



MODERN
CLASSICS

Jack Kerouac Desolation Angels



BOOK ONE

Desolation Angels

PART ONE

Desolation in Solitude

I

Those afternoons, those lazy afternoons, when I used to sit, or lie down, on Desolation Peak, sometimes on the alpine grass, hundreds of miles of snowcovered rock all around, looming Mount Hozomeen on my north, vast snowy Jack to the south, the enchanted picture of the lake below to the west and the snowy hump of Mt Baker beyond, and to the east the rilled and ridged monstrosities humping to the Cascade Ridge, and after that first time suddenly realizing 'It's me that's changed and done all this and come and gone and complained and hurt and joyed and yelled, not the Void' and so that every time I thought of the void I'd be looking at Mt Hozomeen (because chair and bed and meadowgrass faced north) until I realized 'Hozomeen is the Void – at least Hozomeen means the void to my eyes' – Stark naked rock, pinnacles and thousand feet high protruding from hunchmuscles another thousand feet high protruding from immense timbered shoulders, and the green pointy-fir snake of my own (Starvation) ridge wriggling to it, to its awful vaulty blue smokebody rock, and the 'clouds of hope' lazing in Canada beyond with their tittlefaces and parallel lumps and sneers and grins and lamby blanks and puffs of snout and mews of crack saying 'Hoi! hoil earth!' – the very top tittermost peak abominables of Hozomeen made of black rock and only when storms blow I dont see them and all they do is return tooth for tooth to storm an imperturbable surl for cloudburst mist – Hozomeen that does not crack like cabin rigging in the winds, that when seen from upsidedown (when I'd do my headstand in the yard) is just a hanging bubble in the illimitable

ocean of space – Hozomeen, Hozomeen, most beautiful mountain I ever seen, like a tiger sometimes with stripes, sunwashed rills and shadow crags wriggling lines in the Bright Daylight, vertical furrows and bumps and Boo! crevasses, boom, sheer magnificent Prudential mountain, nobody's even heard of it, and it's only 8,000 feet high, but what a horror when I first saw that void the first night of my staying on Desolation Peak waking up from deep fogs of 20 hours to a starlit night suddenly loomed by Hozomeen with his two sharp points, right in my window black – the Void, every time I'd think of the Void I'd see Hozomeen and understand – Over 70 days I had to stare at it.

2

Yes, for I'd thought, in June, hitch hiking up there to the Skagit Valley in northwest Washington for my fire lookout job 'When I get to the top of Desolation Peak and everybody leaves on mules and I'm alone I will come face to face with God or Tathagata and find out once and for all what is the meaning of all this existence and suffering and going to and fro in vain' but instead I'd come face to face with myself, no liquor, no drugs, no chance of faking it but face to face with ole Hateful Duluoze Me and many's the time I thought I die, suspire of boredom, or jump off the mountain, but the days, nay the hours dragged and I had no guts for such a leap, I had to *wait* and get to see the face of reality – and it finally comes that afternoon of 8 August as I'm pacing in the high alpine yard on the little well-worn path I'd beaten, in dust and rain, on many a night, with my oil lamp banked low inside the cabin with the four-way windows and peaked pagoda roof and lightning rod point, it finally comes to me, after even tears, and gnashing, and the killing of a mouse and attempted murder of another, something I'd never done in my life (killing animals even rodents), it comes in these words: 'The void is not disturbed by any kind of ups and downs, my God look at Hozomeen, is he worried or tearful? Does he bend before storms or snarl when the sun shines or sigh in the late day drowse? Does he smile?

Was he not born out of madbrained turmoils and upheavals of raining fire and now's Hozomeen and nothing else? Why should I choose to be bitter or sweet, he does neither? – Why cant I be like Hozomeen and O Platitute O hoary old platitute of the bourgeois mind 'take life as it comes' – Twas that alcoholic biographer, W. E. Woodward, said, 'There's nothing to life but just the living of it' – But O God I'm bored! But is Hozomeen bored? And I'm sick of words and explanations. Is Hozomeen?

Aurora Borealis
over Hozomeen –
The void is stiller

– Even Hozomeen'll crack and fall apart, nothing lasts, it is only a faring-in-that-which-everything-is, a passing-through, that's what's going on, why ask questions or tear hair or weep, the burble blear purple Lear on his moor of woes he is only a gnashy old flap with winged whiskers beminded by a fool – to be *and* not to be, that's what we are – Does the Void take any part in life and death? does it have funerals? or birth cakes? why not I be like the Void, inexhaustibly fertile, beyond serenity, beyond even gladness, just Old Jack (and not even that) and conduct my life from this moment on (though winds blow through my windpipe), this ungraspable image in a crystal ball is not the Void, the Void is the crystal ball itself and all my woes the Lankavatara Scripture hairnet of fools, 'Look sirs, a marvelous sad hairnet' – Hold together, Jack, pass through everything, and everything is one dream, one appearance, one flash, one sad eye, one crystal lucid mystery, one word – Hold still, man, regain your love of life and go down from this mountain and simply *be – be – be* the infinite fertilities of the one mind of infinity, make no comments, complaints, criticisms, appraisals, avowals, sayings, shooting stars of thought, just *flow, flow*, be you all, be you what it is, it is only what it always is – Hope is a word like a snow-drift – This is the Great Knowing, this is the Awakening, this is Voidness – So shut up, live, travel, adventure, bless and dont be sorry – Prunes, prune, eat your prunes – And you have been forever, and you will be forever, and all the worrisome smashings of your foot

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on innocent cupboard doors it was only the Void pretending to be a man pretending not to know the Void –

I come back into the house a new man.

All I have to do is wait 30 long days to get down from the rock and see sweet life again – knowing it's neither sweet nor bitter but just what it is, and so it is –

So long afternoons I sit in my easy (canvas) chair facing Void Hozomeen, the silence hushes in my little shack, my stove is still, my dishes glitter, my firewood (old sticks that are the form of water and welp, that I light small Indian fires with in my stove, to make quick meals) my firewood lies piled and snaky in the corner, my canned goods wait to be opened, my old cracked shoes weep, my pans lean, my dish rags hang, my various things sit silent around the room, my eyes ache, the wind wallows and belts at the window and upped shutters, the light in late afternoon shades and bluedarks Hozomeen (revealing his streak of middle red) and there's nothing for me to do but wait – and breathe (and breathing is difficult in the thin high air, with West Coast sinus wheezings) – wait, breathe, eat, sleep, cook, wash, pace, watch, never any forest fires – and daydream, 'What will I do when I get to Frisco? Why first thing I'll get a room in Chinatown' – but even nearer and sweeter I daydream what I'll do Leaving Day, some hallowed day in early September, 'I'll walk down the trail, two hours, meet Phil in the boat, ride to the Ross Float, sleep there a night, chat in the kitchen, start early in the morning on the Diablo Boat, go right from that little pier (say hello to Walt), hitch right to Marblemount, collect my pay, pay my debts, buy a bottle of wine and drink it by the Skagit in the afternoon, and leave next morning for Seattle' – and on, down to Frisco, then LA, then Nogales, then Guadalajara, then Mexico City – And still the Void is still and'll never move –

But I will be the Void, moving without having moved.

