

## REMEMBRANCE OF ALLEN GINSBERG

*April, 1997*

When you first appeared to me  
at Brooklyn College 1960  
w/ Corso & Whalen and Snyder reinventing oral poetry  
we were reading Eliot and Pound –  
ashes on the page – ideas dying on the page.

You opened up the line  
opened the poem to the world.  
It is a struggle with a phantom  
then and now for the young  
to discern their lives spread out  
before them as anything but  
“a body etherized upon a table”  
except as the dreary suppression of desire.

Suddenly when you read  
there at Brooklyn College,  
life became molten,  
spirit and matter merged,  
feeling flooded  
the dry wound of mind,  
the soul and the body healed  
no longer severed  
by centuries of dogma.

A future opened and with bare feet,  
naked body and open mind,  
I could walk the American earth.



In the Haight Ashbury  
when I edited the *Oracle*,  
and helped originate the Human Be-In  
you came forth chanting with harmonium  
“Om Namō Shivaya”  
and danced wildly like Shiva  
creating and destroying universes.  
And wrote in the *Oracle* that  
America’s political need  
was orgies in the parks and  
naked bacchantes in the forests.  
In the Houseboat Summit interview  
you asked Leary, “What do you  
really mean by drop out?”

Years later we met at  
an Italian Restaurant  
in North Beach  
and you kissed me  
and spoke about  
the Aboriginal shaman  
in Australia who had memorized  
Britannica’s of information  
in verse that their culture  
needed to survive  
and passed it on orally.

Two years ago I sat with you  
at a City Lights signing  
while Ann drew you,  
and I told you how you

had brought me from  
academia at Brooklyn College  
to the heart of life.  
And now you were teaching there.  
You spoke of the spontaneous mind –  
first thought, best thought.

When I read of your hepatitis and liver cancer,  
I wrote you that I loved you  
and that you showed me and the world  
that the poem and life must encompass it all,  
and that I too had been seized by the dragon  
and asked you to not to cease the struggle.  
I wanted you so much to live.  
But the next morning you were murdered  
by your past, by the fire in the liver.

I bear witness before the immortal mirror  
how time is checking us out.  
Ravaged from the explorations  
of the undiscovered mind,  
and time is checking us out.  
Savaged bodies bent by the raging river.  
Bob Kaufman jazz images flowing  
beaten, shocked and traumatized  
and time is checking us out.  
Tim Leary wanderer through the inner cosmos  
kedomized unable to feel the pain in his body  
until it was too late,  
and time is checking us out.  
Ram Dass with his peaceful smile

and high blood pressure  
now silent and paralyzed,  
and time is checking us out.  
Allen Ginsberg, the voice of the bard,  
body bent, the song stilled  
and time is checking us out.

Time must replace its heroes of deep soul,  
its explorers, the voices that make us whole.  
Somehow the light must pass through time  
incandescent, meteoric and passionate  
the fire must burn through time.