Howl is a poem written by Allen Ginsberg in 1955, published as part of his 1956 collection of poetry titled Howl and Other Poems, and dedicated to Carl Solomon.

Ginsberg began work on "Howl" as early as 1954. In the Paul Blackburn Tape Archive at the University of California, San Diego, Ginsberg can be heard reading early drafts of his poem to his fellow writing associates. "Howl" is considered to be one of the great works of American literature. It came to be associated with the group of writers known as the Beat Generation.

There is no foundation to the myth that "Howl" was written as a

### BACKGROUND

Allen Ginsberg wrote drafts of the poem "Howl" in mid-1954 to 1955, purportedly at a coffeehouse known today as the Caffe Mediterraneum in Berkeley, California. Many factors went into the creation of the poem. A short time before the composition of "Howl," Ginsberg's therapist, Dr. Philip Hicks, encouraged him to quit his job and pursue poetry full-time. He experimented with a syntactic subversion of meaning called parataxis in the poem "Dream Record: June 8, 1955" about the death of Joan Vollmer, a technique that

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- 1957 obscenity trial 3
Allen Ginsberg

## Poetry collections

- Howl and Other Poems (1956)
- Kaddish and Other Poems (1961)
- Reality Sandwiches (1963)
- Planet News (1968)
- The Fall of America: Poems of These States (1973)
- Mind Breaths (1978)

## Poems

- "Howl" (1956)
- "Kaddish" (1961)
- "Wichita Vortex Sutra" (1966)
- "Iron Horse" (1973)
- "Hadda Be Playing on the Jukebox" (1975)
- "Plutonian Ode" (1978)

## Other works

- The Yage Letters (1963, letters)
- Songs of Innocence and Experience by William Blake, tuned by Allen Ginsberg (1970 album)

## Films

- Pull My Daisy (1959)
- Life and Times of Allen Ginsberg (1993)
- Beat (2000)
- Corso: The Last Beat (2007)
- I'm Not There (2007)
- Chicago 10 (2009)
- The Chicago 8 (2010)
- Howl (2010)
- Kill Your Darlings (2013)
EXTERNAL LINKS


FURTHER READING

In late August 2007, Ron Collins, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Nancy Peters, Bill Morgan, Peter Hale, David Skover, Al Bendich (one of LF’s 1957 lawyers in the *Howl* case), and Eliot Katz petitioned Pacifica Radio to air Ginsberg’s *Howl* on October 3, 2007 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the verdict declaring the poem to be protected under the First Amendment against charges of obscenity. Fearing fines from the FCC, Pacifica New York radio station WBAI opted not to broadcast the poem. The station chose instead to play the poem on a special webcast program, replete with commentary (by Bob Holman, Regina Weinreich and Ron Collins, narrated by Janet Coleman), on October 3, 2007.[78]

2007 BROADCASTING FEARS

Boston independent alternative rock radio station WFNX became the first commercial radio station to broadcast "Howl" on Friday, July 18, 1997 despite Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Safe Harbor laws.[77][78]

1997 BROADCASTING CONTROVERSY

On October 7, 2005, celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of the first reading of the poem were staged in San Francisco, New York City, and in Leeds in the UK. The British event, Howl for Now, was accompanied by a book of essays of the same name, edited by Simon Warner and published by Route Publishing (*Howl for Now* ISBN 1-901927-25-3) reflecting on the piece’s enduring influence.

*The New York Times* sent Richard Eberhart to San Francisco in 1956 to report on the poetry scene there. The result of Eberhart’s visit was an article
CRITICAL RECEPTION