3

Aw, and I remember sweet days of home that I didnt appreciate when I had them – afternoons then, when I was 15, 16, it meant Ritz

6

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Brothers crackers and peanut butter and milk, at the old round kitchen table, and my chess problems or self-invented baseball games, as the orange sun of Lowell October'd slant thru the porch and kitchen curtains and make a lazy dusty shaft and in it my cat'd be licking his forepaw laplap with tiger tongue and cue tooth, all undergone and dust betided, Lord – so now in my dirty torn clothes I'm a bum in the High Cascades and all I've got for a kitchen is this crazy battered stove with cracked stove-pipe rust – stuffed, yea, at the ceiling, with old burlap, to keep the rats of night out – days long ago when I could have simply walked up and kissed either my mother or my father and say 'I like you because someday I'll be an old bum in desolation and I'll be alone and sad' – O Hozomeen, the rocks of it gleam in the downgo sun, the inaccessible fortress parapets stand like Shakespeare in the world and for miles around not a thing knows the name of Shakespeare, Hozomeen or me –

Late afternoon long ago home, and even recently in North Carolina when, to recall childhood, I did eat Ritz and peanut butter and milk at four, and played the baseball game at my desk, and it was schoolboys in scuffed shoes coming home just like me, hungry (and I'd make them special Jack Bananasplits, only a measly six months ago) – But here on Desolation the wind whirls, desolate of song, shaking rafters of the earth, progenitating night – Giant bat shadows of cloud hover on the mountain.

Soon dark, soon my day's dishes done, meal eaten, waiting for September, waiting for the descent to the world again.

4

Meanwhile the sunsets are mad orange fools raging in the gloom, whilst far in the south in the direction of my intended loving arms of señoritas, snowpink piles wait at the foot of the world, in general silver ray cities – the lake is a hard pan, gray, blue, waiting at the mist bottoms for when I ride her in Phil's boat – Jack Mountain as always receives his meed of little cloud at highbrow base, his thousand football fields of snow all raveled and pink, that one unimaginable

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abominable snowman still squatted petrified on the ridge – Golden Horn far off is yet golden in a gray southeast – Sourdough’s monster hump overlooks the lake – Surly clouds blacken to make fire rims at that forge where the night’s being hammered, crazed mountains march to the sunset like drunken cavaliers in Messina when Ursula was fair, I would swear that Hozomeen would move if we could induce him but he spends the night with me and soon when stars rain down the snowfields he’ll be in the pink of pride all black and yaw-y to the north where (just above him every night) North Star flashes pastel orange, pastel green, iron orange, iron blue, azurite indicative constellative auguries of her makeup there that you could weigh on the scales of the golden world –

The wind, the wind –

And there’s my poor endeavoring human desk at which I sit so often during the day, facing south, the papers and pencils and the coffee cup with sprigs of alpine fir and a weird orchid of the heights wiltable in one day – My Beechnut gum, my tobacco pouch, dusts, pitiful pulp magazines I have to read, view south to all those snowy majesties – The waiting is long.

On Starvation Ridge

little sticks

Are trying to grow.

5

Only the night before my decision to live loving, I had been degraded, insulted and made mournful by this dream:

‘And get a good tenderloin steak!’ says Ma handing Deni Bleu the money, she’s sending us to the store to get a good supper, also she’s suddenly decided to put all her confidence in Deni these later years now that I’ve become such a vogue ephemeral undeciding being who curses the gods in his bed sleep and wanders around bareheaded and stupid in the gray darkness – It’s in the kitchen, it’s all agreed, I dont say anything, we go off – In the front bedroom by the stairs Pa is

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dying, is in his death bed and practically dead already, it's in spite of *that* that Ma wants a good steak, wants to plank her last human hope on Deni, on some kind of decisive solidarity – Pa is thin, pale, his bed sheets white, it seems to me he's dead already – We go down in the gloom and negotiate our way somehow to the butcher store in Brooklyn in the downtown main streets around Flatbush – Bob Donnelly is there and the rest of the gang, bareheaded and bummy in the street – A gleam has now come in Den's eyes as he sees his chance to turn tail and become a con man with all Ma's money in his hand, in the store he orders the meat but I see him pulling shortchange tricks and stuffing money in his pocket and making some kind of arrangement to renege on *her* agreement, her *last* agreement – She had pinned her hopes on him, I was of no more avail – Somehow we wander from there and don't go back to Ma's house and wind up in the River Army which is dispatched, after watching a speedboat race, to swim downstream in the cold swirling dangerous waters – The speedboat, if it had been a 'long' one could have dived right under the flotilla'd crowd and come up the other side and completed its time but because of faulty short design the racer (Mr Darling) complains that that was the reason his boat just ducked under the crowd and got stuck there and couldn't go on – big official floats took note.

Me in the lead gang, the Army starts swimming downstream, we are going to the bridges and cities below. The water is cold and the current extremely bad but I swim and struggle on. 'How'd I get here?' I think. 'What about Ma's steak? What did Deni Bleu do with her money? Where is he now? O I have no time to think!' Suddenly from a lawn by the St Louis de France church on the shore I hear kids shouting a message at me, 'Hey your mother's in the insane asylum! Your mother's gone to the insane asylum! Your father's dead!' and I realize what's happened and still, swimming and in the Army, I'm stuck struggling in the cold water, and all I can do is grieve, grieve, in the hoar necessitous horror of the morning, bitterly I hate myself, bitterly it's too late yet while I feel better I still feel ephemeral and unreal and unable to straighten my thoughts or even really grieve, in fact I feel too stupid to be really bitter, in short I don't know what I'm doing and I'm being told what to do by the

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Army and Deni Bleu has played a wood on me too, at last, to get his sweet revenge but mostly it's just that he's decided to become an out-and-out crook and this was his chance –

. . . And even though the saffron freezing message may come from the sunny ice caps of this world, O haunted fools we are, I add an appendage to a long loving letter I'd been writing to my mother for weeks

Dont despair, Ma, I'll take care of you whenever you need me – just yell . . . I'm right there, swimming the river of hardships but I know how to swim – Dont ever think for one minute that you are left alone.

She is 3,000 miles away living in bondage to ill kin.
Desolation, desolation, how shall I ever repay thee?

6

I could go mad in this – O carryall menaya but the weel may track the rattle-burr, poniac the avoid devoidity runabout, minavoid the crail – Song of my all the vouring me the part de rail-ing carry all the pone – part you too may green and fly – welkin moon wrung salt upon the tides of come-on night, swing on the meadow shoulder, roll the boulder of Buddha over the pink partitioned west Pacific fog mow – O tiny tiny tiny human hope, O molded cracking thee mirror thee shook pa t n a watalaka – and more to go –

Ping.

7

Every night at 8 the lookouts on all the different mountaintops in the Mount Baker National Forest have a bull session over their radios – I have my own Packmaster set and turn it on, and listen.

It's a big event in the loneliness –

'He asked if you was goin to sleep, Chuck.'

'You know what he does Chuck when he goes out on patrol? – he finds a nice shady spot and just goes to sleep.'

'Did you say Louise?'

'– I doant knaow –'

'– Well I only got three weeks to wait –'

'– right on 99 –'

'Say Ted?'

'Yeah?'

'How do you keep your oven hot for makin those, ah, muffins?'

'Oh just keep the fire hot –'

'They only got one road that ah zigzags all over creation –'

'Yeh well I hope so – I'll be there waitin anyway.'

Bzzzzz bzgg radio – long silence of pensive young lookouts –

'Well is your buddy gonna come up here and pick you up?'

'Hey Dick – Hey Studebaker –'

'Just keep pourin wood in it, that's all, it stays hot –'

'Are you still gonna pay him the same thing as you did ah pay him coming out?'

'– Yeah but ah three four trips in three hours?'

