Transitive Properties: Allen Ginsberg's Transit Poetics

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***Introduction*: Theorizing Transit Poetry**

This morning I'm taking the bus to work—I'm a commuter—and I happen to be running late because the bus is off schedule. So I suppose that means we're late together, the bus and I, as we move in transit through traffic towards one stop after another, inching towards (my) destination and (its) endless loop. I look out the window beside me, watching the familiar storefronts slide past and anxiously wondering why they don't pass faster. This is to forget, however, the automotive wonder that enables them to be moving at all. Enables *me* to move, that is. As I write this my handwriting blurs, the pen jumping and sliding all over the page in rhythm with the turns and jumps of the bus itself. *What kind of poetry is present here*, I wonder, *what kind of lyric possibilities might emerge from writing in transit?*

Allen Ginsberg pondered these same questions. "If I had a Green Automobile," he muses in an early poem, "I'd go find my old companion" and together

> We'd pilgrimage to the highest mount
> of our earlier Rocky Mountain visions
> laughing in each other's arms,
> delight surpassing the highest Rockies,
>
> and after old agony, drunk with new years,
> bounding toward the snowy horizon
> blasting the dashboard with original bop
> hot rod on the mountain
>
> we'd batter up the cloudy highway
> where angels of anxiety
> careen through the trees
> and scream out of the engine.[1]

The poem is a subjunctive flight of fancy and a more conventional lyric than we're used to in Ginsberg, one that gives form to an imaginative cross-country "pilgrimage" shared with his lover and friend Neal Cassady. Driving not "to arrive somewhere better, but to escape normative culture and to exist in the moment…for the beauty of driving,"[2] the poem performs a Beat

mythologizing of the American road narrative in which the motion of travel fashions "an ageless monument to love / in the imagination" (*CP* 94). Ginsberg's gravitation towards the *physical experience* of movement as a resource for poetic form catalyzes the organization of his verse: its sound, syntax, and visual structure. In his "Green Automobile / which I have invented…and visioned / on the roads of the world," Ginsberg zooms across the page, bringing readers along for the ride, allowing us to hear "this poem's radio" in the assonance "*blas*ting the *dash*board with *orig*inal *bop*" and to discern the sound of the car's straining engine as these "angels of anxiety / car*een* through the *trees* / and sc*ream* out of the engine" (*CP* 91). But the employment of quatrains is then intriguing in this regard, for they appear formally unmotivated by the unrhymed and unmetrical verse, and further, thematically unnecessarily given Ginsberg's expressed desire to break loose from both imaginative and social mores. Don't quatrains, a form of striking regularity and consistency, work against the poem's music and constrain its rhetoric?

Because stanza shape constitutes "part of a poem's nonsemantic machinery" by imparting "visual cues to the reader about how to interpret the object they encounter," as Willard Spiegelman insightfully observes, "the very fact of quatrains—even if unrhymed and unmetrical—tends to *mean* that we are being presented with a poem, rather than another kind of thing."[3] The quatrains of "The Green Automobile" are thus more than an empty inheritance from the "formal legacy of Romanticism," but crucially serve as a "scaffolding" that specifically marks the text as *poetic* through an "illusion of visual order."[4] Spiegelman's insistence on the distinctly poetic effect of this stanza form encourages us to reconsider "The Green Automobile" through a lens attentive to how the *visual* aspects of the poem help generate meaning in their interaction with the poem's imaginative flight. That is to say, the quatrains create a distinct sense of motion in their sprawling lines; we can imagine how the four lines of each stanza embody the four

wheels of the automobile and their staggered lineation from the left margin towards the right edge of the page textually recreate the movement of travel. Integrating visual, musical and rhetorical elements, each stanza becomes a poetic vehicle that both moves (across the page) and conveys movement (of the automobile), impressing upon us the feeling of travel*ing*: "this Green Automobile: I give you *in flight*" (*CP* 94, emphasis mine).

The task I take up in this essay is exploring poetry written "in flight," verse composed while literally *in transit* that draws on the physical and sensory experience of such movement in its formal structures. More specifically, I will be considering Allen Ginsberg's poetry of the 1960s, a period during which he journeyed and journaled extensively, both at home and abroad. But wherever he went—whether sailing from Europe, roaming through India, being expelled from Prague, or rambling across the US in a van—Ginsberg encountered a world in which travel through space necessitated an aesthetics attuned to Cold War anxieties about traversing (or transgressing) the borders of national and personal identity. I thus approach Ginsberg in a global context that takes into consideration not only the politically fraught boundaries of (trans)national identity during the Cold War decades, but also the global (ship, plane) and domestic (car, train) technologies of travel that enabled such permeable perimeters. Ginsberg's poetry of the late 1950s and across the 1960s explicitly wonders and wanders about such borders by addressing the aesthetic space of the poem as a site in which travel, the human body, and even language itself intersect in unpredictable yet important ways. Situated not in *a* place but in transit *through* space, Ginsberg's poems become, as we'll see, vehicles for transforming the experience of movement into a politicized consciousness. Though written long before the decade of travel I focus on here, "The Green Automobile" suggests such possibilities in its flight down "boulevards / where armies march and still parade…under the invisible / banner of Reality," as though the body in

transit necessarily confronts the hegemony of national power and presses against Cold War structures of reality (*CP* 93). It is precisely the (poetic) conjunctions and (political) disjunctions of travel and of transit that drives my investigation of Ginsberg. While "The Green Automobile" is only an imaginative flight, it lays the groundwork for a poetics that would emerge most successfully when Ginsberg turned from imagined travel to literal transit.

Yet despite the insatiable wanderlust that dominated his life and inspired reams of his writing, critical consideration of the intimate relation between travel and poetics in Ginsberg remains largely unwritten. While contemporary studies like the edited volume *The Transnational Beat Generation* have (ambivalently) expanded our focus beyond the US,[5] Josef Rauvolf's essay "Prague Connection" can be read as representative of recent Ginsberg criticism in its discussion of Ginsberg's "travails in Prague" alongside his affiliation with a "parallel and synchronic [poetry] movement" in then-Czechoslovakia.[6] While this work crucially expands our conception of the Beat generation as an internationalist cultural force, the focus on *travails* rather than *travels* epitomizes the aesthetic oversight in recent studies that remain fixated on the biographical. Even when engaging literary texts, as Todd Tietchen does in his account of Ginsberg in Cuba, such critical attention privileges prose writings and other literary texts in order to historicize the countercultural imagination while ignoring poetics altogether.[7] This poetic deficit maps, in part, the larger critical silence surrounding Ginsberg's energetic stylistic experimentation after his major successes in *Howl* and *Kaddish,* curiously coupling his shift in poetics with his decade of travel, enveloping them together in critical silence.[8] My work here seeks to redress the absence of substantial critical attention to Ginsberg's poetry during this period by elucidating how his poetic breakthroughs are animated by means of travel, and furthermore, I propose to deepen our discussion of Ginsberg's transnationalism by elucidating

how transit adheres as an aesthetic quality in his work.

Travel is not, of course, a uniform discourse.[9] But as I suggested above, the bulk of critical assessment adopts a biographical approach to Ginsberg's globe-trotting, coloring him as a tourist by focusing on how his 'American' poetics draws (or doesn't) on a local, non-American environment.[10] These transnational approaches assume a static frame, so that whether at home or abroad, Ginsberg is never moving *between places*. Otherwise excellent work by Amy Hungerford on Ginsberg's "formal supernaturalism" and by Craig Svonkin on his "spiritual self-othering" fall prey to this tendency, where Ginsberg is always fixed in (a single) location and never seen as occupying a liminal or interstitial space.[11] As a result, our understanding of Ginsberg has been governed by the fixity of place and dominated by the meditative and elegiac modes that arise from reflection in stasis.[12] It's not that Ginsberg never wrote such poems; "Siesta in Xbalba" (1954), for instance, is a "skully meditation" written while he camped at the top of El Castillo near the ruins of Chichén Itzá.[13] "Literally suspended in his hammock and surveying his surroundings," Ginsberg remains suspended on the "threshold of…perception" but unable to transcend the Romantic influence Franca Bellarsi traces in the poem's lyricism.[14] Rather, the poem's "strong ekphrastic quality" and "snapshot technique of momentar[ily] *freezing of the scene*"[15] construct an outline of the castle's ruins in lines alternatively offset right and left to mimic its stone construction, generating only a *desire* to travel that the poem fails to effect: "these ruins so much / woke me to nostalgia / for the classic stations of the earth…I dream nightly of an embarkation" (*CP* 111-112). As the second half of "Siesta" demonstrates, the meditative, photographic and ultimately static poetics produce suspension rather than movement and limit the poet to simple observation:

> The nation over the border
> grinds its arms and dreams

of war: I see
the fiery blue clash
of metal wheels
clanking in the industries
of night, and
detonation of infernal bombs

…and the silent downtown
of the States
in watery dusk submersion. (*CP* 118)

The enjambment of the first line mimes the nationalized line separating the US and Mexico, allowing Ginsberg to peer over the "border" and "see / the fiery blue clash" of the American military-industrial complex "grind[ing] its arms." Although this view from outside "the States" can offer a defamiliarizing view of one's nation, Ginsberg's border transgressing power is limited to vision alone; even as he descries America's "dreams / of war," the isolation of the final three lines following the ellipsis chart the separation of poet from nation. The poet's potential denouncement and action against such militarization remains as "silent," finally, as the submerged city he contemplates. Unlike "The Green Automobile," "Siesta in Xbalba" is not so much a travel poem as it is a postcard, mimetic of *place* and devoid of movement. My intervention in this study is to foreground Ginsberg's poetry that defines travel as a movement *between places* (rather than as inhabiting *a* place) and *through spaces,* allowing us to excavate an eclipsed poetics of transit. We need, therefore, to briefly survey the terrain of US poetry's past relations with global travel and to examine as well how the experience of speed offered by twentieth century transit technologies generates novel experiences of traveling.

Robert von Hallberg set the terms for an intensified debate about travel poetry in his *American Poetry and Culture: 1945-1980* by focusing on the 1950s as a "traveling time" when US poets consciously began "giving form to a new cultural experience, or rather to a newly diffused one…[in their] writing about the class of Americans who conceived of themselves as the

center of American social, political, and economic life"— that is, middle-class tourists and travelers.[16] He further asserts that US poets traveling-and-writing in the post-war years participated in (and thus helped to form) a "culture dominated by a mass, or lower-middle class, imagination" by composing "tourist poems [that] were conservative in terms of poetic technique."[17] Midcentury poets are consequently viewed to be developing a poetics "of accommodation rather than opposition," insofar as their travel poetry serves as "part of America's cultural claim to global hegemony" by precipitating the expansion of American cultural, militaristic, and economic power abroad.[18] von Hallberg's thesis is powerful and elegant —where the poets go, US power and policy (and culture) goes—particularly in its adherence to a unidirectional model of US global expansion following the Second World War II. Helen Vendler, however, dissents from von Hallberg's assumption "that a cultural and social mimesis can be found in poetry" and I concur with her assertion that poetry instead comprises a more ambivalent space in which various formal and social energies intersect in no predetermined fashion.[19] Jeffrey Gray furthers this critique by disputing von Hallberg's narrative equation of postwar travel with "colonial mastery," contending that for many midcentury poets "travel took the form of a critique of the West, its systems of economy and labor, its desacralized society, and its exploitative geopolitics."[20] While I advance here Gray's notion of 'travel-of-critique'[21] as a particularly relevant critical approach for Ginsberg's radical formal and political project developed in his travel poetry of the 1960s, it should not escape notice that Gray's own discussion of Ginsberg quarrels with von Hallberg's politics but overlooks travel as an aesthetic force shaping the poetry.[22] So as Vendler suggests, a greater emphasis is needed on the non-mimetic qualities of poetry in relation to travel, even as we acknowledge how each discourse continues to draw from the other.