FOOTNOTE TO "HOWL"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Everyday is in eternity!&quot;</td>
<td>A reference to &quot;Auguries of Innocence&quot; by Blake: “Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand/And Eternity in an hour.&quot;[75]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Holy Peter holy Allen holy Solomon holy Lucien holy Kerouac holy Huncke holy Burroughs holy Cassady...&quot;</td>
<td>Peter Orlovsky, Carl Solomon, Lucien Carr, Jack Kerouac, Herbert Huncke, William S. Burroughs, and Neal Cassidy.[78]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Holy the Fifth International&quot;</td>
<td>A reference to four &quot;Internationals,&quot; meetings of Communist, Socialist, and/or Labor groups. The First International was headed by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in 1864. The Fourth International was a meeting of Trotskyists in 1938. The Fifth International, Ginsberg would claim, is yet to come.[79]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PART III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I'm with you in Rockland/where we are great writers on the same dreadful typewriter...&quot;</td>
<td>At Columbia Presbyterian Psychological Institute, Ginsberg and Solomon wrote satirical letters to Malcolm de Chazal and T. S. Eliot which they did not ultimately send.[70][71]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I'm with you in Rockland/where you drink the tea of the breasts of the spinsters of Utica.&quot;</td>
<td>A reference to Mamelles de Tiresias by Guillaume Apollinaire.[72]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;From &quot;I'm with you in Rockland/where you scream in a straightjacket&quot; to &quot;fifty more shocks will never return your soul to its body again...&quot;</td>
<td>Solomon actually received shock treatment and was put in a straightjacket at Pilgrim State.[72]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I'm with you in Rockland/where you bang on a catatonic piano...&quot;</td>
<td>Ginsberg was actually the one reprimanded for banging on a piano at CPPI.[73][74]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I'm with you in Rockland/where you split the heavens of Long Island...&quot;</td>
<td>Pilgrim State is located on Long Island.[73]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I'm with you in Rockland/where there are twenty five thousand mad comrades all together singing the final stanzas of the Internationale...&quot;</td>
<td>The population of Pilgrim State was 25,000. &quot;The Internationale&quot; was a song used and made popular by worker movements, and was featured in the Little Red Songbook of the Industrial Workers of the World.[72]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;... the door of my cottage in the Western night.&quot;</td>
<td>A reference to the cottage on Milvia Street in Berkeley California where many of the poems in Howl and Other Poems were composed, including &quot;A Strange New Cottage in Berkeley.&quot;[72]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Moloch! Solitude! Filth! Ugliness!&quot;</td>
<td>Fire god of the Canaanites referred to in Leviticus 18:21: &quot;And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech.&quot; Worship of Moloch involved the sacrifice of children by fire.[49][65]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Moloch whose buildings are judgement!&quot;</td>
<td>A reference to Urizen, one of William Blake’s four Zoas.[69]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Crossbone soulless jailhouse and congress of sorrows...&quot; and &quot;Holy the solitudes of skyscrapers and pavements! Holy the cafeterias filled with the millions!&quot;</td>
<td>A reference to God's Man, a graphic novel by Lynd Ward which was in Ginsberg's childhood library.[66]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From &quot;Moloch whose breast is a cannibal dynamo!&quot; to &quot;Moloch whose skyscrapers stand in the long streets like endless Jehovahs!&quot;</td>
<td>A reference to several films by Fritz Lang, most notably Metropolis in which the name &quot;Moloch&quot; is directly related to a monstrous factory. Ginsberg also claimed he was inspired by Lang’s M and The Testament of Dr. Mabuse.[67]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Moloch whose eyes are a thousand blind windows!&quot;</td>
<td>Ginsberg claimed Part II of &quot;Howl&quot; was inspired by a peyote-induced vision of the Sir Francis Drake Hotel in San Francisco which appeared to him as a monstrous face.[30][67][68]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From “Moloch whose soul is electricity and banks!” to “Moloch whose name is the Mind!” A reference to [69]

“Lifting the city to Heaven which exists and is everywhere about us” A reference to “Morning” from Season in Hell by Arthur Rimbaud.[20]