My life is a vast and insane legend reaching everywhere without beginning or ending, like the Void – like Samsara – A thousand memories come like tics all day perturbing my vital mind with almost muscular spasms of clarity and recall – Singing in a false limey accent to *Loch Lomond* as I heat my evening coffee in cold rose dusk, I immediately think of that time in 1942 in Nova Scotia when our seedy ship put in from Greenland for a night's shore leave, Fall, pines, cold dusk and then dawn sun, over the radio from wartime America the faint voice of Dinah Shore singing, and how we got drunk, how we slipped and fell, how the joy welled up in my heart and exploded fuming into the night that I was back to my beloved America almost – the cold dog dawn –

Almost simultaneously, just because I'm changing my pants, or that is putting on an extra pair for the howling night, I think of the marvelous sex fantasy of earlier in the day when I'm reading a cowboy story about the outlaw kidnapping the girl and having her all

alone on the train (except for one old woman) who (the old woman now in my daydream sleeps on the bench while ole hard hombre me outlaw pushes the blonde into the men's compartment, at gun point, and she wont respond but scratch (natch) (she loves an honest killer and I'm old Erdayway Molière the murderous sneering Texan who slits bulls in El Paso and held up the stage to shoot holes in people only) – I get her on the seat and kneel and start to work, French postcard style, till I've got her eyes closed and mouth open until she cant stand it and loves this lovin outlaw so she by her own wild willin volition jumps to kneel and works, then when I'm ready turns while the old lady sleeps and the train rattles on – 'Most delightful my dear' I'm saying to myself in Desolation Peak and as if to Bull Hubbard, using his way of speech, and as if to amuse him, as if he's here, and I hear Bull saying 'Dont act effeminate Jack' as he seriously told me in 1953 when I had started joking with him in *his* effeminate manner routine 'On *you* it dont look good Jack' and here I am wishing I could be in London with Bull tonight –

And the new moon, brown, sinks early yonder by Baker River dark.

My life is a vast inconsequential epic with a thousand and a million characters – here they all come, as swiftly we roll east, as swiftly the earth rolls east.

8

For smoking all I have is Air Force paper to roll my tobacco in, an eager sergeant had lectured us on the importance of the Ground Observer Corps and handed out fat books of blank paper to record whole armadas apparently of enemy bombers in some paranoiatic Conelrad of his brain – He was from New York and talked fast and was Jewish and made me homesick – 'Aircraft Flash Message Record,' with lines and numbers, I take my little aluminum scissors and cut a square and roll a butt and when airplanes pass I mind my own business although he (the Sgt) did say 'If you see a flying saucer report the flying saucer' – It says on the blank: 'Number of aircraft, one,

two, three, four, many, unknown,' reminds me of the dream I had of me and W. H. Auden standing at a bar on the Mississippi River joking elegantly about 'women's urine' – 'Type of aircraft,' it goes on, 'single – , bi – , multi – , jet, unknown' – Naturally I love that unknown, got nothin else to do up there on Desolation – 'Altitude of aircraft' (and dig this) 'Very low, low, high, very high, unknown' – then 'SPECIAL REMARKS: EXAMPLES: Hostile aircraft, blimp' (bloop), 'helicopter, balloon, aircraft in combat or distress etc.' (or whale) – O distressed rose unknown sorrow plane, come!

My cigarette paper is so sad.

'When will Andy and Fred get here!' I yell, when they come up that trail on mules and horses I'll have real cigarette paper and my dear mail from my millions of characters –

For the trouble with Desolation, is, no characters, alone, isolated, but is Hozomeen isolate?

9

My eyes in my hand, welded to wheel to welded to whang.

10

To while away the time I play my solitaire card baseball game Lionel and I invented in 1942 when he visited Lowell and the pipes froze for Christmas – the game is between the Pittsburgh Plymouths (my oldest team, and now barely on top of the 2nd division) and the New York Chevviess rising from the cellar ignominiously since they were world champions last year – I shuffle my deck, write out the lineups, and lay out the teams – For hundreds of miles around, black night, the lamps of Desolation are lit, to a childish sport, but the Void is a child too – and here's how the game goes: – what happens: – how it's won, and by whom: –

The opposing pitchers are, for the Chevviess, Joe McCann, old vet of 20 years in my leagues since first at 13 age I'd belt iron

rollerbearings with a nail in the appleblossoms of the Sarah backyard, Ah sad – Joe McCann, with a record of 1–2 (this is the 14th game of the season for both clubs), and an earned run average of 4.86, the Chevviés naturally heavily favored and especially as McCann is a star pitcher and Gavin a secondrater in my official effectiveness rulings – and the Chevviés are hot anyway, comin up, and took the opener of this series 11–5 . . .

The Chevviés jump right out ahead in their half of the first inning as Frank Kelly the manager belts a long single into center bringing home Stan Orsowski from second where he'd gone on a bingle and walk to Duffy – yag, yag, you can hear those Chevviés (in my mind) talking it up and whistling and clapping the game on – The poor greenclad Plymouths come on for their half of the opening inning, it's just like real life, real baseball, I cant tell the difference between this and that howling wind and hundreds of miles of Arctic Rock without –

But Tommy Turner with his great speed converts a triple into an inside-the-park homerun and anyway Sim Kelly has no arm out there and it's Tommy's sixth homerun, he is the 'magnificent one' all right – and his 15th run batted in and he's only been playin six games because he was injured, a regular Mickey Mantle –

Followed immediately back to back by a line drive homerun over the rightfield fence from the black bat of old Pie Tibbs and the Plyms out ahead 2–1 . . . wow . . .

(the fans go wild in the mountain, I hear the rumble of celestial racing cars in the glacial crevasses)

– Then Lew Badgurst singles to right and Joe McCann is really getting belted (and him with his fancy earned run average) (pah, goes to show) –

In fact McCann is almost batted out of the box as he further gives up a walk to Tod Gavin but Ole Reliable Henry Pray ends up the inning grounding out to Frank Kelly at third – it will be a slugfest.

Then suddenly the two pitchers become locked in an unexpected brilliant pitching duel, racking up goose egg after goose egg, neither one of them giving up a hit except one single (Ned Gavin the pitcher got it) in the second inning, right on brilliantly

up to the uttermost eighth when Zagg Parker of the Chevs finally breaks the ice with a single to right which (he too for great super runner speed) unopposed stretches into a double (the throw is made but he makes it, sliding) – and a new tone comes in the game you'd think but no! – Ned Gavin makes Clyde Castleman fly out to center then calmly strikes out Stan the Man Orsowski and stalks off the mound chewing his tobacco unperturbed, the very void – Still, a 2-1 ballgame favor of his team –

McCann yields a single to big bad Lew Badgurst (with big arms southpawing that bat) in *his* half of the eighth, and there's a base stolen on him by pinch runner Allen Wayne, but no danger as he gets Tod Gavin on a grounder –

Going into the final inning, still the same score, the same situation.

All Ned Gavin has to do is hold the Chevvies for 3 long outs. The fans gulp and tense. He has to face Byrd Duffy (batting .346 up to this game), Frank Kelly, and pinch hitter Tex Davidson –

He hitches up his belt, sighs, and faces the chubby Duffy – and winds up – Low, one ball.

Outside, ball two.

Long fly to center field but right in the hands of Tommy Turner.
Only two to go.

'Come on Neddy!' yells manager Cy Locke from the 3rd base box, Cy Locke who was the greatest shortstop of all time in his time in my appleblossom time when Pa was young and laughed in the summernight kitchen with beer and Shammy and pinochle –

Frank Kelly up, dangerous, menacing, the manager, hungry for money and pennants, a whiplash, a firebrand –

Neddy winds up: delivers: inside.

Ball one.

Delivers.

Kelly belts it to right, off the flagpole, Tod Gavin chases, it's a standup double, the tying run is on second, the crowd is wild. Whistles, whistles, whistles –

Speedboy Selman Piva is sent out to run for Kelly.

Tex Davidson is a big veteran chaw-chawin old outfielder of the

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old wars, he drinks at night, he doesn't care – He strikes out with a big wheeling whackaround of the empty bat.