The importance of this focus can be illustrated by glancing at "America" (1956) and "American Change" (1958), two thematically twinned poems that show how Ginsberg's location *outside the* nation—literally "at the margin of American society" as he sails across the Atlantic—enables him blend "public history, immigrant history, personal history, sharp-eyed detail, mockery of political authority, and a haunting sense of vanished things" into a poem that *produces* rather than promises a critique of the nation.[23] Located from within national boundaries, the well-known "America" is a parodic litany against the nation that takes the form of an ironized Whitmanian self-nation conflation for its structure: "America I've given you all and now I'm nothing. / America two dollars and twentyseven cents January 17, 1956."[24] While the poem is rightly celebrated for its rejection of a mid-century economic ethos in favor of a "queer" labor counter to the "precision" of postwar American industry,[25] the poem's critique is diminished by its reliance on the anaphoric use of "America" that reiterates—and thus reinstates—a national framework at the beginning of every line.[26] Like the poet forever "putt*ing* [his] queer shoulder to the wheel" and therefore never quite actually doing so, the anaphora functions as a rhetorical present-progressive that holds the nation intact. "American Change" on the other hand, was composed as Ginsberg sailed from Europe to New York, and he took advantage of this (literal) outsider's view to revisit the theme of "America" through the lens of travel:

> The first day I looked on, after a long time far from home in Mid Atlantic on a summer day
> Dolphins breaking the glassy water under the blue sky,
> a gleam of silver in my cabin, fished up out of my jangling new pocket of coins and green dollars
> —held in my palm, the head of the feathered indian, old Buck-Rogers eagle eyed face, a gash of hunger in the cheek
> gritted jaw of the vanished man begone like a Hebrew with airlock combed down the side—O Rabbi Indian
> […]
> but now with all the violin music of Vienna, gone into the great slot machine of Kansas City, Reno—
> The coin seemed so small after vast European coppers thick francs leaden pesetas, lire endless and heavy[27]

His liminal location as a traveling subject "in mid Atlantic" allows Ginsberg to approach

America from a global perspective, and the poem plays upon the implicit pun in *change* to invest each coin "fished up out of [his] jangling new pocket" with a vision of the historical violence and environment destruction that lies behind it. Organized by chance operation, each strophe of "American Change" replaces the stolid anaphora of "America" with a more open-ended formal practice that allows Ginsberg to glide between the personal and the national, transgressing these boundaries rather than conflating them, just as his geographical movement does so with national boundaries. Transit across the ocean, in other words, lends Ginsberg's poetics a "more stochastic slant" that transforms his politics into a destabilizing, transnational critique.[28]

As these examples suggest, it is imperative to think about both the aesthetic possibilities generated by travel between places, as well as the political consequences that arise from such aesthetic practices. Drawing on Jahan Ramazani's notion of "traveling poetry"[29] and his reminder that "globe-traversing influences, energies, and resistances, far from being minor deviations from nation-based fundamentals, have arguably styled and shaped poetry in English, from the modernist era to the present,"[30] I want to advance here the more specific analytic that I term *transit poetry*: poems written while literally traveling on plane, train, automobile, and the like. As we'll see, Ginsberg's transit poems share three interrelated qualities, regardless of the medium by which he travels: 1) an explicit grounding in the unsettled space of transit; 2) a reflection of the experience of movement through specific formal strategies; and 3) concerted attention on Ginsberg's body and its relation to other people, which often destabilizes structures of personal and/or national identity. So while I retain Ramazani's attention to formal patterning as means of textual and extra-textual travel, I also consider here how transit poetry's specific forms of imaginative travel draw from an American poetic tradition in which "one of the primary assumptions…is that all of experience itself constitutes a form of poetry."[31] As Roger Gilbert

outlines in his work on the American 'walk' poem, transit and its poetic representation remain distinct from one another because the poet's movement through the world is a "kind of frame within which experience takes on a more intensely aesthetic quality," thus endowing *poetic representation* with an ontology apart from raw experience (and thus re-affirming Spiegelman's insistence that visual presentation serves as a poetic 'scaffolding' to guide *our* reading experience).[32] Yet such a frame must necessarily take on altered or amplified—perhaps even radical—characteristics when the poet travels not by foot but by machine technology at significantly higher speeds. As the accelerated pace of modern transit shapes the sensory and bodily experiences of passengers, it also structures the transit poem in ways fundamentally different from poems grounded in walking.

Focusing on Ginsberg's transit poetry thus allows us to recover "relations of travel" that have been obscured in broader discussions of travel poetry,[33] and helps us explore how the body (of the poet, of the poem) is affected by the experiences of twentieth century travel. Acknowledging a relation between movement and sensation demands that we acknowledge by extension transit's entwining of bodily affect and perception with the unique experiences offered by travel technologies of the twentieth century.[34] While we might argue that transit poetry, as Cecelia Tichi suggests of the Modernist text in general, does "not contain representations of the machine—it too *is* the machine,"[35] I want to resist adopting such a strictly causal relationship between technological and aesthetic forms. Rather than technology per se, it is "access to new *speeds*," Enda Duffy explains, that "has been the most empowering and excruciating new experience for people everywhere in twentieth-century modernity."[36] Duffy assigns a liberatory political value to speed, one which is echoed in Edward Dimendberg's suggestion that changes to personal "experiences of time, speed, distance…[and] spatial perception" mapped onto "fantasies

of national unity, frictionless circulation, and dystopian breakdown."[37] But this focus on the speed and politics of transit requires us to trade a focus on place for that of the *non-place*—Marc Augé's term describing the 'supermodern' place "meant to be passed through"—of which "the traveler's space may thus be the archetype."[38] However I want to expand Augé's concept to include spaces of travel (such as the airplane) as well as the imaginative spaces unfurled up by poetry. The non-spaces of transit, as it were, tether acceleration to the poet's perception of the world speeding outside the passenger window; they return us, therefore, to Ginsberg's body as the medium through which transit is translated into poetry.

Although his body has been situated as central to both Gay and Buddhist poetic traditions,[39] I foreground Ginsberg's body as a locus where the sensory experiences of transit are registered and become available as poetic material. If the human body in transit renders visible how travel*ing* shapes the body of the poem, this aesthetic potential depends on the fundamental experience of *derealization*: the passenger "feels either that a piece of reality or that a piece of his own self is strange to him."[40] This disjuncture of the self and reality, nurtured by high-speed transit, opens Ginsberg's radical transit poetics to the creation of what Eric Hayot calls "literary worlds"—for "aesthetic worlds, no matter how they form themselves, are, among other things, always relations to and theories of the lived world."[41] I suggest that Ginsberg's politicizing of transit arises from the twinned procedures of derealizing the quotidian world and constructing in its stead an aesthetic world, one that is tilted toward the future and therefore *against the present*. Transit in Ginsberg evinces a practice of "future-founding poetry," a different kind of political critique, that, still fluent with his stance as a prophet, "emphasizes the performative and social aspects of founding the future…[that] it is something that is *done*, and it is always done in relation to other people."[42] An aesthetic and political world-building project, Ginsberg's transit

poetry helps us better theorize how the embodied experience of movement can inform poetics without reducing them to simple mimeticism, and therefore help us rethink Cold War narratives about the body, (anti-)nationalism, and transit as a critical practice.

I. 'Traveling thru, yet moving nowhere': Plane Poetry

Thus I have written this poem on a jet seat in mid Heaven
—"Kral Majales"

Like many midcentury travelers, Ginsberg was in awe of the airplane. The nearly unreal experience of "taking off from Earth to fly" away from and above the "asphalt Space Station / glass buildings" of the airport seemed—as it indeed was—a departure from the known material world into "cities of cloud."[43] Air travel appears consistently throughout Ginsberg's writing but not unambivalently; as a moment for reflect on the wondrous, it's simultaneously a disconnection from the world, its people and goings-on. Given this ambivalence, what kind of poetics can air travel engender? Marit MacArthur proposes the genre of the mid-twentieth century 'passenger-flight' poem, which employs "the passenger's view…as a peculiarly apt trope for the difficulties of imagining the global and registering the conundrum of globalization." MacArthur shows how the high speeds and soaring altitudes of flight produce a "doubly disorienting" effect on the passenger-poet because "not only is the landscape more abstract than in other modes of travel, but the speed of movement, the fact of movement itself, cannot quite be felt." The problem of air travel obtains in its speed that exceeds the poetic attempt to formally render its paradoxical stillness; passenger-flights poems thus "illuminat[e] the perceptual, affective, and ethical confusions of the global perspective" resulting from a derealization of the material world.[44]

These notes toward the poetics of air transit serve to introduce "Over Kansas" (1954) and

"Kral Majales" (1965), two of Ginsberg's 'passenger-flight' poems that straddle a decade during which air travel ascended to become a popular mode of transportation.[45] The questions I want to investigate are whether anything peculiar marks these poems as specifically transit poems (i.e., a written poem in flight) and further, what kind of political or ethical engagement (if any) these poems offer from 20,000 feet. At stake in these questions is the relationship between poetic representation and an extreme form of transit; whether written "traveling thru the dark void / over Kansas"[46] or "in mid Heaven" over Europe,[47] these poems are *about* the "world below" (*CP125*). If the view from the top of the Blue Marble expands Ginsberg's vision, does his displacement from earth preempt his desire to engage with earthly matters? And what if air travel isn't actually movement at all, but paradoxically, a fixing of the poet in the immovable heavens as a price paid for the view, resulting a poetry of stasis rather than motion? Ginsberg's plane poems at once expose the ethical perils of his transit poetry while revealing, as we'll see, the centrality of the poet's body to studies of travel.

"Over Kansas"

Composed in the waning days of 1954, the Ginsberg of "Over Kansas"—a "bald businessman with hornrims"—may physically resemble the poet we've come to know, but in this early transit poem he still had yet to transcend beyond his identity as a businessman with "mixed rye before me…[and] briefcase containing / market research" (*CP* 124). Traveling from "San Francisco—New York," as the poem's subscript tells us, Ginsberg figuratively ventures towards a new poetic identity, navigating from one coast of his identity to another. Central to his early transit poetics, he rhetorically formulates this change as a departure/destination narrative, but as a different between *modes of travel*:

> Better I make
> a thornful pilgrimage on theory

> feet to suffer the total
> isolation of the bum,
> than this hipster
> business family journey
> —crossing U.S. at night— (*CP* 127)

As in "Green Automobile" and "Siesta in Xbalba," *pilgrimage* names a desire to travel figured as a mystical and non-teleological journey. Foreshadowing his greatest transit poem, "Wichita Vortex Sutra" (1966), Ginsberg longs for a

> barefaced pilgrimage
> acrost imaginary plains
> I never made afoot
> into Kansas hallucination
> and supernatural deliverance. (*CP* 124)

Pilgrimage thus conjures not just an older form of travel, but yearning for an enlightenment that ultimately doesn't arrive, try as he might to lend his verse a "scriptural accent" in the archaic diction ('afoot,' 'whereon lieth') he deploys.[48] In the implicit pun on "plains" and planes, Ginsberg contrasts the two sides of his identity with a single world—the poetic supernatural and the "hipster / business"—that crystallizes the paradox of air travel. Travel "afoot" on the plains leads to a supernatural experience that the material 'unreality' of plane flight cannot provide; or as he puts it later in the poem, on the plane he's "traveling thru the dark void / over Kansas yet moving nowhere / in the dark void of the soul" (*CP* 126). A young poet seeking insight into the metaphysical and material world, Ginsberg asserts here a disjunction between "traveling" and movement, developing this division to build his transit poetics.

While "Over Kansas" performs a series of imaginative jumps from the "West Coast" to "New York" (and everywhere in between) and while Ginsberg's memory roams about from "Hollywood" to "Chicago," the text itself performs travel, too (*CP* 124-126). Whether mimicking coast to coast travel in a dash between coasts ("—crossing U.S. at night—") or "pilgrimag[ing] / acrost imaginary plains," Ginsberg uses the text itself to mime travel. But

whether modern technology and textual play, such "facility of *travel* / [is] too superficial for the heart" and as the title of the poem suggests, we are suspended rather than moving over Kansas (*CP* 125, emphasis mine)."The experience of passenger flight," as MacArthur intuits, "create[s] the strange sense of flight being suspended, in a stillness outside quotidian time,"[49] and Ginsberg understands this perceptual aporia to be central to the heart of passenger flight. Although he's physically in transit, Ginsberg ironically equates travel with *stasis,* mirroring his "moving nowhere" in the "void of the soul" with his suspension in the "void / over Kansas." To put it more simply, the value of reading "Over Kansas" as a transit poem is that it unearths how imaginative and textual travel in a poem composed at the speed of a jet precludes the poet's movement or engagement with the world, for "not even the human / imagination satisfies / the endless emptiness of the soul" (*CP* 125). The paradoxical traveling-stillness of flight that Ginsberg discovers in transit derealizes not the "starry world below" but the poet himself:

> in a sudden glimpse
> me being no one in the air
> nothing but clouds and moonlight
> with humans fucking
> underneath… (*CP* 127)

The world may keep "fucking," but that's "underneath"—Ginsberg is "no one in the air," estranged from the "gaiety of national business" he imagines proceeding without him (*CP* 124). The poet in transit, high above the plains, is, in 1954, "nothing" but air.

