

# Conversations with Allen Ginsberg

Two interviews

Fifth Estate Collective  
Allen Ginsberg

1997

Two interviews with the poet on life, death, sex, poetry, Kerouac, and meditation—the first from 1991, published here for the first time; the second from the October 1969 issue of *Fifth Estate*.

## Interview 1

*Note:* In October 1991, *Fifth Estate* staff member Peter Werbe interviewed poet Allen Ginsberg on the radio talk show he hosts. Ginsberg was in Ann Arbor for the performance of his opera, “Hydrogen Jukebox,” a collaboration with composer and pianist Philip Glass. As were so many of Ginsberg’s Michigan appearances, the opening was a benefit for Jewel Heart, an international organization of Tibetan Buddhist and cultural centers.

Ginsberg’s *Selected Poems, 1947–1995* (Harper Collins) and a CD from one of its selections, “The Ballad of the Skeletons,” recorded with Paul McCartney, Philip Glass, and Lenny Kaye, was released shortly before the poet’s death in April of this year.

**Peter Werbe:** At an earlier Ann Arbor appearance, you shared the stage with Gelek Rinpoche, spiritual director of Jewel Heart, and discussed the importance of the last breath before death. What’s its importance?

**Allen Ginsberg:** I recently became a senior citizen; I just turned 65 and my mind is turning to what Shakespeare said at the end of *The Tempest* when Prospero goes home having solved his problems: “To Genoa then where every third thought shall be my grave.” When you get to a certain age, you like to prepare for what’s to come; you make your will, you straighten out your affairs so you don’t leave a mess for other people to worry about and you straighten out your mind so you don’t leave a mess for yourself on the death bed, and don’t panic.

**Peter Werbe:** People in our culture usually see impending death as something quite fearful.

**Allen Ginsberg:** It’s nonsensical to fear death because everyone is going to die, so you might as well relate to it in a way that’s not so scary.

**Peter Werbe:** Were you ever afraid of death?

**Allen Ginsberg:** Yeah, sure, when I was younger. But now that I realize it’s really inevitable I want to come to some terms with it that aren’t negative. I would like to come to some positive terms, which is an old American tradition in Walt Whitman. Remember, he said, “Come lovely death, undulate around the world serenely, arriving, arriving sooner or later in the night, in the day, to each, to all, delicate death.”

**Peter Werbe:** Is this reflected in your recent writing?

**Allen Ginsberg:** Yeah, I think one of the best poems I wrote—song I sang [at my last Ann Arbor appearance], is called “Father Death Blues,” on the death of my own father. It’s a good solid, late work by myself as poet. I’m very pleased to produce something that ripened out of meditation and out of experience.

**Peter Werbe:** You also sang another song there, “Put Down Your Cigarette Rag (Dont Smoke).”

**Allen Ginsberg:** Oh, yeah, (sings) “Dont smoke dont smoke dont smoke, Dont smoke, It’s a nine billion dollar, Capitalist communist joke, Dont smoke the official dope dope dope.”

**Peter Werbe:** I’d like to have you sing the oral alternatives you pose to smoking but we can’t do it on the radio. [Note: The text reads, “Put something in your mouth, Like skin not cigarette filth, Suck tit suck tit suck cock suck cock, suck clit suck prick suck it...But dont smoke shit nope, nope nope nope Dope Dope Dope Dope, the official dope Dont Smoke.”]

**Allen Ginsberg:** It’s saying make love with your mouth. Touching skin with your mouth whether kissing or anything else is more healthy than the official dirty nicotine. But also I pointed out that U.S. Senator Jesse Helms, who has set himself up as the moral arbiter of the country recently with a new law trying to restrict National Endowment for the Arts grants (attacking homosexuals actually) is himself an important lobbyist for this death-dealing legal drug, nicotine. And, spending taxpayer money to subsidize the agriculture of it. A really interesting contradiction.

**Peter Werbe:** What does it mean to you to be a senior citizen other than to get into movies at reduced rates?

**Allen Ginsberg:** And half-fare on the subways. But as a senior citizen I have the right to speak my mind; I’ve been obeying the rules long enough and I still obey the rules, but the true rules are the rules of candor and truthfulness and frankness; that’s what Walt Whitman asked for from poets. So, in a poetry reading there would naturally be a candid, frank and truthful account of what goes through my body and my mind, what rouses me erotically.

