Rockland where you must feel very strange
 I'm with you in Rockland where you imitate the shade of my
 mother

I'm with you in Rockland where you've murdered your twelve
 secretaries
 I'm with you in Rockland where you laugh at this invisible humor
 I'm with you in Rockland where we are great writers on the same
 dreadful typewriter
 I'm with you in Rockland where your condition has become serious
 and is reported on the radio
 I'm with you in Rockland where the faculties of the skull no longer
 admit the worms of the senses
 I'm with you in Rockland where you drink the tea of the breasts of
 the spinsters of Utica
 I'm with you in Rockland where you pun on the bodies of your
 nurses the harpies of the Bronx
 I'm with you in Rockland where you scream in a straightjacket that
 you're losing the game of the actual pingpong of the abyss
 I'm with you in Rockland where you bang on the catatonic piano
 the soul is innocent and immortal it should never die un-
 godly in an armed madhouse
 I'm with you in Rockland where fifty more shocks will never return
 your soul to its body again from its pilgrimage to a cross in
 the void
 I'm with you in Rockland where you accuse your doctors of insan-
 ity and plot the Hebrew socialist revolution against the
 fascist national Golgotha
 I'm with you in Rockland where you will split the heavens of Long
 Island and resurrect your living human Jesus from the
 superhuman tomb
 I'm with you in Rockland where there are twenty-five-thousand
 mad comrades all together singing the final stanzas of the
 Internationale
 I'm with you in Rockland where we hug and kiss the United States
 under our bedsheets the United States that coughs all night
 and won't let us sleep
 I'm with you in Rockland where we wake up electrified out of the
 coma by our own souls' airplanes roaring over the roof
 they've come to drop angelic bombs the hospital illuminates
 itself imaginary walls collapse O skinny legions run outside
 O starry spangled shock of mercy the eternal war is here O
 victory forget your underwear we're free

I'm with you in Rockland in my dreams you walk dripping from a
sea-journey on the highway across America in tears to the
door of my cottage in the Western night

San Francisco 1955-56

Footnote to Howl

Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy!
Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy!
The world is holy! The soul is holy! The skin is holy!
The nose is holy! The tongue and cock and hand and asshole holy!
Everything is holy! everybody's holy! everywhere is holy! everyday
is in eternity! Everyman's an angel!
The bum's as holy as the seraphim! the madman is holy as you my
soul are holy!
The typewriter is holy the poem is holy the voice is holy the hearers
are holy the ecstasy is holy!
Holy Peter holy Allen holy Solomon holy Lucien holy Kerouac holy
Huncke holy Burroughs holy Cassady holy the unknown
buggered and suffering beggars holy the hideous human
angels!
Holy my mother in the insane asylum! Holy the cocks of the grand-
fathers of Kansas!
Holy the groaning saxophone! Holy the bop apocalypse! Holy the
jazzbands marijuana hipsters peace & junk & drums!
Holy the solitudes of skyscrapers and pavements! Holy the cafete-
rias filled with the millions! Holy the mysterious rivers of
tears under the streets!
Holy the lone juggernaut! Holy the vast lamb of the middle class!
Holy the crazy shepherds of rebellion! Who digs Los Ange-
les IS Los Angeles!
Holy New York Holy San Francisco Holy Peoria & Seattle Holy
Paris Holy Tangiers Holy Moscow Holy Istanbul!
Holy time in eternity holy eternity in time holy the clocks in space
holy the fourth dimension holy the fifth International holy
the Angel in Moloch!

Holy the sea holy the desert holy the railroad holy the locomotive
holy the visions holy the hallucinations holy the miracles
holy the eyeball holy the abyss!
Holy forgiveness! mercy! charity! faith! Holy! Ours! bodies! suffer-
ing! magnanimity!
Holy the supernatural extra brilliant intelligent kindness of the
soul!

San Francisco 1955