"Kral Majales"

A decade later finds Ginsberg both a frequent flyer and very nearly a different poet. By 1965, Ginsberg and his poetry were well-known at home and abroad, and in the spring of that year he undertook trips "across the Iron Curtain"[50] to Cuba and then-Czechoslovakia to visit with local poets and observe Communist states first-hand. His incessant political agitation apparently

proved threatening enough to have him expelled from Cuba, and later, from Prague—but only after he was elected to serve as the 'May King' at a student-run festival.[51] "Kral Majales" follows quite literally on the heels of these expulsions, composed on board "a giant jetplane" as Ginsberg was sent to England after having been "sent from Havana *by plane* by detective in green uniform, / and…sent from Prague *by plane* by detectives in Czechoslovakian business suits" (*CP* 361, emphasis added). As a mechanism of state power, Ginsberg's deportation via plane transit politicizes and literalizes the disappearing act of "Over Kansas," dematerializing his threatening presence into the aether. Unlike the earlier plane poem, however, "Kral Majales" revels in this displacement as an empowerment of the poet in relation to East-West political binaries:

> And the Communists have nothing to offer but fat cheeks and eyeglasses and lying policemen
> and the Capitalists proffer Napalm and money in green suitcases to the Naked,
> and the Communists create heavy industry but the heart is also heavy
> […]
> and the Capitalists drink gin and whiskey on airplanes but let Indian brown millions starve
> and when Communist and Capitalist assholes tangle the Just man is arrested or robbed or had his head cut off,
> but not like Kabir, and the cigarette cough of the Just man above the clouds
> in the bright sunshine is a salute to the health of the blue sky. (*CP* 361)

Employing his trademark anaphora and long line, Ginsberg enumerates political failures of both Capitalist and Communist states and positions himself against them both as the "Just man above the clouds / in the bright sunshine." Both literally and figuratively transcending the Cold War deadlock, Ginsberg's anaphoric, paratactic "and" that begins each line dissolves hierarchy and situates his poetic power on level with the political power of the "Capitalists" and "Communists." This rolling anaphora, furthermore, creates a rhythmic energy to mirror the sexual energy that Ginsberg proposes as a political practice; as Justin Quinn notes, Ginsberg here "places his body in this no man's land between the two powers and then writes about what happens. For him both sex and poetry provide the instruments with which to prize open the Cold War deadlock. The poem thus brings together sex as liberatory power, and poetry as the record of

it."[52] Indeed, these formal qualities suggest that the transit poetics of "Kral Majales" are not based on stillness, but rather in *fugitivity*:

> I am the King of May, returning to see Dunhill Fields and walk on Hampstead Heath,
> and I am the King of May, in a giant jet plane touching Albion's airfield trembling in fear
> as the plane roars to a landing on the gray concrete, shakes & expels air,
> and rolls slowly to a stop under the clouds with part of blue heaven still visible.
> And *tho* I am the King of May, the Marxists have beat me upon the street, kept me up all night in Police Station, followed me thru Springtime Prague, detained me in secret and deported me from our kingdom by airplane.
> Thus I have written this poem on a jet seat in mid Heaven. (*CP* 362)

In the semantic gulf that Ginsberg jumps from being "deported…from our kingdom by airplane" to his post-flight pronouncement "Thus I have written this poem on a jet seat in mid Heaven," he transmutes state control into poetic power via the *fugitivity* of passenger flight. The landscape of twentieth century travel is defined by "centrifugal space," as Edward Dimendberg observes, spaces that intertwine the "novel perceptual and behavioral practices" of transit with a "redeployment of surveillance mechanisms…as a strategy of control."[53] Understanding Cold War air travel as navigating "centrifugal space" lights up the fugitivity of "Kral Majales" in the literal as well as figurative sense: Ginsberg's flight from state authority ("our kingdom") is a flight *into* a perceptual and poetic power ("I am the King of May…on a jet seat in mid Heaven"). This might lead us as well to read the poem's anaphoric structure as a list but as a fugue, a polyphony of voices that are brought into harmony only in the poem's final line. However, as "Over Kansas" illustrated, air transit problematizes how the passenger in flight connects or relates to the material world left below. Can the promise of a sexual transcendence of political conflict bring Ginsberg back to earth?

As the poem's concluding lines touch down, Ginsberg's identity transitions from passenger back to pedestrian—but while in transit, so too has his place of arrival shifted from "in a few minutes I will land at London Airport" to "touching [down on] Albion's airfield trembling

in fear" (*CP* 361-362). These locations do not denote the same place; instead, Ginsberg harnesses his fugitive power as a poet in flight to navigate his landing in an idealized "Blakean Albion" of "transatlantic and transgenerational" political promise, not upon the "grey concrete" of London Airport.[54] What interests me here, as in "Over Kansas," is the disjunction between the immateriality of "a jet seat in mid Heaven" and the physicality of the material world below that emerge when the poem is "scribed en route."[55] I suggest that the final declarative of the poem embodies this change in its slide to past tense, from "I am the King of May" to "*Thus* I have written." The transfer from present to present perfect transforms the poem from spontaneous composition to a composed object, ossifying its fugitive energy into a fixed form. And with this, the *Kral Majales*—the "I am" who composes amid the Heavens—becomes the disempowered "I," Allen Ginsberg, who steps off the plane and onto the tarmac. That is to say, while "Kral Majales" is an interesting poem for its East, West, and "middleeuropean" linkages that transcend the Cold War political binary to create an "old Human poesy" joining Kabir, Christ, and Shiva with the Ginsberg's own "Buddhist Jew" identity, I argue this transnational transcendence achieved by the poetic transit is possible only "in mid Heaven" and cannot endure "*under* the clouds with part of blue heaven still visible" (*CP* 361-362). While the power and rhythm of the poem's anaphora build towards an imaginative transcendence, it's brought short by the final line's temporal foreclosure of future possibility ("Thus I have written") as much as by the poem's inability to meaningfully interlace its sexual aesthetics into "harmony with his more radical political vision."[56]

To return to where we began, we must acknowledge that Ginsberg at the very least troubles MacArthur's thesis that by "defamiliariizng the ubiquitous experience of passenger flight, poetry can imaginatively restore a relation between the passenger and the earth below."[57]

Ginsberg's plane-transit poems are a limit to this optimism, for as we have seen, the Freudian derealization of travel is heightened and liberalized by passenger-flight, erasing either the passenger ("Over Kansas") or the world below ("Kral Majales"). Despite Ginsberg's development of a fugitive poetics that speaks directly the imaginative possibilities of flight, the ethical impasse suggested by "Over Kansas" would continue to haunt his transit poetics insofar as for Ginsberg such poetics sought to bridge the gulf separating the body in transit from larger landscape. While the political critique of "Over Kansas" is muted by its derealization of the poet's own body and is emptied of power by the derealization of the material world in "Kral Majales," Ginsberg still understood an ethical imperative to be at the center of his transit poetics: "Everybody forgets who's body / suffers the physical pain…[when traveling] in these High Air / Conditioned modern Powers."[58] So as Ginsberg's poetry explored new forms of transit throughout the 1960s, the problem was not "traveling thru, yet moving nowhere…in the soul," but instead connecting the possibilities of imaginative travel with material bodies. To achieve this embodied connection, Ginsberg would need to strike out for a materialist poetics on a more earth-bound track.

II. Local-Motive: Change of Scenery, Change of Self

Everywhere it's the fear I got in my own / intestines.
— "Angkor Wat"

"From this distance, it appears that Allen Ginsberg was in thrall to a tired idea," Deborah Baker writes, "Disillusioned Westerner goes to mystic East in search of…what exactly?"[59] As she illuminates, Ginsberg was looking for *something* even if he himself was unsure of what that might be, or where he might find the answer. Where air transit had failed him, Ginsberg hoped that his "nervous religious pilgrimages" through India, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Japan would not

only clarify his spiritual confusions but invigorate his poetic endeavor to engage the world around him as well.[60] While his quest was certainly not singular—Kate Teltscher reminds us that twentieth century travel writing has long used India as "a site for the interrogation of the writer's own identity"[61]—Ginsberg's psychic and poetic self-absorption does exclude his writing from a touristic "mastery of the sights and monuments" that defines von Hallberg's neo-imperial traveler.[62] Quite the opposite, actually.[63] Constantly lamenting that he "can't write much despite the brilliance of the small temples," as he notes for instance after visiting Puri, Ginsberg's inability to compose poetry nearly eclipses every other concern.[64] "Open any page of the *Indian Journals* and neither day nor place is important, only that self-repulsion and self-attraction constantly playing itself out on the very edge of consciousness," Gayathri Prabhu observes, adding that "we learn so little about the itinerary and logistics of events and places… but we do learn of the shifts within Ginsberg."[65] As I want to argue here, the drama of the Self played out in the journals and travels of these years is inextricable from the questions of transit raised in the previous section, and so whatever his psychic motives may have been, Ginsberg's primary concern was with developing a new poetics that could engage with the material world. Considering Ginsberg's major poem of these travels, "The Change: *Kyoto-Tokyo Express*," we may unearth how the materiality of transit allows Ginsberg to recover the materiality of his body.

He explained his poetic impasse quite clearly in his journals, noting that contemporary poetry was enacting a "turnabout from photographic objectivity to subjective-abstract composition of words" in order to examine "the very material on which it's made." As he understands it, the subjective turn in poetics represented a turn to *materiality*; poetry was no longer about visions but about "the *vehicle* of the visions, the conceiver of the truth, which is: words." But unable to effect this practice in his work, Ginsberg was "delaying a step forward in

this field" by "hanging on to habitual humanistic series of autobiographical photographs."[66] How can a traveling poet not take photographs? "Angkor Wat," the precursor to "The Change," crystallizes this problem:

> Angkor—on top of the terrace
> in a stone nook in the rain
> Avalokitesvara faces everywhere
> high in their stoniness
> in white rainmist
>
> Slithering hitherward paranoia
> Banyans trailing
> high muscled tree crawled
> over the roof its big
> long snaky toes spread
> down the lintel's red
> cradle-root
> elephantine bigness

A "cut-up collage monologue" of notes and musings compiled from a few days' worth of wandering around the ruins of Angkor temple in Siemréap, "Angkor Wat" exemplifies the wider failure of Ginsberg's poetry during these travels to engage the materiality of the location before him.[67] Like "Siesta in Xbalba," Ginsberg's hides out on "top of the terrace / in a stone nook" and surveys the stillness of Angkor's "stoniness." While the Banyan trees "slithering hitherward" evidence some vitality, they do so only by virtue of Ginsberg's displaced "paranoia," his serpentine image representing (as he noted in his journal) the "snake biting its tail sensation / of the mind changing."[68] Ginsberg cannot observe or interact with the Angkor temples themselves because he so adamantly displaces his own psyche onto the ruins in a "violent disincorporation of experience"[69] that precludes a substantive engagement with its materiality. The warping of the material world warps the poem's syntax, inverting grammatical relations and thus disturbing the relation between Ginsberg and material space: "Winds in and out of space and time the / physical traveler" (*CP* 330). This poetic disjunction of the "physical traveler" and spatial-temporal

experience (a derealization like that of "Over Kansas") structures the very form of the poem in its disavowal of linear corporeal experience for the psychic travel achieved by "jumping in and out of space" through the non-sequiturs of poetic collage (*CP* 330).

As the 1968 Fulcrum Press edition of "Angkor Wat" makes evident in its punctuation of text with photographs of the Angkor Wat compound,[70] the poem feels more like a psychedelic tourist pamphlet than a poem, dependent on an essentially photographic poetics that jump from mental flash to mental flash. Tony Triglio's sharp attention to Ginsberg's structural "recourse to tropes of indigestion" helps us distinguish "Angkor Wat" as a travel rather than a transit poem, insofar as what is indigestible—that is, *unincorporated* into the body of the poet and poem—is precisely the materiality of world itself outside of the poet's mind.[71] All the same, Ginsberg was experimenting with transit writing in other avenues, carefully noting how the experience of being in motion altered his perceptual abilities. "All this writ with the train rackety & my feet crosslegged in a sheet, in bright light & the shifting valise under my seat," he noted one night in his journal, "staring out the window—Einstinean [*sic*] wonders—the sensation of moving trains —the senses altering the blue night."[72] Such entries appear casually but regularly in his journals, quietly preparing him for the undertaking of "The Change," a poem he would compose aboard an express train at the very end of his tour. And indeed, the poem is a change of direction for Ginsberg.