**Peter Werbe:** So, at 65 you still have sexual thoughts?

**Allen Ginsberg:** Sure, sex, death and also life and also food and also health and also your liver and also Buddhism and also Jewishness and also the Middle East and also marijuana and also psychedelics and also meditation and also the Tibetan Lamas; hundreds of thousands of thoughts run through your mind in a couple days.

**Peter Werbe:** Every time I’ve seen you read you have at least one explicitly sexual poem which shocks at least a small percentage of your audience.

**Allen Ginsberg:** I try to write my mind; to give a picture of the actual operation of my mind. It’s like meditation. You notice what goes through your mind. I give in a reading, a sufficient proportion to explicitly erotic matter that you would in the normal course of your daytime reveries whether you’re a fundamentalist Christian or not. That’s why they’re always talking about temptation; something rises in their minds. I’m trying to make an accurate picture and take the windbag out of it all and take the fear out of it and take the anxiety out of it and make it ordinary, because it is ordinary.

**Peter Werbe:** Has there been a recent upsurge in interest in poetry?

**Allen Ginsberg:** I think it’s been happening all along. As the government gets more full of lies and confusion and double-talk, nobody believes anyone anymore And, as the public consciousness—media—gets more obscure and furtive and prejudiced and owned by the Republicans or multi-nationals, the only place you can get any news that stays news or candid, truthful, personal opinion is in poetry. That’s the old tradition of poetry; that’s what it was for. It’s not the state’s; it’s not the official propaganda.

**Peter Werbe:** Do you read “Howl” in public any more?

**Allen Ginsberg:** Yes. When I go to a new state or new country or when there’s some occasion that dignifies it so it’s not just an act, like the first or second reading I gave for Gelek Rinpoche [spiritual director of Ann Arbor’s Jewel Heart] as a benefit. I wanted him to hear that American sound of “Howl,” that “barbaric yawp,” so to speak, to use Whitman’s phrase. I wanted him to hear the phrasing, “Moloch whose mind is pure machinery! Moloch whose blood is running money! Moloch whose fingers are ten armies! Moloch the vast stone of war! Moloch the stunned governments!” then the follow-up about “demonic industries! monstrous bombs!” I wanted him to hear that analysis which winds up “Moloch whose name is the Mind!” which is basically a Buddhist view of the hyper-industrialized catastrophe that’s coming to the planet.

**Peter Werbe:** Is “Howl” your best effort? It’s certainly a dramatic portrayal of America with its myths stripped away.

**Allen Ginsberg:** Well, it's a good one, but a superior poem is a longer one written four years later called "Kaddish." It has a lot more concrete detail and is at the same time a visionary, romantic, bold dream of America and also a narrative account of my mother. I think every couple of years I get into some kind of peak experience with poetry. Before "Howl" there's a poem called "The Green Auto," then "Howl" and "Sunflower Sutra" around 1955. Then "Kaddish" in 1960, "Wichita Vortex Sutra" in 1965, part of which is the climax of Act I of "Hydrogen Juke Box." Philip Glass liked it and it was the first thing he and I did together as a duet. He knew the poem when it was originally published in the mid-'60s in the Village Voice in which I say, "I here declare the end of the war! Let the State tremble, let the Nation weep, let Congress legislate its own delight, (laughs) let the President execute his own desire, for I hereby declare the end of the war." So, that was a moment of self-recognition, self-empowerment, courage, consistent sparkiness. It was meek—obviously, I can't stop the war—but at the same time lively, at the same time surprising, at the same time it was almost inscrutable. How could anybody declare the end of the war? But just the same, how could the President declare it? The same dragon-like inscrutability or outrageousness, actually.

**Peter Werbe:** You've always had the capacity to emanate peace. I'm reminded of the time in 1965 when you confronted the Hell's Angels motorcycle gang in Oakland, California, who had sworn to attack and disrupt a peace demonstration.

**Allen Ginsberg:** Yes, at an early anti-Vietnam war march which prophesied the whole nation turning against the war by 1968.

**Peter Werbe:** The Hells Angels were probably the most frightening looking human beings this side of a Salvadoran death squad, and probably just as mean.

**Allen Ginsberg:** They had a funny kind of code of honor of their own and a Buddha nature of their own, but very deeply hidden, so it was a question of appealing to that.

Almost anybody, even the Supreme Court, has a Buddha nature somewhere buried real deep, so it's a matter of calling on that wakened mind or sense of compassion or gentleness or vulnerability or suffering ultimately. The Supreme Court suffers, Bush suffers, everybody is suffering. You have to put your finger on the suffering, name it, point it out so everybody's in the same boat.