## PART II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Who were expelled from the academy for crazy &amp; publishing obscene odes on the windows of the skull”</td>
<td>Ginsberg had an important auditory hallucination in 1948 of William Blake reading his poems “Ah, Sunflower”, “The Sick Rose”, and “Little Girl Lost”. Ginsberg said it revealed to him the interconnectedness of all existence. He said his drug experimentation in many ways was an attempt to recapture that feeling. [28][29]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“who cowered in unshaven rooms in underwear, burning their money in wastebaskets and listening to the Terror through the wall”</td>
<td>Lucien Carr burned his insanity record, along with $20, at his mother’s insistence[23]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“... poles of Canada and Paterson...”</td>
<td>Kerouac was French-Canadian from Lowell, Massachusetts; Ginsberg grew up in Paterson, New Jersey[24]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“who sank all night in submarine light of Bickford’s floated out and sat through the stale beer afternoons in desolate Fugazzi’s...”</td>
<td>Bickford’s and Fugazzi’s were New York spots where the Beats hung out. Ginsberg worked briefly at Fugazzi’s[52][54]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“... Tangerian bone-grindings...” “... Tangiers to boys ...” and “Holy Tangiers!”</td>
<td>William S. Burroughs lived in Tangier, Morocco at the time Ginsberg wrote “Howl”. He also experienced withdrawal from heroin, which he wrote about in several letters to Ginsberg[37]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“who studied Plotinus Poe St. John of the Cross telepathy and bop kabbalah because the cosmos instinctively vibrated at their feet in Kansas”</td>
<td>Mystics and forms of mysticism in which Ginsberg at one time had an interest[57]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“who disappeared into the volcanoes of Mexico.”</td>
<td>Both a reference to John Hoffman, a friend of Philip Lamantia and Carl Solomon, who died in Mexico, and a reference to Under the Volcano by Malcolm Lowry.[27]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“weeping and undressing while the sirens of Los Alamos wailed them down.”</td>
<td>A reference to a protest staged by Judith Malina, Julian Beck, and other members of The Living Theater.[38]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“who bit detectives in the neck ... dragged off the roof waving genitals and manuscripts.” Also, from “who...fell out of the subway window” to “the blast of colossal steam whistles.”</td>
<td>A specific reference to Bill Cannastra, who actually did most of these things and died when he “fell out of the subway window.”[39][39][40]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Saintly motorcyclists”</td>
<td>A reference to Marlon Brando and his biker persona in The Wild One.[37]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From “Who copulated ecstatic and insatiate” to “Who went out whoring through Colorado in myriad stolen night-cars, N. C. secret hero of these poems.” Also, from “who barreled down the highways of the past” to “&amp; now Denver is lonesome for her heroes”</td>
<td>A reference to Neal Cassady (N.C.) who lived in Denver, Colorado, and had a reputation for being sexually voracious, as well as stealing cars.⁴¹[42][43]</td>
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<tr>
<td>“who walked all night with their shoes full of blood on the showbank docks waiting for a door in the East River to open to a room full of steamheat and opium”</td>
<td>A specific reference to Herbert Huncke’s condition after being released from Riker’s Island.⁴²[44]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“... and rose to build harpsichords in their lofts...”</td>
<td>Friend Bill Keck actually built harpsichords. Ginsberg had a conversation with Keck’s wife shortly before writing “Howl”.⁴⁶²⁴⁵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“who coughed on the six floor of Harlem crowned with flame under the tubercular sky surrounded by orange crates of theology”</td>
<td>This is a reference to the apartment in which Ginsberg lived when he had his Blake vision. His roommate, Russell Durgin, was a theology student and kept his books in orange crates.⁴³[4⁷]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“who threw their watches off the roof to cast their ballot with eternity outside of time...”</td>
<td>A reference to Ginsberg’s Columbia classmate Louis Simpson, an incident that happened during a brief stay in a mental institution for post-traumatic stress disorder.⁴³[4⁵]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“who were burned alive in their innocent flannel suits on Madison Avenue... the nitroglycerine shrieks of the fairies of advertising”</td>