Ned Gavin has thrum him 3 curves. Frank Kelly curses in the dugout, Piva, the tying run, is still on second. *One more to go!*

The batter: Sam Dane, Chevvy catcher, old veteran chawidrink-buddy in fact of Tex Davidson's, only difference is Sam bats lefty – same height, lean, old, don't care –

Ned pitches a call strike across the letters –

And there it comes: – a booming homerun over the centerfield barrier, Piva comes home, Sam comes loping around chewing his tobacco, still doesn't care, at the plate he is mobbed by the Kellies and the crazies –

Bottom of the 9th, all Joe McCann has to do is hold the Plymouth – Pray gets on an error, Gucwa singles, they hold at second and first, and up steps little Neddy Gavin and doubles home the tying run and sends the winning run to third, pitcher eat pitcher – Leo Sawyer pops up, it looks like McCann'll hold out, but Tommy Turner simply slaps a sacrifice grounder and in comes the winning run, Jake Gucwa who'd singled so unobtrusively, and the Plymouths rush out and carry Ned Gavin to the showers atop their shoulders.

Tell me Lionel and I didn't invent a good game!

II

Great day in the morning, he's committed another murder, in fact the same one, only this time the victim sits happily in my father's chair just about on Sarah Avenue location and I'm just sitting at my desk writing on, unconcerned, when I hear of the new murder I go on writing (presumably about it, he he) – All the ladies have gone to the lawns but what horror when they come back just to sense murder in that room, what will Ma say, but he has cut up the body and washed it down the toilet – Dark brewing face bends over us in the gloomdream.

I wake up in the morning at seven and my mop is still drying on the rock, like a woman's head of hair, like Hecuba forlorn, and the

lake is a misty mirror a mile below out of which soon the ladies of the lake shall rise in wrath and all night long I hardly slept (I hear faint thunder in my eardrums) because the mice, the rat, and the two fawns befawdledawdled all over place, the fawns unreal, too skinny, too strange to be deer, but new kinds of mystery mountain mammals – They cleaned out utterly the plate of cold boiled potatoes I laid out for them – My sleepingbag is flat for another day – I sing at the stove: ‘How coffee, you sure look good when you brewin’ –

‘How how lady, you sure look good when you lovin’

(the ladies of the North Pole I heard sing in Greenland)

12

My toilet is a little peaked wood outhouse on the edge of a beautiful Zen precipice with boulders and rock slate and old gnarled enlightened trees, remnants of trees, stumps, torn, tortured, hung, ready to fall, unconscious, Ta Ta Ta – the door I keep jammed open with a rock, faces vast triangular mountain walls across Lightning Gorge to the east, at 8:30 A.M. the haze is sweet and pure – and dreamy – Lightning Creek mores and mores her roar – Three Fools join in, and Shull and Cinnamon feed him, and beyond, Trouble Creek, and beyond, other forests, other primitive areas, other gnarled rock, straight east to Montana – On foggy days the view from my toilet seat is like a Chinese Zen drawing in ink on silk of gray voids, I half expect to see two giggling old dharma bums, or one in rags, by the goat-horned stump, one with a broom, the other with a pen quill, writing poems about the Giggling Lings in the Fog – saying, ‘Hanshan, what is the meaning of the void?’

‘Shihte, did you mop your kitchen floor this morning?’

‘Hanshan, what is the meaning of the void?’

‘Shihte, did you mop – Shihte, did you mop?’

‘He he he he.’

‘Why do you laugh, Shihte?’

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‘Because my floor is mopped.’

‘Then what is the meaning of the void?’

Shihte picks up his broom and sweeps empty space, like I once saw Irwin Garden do – they wander off, giggling, in the fog, and all’s left are the few near rocks and gnarls I can see and above, the Void goes into the Great Truth Cloud of upper fogs, not even one black sash, it is a giant vertical drawing, showing 2 little masters and then space endlessly above them – ‘Hanshan, where is your mop?’

‘Drying on a rock.’

A thousand years ago Hanshan wrote poems on cliffs like these, on foggy days like these, and Shihte swept out the monastery kitchen with a broom and they giggled together, and King’s Men came from far and wide to find them and they only ran, hiding, into crevasses and caves – Suddenly I see Hanshan now appearing before my Window pointing to the east, I look that way, it’s only Three Fools Creek in the morning haze, I look back, Hanshan has vanished, I look back at what he showed me, it’s only Three Fools Creek in the morning haze.

What else?

I3

Then come the long daydreams of what I’ll do when I get out of there, that mountaintop trap. Just to drift and roam down that road, on 99, fast, mebbe a filet mignon on hot coals in a riverbottom some night, with good wine, and on in the morning – to Sacramento, Berkeley, go up to Ben Fagan’s cottage and say first off this Haiku:

Hitch hiked a thousand
miles and brought
You wine

– mebbe sleep in his grass yard that night, at least one night in a Chinatown hotel, one long walk around Frisco, one big Chinese two

big Chinese dinners, see Cody, see Mal, look for Bob Donnelly and the others – few things here and there, a present for Ma – why plan? I'll just drift down the road looking at unexpected events and I won't stop till Mexico City.

14

I have a book up there, confessions of ex communists who quit when they recognized its totalitarian beastliness, *The God That Failed* the title (including one dull O awfully dull account of André Gide's that old postmortem bore) – all I have, for reading – and become depressed by the thought of a world (O what a world is this, that friendships cancel enmity of the heart, people fighting for something to fight, everywhere) a world of GPU's and spies and dictators and purges and midnight murders and marijuana revolutions with guns and gangs in the desert – suddenly, just by tuning in on America via the lookout radio listening to the other boys in the bull session, I hear football scores, talk of so-and-so 'Bo Pelligrini! – what a bruiser!! I don't talk to anybody from Maryland' – and the jokes and the laconic stay, I realize, 'America is as free as that wild wind, out there, still free, free as when there was no name to that border to call it Canada and on Friday nights when Canadian Fishermen come in old cars on the old road beyond the lake tarn' (that I can see, the little lights of Friday night, thinking then immediately of their hats and gear and flies and lines) 'on Friday nights it was the nameless Indian came, the Skagit, and a few log forts were up there, and down here a ways, and winds blew on free feet and free antlers, and still do, on free radio waves, on free wild youngtalk of America on the radio, college boys, fearless free boys, a million miles from Siberia this is and Amerikay is a good old country yet –'

For the whole blighted darkness-woe of thinking about Russias and plots to assassinate whole peoples' souls, is lifted just by hearing 'My God, the score is 26–0 already – they couldn't gain anything thru the line' – 'Just like the All Stars' – 'Hey Ed when you comin down

Jack Kerouac

off your lookout?’ – ‘He’s goin steady, he’ll be wantin to go home straight’ – ‘We might take a look at Glacier National Park’ – ‘We’re goin home thru the Badlands of North Dakota’ – ‘You mean the Black Hills’ – ‘I dont talk to anybody from Syracuse’ – ‘Anybody know a good bedtime story?’ – ‘Hey it’s eight thirty, we better knock off – How 33 ten-seven till tomorrow morning. Good night’ – ‘Ho! How 32 ten-seven till tomorrow morning – Sleep tight’ – ‘Did you say you had Honkgonk on your portable radio?’ – ‘Sure, listen, hingya hingya hingya’ – ‘That does it, good night’ –

And I know that America is too vast with people too vast to ever be degraded to the low level of a slave nation, and I can go hitch hiking down that road and on into the remaining years of my life knowing that outside of a couple fights in bars started by drunks I’ll have not a hair on my head (and I need a haircut) harmed by Totalitarian cruelty –

Indian scalp say this, and prophesy:

‘From these walls, laughter will run over the world, infecting with courage the bent laborious peon of antiquity.’