[FE Note: In the above mentioned incident, the Vietnam Day Committee, led by activists like Jerry Rubin with Ginsberg in the front ranks, planned to march from the University of California Berkeley campus to an Oakland army base where recruits were shipped to the war zone. The demonstrators were stopped at the city border by the police and attacked by the motorcycle gang. Later, Ginsberg, Ken Kesey and others chilled out the head of the Angels with LSD and chanting following a heated political discussion about the war.]

**Peter Werbe:** When ferocious men come to stop you, to hurt you, what does it take?

**Allen Ginsberg:** Maybe I was too stupid in those days to realize the trouble I was in. I've never been in a situation where it was that dangerous, I don't think. In Eastern Europe a couple of times and in Cuba when I was arrested by the communist police for criticizing their governments it was a little more dangerous than anywhere other than maybe Chicago in 1968 with the police there. And, occasionally there have been attempts to set me up by the American police on phony drug charges by threatening friends they'll send them to jail if they don't plant grass in my house. But that was long ago and it never amounted to anything, so I've never been paranoid. At the same time, maybe as coward, I've avoided any really confrontational situation. Certainly I'm a coward. I wouldn't want to be in a really dangerous place.

**Peter Werbe:** It sure sounds like you've been in a number of them.

An October 1969 *Fifth Estate* had an interview with you where you say the "trees are our allies" and that we have to speak in their defense. [FE note: see p. 10 (Interview 2 below in the Web version).]

**Allen Ginsberg:** It was an idea of Gary Snyder's, talking about the Northwest trees and pointing out that the exploiters on the planet were the human race, in a kind of race or species chauvinism, and the workers were actually the trees and the forest and the plants. And somebody, some Senator, ought to speak up for all those hundreds of thousands of miles of trees who have no representation, who have no representation in Congress although they're all sentient beings.

**Peter Werbe:** The Senators are representing the logging companies.

**Allen Ginsberg:** People have been living with the forest and relating to it, and you could say communicating with it, and being communicated to in the form of shade, food, company, meditative comfort, inspiration as long as the human race has been around.

**Peter Werbe:** Tomorrow is the twenty-second anniversary of Kerouac's death.

**Allen Ginsberg:** Yes, old October. His favorite month of reddening leaves and falling leaves and change of the seasons and autumn of fruitfulness. He was very fond of that, maybe out of Thomas Wolff's long prose elegy of October. I remember Kerouac had a lot of octobral word music. I think he liked the word October; it was sort of Beethovenian.

**Peter Werbe:** It was said toward the end of his life he became a misanthrope, almost a racist and right-winger. Was this the Jack Kerouac you knew?

**Allen Ginsberg:** No, I don't think he was. When you look back at his comments at that time, he was quite prophetic. He was putting down that aspect of the left that was angry and waving pictures of Mao Tse-Tung and Castro and calling for bringing the war home and waving the Viet Cong flag which offended the majority of the American people who already were sick of the war. For Kerouac, it was taking a kind of middle position; he didn't like the right wing conservatives and he didn't like the left wing. He liked William Buckley because he had kind of an interesting language. But when he got on Buckley's [TV] program a year before he died, he put down the Vietnam war in a way that embarrassed Buckley. [Web note: see the YouTube video [here](#) (22 minutes).]

Buckley asked what he thought and Kerouac said, "The war is just a way for the South Vietnamese to get our jeeps," which is a real redneck, anti-war remark.

And, Buckley said, "Oh, you can't really mean that," and Kerouac looked at him with this very strange leer and said, "Well, they got a lot of them, didn't they?" Buckley was just reduced to silence.

Teaching Kerouac's work now and rereading *Tristessa* and *Dharma Bums* and *Big Sur*, I'm amazed by his insight into basic Buddhist thoughts of the nature of the universe, the sort of transitory nature and the lack of permanence in the universe, the dream-like nature of the universe, like the moon in a dew drop or a dream itself. He had very good insight. Listening during the last few weeks to the Dali Lama and other teachers, I'm amazed at Kerouac's early American ken.

**Peter Werbe:** You wrote a lot in your early years when you were quite anguished.

**Allen Ginsberg:** Yes, anguished, but I wasn't quite angry. Even in anguish there was always a sort of double humor. The most anguished poem is certainly on my mother ["Kaddish"] and her madness and mental hospitals and yet there's kind of a hyperbolic exaggeration that's a little bit like Charlie Chaplin's bittersweet in "City Lights."

**Peter Werbe:** What capacity does poetry have that it can strike so deeply into the human psyche often more so than prose?