<td>Ginsberg worked as a market researcher for Towne-Olter Associates in San Francisco, on Montgomery Street, not Madison Avenue.⁴⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“who jumped off the Brooklyn Bridge...”</td>
<td>A specific reference to Tuli Kupferberg⁴⁶[4⁹]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“who crashed through their minds in jail...”</td>
<td>A reference to Jean Genet’s Le Condaminé à mort.⁴³[5⁶]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“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”</td>
<td>Many of the Beats went to Mexico City to “cultivate” a drug “habit,” but Ginsberg claims this is a direct reference to Burroughs and Bill Garver, though Burroughs lived in Tangiers at the time.⁵⁰[as Ginsberg says in “America” “Burroughs is in Tangiers I don’t think he’ll come back it’s sinister.”]. Rocky Mount, North Carolina, is where Jack Kerouac’s sister lived (as recounted in The Dharma Bums).⁵² Also, Neal Cassady was a brakeman for the Southern Pacific. John Hollander was an alumnus of Harvard. Ginsberg’s mother Naomi lived near Woodlawn Cemetery.⁵⁴⁵⁵[⁴⁸]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Accusing the radio of hypnotism...”</td>
<td>A reference to Ginsberg’s mother Naomi, who suffered from paranoid schizophrenia. It also refers to Antonin Artaud’s reaction to shock therapy and his “To Have Done with the Judgement of God”, which Solomon introduced to Ginsberg at Columbia Presbyterian Psychological Institute.⁵³⁵⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From “who threw potato salad at CCNY lecturers on Dadaism...” to “resting briefly in catatonia”</td>
<td>A specific reference to Carl Solomon. Initially this final section went straight into what is now Part III, which is entirely about Carl Solomon. An art movement emphasizing nonsense and irrationality. In the poem, it is the subject of a lecture that is interrupted by students throwing potato salad at the professors. This ironically mirrored the playfulness of the movement but in a darker context. A Post WW1 cultural movement, Dada stood for ‘anti-art’, it was against everything that art stood for. Founded in Zurich, Switzerland. The meaning of the word means two different definitions; “hobby horse” and “father”, chosen randomly. The Dada movement spread rapidly.⁵⁵⁵⁶⁵⁷</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Pilgrim’s State’s Rockland’s and Greystone’s foetid halls ...” and “I’m with you in Rockland”</td>
<td>These are mental institutions associated with either Ginsberg’s mother Naomi or Carl Solomon: Pilgrim State Hospital and Rockland State Hospital in New York and Greystone Park State Hospital in New Jersey. Ginsberg met Solomon at Columbia Presbyterian Psychological Institute, but “Rockland” was frequently substituted for “rhythmic euphony”.⁵⁵⁵⁶⁵⁷[⁴⁹]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“with mother finally ******”</td>
<td>Ginsberg admitted that the deletion here was an expletive. He left it purposefully elliptical “to introduce appropriate element of uncertainty.” In later readings, many years after he was able to distance himself from his difficult history with his mother, he reinserted the word “fucked.”⁵⁵ [⁵⁵]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| "Pater Omnipotens Aeterna Deus”/"omnipotent, eternal father God"
| This was taken directly from Cézanne.[53][62]
| "to recreate the measure and syntax of poor human prose…”
| A reference to the tremendous influence Kerouac and his ideas of “Spontaneous Prose” had on Ginsberg's work and specifically this poem.[63][64]
| "what might be left to say in time come after death”
| A reference to Louis Zukofsky’s translation of Catullus: “What might be left to say anew in time after death…” Also a reference to a section from the final pages of Visions of Cody, “I'm writing this book because we're all going to die,” and so on.[65]
| "eli eli lama sabachthani"
| Psalm 22:1, also one of the last words of Jesus: “Oh God, why have you forsaken me?” This is actually a revision of the phrase in Psalms, which would be properly transliterated as azavtani. The phrase used by Ginsberg would be properly translated as "Why have you sacrificed me?" This ties into the themes of misfortune and religious adulation of conformity through the invocation of Moloch in Part II. Though Ginsberg grew up in an agnostic household, he was very interested in his Jewish roots and in other concepts of spiritual transcendence. Although later Ginsberg was a devoted Buddhist, at this time he was only beginning to study Buddhism along with other forms of spirituality.[66]