"The Change"

In his 1965 *Paris Review* interview, Ginsberg described how his travel throughout the early 1960s "winds up in the train in Japan…[in] the poem *The Change,* where all of a sudden I renounce drugs, I don't renounce drugs but I suddenly didn't want to be *dominated* by that non-human any more…[I was] willing to live as a human in this form now…Fortunately I was able to

write then, too."[73] On the threshold of a new chapter in his life and his poetics, Ginsberg finds in the liminality of train transit between Tokyo and Kyoto—moving between departure and destination without fully being tied to either—an embodiment of his transition towards materiality in both his identity and aesthetics. "The Change" formally renders this (non-)space of transit as a cycling between declarative and recursive statements that dramatize the process of self-making and unmaking characteristic of liminality.

"Open[ing] the portals to what Is," Ginsberg relies on the present tense throughout the poem (in contrast to "Kral Majales" and "Angkor Wat") as a mode for interrogating his Self:

> I am that I am—
>
> Closed off from this
> The schemes begin, roulette,
> brainwaves, bony dice,
> Stroboscope motorcycles
> Stereoscopic Scaly
> Serpents winding thru
> cloud spaces of
> what is not— (*CP* 332)

The allusion to Exodus' tautological assertion of identity[74] foregrounds the importance of self-naming to the poem while acknowledging the inherent opacity and deferral of identity that results from such an act. At the same time, it is being "closed off from" from making such announcements that invites the superficiality of "what is not," a superficiality that Ginsberg displays in the nonsense order of alliteration and consonance of *s*-sounds that privilege sound over than semantics. In lines that twist like "Scaly / Serpents," the first section of "The Change" asserts the importance of self-naming by negation, by exposing the false depth produced by a "stereoscopic" focus on surface order rather than deep engagement with identity.

The second half of the poem redresses this problem by employing lyric apostrophe as a structuring refrain while attending more specifically to the materialistic grain of language.

Concerned that self-denying, "Black mantra" language "will come on the railroad, beneath / the wheels," Ginsberg battles repeatedly for coherent self-assertion:

> Allen Ginsberg says this: I am
> a mass of sores and worms
> & baldness & belly & smell
> I am false Name the prey
> of Yamantaka Devourer of
> Strange dreams, the prey of
> radiation & Police Hells of Law
>
> I am that I am I am the
> man & the Adam of hair in
> my loins This is my spirit and
> physical shape I inhabit
> this Universe Oh weeping
> against what is my
> own nature for now (*CP* 334-336)

In his book-length study of the Buddhist aspects on Ginsberg's poetics, Tony Trilgio singles out Ginsberg's "curious shift to the third person" as a moment of "false Nam[ing]" intended to "defamiliarize readers" and "undermin[e] reificatory language" by insisting on "the falsehood inherent in naming at the same time that it culminates in an act of naming."[75] The Buddhist influence is undeniable, but our ongoing examination of transit helps us shift Triglio's claim to see that it's not readers but the poet *himself* who is defamiliarized: it's the paradigmatic experience of transit poetry. The aporetic linkage of "I am that I am I am the / man" as a "false Name" fixates on the materiality of language, its minutiae. Focused obsessively on "I am" as a unit of meaning, Ginsberg's attention to the material of language (which is also the material body of his identity) suffuses the poem, especially in the embrace of his "own nature for now," a line that anagrammatically (and so textually) exposes the inherent effervescence of self hood in the very material letters of *o-w-n/n-o-w*. This attention to the microscopic level of poetry, to the very grain of the letter and language, defines Ginsberg's materialism, a power he wields most powerfully in the climax of the poem:

> In my train seat I renounce
> my power, so that I do
> live I will die

It is precisely the *transit*-ory experience of Selfhood "in my train seat" that enables Ginsberg to performatively "renounce / [his] power" in a speech act of material language.[76] The "movement [of the train] enacts the constant flux of meaning-making that is crucial to [Ginsberg's] conception of an unfixed…language," and although the final stanzas of the poem are visually consistent, Ginsberg's materialized language of paradox, anagrams, and tautology—"I am the Dreamer / and the Dreamed" (*CP* 336)—embodies the liminality of transit in language between meanings and between identities.[77]

The cost of this change to his self and to his poetics was, as we've seen, a total occlusion of politics and of landscape for the poet's body in the present. But perhaps it was just implicit in the poem all along. Earlier in his travels, Ginsberg had energetically journaled about his desire to "know everything about thy Inner America" so that he could enter "the United States of the Universe all at once in his own body, and…never again to be exiled or deported."[78] The Whitmanian cosmology proffered here interestingly reflects upon the "The Change" when read retroactively. Figuring the Self as an "America" joined with the "United States of the Universe," Ginsberg imagines *the human body* as a nation from which each of us must resist exile or deportation, entering into material interpersonal exchange as a form of international relations. As "The Change" makes clear, transit poetics helped Ginsberg overcome his psychic and poetic dilemmas by returning him to the materiality of the body and the materiality of language itself (to the body of the poem, as it were), and so if Ginsberg "imagined that he was returning home with nothing to offer…In his train seat, [he] realized that he would not, after all, return to America with nothing. He would bring India with him."[79] Returning across the borders of his

Self, Ginsberg immigrates to his America-self from travels in Otherness. But if his bodily America was empowered by the derealization of train travel, the geographical nation that Ginsberg returned to in 1966 was a state of crisis.

III. See America, Write: The Auto Poesy of "Wichita Vortex Sutra"

> *The Fall of America continues…chronicle taperecorded scribed by and or sung condensed, the flux of car bus airplane dream consciousness… newspaper headlines radio brain auto poesy & silent desk musings, headlights flashing on road through these States of consciousness*
> *—Allen Ginsberg*[80]

Reinvigorated by his global travels, Ginsberg's poetry of the mid and late 1960s evidences a concerted push to drive his experimental, spontaneous, and increasingly political poetics into new territory. In "Wichita Vortex Sutra," his monumental composition of 1966, Ginsberg's transit poetics collide with an anti-war narrative structure that results in a formal achievement perhaps only surpassed by *Kaddish*. Indeed, the poem circulated widely at the time of its composition and thus appeared "in the vanguard of the mass anti-war movement that would later emerge" in opposition to US military action in Vietnam,[81] and today stands as such a remarkable achievement that, as one observer has it, it remains "the *last* antiwar poem."[82] As a protest poem and a transit poem, "Wichita" consciously attempts to engage with the landscape and with other people in a directly political mode that centers movement and materiality. But Ginsberg's eye was on the nation at large, too. "Kansas bore special significance" in this regard, for it was "symbolic of what [he] considered to be a spiritually barren citizenship that blindly accepted war edicts from Washington, D.C., its people as silent as its seemingly endless flatlands of wheat and corn."[83] Wichita was thus not merely the center of the nation—its literal heartland—but also the imaginative center of the "vortex of hatred" consuming Vietnam-era America.[84] Quite literally

echoing the fantasies of "The Green Automobile" and "Over Kansas," "Wichita Vortex Sutra" confronts the war brewing in the dark heart of America by performing a literal pilgrimage into its geographical and symbolic center, narrating Ginsberg's road-trip to Wichita as a cross between direct political resistance and an exorcism: "this was the heartland of America and Ginsberg was entering it with his own brand of wooden stakes—poetry, mantras, and open discussion of forbidden topics."[85] The formal achievement in "Wichita" is Ginsberg's creation of an oracular and spontaneous transit poetry uniting "the phenomenological space of the individual and the imaginary of democratic ideology"[86] and channeling it into a "personal national consciousness [of] American war-decay"[87] that crescendoes in a "mantra of American language" designed to end the Vietnam conflict (*CP* 415). As I will demonstrate, the unique power of transit in this poetry draws from three different technologies: the automobile, mass media, and poetry itself.

The Auto of 'Auto Poesy'

A number of commentators have in fact noted the ways in which "Wichita" is shaped by and around technologies of travel, most obviously, as an exemplum of a poetic method Ginsberg developed in the 1960s he called "auto poesy."[88] *Auto* refers most immediately to his emphasis on recording spontaneous ('automatic') oral utterances, but also on his mode of transit—this poetry was composed while Ginsberg toured the country in a Volkswagen van purchased with the help of a 1965 Guggenheim Fellowship. While his partner and fellow poet Peter Orlovsky drove, Ginsberg would observe the passing world from the passenger seat window and record his impressions by speaking them aloud into a tape-recorder. So while the poem is directly shaped by the American landscape, I insist it must also be shaped as well by *the speed at which he observes that landscape*:

> Red sun setting flat plains west streaked

with gauzy veils, chimney mist spread
around christmas-tree-bulbed refineries—aluminum
white tanks squat beneath
winking signal towers' bright plane-lights,
orange gas flares
beneath pillows of smoke, flames in machinery—
transparent towers at dusk (*CP* 402)

The landscape zooms by outside his window as Ginsberg records his observations of the passing world, the speed of the car seeming to influence the perceptual movement from "red sun" to "flat plains" to "refineries" in rapid succession. Nevertheless, he is able to capture, like photographs, quick poetic flashes in moments such as the "orange gas flares / beneath pillows of smoke" that make "transparent towers at dusk."[89] Even in such snapshots the lineation of the poem manifests the van's movement as it drifts from left to right, west to east, tracking Ginsberg's transit across the country as, quite literally, a poetry in motion. The inherent risk of 'auto poesy' (and of transit poetry more generally) is what Enda Duffy refers to as *blur*—the "limit discourse of speed…in relation to vision"—which promises "a multiplicity of scenes replacing other scenes in an endless parade" but endangers the passenger's view precisely because "the short time available to look at any one scene meant that the faster one moved, the less one saw."[90] Yet "blur" foregrounds not a problem of motion, as Duffy suggest, but a problem of vision; it is, after all, the traveler's movement at an accelerated speeds that distorts perception of the landscape. So Ginsberg's poetic method circumvents this visual problematic because the striking clarity of his poetic images emerges from a spontaneous *oral* composition. If "Wichita" thus enables "Ginsberg's poetry in this period [to move] from portraiture to landscape" in the imagistic clarity and immediacy of the recorded voice, it his use of this landscape to investigate "the ligatures between private ecstasy and political vision" that motivates us to consider the second implication of auto poetry's orality*: automaticity*.[91]

It bears repeating that the form of "Wichita Vortex Sutra" we read today is not the form in which the poem was composed. Ginsberg recorded his poetry *orally*, only later transcribing it to the page. As he described it,

> Introduction of tape recorder also catalyzes changes in possibilities of composition via improvisation. A short fragment of longer trans-American voyage poetry's is therefore *composed directly on tape* by voice, and then transcribed to page: page arrangement *notates* the thought-stops, breath-stops, runs of inspiration, changes of mind, startings and stopping of the car.[92]

The text of the poem might then be fruitfully compared to sheet music, as though Ginsberg scored his live vocal performance onto the fixed form of the page. Because this preserves direct and immediate perception and precision of the image, 'auto poesy' represents the closest Ginsberg gets to the genuine experience of travel in his art. At the same time, this precision is troubled by the eventual interpretation and textual presentation of the material. Here we return to the essential problem of Ginsberg's transit poetry: how can poetry recorded while literally moving through space assume a fixed and final form? What is lost?