15

And I buy Buddha, who said, that what he said was neither true nor untrue, and there’s the only true thing or good thing I ever heard and it rings a cloudy bell, a mighty supramundane gong – He said, ‘Your trip was long, illimitable, you came to this raindrop called your life, and call it *yours* – we have purposed that you vow to be awakened – whether in a million lifetimes you disregard this Kingly Heeding, it’s still a raindrop in the sea and who’s disturbed and what is time – ? This Bright Ocean of Infinitude sails many fish afar, that come and go like the sparkle on your lake, mind, but dive into the rectangular white blaze of this thought now: You have been assigned to wake up, this is the golden eternity, which knowledge will do you no earthly good for earth’s not pith, a crystal myth – face the A-H truth, awakener, be you not knuckled under the wile of cold or heat, comfort or unrepouse, be you mindful,

moth, of eternity – be you loving, lad, lord, of infinite variety – be you one of us, Great Knowers Without Knowing, Great Lovers Beyond Love, whole hosts and unnumberable angels with form or desire, supernatural corridors of heat – we heat to hold you woke – open your arms embrace the world, it and we rush in, we’ll lay a silver meeting brand of golden hands on your milky embowered brow, power, to make you freeze in love forever – Believe! and ye shall live forever – Believe, that ye have lived forever – overrule the fortresses and penances of dark isolate suffering life on earth, there’s more to life than earth, there’s Light Everywhere, look –’

In these strange words I hear every night, in many other words, varieties and threads of discourse pouring in from that evermindful rich –

Take my word for it, something will come of it, and it will wear the face of sweet nothingness, flappy leaf –

The bullnecks of strong raft drivers the color of purple gold and kirtles of silk will carry us uncarried uncrossing crossable nocross voids to the ulum light, where Ragamita the lidded golden eye opes to hold the gaze – Mice skitter in the mountain night with little feet of ice and diamonds, but’s not my time yet (mortal hero) to know what I know I know, so, come in

Words . . .

The stars are words . . .

Who succeeded? Who failed?

16

AH YAIR, and when
I gets to Third and
Townsend,
I’ll ketch me
the Midnight Ghost –
We’ll roll right down
To San Jose

Jack Kerouac

As quick as you can boast –
– Ah ha, Midnight,
 midnight ghost,
Ole Zipper rollin
 down the line –
Ah ha, Midnight,
 midnight ghost,
Rollin
 down
 the
 line
We'll come a blazing
To Watson-ville,
And whang on through
 the line –
Salinas Valley
 in the night
On down to Apaline –
Whoop Whoop
 Whoop ee
Midnight Ghost
Clear t'Obispo Bump
– Take on a helper
and make that mountain,
and come on down the town,
– We'll rail on through
to Surf and Tangair
and on down by the sea –
The moon she shines
 The midnight ocean
goin down the line –
Gavioty, Gavioty,
O Gavi-oty,
Singin and drinkin wine –
Camarilla, Camarilla,
Where Charlie Parker

went mad
We'll roll on to L.A.
– O Midnight
 midnight,
 midnight ghost,
rollin down the line.
Sainte Teresa
Sainte Teresa, dont you worry,
We'll make it on time,
down that midnight
 line

And that's how I figure I'll make San Francisco to L.A in 12 hours, ridin the Midnight Ghost, under a lashed truck, the Firstclass Zipper freight train, zooam, zom, right down, sleepingbag and wine – a daydream in the form of a song.

17

Getting tired of looking at all the angles of my lookout, as for instance, looking at my sleepingbag in the morning from the point of view of opening it again at night, or at my stove with high supper heat of midafternoon from the point of view of midnight when the mouse'll be scratching in it cold, I turn my thoughts to Frisco and I see it like a movie what'll be there when I get there, I see myself in my new (to-be-bought-in-Seattle-I-plan) black large-sized leather jacket that hangs and ties over my waist low (mebbe hangs over my hands) and my new gray Chino pants and new wool sports shirt (orange and yellow and blue!) and my new haircut, there I go bleak-faced Decembering the steps of my Skid Row Chinatown hotel, or else I'm in Simon Darlovsky's pad at 5 Turner Terrace in the crazy Negro housing project at Third & 22nd where you see the giant gastanks of eternity and a whole vista of the smoky industrial Frisco including the bay and the railroad mainline and factories – I see myself, rucksack on one shoulder, coming in the ever-unlocked

backdoor to Lazarus' bedroom (Lazarus is Simon's strange 15½-year-old mystic brother who never says anything but 'D'ja have any dreams?') (last night in your sleep?) (he means), I come in, it's October, they're at school, I go out and buy ice cream, beer, canned peaches, steaks and milk and stock the icebox and when they come home at late afternoon and in the courtyard the little kids have started screaming for Fall Dusk Joy, I've been at that kitchen table all day drinking wine and reading the papers, Simon with his bony hawk nose and crazy glittering green eyes and glasses looks at me and says through his ever-sinus nostrils 'Jack! You! When'd you get here, hnf!' as he sniffs (horribly the torment of his sniff, I hear it now, cant tell how he breathes) – 'Just today – look, the icebox is full of food – Mind if I stay here a few days?' – 'Plenty room' – Lazarus is behind him, wearing his new suit and all combed to make the junior highschool lovelies, he just nods and smiles and then we're having a big feast and Lazarus finally says 'Where dja sleep last night?' and I say 'In a yard in Berkeley' so he says 'Djav any dreams?' – So tell him a long dream. And at midnight when Simon and I have gone out walking all the way up Third Street drinking wine and talking about girls and talking to the spade whores across from the Cameo Hotel and going to North Beach to look for Cody and the gang, Lazarus all alone in the kitchen fries himself three steaks for a midnight snack, he's a big goodlooking crazy kid, one of many Darlovsky brothers, in the madhouse most of them, for some reason, and Simon hitch hiked all the way to New York to rescue Laz and brought him back to live with him, on relief, two Russian brothers, in the city, in the void, Irwin's protégés, Simon a Kafka writer – Lazarus a mystic who stares at pictures of monsters in weird magazines, for hours, and wanders around the city zombie like, and when he was 15 claimed he would weigh 300 pounds before the year was out and also had set himself a deadline to make a million dollars by New Year's Eve – to this crazy pad Cody oftentimes goes in his shabby blue brakeman's uniform and sits at the kitchen table then leaps out and jumps in his car yelling 'Short on time!' and races off to North Beach to look for the gang or to work to catch his train, and girls everywhere in the streets and in our bars and the whole Frisco scene

one insane movie – I see myself arriving on the scene, across that screen, looking around, all done with desolation – White masts of ships at the foot of streets.