**Allen Ginsberg:** Well, we think all the time in words or most of the time or often we think in words. We conduct the government in words. We conduct our legal affairs, our family affairs—it's all words and language. So, here's the quintessence of language, the deepest language, the permanent and memorable language which goes to the pith experiences that we have and formulates the exact insights and attitudes that you learn from the age of ten to 65 or 95. For instance, Kerouac has a very interesting line in a poem, "Anger doesn't like to be reminded of fits," which puts into one line a whole paragraph I used to describe anger.

In Ann Arbor, we were using the phrase of another Lama, "First thought; best thought." And it was natural thought, the first raw thought you have is the best form if you can remember it. So, the question is remembering your own mind. Poetry remembers your mind.

**Peter Werbe:** You're going to be in Ann Arbor for two performances of "Hydrogen Jukebox." How was it assembled?

**Allen Ginsberg:** We all sat down and decided what are the themes we want to cover? Rock and roll, meditation, death, poetry, music, politics, drugs, travel, the Far East, Buddhism, electricity, ecology, the planet, the death of the planet, the end of the millennium, the fall of America, American empire, war, all of those themes.

Then we rummaged through my work and found poems fitted exactly to those themes.

Then we made a whole scheme which ends with me declaring the end of the war at the end of Act I with a tape of Philip playing and me orating. Then it begins in the second part with a vision of a hyper-civilization—Moloch—and goes off to the end with "Father Death."

**Peter Werbe:** You mention meditation as an important activity, but people often think of it as esoteric or exotic, practiced only by people like Allen Ginsberg.

**Allen Ginsberg:** Half the world does it, actually. The whole eastern portion—India, China, Japan; at least it's traditional in their cultures and it's also traditional in native cultures and basic cultures. American Indians have to sit very patiently during long dances or while hunting. It's a by-product of the activity of the world in a sense. In the case of Americans, it's good medicine for all the animosity and anxiety and freakout and worry and hyper-activity and hyper-intellectuality and hyper-civilization we're constantly subjected to with a barrage of planetary bad news.

**Peter Werbe:** Most people conceive of meditation as sitting and doing nothing which is so inimical to the American psyche.

**Allen Ginsberg:** It would be great if you could sit there and do nothing. The tendency of most minds is to move around and to think and to plan and to gossip and to babble and to constantly be fixating on something and grabbing onto something for entertainment. If you could actually take a vacation from all that activity, it'd be a miracle. That's the purpose of meditation, to see if you can vacate your mind.

In most meditations you pay attention to your breath. You add that awareness to the already ongoing process of breathing. It's hard to focus your mind and concentrate on one thing or rest your mind or abide relaxation in one spot.

You notice there's an automatic nervousness and thinking and planning and memory; you talk to yourself, "What do I have to do next," instead of enjoying the moment. So, you take a friendly attitude to your thoughts, not push them away, not try and stop thinking because that's inevitable, but not to invite your thoughts into tea either. Let them worry about themselves and just observe them, observe your mind moving.

**Peter Werbe:** Are there things you know now you wish you had known earlier in life?

**Allen Ginsberg:** Yes. If you act out fits of anger, they don't do you much good and you always have to pay for it. Although anger is natural, if you notice you're angry, most of the anger disappears, at least 80 percent of it according to the Tibetan teacher in Ann Arbor, Gelek Rimpoche. He says if you get angry, just notice it; you don't have to stop it, just notice it and it tends to dissolve like a soap bubble. I wish I'd noticed that a long time ago.

## Interview 2

Ginsberg 1960s interview

*Note:* Allen Ginsberg spoke to FE staff member David Gaynes in October 1969 on the way to a reading at Macomb Community College on the far east side of metropolitan Detroit. Ginsberg was here doing a series of readings for the John Sinclair Defense Fund and a benefit for the Ann Arbor underground paper The Argus. This is a slightly revised and reduced version of the interview that appeared in the October 30-November 12, 1969 FE.

**Fifth Estate:** What place does poetry have in the United States at the present time in connection with the movement?

**Allen Ginsberg:** Well, what's going on in America is much larger than what's going on in the movement. What's going on is a lot of trees growing and plants moving around and cows eating grass, which is more important than anything, so poetry is just part of the same natural order—it's just like speech ... it's just more coherent speech.

So, if coherent speech has any place in the larger natural movement that's going on, including the sun and the stars and people growing up, then it has got the same old place it always had, and as for the movement, it can stick its preoccupations with what place anything has up its own ass.