Paul Portugés, in his still valuable study *The Visionary Poetics of Allen Ginsberg,* asserts that Ginsberg's "experiments with the tape recorder result in an absolute accuracy, to the point of being able to record the mind in its natural rate of flow…unit[ing] thought and breath in a vivid, accurate transition of the mind and the emotions."[93] But I'm not so sure. While Portugés offers a model of perfect automaticity—the poem flows from the mind to the mouth to the recorder to the page to the reader, uninterrupted—the diagram he uses to illustrate this process suggests something amiss in the poem's transcription. Relying on the "clicking on and off of the [tape] machine,"[94] Portugés reports the following model of how "Wichita" was composed:

> That the rest of earth is unseen, (Click!)
> an outer universe invisible (Click!)
> Unknown (Click!) except thru
> (Click!) language
> (Click!) airprint
> (Click!) magic images[95]

The clicks of the on/off button of the recorder essentially function as line breaks, so "instead of using dashes as he did in 'Kaddish,' [Ginsberg] notated breath and thought breaks by line arrangement."[96] But the desire to assimilate "Wichita" to his older form of poetics ignores the specifics of transit and oral composition—and more to the point, it obscures the textual *blur* that occurs in the process of transcription. For instance, I'm curious why this section could not be transcribed in the following fashion:

> That the rest of earth is unseen, (Click!)
> an outer universe invisible, (Click!)
> Unknown (Click!)
> except thru (Click!)
> language (Click!)
> airprint (Click!)
> magic images (Click!)

That is to say, how can anyone assign a fixed place to the "Click!" at any particular point in a line? Why emphasize the beginning of the line instead of the end (where we might assume a break to occur)? And why is the phrase "Unknown except thru" not enjambed when a click occurs after the first word? I want to suggest that despite the automaticity offered by the tape-recorder, the blur of transit turns up in the lineation of the poem rather than in its imagery. As Ginsberg himself felt that "the tape recorder's not much different from writing in a notebook,"[97] it seems clear that he was editing as he transcribed. The published version of the poem, while it retains some of the spontaneous quality of the tape-recording, transubstantiates its vocal improvisations into textual ones."Passing thru Waterville / Electronic machinery in the bus humming prophecy" (*CP* 412), Ginsberg troubles the line between textual and oral poetics by forging a human/technological hybrid of voice and tape-recorder that balances spontaneity of the poet's voice with the mediation of tech and text. "Far from rejecting the tape recorder as an agent of reification," Michael Davidson observes, Ginsberg and other Cold War poets "embraced it as

an accomplice in the recovery of a more authentic speech."[98] We might, modifying Davidson's claim, suggest "Wichita" is defined by its im/mediated aesthetic, melding the oral self with technologically-derived text in transit. But this leaves us a final question about the *auto* of 'auto poesy': "Can one pose a lyrical autonomy of self (*autos*) when driving in one's auto?"[99]

As we've seen throughout his transit poetry, Ginsberg is anxiously attuned to questions of Selfhood, and I've been calling attention throughout to the problematic mapping of psychic terrain over geographical landscape. "Wichita" differs from other travel and transit poems alike in its embrace of a dispersed (rather than overdetermined) Self in relation to the landscape. In the opening section of the poem, Ginsberg wonders

> What if I opened my soul to sing my absolute self
> Singing as the car crash chomped thru blood & muscle
> tendon skull?
> What if I sang, and loosed the the chords of the fear brow?
> What exquisite noise wd
> shiver my my car companions?
> I am the Universe tonite
> riding in all my Power riding
> chauffeured thru my self by a long haired saint with eyeglasses (*CP* 405)

For Alex Houen, this fantasized death opens an "aesthetics of potentialism" by collapsing the literal vehicle into Ginsberg's poetic vehicle to enable him to "imagin[e] another world of possibility" in the poem's second half.[100] The Whitmanian "singing [of] my absolute self" that precipitates his "singing as the car crash[es]" does not represent a literalization of Ginsberg's 'death drive'; it evinces his awareness that an overdetermined selfhood predicated on the kind of Romantic lyrical subjectivity (of "Angkor Wat," for instance) is no longer feasible. Singing the body electric in the atomic age requires a different imaginary, a different poetics. Ginsberg *rejects* the coherence of the traditional lyric I, his "I disappear[s] / in magic Joy-smoke…under stars on Highway 77" and becomes a vehicle itself, allowing the "Universe…[to be] chauffeured

thru" it (*CP* 405). This is the poet singing himself, made automotive. By complicating lyric autonomy and foregrounding the Self as both driving and driven, in motion and open to technological im/mediation, Ginsberg prepares us for considering transit poetics not as an ethical failure ("Over Kansas," "Kral Majales") or a fastening onto the body ("The Change"), but as a mobile political project.

I want to turn, then, to consider how the auto poesy of "Wichita Vortex Sutra," drawing on the polyvalence of *auto,* furthers Ginsberg's transit poetics by engaging language itself as a material form that itself travels and can be traveled through. As Ginsberg drives through America and its ever-expanding technological mediascape of war propaganda, I will argue that important as the material technologies of travel and communication are, it will be the technology of poetic language that constitutes the "crisis of knowledge" at the poem's center—and its resolution.[101]

Black Magic Materialism: Language in Motion

Throughout his mid-American travels, Ginsberg "was obsessed wth the notion that language was magic," believing "cleverly manipulated language created the black magic of war" through its endless circulation on television, radio, and in newsprint. Everywhere language not only spoke of war, but literally helped *create* it: "The war is language / language abused" (*CP* 409). So "it only stood to reason that the thoughtful arrangement of language could create the magic of peace."[102] Poetry, in other words, was the anti-war antidote to national propaganda, and as critics of the poem have long noted, "Wichita" brings Ginsberg's "own outlaw poetry [together] with the language and perspectives of the mass market media" in order to make the "circumambient media discourse" of contemporary American life "audible and visible to critical analysis."[103] Driving through the mediascape[104] of American "Headline language poetry," Ginsberg insists that traversing the space of the nation is inseparable from traversing the nation's language and he

insists, more directly, on the irreducible materiality of this "nation one body…languaged" (*CP* 408, 414).

The very first words of the poem make this apparent in their replication of non-poetic language found on a road sign—"Turn Right Next Corner / *The Biggest Little Town in Kansas* / *Macpherson*"—as evidence for how language shapes the material environment (*CP* 402). As Marc Augé observes,

> the real non-places…the ones we inhabit when we are driving down the motorway, wandering through the supermarket or sitting in an airport lounge…have the peculiarity that they are defined partly by the words and texts they offer us: their 'instructions for use'…This establishes the traffic conditions of spaces in which individuals are supposed to interact only with texts, whose proponents are not individuals but 'moral entities' or institutions…[and] form an integral part of the landscape.[105]

The quintessentially American non-place of the highway, as Augé attests, is equal parts language and landscape; each constructs the other in the traveler's experience of transit. Ginsberg renders this imbrication visible in the softly mimetic enjambments that reproduce the layout of the highway sign outside Macpherson, putting readers into engagement with this as *institutional,* not descriptive, *language*. By directly replicating 'official' state language,[106] Ginsberg illustrates that such language is built into the landscape—but cleverly shows that poetry can perform similar effects. "A chief virtue of 'Wichita' is that it makes the reader *experience* the proliferation and abuse of language," observes James Mersmann, "its technique is to notice and reproduce the language that inundates the senses everyday, and in doing so it makes one painfully aware that in every case language is used not to communicate truth but to manipulate."[107] As a transit poem, "Wichita" does not just display language, but as Merman suggests, enables readers to *experience* accelerated travel as the *experience* of language, language that zips by so fast that "last week's paper is Amnesia" (*CP* 408). So rather than rejecting the everyday language of the mediascape, Ginsberg incorporates it into the poem to turn it against itself:

Aiken Republican on the radio 60,000
Northvietnamese troops not infiltrated but over 250,000
South Vietnamese armed men
our Enemy—
Not Hanoi our enemy
Not China our enemy
The Viet Cong!
[…]
Bomb China's 200,000,000
cried Stennis in Mississippi
I guess it was 3 weeks ago
Holmes Alexander in Albuquerque Journal
Provincial newsman
said I guess we better begin to do that Now,
his typewriter clacking in his aged office (*CP* 406)

These lines offer a portrait of the 'black magic' version of Ginsberg's own composition process of "Wichita," where oral speech ("cried Stennis") is transformed into text ("Holmes Alexander… typewriter clacking"), but they more importantly evidence the circular relationship whereby the policy-making speech of government officials is uncritically reproduced by cultural forms of media that circulate endlessly throughout America. "Wichita" defamiliarizes the news in order to materialize it, employing "William Carlos Williams's own version of materialist modernism [to] exten[d] the lyric poem into a docupoem where one might not simply 'get the news' but become a medium through which the news from mass media could be revealed as part of the noise of language that obfuscated about the war."[108] Labeling "Wichita" a *docupoem* elucidates some of Ginsberg's formal leanings toward journalism and surrealism,[109] while allowing us to describe how the poem documents not history but media forms as they travel across the nation.

Again, Ginsberg's poetics are materialist insofar as they are part of a discourse of transit, and the media's language is no different. Language travels intra- and internationally, and therefore has material consequences: "Napalm and black clouds emerging in newsprint" translates into "flesh soft as a Kansas' girls / ripped open by metal explosion…on the other side of the planet" (*CP* 410). "For Ginsberg the orality of the tape voice stands in direct opposition to the reproduced

heteroglossia of incorporated sound," Michael Davidson rightly maintains, so that his "prophecy no longer emanates from some inner visionary moment but from a voice that has recognized its inscription within an electronic environment, a voice that has seized the means of reproduction and adapted it to oppositional ends."[110]

What I want to emphasize is Ginsberg's conjunction of a materialist and a transit poetics makes visible, in its incorporation of contemporary news media, the "Black magic language" of the State Department and news media as "formulas for reality" that effect real human catastrophe (*CP* 409). The task at hand in "Wichita" is to create an im/mediated transit poetics that can both acknowledge "all this black language / writ by machine" but also counter its destructive power through a poetic technology of peace (*CP* 413).

White Magic Mantras: Undeclaring a War

The center of the poem—the heart of the poetic vortex—arrives just when Ginsberg has reached the peak of his frustration, when his "search for the language / that is also yours" feels almost destined to fail, for "almost all our language has been taxed by war" (*CP* 414). Against the materiality of the black magic language he encounters everywhere throughout America, Ginsberg turns to the *mantra*, a spiritual and poetic form of language he had become quite attached to while abroad in India. A mantra, as Ginsberg understood it, was "a short verbal formula," a phrase that could be "repeated as a form of prayer meditation over and over until…the words become pure *physical sounds*" that permitted the utterance to acquire "a new density as a kind of magic language or magic spell and becomes a solid object."[111] Although we discussed a materialist poetics in connection with tautology and paradox in "The Change," the mantra of "Wichita" differs by its emphasis on sound as a phonic power rather a textual game. In her excellent article on Ginsberg's poetry of the 1960s, Amy Hungerford asserts that the mantras of

"Wichita" represent the culmination of "Ginsberg's entire poetic effort between his return from India and the end of the decade" in their instantiation of a "supernatural formalism" that employs "the literal form of the sound, the particular assemblage of 'syllables,' [to carry] the weight of what Ginsberg imagines the poem to do."[112] What he imagines it to do, however, is what no other poet has ever dared: to literally end an armed conflict with a poetic speech act.

> I lift my voice aloud,
> make Mantra of American language now,
> I here declare the end of the War!
> Ancient days' Illusion!—
> and pronounce words beginning of my own millennium.
> […]
> this Act done by my own voice,
> nameless Mystery—
> published to my own senses,
> blissfully received by my own form (*CP* 415)

As he himself later glossed these lines, Ginsberg "wanted to—in the English language—make a series of syllables that would be identical with a historical event,"[113] so that "'I here declare the end of the war' is a fact, whether or not the war ends for everyone or not. I end the war in me and anyone who's affected by my gesture."[114] I want to suggest that the significance of Ginsberg's "Mantra of American language"—and the importance of "Wichita" as a whole—depends on understanding the mantra's iterability as a poetic speech act and not as an assertion of historical fact. Rather than assertion of reality, we need to understand how the magic of the mantra resides in its condensation of oral auto-poesy into a poetic vehicle that unites the poet's body with the body of the poem (and implicitly, the body public) in a declaration "published *to* my own senses, / blissfully received *by own form*."