I see myself wandering among the wholesale markets – down past the deserted MCS union hall where I'd tried so hard to get a ship, for years – There I go, chewing on a Mister Goodbar –

I wander by Gumpy's department store and look in the artframe shop where Psyche, who always wears jeans and turtleneck sweater with a little white collar falling over, works, whose pants I would like to remove and just leave the turtleneck sweater and the little collar and the rest is all for me and all too sweet for me – I stand in the street staring in at her – I sneak by our bar several times (The Place) and peek in –

18

I wake up and I'm on Desolation Peak and the firs are motionless in the blue morning – Two butterflies comport, with worlds of mountains as their backdrop – My clock ticks the slow day – While I slept and traveled in dreams all night, the mountains didn't move at all and I doubt they dreamed –

I go out to fetch a pail of snow to put in my old tin washtub that reminds me of my grandfather's in Nashua and I find that my shovel has disappeared from the snowbank on the precipice, I look down and figure it will be a long climb down and up but I can't see it – Then I do see it, right in the mud at the foot of the snow, on a ledge, I go down very carefully, slipping in the mud, for fun yank out a big boulder from the mud and kick it down, it goes booming and crashes on a rock and splits in two and thunders 1500 feet down to where I see the final rock of it rolling in long snowfields and coming to rest against boulders with a knock that I only hear 2 seconds later – Silence, the beautiful gorge shows no sign of animal life, just firs and alpine heather and rocks, the snow beside me blinds whitely in the sun, I loose down at the cerulean neutral lake a look of woe, little pink or almost brown clouds hover in its mirror, I look up and there's

mighty Hozomeen redbrown pinnacles high in the sky – I get the shovel and come up carefully in the mud, slipping – fill the pail with clean snow, cover the stash of carrots and cabbage in a new deep snowhole, and go back, dumping the lump in the tin tub and splashing water over the sides onto my dusty floor – Then I get an old pail and like the old Japanese woman go down among beautiful heather meadows and gather sticks for my stove. It's Saturday afternoon all over the world.

19

'If I were in Frisco now,' I think in my chair in the late aftersolitudes, 'I'd buy a great big quart of Christian Brothers Port or some other excellent special brand and go up to my Chinatown room and empty half its contents in an empty pint, stick that in my pocket, and take off, around the little streets of Chinatown watching the children, the little Chinese children so happy with their little hands in their parents' wrapt, I'd look in grocery stores and see the noncommittal Zen butchers cutting the necks of chickens, I'd gaze water mouthed at the beautiful glazed cured roasted ducks in the window, I'd wander around, stand on the corner of Italian Broadway too, to get the feel of life, blue skies and white clouds above, I'd go back and into the Chinese movie with my pint and sit there drinking it (from now, 5 p.m.) three hours digging the weird scenes and unheard-of dialogs and developments and maybe some of the Chinese would see me drink-a-pint and they'd think 'Ah, a drunken white man in the Chinese movie' – at 8 I'd come out to a blue dusk with sparkling lights of San Francisco on all the magic hills around, now I'd refill my pint in the hotel room and really take off for a long hike around the city, to work up an appetite for my midnight feast in a booth in Sun Heung Hung's marvelous old restaurant – I'd strike over the hill, over Telegraph, and right down to the rail spur where I know a place in a narrow alley where I can sit and drink and wallgaze a vast black cliff that has magic vibratory properties that send back messages of swarming holy light in the night, I know I tried it –

then, drinking, sipping, re-capping the bottle, I walk the lonely way along the Embarcadero through Fisherman's Wharf restaurant areas where the seals break my heart with their coughing cries of love, I go, past shrimp counters, out, past the masts of the last docked ships, and then up Van Ness and over and down into the Tenderloin – the winking marquees and bars with cocktail cherry-sticks, the fallow characters the old alcoholic blondes stumbling to the liquor store in slacks – then I go (wine almost gone and me high and glad) down main arterial Market Street and the honkytonk of sailors, movies, and sodafountains, across the alley and into Skid Row (finishing my wine there, among scabrous old doorways chalked and be-pissed and glass-crashed by a hundred thousand grieving souls in Goodwill rags) (the same old boys who roam the freights and cling to little bits of paper on which you always find some kind of prayer or philosophy) – Wine finished, I go singing and handclapping quietly to the beat of my feet all the way up Kearney back to Chinatown, almost midnight now, and I sit in the Chinatown park on a dark bench and take the air, drinking in the sight of the foody delicious neons of my restaurant blinking in the little street, occasionally crazy drunks go by in the dark looking for half finished bottles on the ground, or butts, and across Kearney there you see the blue cops go in and out of the big gray jailhouse – Then I go in my restaurant, order from the Chinese menu, and instantly they bring me smoked fish, curried chicken, fabulous duck cakes, unbelievably delicious and delicate silver platters (on stems) containing steaming marvels, that you raise the cover off and look and sniff – with tea pot, cup, ah I eat – and eat – till midnight – maybe then over tea write a letter to beloved Ma, telling her – then done, I either go to bed or to our bar, The Place, to find the gang and get drunk . . .

On a soft August evening I scramble down the slope of the mountain and find a steep place to sit crosslegged near firs and blasted old tree stumps, facing the moon, the yellow halfmoon that's sinking

into the mountains to the southwest – In the western sky, warm rose – About 8:30 – The wind over the miledown lake is balmy and reminiscent of all the ideas you've ever had about enchanted lakes – I pray and ask Awakener Avalokitesvara to lay his diamond hand on my brow and give me the immortal understanding – He is the Hearer and Answerer of Prayer, I know that this business is self hallucination and crazy business but after all it is only the awakeners (the Buddhas) who have said they do not exist – In about twenty seconds comes this understanding to my mind and heart: 'When a baby is born he falls asleep and dreams the dream of life, when he dies and is buried in his grave he wakes up again to the Eternal Ecstasy' – 'And when all is said and done, it doesnt matter' –

Yea, Avalokitesvara did lay his diamond hand . . .

And then the question of why, why, it's only the Power, the one mental nature exuding its infinite potentialities – What a strange feeling reading that in Vienna in February of 1922 (month before I was born) such and such was going on in the streets, how could there have been a Vienna, nay even the conception of a Vienna before I was born?! – It's because the one mental nature goes on, has nothing to do with individual arrivers and departers that bear it and fare in it and that are fared in by it – So that 2500 years ago was Gotama Buddha, who thought up the greatest thought in Mankind, a drop in the bucket those years in that Mental Nature which is the Universal Mind – I see in my mountainside contentment that the Power delights and joys in both ignorance and enlightenment, else there wouldnt be ignorant existence alongside enlightened inexistence, why should the Power limit itself to one or the other – whether as the form of pain, or as impalpable ethers of formlessness and painlessness, what matters it? – And I see the yellow moon a-sinkin as the earth rolls away. I twist my neck around to see upsidedown and the mountains of the earth are just those same old hanging bubbles hanging into an unlimited sea of space – Ah, if there was another sight besides eye sight what atomic otherlevels wouldnt we see? – but here we see moons, mountains, lakes, trees and sentient beings only, with our eyesight – The Power delights in all of it – It is reminding itself

that it is the Power, that's why, for it, The Power, is really only ecstasy, and its manifestations dream, it is the Golden Eternity, ever peaceful, this bleary dream of existence is just a blur in its – I run out of words – The warm rose in the west becomes a hushed pastel park of gray, the soft evening sighs, little animals rustle in the heather and holes, I shift my cramped feet, the moon yellows and mellows and finally begins to hit the topmost crag and as always you see silhouetted in its magic charm some snag or stump that looks like the legendary Coyotl, God of the Indians, about to howl to the Power –

O what peace and content I feel, coming back to my shack knowing that the world is a babe's dream and the ecstasy of the golden eternity is all we're going back to, to the essence of the Power – and the Primordial Rapture, *we all know it* – I lie on my back in the dark, hands joined, glad, as the northern lights shine like a Hollywood premiere and at that too I look upsidedown and see that it's just big pieces of ice on earth reflecting the otherside sun in some far daylight, in fact, too, the curve of the earth silhouetted is also seen arching over and around – Northern lights, bright enough to light my room, like ice moons.

What content to know that when all is said and done it doesn't matter – Woes? the piteousnesses I feel when I think of my mother? – but it all has to be roused and remembered, it isn't there by itself, and that's because the mental nature is by nature free of the dream and free of everything – It's like those pipe-smoking Deist philosophers who say 'O mark the marvelous creation of God, the moon, the stars etc., would you trade it for anything?' not realizing they wouldn't be saying this at all if it wasn't for some primordial memory of when, of what, of how nothing was – 'It's only recent,' I realize, looking at the world, some recent cycle of creation by The Power to joy in its reminder to its selfless self that it is The Power – and all of it in its essence swarming tender mystery, that you can see by closing your eyes and letting the eternal silence in your ears – that blessedness and bliss surely to be believed, my dears –

The awakeners, if they choose, are born as babes – This is my first awakening – There are no awakeners and no awakening.