**Fifth Estate:** Do you think that poetry is playing an important role in creating social awareness?

**Allen Ginsberg:** No, I don't think it is ...

**Fifth Estate:** Do you think that rock music is the new poetry as far as young people are concerned?

**Allen Ginsberg:** Well, yes, with the Beatles' "I Am A Walrus," and some of Dylan's lyrics.

It returns to the old poetry which is minstrelsy ... I think it's being used in the same way ... Like, the bard used to be the cat who went around from valley to valley getting the news and rhyming it up and telling everybody. The

bardic tradition is the ancient oral newspaper before they had moveable type and so, like now, song is a source of information and news, about which way the wind is blowing.

**Fifth Estate:** What purpose do you think your poetry serves?

**Allen Ginsberg:** I don't know anything. I just feel as if I'm getting up and bullshitting to myself. At least at this hour of the morning that's what it feels like.

**Fifth Estate:** What did it feel like last night when you [read in Detroit]?

**Allen Ginsberg:** Like one old lone man talking to himself, other people overhearing, and to the extent that his speech was accurate and honest, one man felt like anybody else, or everybody else. But it didn't have any social conclusions or propositions to it, finally. There's no system at the end. What'd we begin with, let's go back to there.

**Fifth Estate:** All right, what place poetry has in connection with the movement in America today?

**Allen Ginsberg:** Here's what I'm bridleing about—what is happening socially now, which, here in Detroit, right now, is being called the movement—is a little wavelet on a larger awareness that's growing in people, which is a biological awareness rather than a political awareness ... Another kind of politics is slowly emerging which is indistinguishable from biology or ecology ... Ideological politics, ideological marxist politics has become completely bankrupted along with capitalism in the biological crisis that's overtaken the planet. There's a threat to the existence of the entire planet, so when you ask the question what place has poetry in the social revolution, I begin bridleing, I begin cursing because it's like putting everybody's understanding back in the thirties, in a way, when everybody was arguing whether or not the poet should be responsible socially.

This is an argument that ultimately wound up whether or not the poet was responsible to the Central Committee of the Communist Party for a proper articulation of the needs and desires and logical ideology of the masses. And that, as Chairman Mao has repeatedly said, the poet must stand up and take criticism from the Communist Party because the Communist Party is the will of the people. Therefore, since the poet must be responsible to the will of the people he must be responsible logically to the Communist Party and therefore, if they tell him to fuck off, he's got to fuck off. In other words, the terminology of the question you asked, that same terminology seems dated and that's why I was being so creepy in my answer.

The creepiness of my answer did sneak in some reference to biology. I don't think the movement as it is known here is yet ecologically oriented and biologically conscious or complete and, therefore, the movement is full of shit.

**Fifth Estate:** The movement here in Detroit?

**Allen Ginsberg:** Everywhere, the whole movement—in the United States and Cuba and Russia and China, everywhere. The whole revolutionary movement is not yet into the realization of the fact that man's material grasping is actually destroying other species and it's actually beginning to threaten the existence of the planet itself.

As Gary Snyder points out, the exploited masses are not just blacks and hippies and the Chinese, the exploited masses are the trees and the fish in the sea, those are the exploited masses, the rest of the sentient beings on the planet.

I think we need things like Snyder's "Smokey the Bear Sutra," and a new thing called "The Declaration of Interdependence," which was just put out by a whole gang of ecology action people on the west coast that are sympathetic enough to include the whole planet and not just the human contingent.

**Fifth Estate:** Why is it that the section of the movement that has ecology as its roots is based on the west coast?

**Allen Ginsberg:** Because everybody here is so covered with machinery and smog that they have forgotten that nature even exists. Quite literally, here people have become so divorced from the bio-system of the planet, especially here in Detroit, the center of mechanization, that they literally have forgotten that they are part of a larger interdependent harmonic organic system. They've got mountains out there so you can always go out in the mountains and realize that mountains are bigger than cities, that the back country is much much vaster than the places the humans have filled up.

**Fifth Estate:** Well, what effect do you think ecology oriented poets like Gary Snyder and Diane di Prima are having on the people as far as changing these things goes?

**Allen Ginsberg:** I don't like the phrase "the people." Who is the people, who is the people, who the fuck is the people? I keep bridleing over this political terminology.

Who is the people? What does that mean?

**Fifth Estate:** Well, the people who are capable of changing things or setting the world straight, because the trees certainly can't do it by themselves.

