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## Collected Poems 1947-1997

By Allen Ginsberg



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**Collected Poems 1947-1997** By Allen Ginsberg

Here, for the first time, is a volume that gathers the published verse of Allen Ginsberg in its entirety, a half century of brilliant work from one of America's great poets. The chief figure among the Beats, Ginsberg changed the course of American poetry, liberating it from closed academic forms with the creation of open, vocal, spontaneous, and energetic postmodern verse in the tradition of Walt Whitman, Guillaume Apollinaire, Hart Crane, Ezra Pound, and William Carlos Williams. Ginsberg's classics *Howl*, *Reality Sandwiches*, *Kaddish*, *Planet News*, and *The Fall of America* led American (and international) poetry toward uncensored vernacular, explicit candor, the ecstatic, the rhapsodic, and the sincere—all leavened by an attractive and pervasive streak of common sense. Ginsberg's raw tones and attitudes of spiritual liberation also helped catalyze a psychological revolution that has become a permanent part of our cultural heritage, profoundly influencing not only poetry and popular song and speech, but also our view of the world.

The uninterrupted energy of Ginsberg's remarkable career is clearly revealed in this collection. Seen in order of composition, the poems reflect on one another; they are not only works but also a work. Included here are all the poems from the earlier volume *Collected Poems 1947-1980*, and from Ginsberg's subsequent and final three books of new poetry: *White Shroud*, *Cosmopolitan Greetings*, and *Death & Fame*. Enriching this book are illustrations by Ginsberg's artist friends; unusual and illuminating notes to the poems, inimitably prepared by the poet himself; extensive indexes; as well as prefaces and various other materials that accompanied the original publications.



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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

*Starred Review.* Counterculture icon, beat apostle, Buddhist chanter, heir to William Blake, unapologetic explorer of intoxicating substances, world traveler, political protest leader, celebrant of gay sex, chronicler of New Jersey Jewish heritage and of Lower East Side post-hippie bohemians, Ginsberg (1926–1997) became by the midpoint of his career the most famous American poet of his era. At first hardworking and tormented, later on a spontaneous, welcoming mentor, the writer who in *Howl* (1956) "saw the best minds of my generation starving hysterical naked," and who mourned his psychotic mother in the wrenching title poem of *Kaddish* (1960) kept creating entertaining (if not quite so innovative) poems, for almost three decades after he rose to fame. This first complete collection of Ginsberg's work reproduces his 1980 *Collected Poems*—including all the extensive notes: here are "Howl" and "Kaddish" and the great anti-Vietnam War poem "Wichita Vortex Sutra"; here too are the poems about Prague and Cornwall, Benares and Shanghai and the Australian outback, the songs and chants in quatrains (with sheet music) and the unashamed odes to beautiful young men. This complete edition adds *White Shroud* (1986), *Cosmopolitan Greetings* (1994) and the aptly titled *Death and Fame: Last Poems* (2000). A hefty, vivid and important tome, it should remind us just how much Ginsberg accomplished. (Oct.)

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## Review

"There's a lot to like...the current volume testifies to the poet's scope and indefatigable energy."

## About the Author

Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997) was an American poet, best known for the poem *Howl* (1956). He was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters, was awarded the medal of Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Minister of Culture, won the National Book Award for *The Fall of America*, and was a co-founder of the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics at the Naropa Institute, the first accredited Buddhist college in the Western world.

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