Jack Kerouac

In my shack I lie, remembering the violets in our backyard on Phebe Avenue when I was eleven, on June nights, the blear dream of it, ephemeral, haunted, long gone, going further out, till it shall be all gone out.

21

I wake up in the middle of the night and remember Maggie Cassidy and how I might have married her and been old Finnegan to her Irish Lass Plurabelle, how I might have got a cottage, a little ramshackle Irish rose cottage among the reeds and old trees on the banks of the Concord and woulda worked as a grim bejacketed gloved and bebaseballhatted brakeman in the cold New England night, for her and her Irish ivory thighs, her and her marshmallow lips, her and her brogue and 'God's Green Earth' and her two daughters – How I would of laid her across the bed at night all mine and laborious sought her rose, her mine of a thing, that emerald dark and hero thing I want – remember her silk thighs in tight jeans, the way she folded back one thigh under her hands and sighed as we watched Television together – in her mother's parlor that last haunted 1954 trip I took to October Lowell – Ah, the rose vines, the river mud, the run of her, the eyes – A woman for old Duluo? Unbelievable by my stove in desolation midnight that it should be true – Maggie Adventure –

The claws of black trees by moonlit rosy dusk mayhap and by chance hold me much love too, and I can always leave them and roam along – but when I'm old by my final stove, and the bird fritters on his branch of dust in O Lowell, what'll I think, willow? – when winds creep inside my sack and give me bareback blues and I go bent about my meritorious duties in the sod-cover earth, what lovesongs then for old bedawdler bog bent foggy Jack O – ? – no new poets will bring laurels like honey to my milk, sneers – Sneers of love woman were better I guess – I'd fall down ladders, brabac, and wash me river underwear – gossip me washlines – air me Mondays – fantasm me Africas of housewives – Lear me daughters –

panhandle me marble heart – but it might have been better than
what it may be, lonesome un-kissed Dulooz lips surling in a tomb

22

Early Sunday mornings I always remember home in Ma's house in Long Island, recent years, when she's reading the Sunday papers and I get up, shower, drink a cup of wine, read the scores and then eat the charming little breakfast she'll lay out for me, just all I have to do is ask her, her special way of crisping bacon and the way she sunnysides the eggs – The TV not turned on because there's nothing much of note on Sunday mornings – I grieve to think that her hair is turning gray and she's 62 and will be 70 when I'm in my owlish 40s – soon it will be my 'old mother' – in the bunk I try to think of how I'll take care of her –

Then as day lengthens and Sunday drags and the mountains wear the pious dullish aspect Sabbathini I always begin to think instead of earlier days in Lowell when the redbrick mills were so haunted by the riverside about 4 in the afternoon, the kids coming home from the Sunday movies, but O the sad redbrick and everywhere in America you see it, in the reddening sun, and clouds beyond, and people in their best clothes in all that – We all stand on the sad earth throwing long shadows, breath cut with flesh.

Even the skitter of the mouse in my shack attic on Sundays has a Sunday halidom about it, as though churchgoing, churchment, preachments – We'll have a whack at it around.

Mostly Sundays I'm bored. And all my memories are bored. The sun is too golden bright. I shudder to think what people are doing in North Carolina. In Mexico City they wander around eating vast planks of fried porkskin, among parks, even their Sunday is a Blight – It must be the Sabbath was invented to soften joy.

For normal peasants Sunday is a smile, but us black poets, agh – I guess Sunday is God's lookingglass.

Compare the churchyards of Friday night, with the pulpits of Sunday morn –

Jack Kerouac

In Bavaria, men with bare knees walk around with hands behind their backs – Flies drowse behind a lace curtain, in Calais, and out the window see the sailboats – On Sunday Céline yawns and Genet dies – In Moscow there's no pomp – Only in Benares on Sundays peddlers scream and snakecharmers open baskets with a lute – On Desolation Peak in the High Cascades, on Sundays, agh –

I think in particular of that redbrick wall of the Sheffield Milk Company by the mainline of the Long Island Railroad in Richmond Hill, the mud tracks of workers' cars left in the lot during the week, one or two forlorn Sundayworker cars parked there now, the clouds passing in the pools of brown puddlewater, the sticks and cans and rags of debris, the commute local passing by with pale blank faces of Sunday Travelers – presaging the ghostly day when industrial America shall be abandoned and left to rust in one long Sunday Afternoon of oblivion.

23

With his ugly many bud legs the green alpine caterpillar comports in his heather world, a head like a pale dewdrop, his fat body reaching up straight to climb, hanging upsidedown like a South American ant eater to fiddle and fish and sway around in search, then cromming up like a boy making a limb he aligns himself hidden under heather limbs and plucks and monsters at the innocent green – the part of the green, he is, that was given moving juice – he twists and peers and intrudes his head everywhere – he is in a jungle of dappled shady old lastyear's gray heather pins – sometimes motionless like the picture of a boa constrictor he yaws to heaven a songless gaze, sleeps snakeheaded, then turns in like a busted-out tube when I blow on him, swift to duck, quick to retire, meek to obey the level injunction of lie still that's meant by the sky whatever may chance from it – He is very sad now as I blow again, puts head in shoulder mourning, I'll let him free to roam unobserved, playing possum as he wists – there he goes, disappearing, making little jiggles in the jungle, eye level to his world I perceive that he too is overtopped by a few fruits

and then infinity, he too's upside-down and clinging to his sphere –
we are all mad.

I sit there wondering if my own travels down the Coast to Frisco and
Mexico wont be just as sad and mad – but by bejesus j Christ it'll be
bettern hangin around *this* rock –

24

Some of the days on the mount, tho hot, are permeated with a pure
cool beauty that presages October and my freedom in the Indian
plateau of Mexico which will be even purer and cooler – O old
dreams I've had of the mountains on the plateau of Mexico when
the skies are filled with clouds like the beards of patriarchs and
indeed I'm the Patriarch himself standing in a flowing robe on the
green hill of gold – In the Cascades summer may heat in August but
you get the Fall hint, especially on the eastern slope of my hill in the
afternoons, away from the burn of the sun, where the air is sharp
and mountainlike and the trees have well withered to a beginning of
the end – Then I think of the World Series, the coming of football
across America (the cries of a keen Middlewestern voice on the
scratchy radio) – I think of shelves of wine in stores along the main-
line of the California Railroad, I think of the pebbles in the ground
of the West under vast Fall-booming skies, I think of the long hori-
zons and plains and the ultimate desert with his cactus and dry mes-
quites stretching to red tablelands far away where my traveler's old
hope always wends and wends and only void returns from nowhere,
the long dream of the Western hitch hiker and hobo, the harvest
tramps who sleep in their cottonpickin bags and rest content under
the flashy star – At night, Fall hints in the Cascade Summer where
you see Venus red on her hill and think 'Who will be my lady?' – It
will all, the haze shimmer and the beezing bugs, be wiped off the
slate of summer and hurled to the east by that eager sea west wind
and that's when hairflying me'll be stomping down the trail for the
last time, rucksack and all, singing to the snows and jackpines, en

route for further adventures, further yearnings for adventures – and all behind me (and you) the ocean of tears which has been this life on earth, so old, that when I look at my panoramic photographs of the Desolation area and see the old mules and wiry roans of 1935 (in the picture) hackled at a no-more corral fence, I marvel that the mountains lookt the same in 1935 (Old Jack Mountain to an exact degree with the same snow arrangement) as they do in 1956 so that the oldness of the earth strikes me recalling primordially that it was the same, they (the mountains) looked the same too in 584 B.C. – and all that but a sea spray drop – We live to long, so long I will, and jounce down that mountain highest perfect knowing or no highest perfect knowing full of glorious ignorant looking to sparkle elsewhere –