Not everyone has been so attuned to Ginsberg's music. Subarno Chattarji chastises Ginsberg for a "self-indulgent" poem that practices an "aesthetics of denial" by reducing the war to merely "a linguistic and media hyper-reality" that doesn't "translate into actual conception of

the reality of war and the 'other.'"[115] Although Chattarji is of course correct that viewing "the war as language *per se*, is to ignore and misrepresent its terrible actuality," I suggest that Ginsberg has no intention of acting as a journalist or documentarian in his poetic critique of media in "Wichita."[116] Paul Breslin similarly faults Ginsberg for a "psycho-political confusion" that too fully equates the personal and the national, the poetic with the historical.[117] But such readings all too quickly dismiss these lines for their "at best naive and at worst irresponsible" treatment of history,[118] while ignoring their illuminating power as a counterfactual: Ginsberg's mantra reminds us that "the government itself had failed to find an official language for its actual involvement in Southeast Asia: The war in Vietnam was an undeclared one."[119] Further, to reduce such lines to bad historical accounting is to ignore the poetic charge these lines carry as a transit poetics. If Paul Carrol is right (and I think he is) that readers tend to understand "the mantra's efficiency" as an index to the success of "Wichita Vortex Sutra" as a whole,[120] then I contend that condemnation of the poem has repeatedly overlooked how *poetry itself travels*: Ginsberg's American mantra is a vehicle of change with the ability to travel from reader to reader and from listener to listener precisely because of its performative nature.

By performative, I mean both the speech act *form* of the utterance ('I declare') and what Jonathan Culler identifies as "lyric performance," that which "succeeds as it acts iterably through repeated readings, making itself memorable" as part of "the poem's functioning in the world."[121] More specifically, what makes this mantra of American language ("I here declare the end of the War!") such a powerful instance of transit poetry its fusing of the two[122] in a unit that, like the automobile, can travel freely and at high speed from reader to reader. Ginsberg's manta becomes an 'auto-poetic' in itself, an autonomous and nearly automatic utterance that can move in transit across the globe just as fast (if not more so) than Ginsberg drives his van across Kansas. Hence

the "Sutra" of the poem's title, which emphasizes not just its Buddhist-inflected approach to language and its explicit didacticism, but Ginsberg's imperative that this condensed pacifist proclamation be passed as wisdom from one individual to another as "performance, even in its appearance on the page."[123] Thus, I want to assert what no commentator on the poem, as far as I can tell, has dared to say: not that the mantra succeeds, but that it *could*. What if Lyndon Johnson, in 1966, spoke these words? Suddenly, absurdity becomes power. It's a speech act that *could succeed*, opening the potential for a non-violent future. As Ben Hickman summarizes, "these lines are palpably not a *declaration* of the end of the war, but an indication that such a declaration might be possible if we take proper responsibility…The gamble of *Wichita Vortex Sutra* is to fantasize an alternate reality in the face of the war."[124] That it doesn't end the Vietnam War is a historical failure, not a poetic one.

"Wichita Vortex Sutra" succeeds, in my reading, by distilling Ginsberg's transit poetics into a singular moment when his materialist language can be formed into a lyrical vehicle able to travel from one reader to another. Ginsberg harnesses the mantra as a form of transit, a language formed in motion and capable of motion itself. Ginsberg may "not outline a different America in the poem, no countercultural other America that happens to be spatially congruent with official America," but he is after all, a poetic, not a historical, cartographer: "the poem *itself* is…that performance [of futurity], and so there is no difference between its marking and making the beginning…[of] the future in the present tense."[125] "Wichita Vortex Sutra" redefines transit poetry as an auto-poesy that disrupts the official narratives of the "national fantasy" and asks readers to take the wheel and bring a more peaceful future world into being.[126]

***Coda*: From Transit Back to Travel**

Ginsberg returned again and again, as poets do, to the same themes, the same images, and the

same obsessions across his vast body of work. The transit poem, as I've been suggesting, is a central part of Ginsberg's oeuvre, one that charts his shift towards materialist and embodied language while continuing his quest to explore the interrelation of physical and poetic travel. Just a half year after "Wichita Vortex Sutra," Ginsberg composed another long transit poem as he undertook a lengthy train-then-bus journey from the West Coast to New York, a trip that covers the same geography as "Over Kansas" (where we began our study) but in forms of transit more closely tied to the Earth and to other people. "Iron Horse" (1966), the poem that resulted from this trip, does not perform the triumphant poetic pilgrimage of "Wichita" but assumes an elegiac pose and practices the more disintegrated poetics that defines *The Fall of America* as a whole.[127] "Iron Horse" serves for me, as for Ginsberg, as a conceptual closure though not a climax. The poem is "not the major work that Ginsberg hoped it would be," as Schumacher comments, but it remained important to Ginsberg because it meant "he now had four of the major forms of transportation—air, rail, bus, and automobile—represented in his sequence."[128] From the promise of transit's utopian possibilities in "Wichita Vortex Sutra," Ginsberg turns to a more pessimistic view once he exits his auto and boards the passenger train where "the masses seem to be lost, blurred by the rush of the train and bus (or passing time), doomed figures in America's inevitable fall."[129] Failure is central to "Iron Horse," both thematically and politically, as "Ginsberg's failure to create a multifocal communitarian vision is articulated as a failure borne of solipsistic masturbation fantasies."[130] "Iron Hose" provides a fitting conclusion to our study of transit poetics because, returning to the ethical impasse of "Over Kansas," its failure resides in the nonfulfillment of transit's promise to transform embodied experience into interpersonal connection.

Split into two parts, the first section of the poem records passage by train across the

Western US but effectively renounces both the potency and promise of "Wichita." Transit is quickly equated with solipsism and masturbation, as Triglio notes, a parody of the political potency Ginsberg typically advocates. Feeling a "soft stirring…thru breast to belly"—as though reversing the great poetic breath he had developed in "Kaddish"[131]—Ginsberg ignores the world passing by to "lie back on bunk and lift the shade a bit / enjoy the sun on my flagpole."[132] The descent from the visionary pulse of "Wichita" to the atomistic pessimism of "Iron Horse" might be understood by this image alone, Ginsberg abandoning the erection of a utopian state for the utopia of his erection alone in his cabin. He no longer seems interested in seriously grappling with America or the scenery, content to "just lie back look at the landscape / see a tree / & cross Ameriky" (*CP* 440-441). The poetic flourishes of observation that animated the "Wichita" vanish on the "American heartland passing flat," as though the barren "flatland / emptiness" compels the poet to ignore the outside world, as if the inward turn inspired by "The Change" has now eclipsed the environment entirely (*CP* 449). Ginsberg suddenly becomes "reluctant / to face my own language" on the "railroad chugging" across the nation, so that he's oblivious to the "passing Mojave" and can only utter a private mantra into his tape recorder:[133]

> Na-mu sa-man-da mo-to-nan o-ha-ra-chi ko-to-sha so-no-nan to-ji-to en gya-gya gya-ki gya-ki un-nun shi-fu-ra shi-fu-ra ha-ra-shi-fu-ra ha-ra-chi-fu-ra chi-shu-sa chi-chu-sa shu-shi-ri shu-shi-ri so-ha-ja so-ba-ja se-chi-gya shi-ri-ei so-mo-ko
>
> The Universe is empty.
>
> Click of train
> eyes closed… (*CP* 446)

The clicking of the train along the track closes the eye, and the world appears empty, non-material. There's undoubtedly a Buddhist influence here, but it is indeed a 'strategy of retreat' that simply allows the landscape to exist "empty."[134] Whereas the "Mantra of American language" achieved a sublime fusion of language's materiality with the material of the landscape,

"Iron Horse" meekly withdraws from the world. It's not that America has changed—"the whole populace [is still] fed by News / few dissenting on this train, I the lone beard who don't like / Vietnam War"—but here Ginsberg's im/mediation is associated with the impotence of language. "Better to stop publishing Prophecy," he exclaims, "metaphor so mixed with machinery / no one knows where flesh ends / and robot…begins" (*CP* 450-454). I can't help but wonder then if Ginsberg's pessimism in "Iron Horse" results from the incommensurability of auto poesy with mass transit.

Unlike the freedom of the auto/mobile in "Wichita Vortex Sutra," "Iron Horse" is a poem composed on a passenger train, meaning that Ginsberg is trapped in a private car linked with a series of other private cars that all travel along *on the same, single, predetermined track*. The individual has no control over direction or destination, by extension making the poet who rides the rails complicit with transit of soldiers shipping out to war: "Too late, too late / the Iron Horse hurrying to war / too late for laments / too late for warning— / I'm a stranger alone in my country again" (*CP* 453). Ginsberg's loneliness is no longer that of the prophetic figuring driving his auto-poesy around the country, but that of just one among the faceless multitude, all ensnared in the same experience in transit, the same experience of time and history. Whereas the poetic and performative immediacy of "Wichita" opened the poem (and specifically its Mantra) to what Walter Benjamin describes as "a conception of the present as the 'time of the now'…shot through with chips of Messianic time," "Iron Horse" regresses to a temporality structured as "empty, homogenous time," the train's progress along the tracks mirroring time's inevitable progress forward.[135] The prophet-in-transit of "Wichita" and his future-founding power evaporate as Ginsberg relinquishes his power to watch his nation crumble from the passenger window: "electric lightening South / follows this train / Apocalypse prophesied / the Fall of

America / signaled from Heaven" (*CP* 452). The acknowledgement that he is a citizen like any other, caught in the same webs of language and complicity, derails Ginsberg's transit/auto-poetic project, for it's "better [to] turn flapjacks in Omaha / than be a prophet on the electric Networks" (*CP* 454). The technology of heaven, trailing the train, signals Ginsberg's need to abandon Moloch's mechanics for a simpler pedestrian poetics.

Back on his feet: Transit Poetry's Final Stop

Ginsberg's transit poems reanimate overlooked aspects of his poetic practice, and offer us a way to more broadly reconsider American Cold War poetics through a transit lens. The profoundly individualist tint of Ginsberg's transit poetry insists not on the freedom of the autonomous individual, but the capacity for meaningful and direct linguistic action that we possess as im/mediated individuals. His auto poesy is ultimately not about the freedom of the car to travel wherever it likes, but the interaction of that movement with the (concrete and linguistic) built environment that surrounds us. In an era defined by 'agency panic,'[136] transit poetics insist on poets' capability to observe and create, and to put their creations into motion among readers. Ginsberg's emphatic individualism, as we saw in "Wichita Vortex Sutra," depends upon an understanding of the individual as a conduit or "chauffeur" for shared, yet embodied, experience. Ginsberg's formal representation of travel is not meant, *contra* von Hallberg, to simply reflect a traveling experience that readers already possess, but to empower them to see transit as a process through which derealization reveals hidden knowledge about our world. This is what Paul Goodman means when he asserts that the avant-garde artist is "excessively social responsible" in their attempt to construct "the physical re-establishment of community."[137] Ginsberg's radical, avant-garde, and materialist transit poetry is above all about disrupting civic passivity for a more participatory—and contingent—poetic politics. This requires, as Ginsberg attests, attention to

how our movement in the world creates "a field of inquiry exposed to observations" productive of "knowledge…[that] is also transient, though recurrent, occurring in situ, in experience."[138]

Yet as we've seen, Ginsberg's transit poetics always existed in tension with more conventional lyric modes, especially what I've referred to as travel poems. Neither mode ever fully eclipsed the other, but Ginsberg did appear to turn away from the materialist possibilities of transit poetry as the 1970s neared (and when he composed most of the poetry that would complete *The Fall of America*), turning instead to song and lyric and thus re-turning to a traveling poetics rather than one in transit. As he told Paul Portugés in conversation, "mantras led to singing, singing led to song,"[139] and it's no coincidence that as Ginsberg pursued a more song and music influenced direction in his poetry,[140] he also returned to walking as the primary mode of narrativizing his poetics. "September on Jessore Road" (1971)[141] is a "long poem written with music written simultaneously" that employs the conventional verse and refrain structures of popular song to enumerate and lament the atrocities of the refugee crisis caused by the Bangladesh Liberation War.[142] Ginsberg traveled to personally witness and visit with refugees, and though he walked along Jessore Road itself, the poem—composed after he had returned to New York[143]—is a "disembodied" verse-song[144] rather than a transit poem, one still able to travel globally ("The way beyond the printed page is music!" he proclaimed)[145] but without the materialist muscle of the mantra.[146]

The turn to song evidences Ginsberg's loss of faith in the power of materialist and performative mantra-based poetics, the success of which he developed in transit. In "Mugging" (1974), another walking poem, Ginsberg narrates a visit to his old New York City neighborhood and his attempt to prevent his mugging by repeating a mantra that fails to charm his assiliants: "Om Ah Hum didn't stop em enough."[147] The internal rhyme adds a self-conscious

irony to the absurdity of this moment, but it also succinctly encapsulates the failure of the performative power Ginsberg had asserted in "Wichita Vortex Sutra." In this light, Ginsberg's turn to walking poems signals a broader cultural shift away from the early Cold War "culture of spontaneity" toward a poetics more centered on identity, confession, and textuality.[148]

It remains to be said that Ginsberg's transit poetry is not so much a mode or practice as a set of formal *experiments* though which he sought to understand how an embodied subject could make sense of the world as it was experienced in motion. Perhaps, too, he wanted to put this defamiliarizing experience to political use as a critique of the present. But for Cold War avant-gardists like Ginsberg, "poems are actions, not solutions."[149] If travel "is always *from* a place as much as it is *to* a place,"[150] the 'action' of Ginsberg's transit poetics is therefore an emphatic insistence that we are always moving *from* the present and *toward* the future. No other poet has so distinctly rendered the latent possibilities of our modes of travel, nor so adamently insisted on our capacity to imagine new and future worlds while moving through this one. Transit may be, then, an embodied allegory of the historical world we're moving through now, day by day; if so, Ginsberg's poems ask us to read poetry, in his time as much as in ours, as a way of meaningfully engaging our bodies with the world speeding by us.