### PART I

**BIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES AND ALLUSIONS**

Finally, the Ministry of Transport and Public Works considered in December 1969 that the broadcast of *Howl* contravened the licence of operation of Yleisradio: it was neither educational nor useful. Yleisradio received a reprimand, and was instructed to be more careful when monitoring that no more such programs should be broadcast.

Yleisradio is formally the parliament’s radio station, and at that time, it was considered a bastion of left-minded editors and "radicalists", especially because of Eino S. Repo, the president of Yleisradio. So the *Howl* broadcast provided the right-wing politicians a good reason to question the operations of Yleisradio in general, especially in the light of the parliamentary election next year. There was a heated debate in the parliament and in the press in late 1969 concerning the educational role of the public service radio station that Yleisradio is, and the artistic value of Ginsberg's poem, whether it is art or mere pornography. The debate seemed to boil down to the question of which words could be allowed in public-service radio.

At that time, homosexual acts were still illegal in Finland.

Also, a report of an offence was filed to the criminal investigation department of copyright violation as well. No charges ever followed.

A Liberal-Party member of the Finnish Parliament, Arne Berner, happened to hear the broadcast, and started an interpellation, addressed to the Minister of Transport and Public Works. It was signed by him and 82 other members of the 200 members of parliament. It is unclear how many of the other signatories actually had heard the broadcast. The interpellation text only contained a short extract of six lines (considered to be offensive, and representative of the poem) of over seventy from the poem, and the debate was mainly based upon them.

Part one of *Howl* was broadcast in Finland on September 30, 1969, on Yleisradio's (Finland's national public-broadcasting company) "parallel programme" at 10:30 p.m. The poem was read by three actors with jazz music specially composed for this radio broadcast by Henrik Otto Donner. The poem was preceded by an eight-minute introduction. The Finnish translation was made by Anselm Hollo. The translation was published already in 1961 in Parnasso literary magazine, and caused no turmoil then.

### 1969 BROADCAST CONTROVERSY IN FINLAND

The case was widely publicized. (Articles appeared in both Time and Life magazines.) An account of the trial was published by Ferlinghetti's lead defense attorney Jake Ehrlich in a book called *Howl of the Censor.* The 2010 film *Howl* depicts the events of the trial. James Franco stars as the young Allen Ginsberg and Andrew Rogers portrays Ferlinghetti.[26]

On June 3 Shig Murao, the bookstore manager, was arrested and jailed for selling *Howl and Other Poems* to an undercover San Francisco police officer. City Lights Publisher Lawrence Ferlinghetti was subsequently arrested for publishing the book. At the obscenity trial, nine literary experts testified on the poem's behalf. Supported by the American Civil Liberties Union, Ferlinghetti won the case when California State Superior Court Judge Clayton Horn decided that the poem was of "redeeming social importance".[23][24][25]

Customs officials seized 520 copies of the poem on March 25, 1957, being imported from the printer in London.
"Howl" contains many references to illicit drugs and sexual practices, both heterosexual and homosexual. On the basis of one line in particular

1957 OBSCENITY TRIAL

On another occasion, he explained: "the line length ... you'll notice that they're all built on bop — you might think of them as a bop refrain — chorus after chorus after chorus — the ideal being, say, Lester Young in Kansas City in 1938, blowing 72 choruses of ‘The Man I Love’ until everyone in the hall was out of his head..."

Ginsberg's own commentary discusses the work as an experiment with the "long line". For example, Part I is structured as a single run-on sentence with a repetitive refrain dividing it up into breaths. Ginsberg said, "Ideally each line of ‘Howl’ is a single breath unit. My breath is long — that's the measure, one physical-mental inspiration of thought contained in the elastic of a breath,"

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, Angel-headed hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly connection to the starry dynamo in the machinery of night,

The frequently quoted and often parodied opening lines set the theme and rhythm for the poem:

RHYTHM

The closing section of the poem is the "Footnote", characterized by its repetitive "Holy!" mantra, an ecstatic assertion that everything is holy. Ginsberg says, "I remembered the archetypal rhythm of Holy Holy Holy weeping in a bus on Kearny Street, and wrote most of it down in notebook there .. I set it as 'Footnote to Howl' because it was an extra variation of the form of Part II."[14]

FOOTNOTE

Part III, in relation to Parts I, II, and IV is "a litany of affirmation of the Lamb in its glory," according to Ginsberg. It is directly addressed to Carl Solomon, whom Ginsberg met during a brief stay at a psychiatric hospital in 1949; called "Rockland" in the poem, it was actually Columbia Presbyterian Psychological Institute. This section is notable for its refrain, "I'm with you in Rockland," and represents something of a turning point away from the grim tone of the "Moloch"-section. Of the structure, Ginsberg says Part III is, "pyramidal, with a graduated longer response to the fixed base."[14]

PART II

Most lines in this section contain the fixed base "who." In "Notes Written on Finally Recording Howl," Ginsberg writes, "I depended on the word 'who' to keep the beat, a base to keep measure, return to and take off from again onto another streak of invention."[14]