Later in the afternoon the west wind picks up, comes from smileless wests, invisible, and sends clean messages thru my cracks and screens – More, more, let the firs wither more, I want to see the white marvels south –

25

Noumena is what you see with your eyes closed, that immaterial golden ash, Ta the Golden Angel – Phenomena is what you see with your eyes open, in my case the debris of one thousand hours of the living-conception in a mountain shack – There, on top of the woodpile, a discarded cowboy book, ugh, awful, it is full of sentimentality and long-winded comments, silly dialog, sixteen heroes with double guns to one ineffectual villain whom I'd rather like for his irascibility and clomping boots – the only book that I have thrown away – Above it, sitting on corner of window, a can of Macmillan Ring Free Oil that I use to keep my kerosene in and to stoke fires, to fire fires, wizard like, vast dull explosions in my stove that get the coffee boiling – My frying pan hangs from a nail over another (castiron) pan too big to use but my used pan keeps dripping dribbles of fat down its back reminds of streamers of sperm, that I scrape off and flut into the wood, who cares – Then the old stove with the water pan, the perpetual coffee potpan with long handle, the tea pot seldom used

– Then on a little table the great greasy dishpan with its surroundant accoutrements of steel scrubber, rags, stove rags, wash-whirl stick, one mess, with a perpetual puddle of black scummy water under it that I wipe out once a week – Then the shelf of canned goods diminishing slowly, and other foods, Tide soap box with the pretty housewife holding up a Tide box saying ‘Just made for each other’ – Box of Bisquick left here by the other lookout I never opened, jar of syrup I dont like – give to an ant colony down the yard – old jar of peanutbutter left here by some lookout presumably when Truman was President apparently from the old peanut rot of it – Jar I pickled onions in, that turns to smell like hard cider as the afternoon sun works it, to rancid wine – little bottle of Kitchen Bouquet gravy juice, good in stews, awful to wash off your fingers – Box of Chef Boyardee’s Spaghetti Dinner, what a joyous name, I picture the Queen Mary docked in New York and Chefs going out to hit the town with little berets, towards the sparkling lights, or else I picture some sham chef with mustachio singin Italian arias in the kitchen on television cook shows – Pile of enveloped green pea powder soup, good with bacon, good as the Waldorf-Astoria and that Jarry Wagner first introduced me to that time we hiked and camped at Potrero Meadows and he dumped frying bacon into the whole soup pot and it was thick and rick in the smoky night air by the creek – Then a half-used cellophane bag of blackeyed peas, and a bag of Rye Flour for my muffins and to glue together Johnnycakes – Then a jar of pickles left in 1952 and froze in the winter so that the pickles are just spicy water husks looking like Mexican greenpeppers in a jar – My box of cornmeal, unopened can of Calumet Baking Powder with the full-headed Chief – new unopened can of black pepper – Boxes of Lipton soup left by Ole Ed the previous lonely fucker up here – Then my jar of pickled beets, ruby dark and red with a few choice onions whitening against the glass – then my jar of honey, half gone, for hot-milk-and-honey on cold nights when I feel bad or sick – Unopened can of Maxwell House coffee, the last one – Jar of red wine vinegar I’ll never use and which I wish was wine and looks like wine so red and deep – Behind that, new jar of molasses, that I drink from the bottle sometimes, mouthfuls of iron – The box of

Jack Kerouac

Ry-Krisp, which is dry sad concentrated bread for dry sad mountains – And a row of cans left years ago, with frozen and dehydrated asparagrass that is so ephemeral to eat it's like sucking water, and paler – Canned whole boiled potatoes like shrunk heads and useless – (that only the deer eat) – the last two cans of Argentine roastbeef, of an original 15, very good, when I arrived in the lookout on that cold storming day with Andy and Marty on the horses I found 30¢ worth of canned meat and tuna, all good, which in my tightness I'd never have thought to buy – Lumberjack syrup, a big tall can, also a leftover gift, for my delicious flapjacks – Spinach, which, so iron like, never lost its flavor in its seasons on the shelf – My box full of potatoes and onions, O sigh! I wish I had an ice cream soda and a sirloin steak!

La Vie Parisienne, I picture it, a restaurant in Mexico City, I go in and sit at the rich tablecloth, order good white Bordeaux and a filet mignon, for dessert pastries and strong coffee and a cigar, Ah, and stroll down the boulevard Reforma to interesting darknesses of the French movie with the Spanish titles and the sudden booming Mexico Newsreel –

Hozomeen, rock, never eats, never stores up debris, never sighs, never dreams of distant cities, never waits for Fall, never lies, maybe though he dies – Bah.

Every night I still ask the Lord, 'Why?' and haven't heard a decent answer yet.

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Remembering, remembering, that sweet world so bitter to taste – the time when I played Sarah Vaughan's 'Our Father' on my little box in Rocky Mount and the colored maid Lula wept in the kitchen so I gave it to her so on Sunday mornings in the meadows and pine barrens of North Carolina now, emerging from her old man's old bare house with the pickaninny porch, you hear the Divine Sarah – 'for Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, forever, a men' – the way her voice breaks into a bell on the 'a' of amen,

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quivering, like a voice should – Bitter? because bugs thrash in mortal agony even on the table as you'd think, deathless fools that get up and walk off and are reborn, like us, 'hooman beens' – like winged ants, the males, who are cast off by the females and go die, how utterly futile they are the way they climb windowpanes and just fall off when they get to the top, and do it again, till they exhausted die – And the one I saw one afternoon on my shack floor just thrashing and thrashing in the filthy dust from some kind of fatal hopeless seizure – oi, the way we do, whether we can see it now or not – Sweet? just as sweet, tho, as when dinner is bubbling in the pot and my mouth is watering, the marvelous pot of turnip greens, carrots, roastbeef, noodles and spices I made one night and ate barechested on the knoll, sitting crosslegged, in a little bowl, with chopsticks, singing – Then the warm moonlit nights with still the red flare in the west – sweet enough, the breeze, the songs, the dense pine timber down in the valleys of the cracks – A cup of coffee and a cigarette, why zazen? and somewhere men are fighting with frighting carbines, their chests crisscrossed with ammo, their belts weighed down with grenades, thirsty, tired, hungry, scared, insaned – It must be that when the Lord thought forth the world he intended for it to include both me and my sad disinclined pain-heart AND Bull Hubbard rolling on the floor in laughter at the foolishness of men –

At night at my desk in the shack I see the reflection of myself in the black window, a rugged faced man in a dirty ragged shirt, need-a-shave, frowny, lipped, eyed, haired, nosed, eared, handed, necked, adamsappled, eyebrowed, a reflection just with all behind it the void of 700000000000 light years of infinite darkness riddled by arbitrary limited-idea light, and yet there's a twinkle in me eye and I sing bawdy songs about the moon in the alleys of Dublin, about vodka hoy hoy, and then sad Mexico sundown-over-rocks songs about amor, corazón, and tequila – My desk is littered with papers, beautiful to look at thru half closed eyes the delicate milky litter of papers piled, like some old dream of a picture of papers, like papers piled on a desk in a cartoon, like a realistic scene from an old Russian film, and the oil lamp shadowing some in half – And looking at my face closer in the tin mirror, I see the blue eyes and sun red face and red