As fate would have it, Ginsberg was unable to accept the National Book Award he won in 1974 for his collection *The Fall of America*—the only volume of his to do so, and a collection consisting almost entirely of transit poems. Always at war with stasis, Ginsberg was out traveling.

Notes

[1] Allen Ginsberg, "The Green Automobile," *Collected Poems: 1947-1997* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2006), 91. Hereafter cited in-text according to page numbers in the *Collected* as *CP*.

[2] Deborah Paes de Barros, "Driving that highway to consciousness: late twentieth-century American travel literature," *Cambridge Companion to American Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 229.

[3] Willard Spiegelman, "Foursquare: The Romantic Quatrain and Its Descendants," *Something Understood: Essays and Poetry for Helen Vendler* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009), 148.

[4] Ibid., 151.

[5] Nancy M. Grace and Jennie Skerl, "Introduction to Transnational Beat: Global Poetics in a Postmodern World," *The Transnational Beat Generation*, Grace and Skerl, eds. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 4-5. Their introduction emphasizes how the Beats ambivalently "imagine America as physical space/s and as a device for connectivity," thus reifying a US-centric approach even as it draws in the rest of the globe (4).

[6] Grace and Skerl, "Introduction to Transnational Beat," 10. See also Rauvolf, "Prague Connection," *The Transnational Beat Generation,* 179-200.

[7] See Todd F. Tietchen, "The Cubalogues (and After): On the Beat Literary Movement and the Early Cuban Revolution," *Arizona Quarterly* 63.4 (2007): 119-152.

[8] As Amy Hungerford observes, "most studies of his work break off just as he leaves Tangier for India" in late 1961, just a year after *Kaddish* was published. See her "Postmodern Supernaturalism: Ginsberg and the Search for a Supernatural Language," *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 18.2 (2005): 281.

[9] One of the many possible avenues for conceptualizing travel is through the discourse of tourism, although it is one that I elect not take up here. The question of the tourism, as I note below, is discussed in much of the work on Ginsberg, and while it might complicate the political arguments about travel and (trans)nationalism, I feel that the robust debate about literature and tourism remains to the side of my primary considerations here, insofar as debating the gradations of tourist/traveler/native are not nearly important as the essential experience of *transit* I explore. In any case, it's worth repeating Jonathan Culler's claim in "The Semiotics of Tourism" that to condemn the tourist is to ignore our inevitable complicity with, and participation in, the tourist semiotics in our own culture as much as any other. For a consideration of tourism and poetics, see Jahan Ramazani, "Poetry and Tourism in a Global Age," *New Literary History* 46.3 (2015); and for a study of the semiotics of tourism, see Jonathan Culler "The Semiotics of Tourism," *Framing the Sign: Criticism and its Institutions* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988). and Dean McCannel, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

[10] See for instance Steve Harney, "Ethnos and the Beat Poets," *Journal of American Studies* 25.3 (1991): 363-380; Josh Pederson, "Gnostic Mantra: Reading Religious Syncretism in Allen Ginsberg's 'Plutonian Ode'," *Religion & Literature* 41.3 (2009): 27-42; and Luke Walker, "Allen Ginsberg's 'Wales Visitation' as a neo-Romantic response to Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey'," *Romanticism* 19.2 (2013): 207-217.

[11] See Amy Hungerford, "Postmodern Supernaturalism," and Craig Svonkin, "Manishevitz and Sake, the Kaddish and the Sutras: Allen Ginsberg's Spiritual Self-Othering," *College Literature* 37.4 (2010): 166-193.

[12] See Charles Molesworth, *The Fierce Embrace: A Study of Contemporary Poetry* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1979), 50-53; Helen Vendler, "Review of *The Fall of America,*" in *On the Poetry of Allen Ginsberg,* ed. Lewis Hyde (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984), 203-209; and Spiegelman, *The Didactic Muse: Scenes of Instruction in Contemporary American Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 94-99.

[13] Allen Ginsberg, "Siesta in Xbalba," *Collected Poems: 1947-1997,* 109. Hereafter cited in-text according to page numbers in the *Collected* as *CP*. For a full account of Ginsberg's adventures in Mexico, see Schumacher, *Dharma Lion: A Biography of Allen Ginsberg*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 160-174.

[14] Franca Bellarsi, "Alien Hieroglyphs of Eternity' and 'Cold Pastorals': Allen Ginsberg's 'Siesta in Xbalba' and John Keats's Great Odes," *Comparative American Studies* 11.3 (2013): 249.

[15] Ibid., 261. Emphasis mine.

[16] Robert von Hallberg, *American Poetry and Culture: 1945-1980* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 70.

[17] Ibid., 177, 74.

[18] Ibid., 72-74. He energetically, though perhaps not convincingly, argues that the major poets at midcentury were not writing poetry as an "adversary to dominant culture," but actively engaging, incorporating, and shaping it as part of an emergent and prosperous American middle class (228). I also want to note that von Hallberg's most prominent mention of Ginsberg occurs as an anecdote in his closing chapter, where he uses Ginsberg's protest of Mona Van Duyn's winning of the 1971 National Book Award as evidence not only for his—but America's—preference for 'suburban poetry.' Ginsberg would later win this prize in 1974 for *The Fall of America.*

[19] Helen Vendler, *The Music of What Happens: Poems, Poets, Critics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 23.

[20] Jeffrey Gray, *Mastery's End: Travel and Postwar American Poetry* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 2005), 17, 147.

[21] Drawing on Freud, Gray asserts that whether or not it is explicitly articulated as such, travel always contains a measure of implicit critique because travel "is always *from* a place as much as it is *to* a place, and thus it implies a rejection of the place one leaves." See *Mastery's End,* 147-148.

[22] As he writes, Ginsberg's use of "travel as critique has more typically meant the movement away from the patria's demands of work and responsibility, toward an alternate world of spirituality and gratification." See Gray, *Mastery's End*, 149.

[23] Vendler, *The Music of What Happens,* 264.

[24] Allen Ginsberg, "America," *Collected Poems: 1947-1997*, 154-156. Hereafter cited in-text according to page numbers in the *Collected* as *CP*.

[25] Sex and sexuality play a large part in both Ginsberg's critique of America as well as in his conception of transit, although like tourism, this lies outside the scope of the present study. But it's worthwhile to observe here, upon that infamous "queer shoulder," sex and sexuality do not constitute an unchanging discourse in Ginsberg's work. In the earlier poems of the 1950s, sexuality is aligned with political promise, optimism, and revolution, while in later poems it increasingly serves as a source of anxiety and a site for reflection on personal or political failures. For a fuller treatment of Ginsberg's sexuality in relation to his poetics, see Gregory Woods's *Articulate Flesh* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); Paul Breslin's *Psycho-Political Muse* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987); Robert K. Martin's *The Homosexual Tradition in American Poetry* (Iowa City: Iowa University Press, 1998); Michael Davidson's *Guys Like Us: Citing Masculinity in Cold War Poetics* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004); Tony Triglio's chapter on "Queer Dharma" in *Allen Ginsberg's Buddhist Poetics* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2007): 30-61; as well as Catharine Stimpson's terrific exposition of Ginsberg's misogyny and conservative ideas abut gender roles in "The Beat Generation and the Trials of Homosexual Liberation" *Salmagundi* 58/59 (1982): 373-392.

[26] Following Derrida's critique of J.L. Austin in "Signature, Event, Context," poststructuralist theory has tended to assert that repetitive performances of identity indicate not the force of normative identifications, but an inherent instability that requires repetition to reinstate it; see Derrida, "Signature, Event, Context" in *Margins of Philosophy* trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 307-330. For instance, Judith Butler's discussion of the instability of normative gender in *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1993), which, as she also discusses the relation of parody to repetition, provides an additional valence to the discussion of anaphora here; namely, the need to repeatedly and performatively assert "America" as a coherent concept.

[27] Allen Ginsberg, "American Change," *Collected Poems: 1947*-1997, 194. Hereafter cited in-text according to page numbers in the *Collected* as *CP*.

[28] Molesworth, *The Fierce Embrace*, 50.

[29] In his own words, "the travel in what I am calling traveling poetry often occurs at the micro-level: swift territorial shifts by line, trope, sound, or stanza that result in flickering movements and juxtapositions." See Jahan Ramazani, *A Transnational Poetics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 53.

[30] Ibid., 23.

[31] Roger Gilbert, *Walks in the World: Representation and Experience in Modern American Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 4.

[32] Ibid., 5-6.

[33] As James Clifford suggests in his groundbreaking work, cultural privileging of "relations of dwelling over relations of travel" serves to "marginalize or erase several blurred boundary areas" like *means of transport.* See Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 22-23.

[34] See Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).

[35] Cecila Tichi, *Shifting Gears: Technology, Literature, Culture in Modernist America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 16.

[36] Enda Duffy, *The Speed Handbook: Velocity, Pleasure, Modernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 1. Emphasis mine.

[37] Edward Dimendberg, "The Will to Motorization: Cinema, Highways, and Modernity: For Wolf Donner, In Memoriam." *October* 73 (1995): 137. See also Duffy, *The Speed Handbook,* 263-273.

[38] Marc Augé, *Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity.* 2nd ed. (London and Brooklyn: Verso, 2008), 64-70.

[39] Woods, *Articulate Flesh* and Triglio, *Allen Ginsberg's Buddhist Poetics.*

[40] See Freud, "A Disturbance of Memory on the Acropolis," *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. Vol XXII.* trans James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1964), 239-248.

[41] Eric Hayot. "On Literary Worlds," *Modern Language Quarterly* 72.2 (2011): 137.

[42] Sascha Pöhlman, *Future-Founding Poetry: Topographies of Beginnings from Whitman to the Twenty-First Century* (Rochester: Camden House, 2015), 257.

[43] Allen Ginsberg, "New York to San Fran," *Airplane Dreams: Compositions from Journals* (Toronto: The House of Anansi, 1968), 11.

[44] Marit J. MacArthur, "One World? The Poetics of Passenger Flight and the Perception of the Global," *PMLA* 127.2 (2012): 266-269.

[45] See von Hallberg, *American Poetry and Culture*, 70 and MacArthur, "One World?," 265.

[46] Allen Ginsberg, "Over Kansas," *Collected Poems: 1947-1997*, 126. Hereafter cited in-text according to page numbers in the *Collected* as *CP*.

[47] Allen Ginsberg, "Kral Majales," *Collected Poems: 1947-1997*, 362. Hereafter cited in-text according to page numbers in the *Collected* as *CP*.

[48] Ron Howard. "Allen Ginsberg," *Alone with America: Essays on the Art of of Poetry in the United States since 1950* (New York: Atheneum, 1950), n.3 p.147.

[49] MacArthur, "One World?," 269.

[50] See Justin Quinn, *Between Two Fires* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 10.

[51] For a full account of these events and their local consequences, see Josef Rauvolf, "Prague Connection," 179-200.

[52] Quinn, *Between Two Fires*, 164.

[53] Dimendberg, "The Will to Motorization," 91-92.

[54] For more on Ginsberg's relationship to Blake during the period, and Blake's influence on Ginsberg's politics, see Luke Walker, "Allen Ginsberg's Blakean Albion," *Comparative American Studies* 11.3 (2013): 227-242.