**Allen Ginsberg:** The trees are the only ones who are getting the world straight. They're the ones who are producing the oxygen we are consuming; the trees are like the oxygen factories of the atmosphere. The trees are our biggest allies. If the enemy is the materialistic, consumer-oriented, predatory, acquisitive capitalistic, manufacturing society which is consuming all our natural resources at a suicidal rate, our natural allies in this battle for survival are the trees and the grass.

The ecology oriented people are articulating clearly what everybody, including the capitalists, is unconsciously realizing. But it is just too large and apocalyptic and horrible to realize into consciousness that we are in, perhaps, the death throes of the planet and that the planet may be finished unless we take some immediate measures, unless we're aware of the fact that we're a threat to the planet ...

**Fifth Estate:** Does the poet have any place in turning peoples' eyes to these facts?

**Allen Ginsberg:** Well, not ordained by God, but it's just common sense. I guess that poets have always been running around in the woods and spouting out about nature so, yeah, sure, they'd be the first ones to be sensitive when nature gets shit all over. It is shit because it's just the waste product, thoroughly machine shit, the shit of robots, even brown colored, in a gaseous form, robot farts.

**Fifth Estate:** Why is it that the state is constantly busting poets like John Sinclair, LeRoi Jones, you, and in some cases, even driving them to suicide as with d.a. levy?

**Allen Ginsberg:** Or Brodsky, Alexi Ginzburg, Essenin ... or all the poets in China they fucked in the ass, too. I hate Mao Tse-Tung. His literary criticism is the worst of the new criticism that has escaped, worse than Alan Tate ... Mainly they bust poets because I don't think poets are intimidated by authority. If they've reported their unconscious correctly, if they're measuring their unconscious accurately, then you are getting an unconditioned report on what you're actually thinking and feeling rather than a partial report on what you think you're supposed to feel and think as dictated by politicians of any side.

**Fifth Estate:** What do you think of violence as a means for change? Is there a time when its use is necessary or acceptable?

**Allen Ginsberg:** Once a question like that is posed, it then becomes unanswerable. That's like something Burroughs said the other day: "Once a problem is posed, it becomes insoluble." There's no answer, I mean I don't have an answer for that, all I know is that I get violently angry, but I know every time I do, I pay for it because I usually hit the wrong person. Like at the beginning of this interview I was violently angry, but I don't even know who I was being angry at, so I took it out on you. So, most violence I've seen has been bullshit.

**Fifth Estate:** Can you rationalize it as self-defense ever?

**Allen Ginsberg:** I've never been in a situation where violent fisticuffs, guns, or self-defense was more effective than other means; there are always other means that were more effective, I've found. But it requires training in other means, just as self-defense requires training in karate. In Chicago, had they had classes in rhythmic behavior, mantra chanting and organized body movements, the first day of the [1968 Democratic Party] Convention would have sent a message much more sympathetic and interesting to the world at large through the public imagery than they did when they sent the snake dance karate message.

They would have averted violent conspiracy evidence in the trial and they would have trained people for something useful. The karate class in this case was neither used nor useful; it was just a lot of bullshit. It was never put into use anyway; it was just a theatrical gesture.

The rationalization for it at the time was that it was absolutely practically necessary that they be trained precisely in that way, for physical combat contact. Well, it wasn't—it was just hysterical and the guys who were running it agreed later anyway. It would have been more effective in terms of street tactics had they spent a day teaching people mantras, because the mantras were used a little, at least, and the karate never was—so violence only leads to more violence, it's a big drag, egotistical, like with the police, but the violence is already set forth and so escalated in every direction and everybody is so insistent on having their own way that I suppose that it's going to take place

...

**Fifth Estate:** Where's it all going to stop?

**Allen Ginsberg:** Burroughs says the planet's finished. As to whether or not it is...?

## **Excerpt from Wichita Vortex Sutra**

I lift my voice aloud,  
make Mantra of American language now,  
I here declare the end of the War!  
Let the States tremble, let the Nation weep,  
let Congress legislate its own delight  
let the President execute his own desire  
this Act done by my own voice,  
published to my own senses,  
blissfully received by my own form  
approved with pleasure by my sensations  
manifestations of my very thought  
accomplished in my own imagination  
all realms within my consciousness fulfilled  
60 miles from Wichita  
near El Dorado,  
The Golden One,  
in chill earthly mist,  
houseless brown farmland plains rolling heavenward  
one midwinter afternoon Sunday called the day of the Lord  
Pure Spring Water gathered in one tower  
where Florence is  
set on a hill  
stop for tea & gas  
—February 14, 1966



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