Called by Ginsberg "a lament for the Lamb in America with instances of remarkable lamb-like youths", Part II is perhaps the best known, and communicates scenes, characters, and situations drawn from Ginsberg's personal experience as well as from the community of poets, artists, political radicals, jazz musicians, drug addicts, and psychiatric patients whom he encountered in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Ginsberg refers to these people, who were underrepresented outcasts in what the poet believed to be an oppressively conformist and materialistic era as "the best minds of my generation." He describes their experiences in graphic detail, openly discussing drug use and homosexual activity at multiple points.

PART I

The poem consists of three parts, with an additional footnote.

OVERVIEW AND STRUCTURE

The earliest extant recording of "Howl" was thought to date from March 18, 1956. (The Blackburn Collection recordings show otherwise). Ginsberg and
Snyder, after hitch-hiking from San Francisco, read from their poems in the Anna Mann dormitory at Reed College, Snyder's alma mater. This recording, discovered in mid-2007 on a reel-to-reel tape in the Reed College archives, contains only Part I of "Howl." After beginning to read Part II, Ginsberg said to the audience, "I don't really feel like reading anymore. I just sorta haven't got any kind of steam."

Soon afterwards, it was published by Lawrence Ferlinghetti, who ran City Lights Bookstore and the City Lights Press. Ginsberg completed Part II and the "Footnote" after Ferlinghetti had promised to publish the poem. "Howl" was too short to make an entire book, so Ferlinghetti requested some other poems. Thus the final collection contained several other poems written at that time; with these poems, Ginsberg continued the experimentation with long lines and a fixed base he'd discovered with the composition of "Howl" and these poems have likewise become some of Ginsberg's most famous: "America", "Sunflower Sutra," "A Supermarket in California", etc.

Ginsberg was ultimately responsible for inviting the readers (Gary Snyder, Philip Lamantia, and Philip Whalen, Michael McClure and Kenneth Rexroth) and writing the invitation. "Howl" was the second to the last reading (before "A Berry Feast" by Snyder) and was considered by most in attendance the highlight of the reading. Many considered it the beginning of a new movement, and the reputation of Ginsberg and those associated with the Six Gallery reading spread throughout San Francisco.[11] In response to Ginsberg's reading, McClure wrote: "Ginsberg read on to the end of the poem, which left us standing in wonder, or cheering and wondering, but knowing at the deepest level that a barrier had been broken, that a human voice and body had been hurled against the harsh wall of America..."[12]

The poem was first performed at the [11]

Ginsberg admitted later this sympathy for Solomon was connected to bottled-up guilt and sympathy for his mother's schizophrenia (she had been lobotomized), an issue he was not yet ready to address directly. In 2008, Peter Orlovsky told the co-directors of the 2010 film Howl that a short moonlit walk—during which Orlovsky sang a rendition of the Hank Williams song "Howlin' At the Moon"—may have been the encouragement for the title of Ginsberg's poem. "I never asked him, and he never offered," Orlovsky told them, "but there were things he would pick up on and use in his verse form some way or another. Poets do it all the time." The Dedication by Ginsberg states he took the title from Kerouac.

Ginsberg would experiment with this breath-length form in many later poems. The first draft contained what would later become Part I and Part III. It is noted for relating stories and experiences of Ginsberg's friends and contemporaries, its tumbling, hallucinatory style, and the frank address of sexuality, specifically homosexuality, which subsequently provoked an obscenity trial. Although Ginsberg referred to many of his friends and acquaintances (including Neal Cassady, Jack Kerouac, William S. Burroughs, Peter Orlovsky, Lucien Carr, and Herbert Huncke), the primary emotional drive was his sympathy for Carl Solomon, to whom it was dedicated; he met Solomon in a mental institution and became friends with him.

[4]

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Define howl. howl synonyms, howl pronunciation, howl translation, English dictionary definition of howl. v. howled , howl·ing , howls v. intr. 1. To utter or emit a long, mournful, plaintive sound. 2. To cry or wail loudly, as in pain, sorrow, or anger. Howl - definition of howl by The Free Dictionary. https://www.thefreedictionary.com/howl.