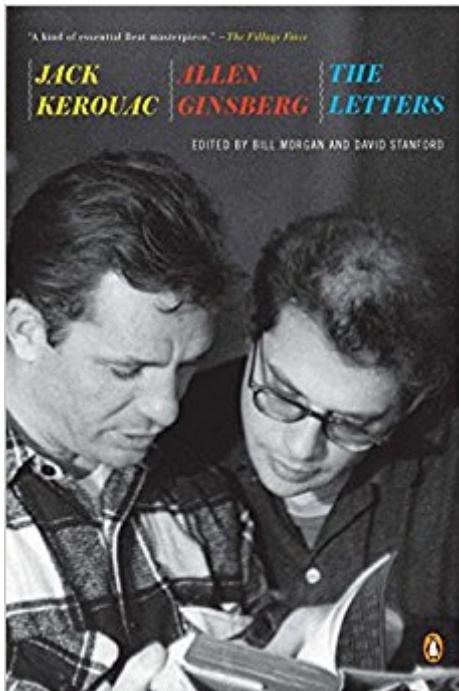


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Jack Kerouac And Allen Ginsberg: The Letters



Synopsis

"[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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Customer Reviews

One afternoon in 1944, two aspiring writers met in an apartment a few blocks from the Columbia campus in New York City. The younger of the pair was a 17-year-old poet from New Jersey named Allen Ginsberg. Skinny, bespectacled, and excruciatingly self-conscious, Ginsberg was instantly smitten with the other student -- a blue-eyed, 21-year-old, French-Canadian football player named Jack Kerouac. Decades later, Kerouac would wryly recall that his first impression of Ginsberg was of "a lecher who wanted everybody in the world to take a bath in the same huge bathtub which would give him a chance to feel legs under the dirty water." After seeing the shy poet say goodbye to each step in his apartment building as he moved out, however, Kerouac recognized Ginsberg as a

kindred spirit. Their creative alliance became the central axis of an ever-expanding circle of writers, artists, musicians, and fellow travelers that Kerouac christened the Beat Generation. Many of the authors lionized by academia during the post-war era have been forgotten (read any Conrad Aiken lately?) but the best novels and poems produced by this group - which eventually encompassed William Burroughs, Gary Snyder, Philip Whalen, Diane DiPrima, Michael McClure, Anne Waldman and others -- still seem fresh, hip, and relevant. The result is a Beat revival that has been ongoing since the '70s. A feature film based on Ginsberg's breakthrough poem "Howl" is coming out this September, featuring the hot actor of the moment, James Franco, in a nearly uncanny performance as the young Ginsberg in San Francisco. Death Cab for Cutie's Ben Gibbard and Son Volt's Jay Farrar recently teamed up for a Kerouac tribute called "One Fast Move or I'm Gone.

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