[55] Allen Ginsberg, "Notes" in *Collected Poems: 1947-1997*, 783.

[56] Martin, *The Homosexual Tradition*, 168.

[57] MacArthur, "One World?," 278.

[58] Ginsberg, "New York to San Fran," 17.

[59] Deborah Baker, *A Blue Hand: The Beats in India* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2008), 6-7.

[60] Triglio, *Buddhist Poetics*, xiv.

[61] Kate Teltscher, "India/Calcutta: site of palaces and dreadful night," *Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing,* eds. Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 194.

[62] von Hallberg, *American Poetry and Culture*, 75-76.

[63] As Willard Spiegelman observes, "despite his travels and his experiments with foreign philosophies, religions, and medicines, Ginsberg remains a distinctly homegrown product. For all the explicit topicality of his poetry, its references to public issues and personalities, it remains an unorganized work…Ginsberg does not tell stories or use parables." See Spiegelman, *The Didactic Muse*, 95.

[64] Allen Ginsberg, *Indian Journals: March 1962-May 1963* (New York: Grove Press), 99.

[65] Gayathri Prabhu, "Figurations of the Spiritual Squalid in Allen Ginsberg's *Indian Journals*: Transformation of India in Post-War Beat and American Imagination," *Transnational Literature* 6.1 (2013): 10.

[66] Ginsberg, *Indian Journals*, 38-39.

[67] Triglio, *Allen Ginsberg's Buddhist Poetics,* 36.

[68] Ginsberg, *Indian Journals*, 52.

[69] Triglio, *Allen Ginsberg's Buddhist Poetics,* 44.

[70] See Allen Ginsberg, *Angkor Wat* (London: Fulcrum Press, 1969). This edition is now extremely rare.

[71] Triglio, *Allen Ginsberg's Buddhist Poetics,* 44. Emphasis removed.

[72] Ginsberg, *Indian Journals*, 108-109.

[73] Allen Ginsberg, "The Art of Poetry VIII: An Interview," *The Paris Review* 37 (1966): 49-50.

[74] In Exodus 3:14, God replies to Moses's request for His name as "I am that I am" (KJV).

[75] Triglio, *Allen Ginsberg's Buddhist Poetics,* 78.

[76] As Derrida summarizes, the performative speech act (of which Ginsberg's syntax adopts the form; first person, present tense, indicative mood, active voice) "produces of transforms a situation, it operates," and because it has *material effects* on the world, it too *is material*. See "Signature Event Context," 321.

[77] Triglio, *Allen Ginsberg's Buddhist Poetics,* 84.

[78] Ginsberg*, Indian Journals*, 19-20.

[79] Baker, *A Blue Hand*, 208-209.

[80] Allen Ginsberg, "Author's Cover Writ" in *Collected Poems: 1947-1997,* 823.

[81] Ben Hickman, *Crisis and the US Avant-Garde: Poetry and Real Politics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 106.

[82] See Rolf Potts, "The Last Antiwar Poem," *The Nation*, November 27, 2006. Online.

[83] Schumacher, *Dharma Lion,* 459.

[84] Allen Ginsberg, "Wichita Vortex Sutra," *Collected Poems: 1947-1997*, 418. Hereafter cited in-text according to page numbers in the *Collected* as *CP*.

[85] Schumacher, *Dharma Lion*, 460. See also Ginsberg's poem "Pentagon Exorcism" (*Collected Poems*, 491) which continues the fixation on magical language and the human body developed in "Wichita."

[86] Justin Quinn, "Coteries, Landscape, and the Sublime in Allen Ginsberg." *Journal of Modern Literature* 27.1-2 (2003): 203.

[87] Allen Ginsberg, "*The Fall of America* Wins an Award," *Deliberate Prose: Selected Essays 1952-1995*, ed. Bill Morgan (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 19.

[88] As he described it on the back cover of *Fall of America*, the label 'auto poesy' refers to poems "taperecorded scribed by hand or sung condensed." I would highlight here that, to clarify Ginsberg's prose, 'auto poesy' refers to poems originally recoded orally and *then* transcribed, so that the flux of travel aligns with states of consciousness, both of which are seen as constantly moving *vehicles* for poetry. See Ginsberg, "Author's Cover Writ," 823.

[89] Later in his career, Ginsberg would more explicitly assert his "snapshot poetics," which had its "origins [in] the imagistic grounding of poetry that [he] had learned from Williams and its relation to the photographic practice." As he puts it, "writing poems and taking pictures have been two discrete but very closely related activities." Ginsberg, *Snapshot Poetics* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1993), 16. For more on Ginsberg relation's to photography, see Erik Mortensen, "Capturing the Fleeting Moment: Photography in the Work of Allen Ginsberg" *Chicago Review* 51.1/2 (2005): 215-231 and Oliver Harris, "Minute Particulars of the Counter-Culture: *Time*, *Life,* and the Photo-Poetics of Allen Ginsberg" *Comparative American Studies* 10.1 (2012): 3-29.

[90] Duffy, *The Speed Handbook,* 175.

[91] Quinn, "Coteries, Landscape, and the Sublime," 201.

[92] Ginsberg, "Some Metamorphoses of Personal Prosody," *Deliberate Prose,* 260. Emphasis mine.

[93] Paul Portugés, *The Visionary Poetics of Allen Ginsberg* (Santa Barbra: Ross-Erikson, Publishers, 1978)*,* 82-83.

[94] Allen Ginsberg, "Improvised Poetics" in *Composed on the Tongue,* ed. Donald Allen (Bolinas: Grey Fox Press), 29.

[95] Portuges, *Visionary Poetics*, 82. This diagram originally appeared in "Improvised Poetics," itself a transcribed interview with Ginsberg from 1968. Both Portugés and Ginsberg biographer Michael Schumacher reproduce this diagram verbatim and take it face value. Although it comes direct from Ginsberg himself, it is a diagram at least twice transcribed by the time it reaches critical consideration, and since Portugés cites it as evidence for his claims, I proceed to treat the diagram in context with his assertions. See Ginsberg, "Improvised Poetics," 28 and Schumacher, *Dharma Lion*, 465.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Ginsberg, "Improvised Poetics," 58.

[98] Michael Davidson, *Ghostlier Demarcations: Modern Poetry and the Material World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 203.

[99] Alex Houen, "'Back! Back! Back! Central Mind-Machine Pentagon…': Allen Ginsberg and the Vietnam War" *Cultural Politics* 4.3 (2008): 356.

[100] Houen, "Back! Back! Back!," 353-357.

[101] David R. Jarraway, "'Standing by His Word': The Politics of Allen Ginsberg's Vietnam 'Vortex'," *The Journal of American Culture* 16.3 (1993): 86.

[102] Schumacher, *Dharma Lion,* 461.

[103] Steven Gould Axelrod, "Between Modernism and Postmodernism: The Cold War Poetics of Bishop, Lowell, and Ginsberg." *Pacific Coast Philology* 42.1 (2007): 19.

[104] Arjun Appadurai defines "mediascape" in his influential work as "the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information…and to the images of the world created by this media," adding that "whether produced by private or state interests, tend to be image-centered, narrative-based accounts of strips of reality, and what they offer to those who experience and transfer them is a series of elements…out of which scripts can be formed of impinged lives, *their own as well as those of others living in other places.*" (219-220, emphasis mine). See Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy" in *The Cultural Studies Reader* 3rd Ed. (New York and London: Routledge, 2007), 217-226.

[105] Augé, *Non-Places*, 77-78.

[106] Highway signs and other roadsigns have been federally regulated by the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD) and the supplemental *Standard Highway Signs* (SHS) in some form since the 1930's. As the Federal Highway Administration's website says, "MUTCD Editions Reflect Life in America." See https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/kno-history.htm

[107] James F. Mersmann. *Out of the Vietnam Vortex: A Study of Poets and Poetry Against the War* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1974), 72.

[108] Philip Metres, *Behind the Lines: War Resistance Poetry on the American Homefront since 1941* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2007), 116.

[109] Jahan Ramazani rightly situates 'docupoetry' in the tradition of found poetry and Tzara's dadaist cut-ups, but with a stronger reliance on newspaper and reportage as sources; see *Poetry and Its Others* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 67.

[110] Davidson, *Ghostlier Demarcations*, 206.

[111] Ginsberg, "Reflections on the Mantra," *Deliberate Prose,* 148. Emphasis mine.

[112] Hungerford, "Supernatural Realism," 284.

[113] Ginsberg, "Improvised Poetics," 46-47.

[114] Paul Carroll, *The Poem in Its Skin* (Chicago and New York: Follett Publishing Company, 1968), 107. This quote comes from a personal letter sent to Carroll in 1967, in which Ginsberg clarified Carroll's reading of the poem in specific passages.

[115] Subarno Chattarji, *Memories of a Lost War: American Poetic Responses to the Vietnam War* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 48-49, 91-92.

[116] Ibid., 49.

[117] Breslin, *The Psycho-Political Muse,* 38.

[118] Marjorie Perloff, "A Lion in Our Living Room: Reading Allen Ginsberg in the Eighties," *Poetic License: Essays on Modernist and Postmodernist Lyric* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1990), 210.

[119] Schumacher, *Dharma Lion,* 461.

[120] Carroll, *The Poem in Its Skin,* 96.

[121] Jonathan Culler, *Theory of the Lyric* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 131.

[122] For a theorization of a fusing of the two appears in everyday language, see Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context," 329-330.

[123] Spiegelman, *The Didactic Muse*, 80.

[124] Hickman, *Crisis and the US Avant-Garde,* 110

[125] Pöhlmann, *Future-Founding Poetry,* 276-281.

[126] Lauren Berlant, *The Anatomy of National Fantasy: Hawthorne, Utopia, and Everyday Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 4-5.

[127] See Vendler, "Review of *The Fall of America,*" 203-209.

[128] Schumacher, *Dharma Lion,* 475-477.

[129] Ibid., 477.

[130] Triglio, *Allen Ginsberg's Buddhist Poetics,* 60.

[131] See Ginsberg, "How *Kaddish* Happened," *Deliberate Prose,* 235.

[132] Allen Ginsberg, "Iron Horse," *Collected Poems: 1947-1997*, 440. Hereafter cited in-text according to page numbers in the *Collected* as *CP*.

[133] According to Ginsberg's notes, the mantra recited here is the "Dharani of Removing Disasters," a Buddhist chant recorded in D.T. Suzuki's *Manual of Zen Buddhism*. See "Notes," 789.

[134] Triglio's discussion of "Iron Horse" is titled "Strategies of Retreat"; see *Allen Ginsberg's Buddhist Poetics*, 118.

[135] Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), 262-263.

[136] See Davidson, *Guys Like Us*, 8-12.

[137] Paul Goodman, "Advance-Guard Writing in America: 1900-1950." *Creator Spirit Come!: The Literary Essays of Paul Goodman,* ed. Taylor Stoehr (New York : Free Life Editions, 1977), 160-162.

[138] Lyn Hejinian, "The Quest for Knowledge in the Western Poem." *The Language of Inquiry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 221.

[139] Portugés, *Visionary Poetics,* 131.

[140] Ginsberg not only recorded a series of albums (his *Collected* lists a discography of at least 11 albums), but even his many of his printed poems began to include musical annotation, as "September on Jessore Road" does.

[141] See Ginsberg, "September on Jessore Road," *Collected Poems: 1947-1997*, 579-583.

[142] Portugés, *Visionary Poetics,* 131.

[143] According to the poem's postscript; see "Jessore Road," 583.

[144] Ginsberg, "Improvised Poetics," 59.

[145] Ibid., 58.

[146] Singer and poet Moushumi Bhowmik has performed and recorded a version of the poem in Bengali, a version of which is available on her album *Ekhono Golpo.*

[147] Allen Ginsberg, "Mugging," *Collected Poems: 1947-1997*, 634.

[148] See Daniel Belgrad, *The Culture of Spontaneity: Improvisation and the Arts in Postwar America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), as well as Triglio, *Allen Ginsberg's Buddhist Poetics,* 182-184; Houen, "Back! Back! Back!," 370-371; and and Anne Hartman, "Confessional Counterpublics in Frank O'Hara and Allen Ginsberg," *Journal of Modern Literature* 28.4 (2005): 40-56.

[149] Gray, *Mastery's End*, 237.

[150] Ibid., 147-148.

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