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Allen Ginsberg v Olomouci
Komentovaná přednáška Allena Ginsberga o spontánním
psaní

Allen Ginsberg in Olomouc
Allen Ginsberg's Lecture on Spontaneous Writing with
Commentary

Diplomová práce

Vedoucí práce: prof. PhDr. Josef Jařab, CSc.

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V Olomouci dne Vlastnoruční podpis.....

Mé poděkování patří především prof. Josefu Jařabovi za jeho cenné připomínky, odborné rady a poskytnuté materiály. Děkuji také Veronice, bez jejíž vytrvalé podpory bych tuto práci nebyl schopný dokončit.

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Úvod

Byla středa 24. listopadu 1993 a v aule filozofické fakulty univerzity Palackého v Olomouci, kde se v rámci kurzu American Open Poetics pravidelně scházela hrstka posluchačů, teď příchozí s obtížemi hledali volné místo. Svého hosta, který jej na následující čtyři lekce vystřídal na postu přednášejícího, uváděl tehdejší rektor prof. Josef Jařab jako člověka, kterého nejen že, jak praví klišé, není třeba představovat, ale lze jej uspokojivě představit pouze dvěma slovy.¹ Byl jím Allen Ginsberg.

Legenda amerického a potažmo světového básnictví přitom nestanula na české půdě poprvé. Už v roce 1965 byl vyhoštěn z tehdejšího Československa poté, co byl zvolen prvním a také posledním králem majálesu v historii ČSSR. Svůj mandát mohl předat až po pádu komunistického režimu, když v rámci turné po východní Evropě zavítal v doprovodu kolegů v květnu 1990 kromě Prahy také do Olomouce, do níž se vrátil už sám na pozvání prof. Jařaba v roce 1993. Přes svůj zhoršující se zdravotní stav naposledy navštívil Prahu ještě v roce 1996.

Smutnou skutečností přesto zůstává, že patrně nejlépe zdokumentovala Ginsbergovo působení na našem území komunistická státní bezpečnost, která v touze po informacích dokonce neváhala napomocť Ginsbergovi při „ztrátě“ jeho deníku. Z porevolučních Ginsbergových vystoupení se toho však dochovalo překvapivě málo. K světlým výjimkám patří například krátký dokumentární film *Návrat Krále Majálesu* z roku 1993 nebo sbírka *Beatnici v Praze*, kterou vydalo nakladatelství Argo v roce 2001 a jejíž součástí je kompaktní disk s nahrávkami, na nichž tři legendy beatnického hnutí — Allena Ginsberga, Lawrence Ferlinghettiho a Garryho Snydera — doprovází čeští hudebníci. Tím však výčet pomalu končí.

S úmyslem napravit alespoň částečně tento žalostný stav vznikla tato práce. Z první Ginsbergovy návštěvy Olomouce se bohužel žádný dostupný záznam nedochoval. Lépe je tomu u návštěvy druhé z listopadu a prosince 1993, ze které byly v soukromém archivu nalezeny zvukové nahrávky

¹ Allen Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind" (unpublished lecture, December 11, 2014), Příloha II, 74.

Ginsbergových přednášek o teorii a technice spontánního psaní poezie, které představují středobod této práce.

Hlavním úkolem tedy bylo převedení těchto vzácných nahrávek ze zastaralého formátu do formátu lépe odpovídajícího současným potřebám a jejich následný přepis do textové podoby, aby z nich následně bylo možno snáze čerpat a lépe se v nich orientovat. Přepis těchto přednášek byl posléze doplněn komentářem, který má za úkol přiblížit čtenáři osobnost Allena Ginsberga, teoreticky zformulovat techniku psaní mysli, kterou se ve svých přednáškách zaobírá, a následně tyto přednášky rozčlenit a analyzovat jejich klíčové myšlenky v souladu s tzv. slogany pro psaní mysli, s jejichž pomocí Ginsberg svůj výklad strukturuje a vysvětluje.

1 Allen Ginsberg a spontánní poezie

Tvrzení, že Ginsberga není třeba představovat, není vůbec nadnesené. Že je patrně nejslavnějším básníkem na zeměkouli,² by si o sobě troufl s klidným svědomím tvrdit pravděpodobně jen málokdo. Stejně jako jeho básnické vzory Walt Whitman a William Carlos Williams se i Ginsberg nesmazatelně zapsal do tváře moderní Americké poezie a navždy ovlivnil její podobu, podobně jako jejich ani jeho dílo se neseťkalo vždy s pozitivním čtenářským ohlasem — Whitmanovy verše se doboví kritici nezdráhali označit za „zhovadilost“ a „nesouvislé žvanění“,³ Williamsova tvorba připadala Ginsbergovým profesorům na Kolumbijské univerzitě provinční, naivní a vůbec nesmyslná⁴ a když Lawrence Ferlinghetti poprvé vydal Ginsbergovu klíčovou sbírku „Kvílení a jiné básně“, vyjádřil se jeden z kritiků, že se mu z ní chtělo kvílet.⁵ Všichni tři se totiž odhodlali k tradičně neoblíbenému kroku — vystoupit ze zaběhlých pořádků. Co na tom, že tak učinili s úmyslem posunout vyjadřovací prostředky poezie blíže k požadavkům své doby.

Cesta, během níž se z ostýchavého chlapce stal oblíbený americký prorok⁶ a mluvčí přinejmenším jedné generace, nebyla v žádném ohledu přímá a každý její rozcestník už byl mnohokrát popsán. Proto se zaměřím především na ty události, které formovaly Ginsbergovu tvorbu do podoby, v jaké ji představil svým olomouckým posluchačům.

Skutečnost, že byl Ginsbergův otec Louis sám relativně uznávaným básníkem, nepochybně sehrála v životní dráze jeho syna svoji roli, přesto však nelze jeho tvorbu pokládat za zdroj inspirace pro tvorbu Allenovu. Louisovy verše byly „písňové a rýmované, převážně se jednalo o čtyřverší se střídavým rýmováním či rýmovaná dvojverší oslavující přírodu, jaro, lásku a svítání,“⁷ tedy v zásadě to, vůči čemu se Allen snažil později ve svém psaní

² See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 143.

³ Walt Whitman, *Stébla trávy* (Praha: Naše vojsko, 1955), 12.

⁴ See Allen Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, ed. David Carter (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2001), 112.

⁵ See Lewis Hyde, ed., *On the Poetry of Allen Ginsberg* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002), 26.

⁶ See Hyde, 331.

⁷ Bill Morgan, *I Celebrate Myself: The Somewhat Private Life of Allen Ginsberg* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 8.

vymezit. Dalo by se říct, že se na jeho tvorbě zásadněji než Louis podepsala Ginsbergova matka Naomi, jejíž těžký zápas s duševní chorobou se negativně odrazil také na Allenově přijetí vlastní sexuality,⁸ častým námětem v jeho tvorbě, a jejíž smrt vedla k napsání „Kadiš“, vedle „Kvílení“ Ginsbergovy zřejmě nejslavnější básně.

Zásadním zlomem bylo pro Ginsberga přijetí na Kolumbijskou univerzitu, kdy se přesouvá z prostředí rodného Patersonu ve státě New Jersey do New Yorku. Zde se prostřednictvím Luciena Carra seznamuje mimo jiných s Jackem Kerouacem a Williamem S. Burroughsem, ústředními postavami uskupení, které bude v budoucnu označováno jako beatnická generace.

Přestože je jméno Jacka Kerouaca spojováno především s jeho prózou, Ginsberg jej považoval za jednoho z největších básníků a k jeho poezii se stavěl často až s nekritickým obdivem — o Kerouacově sbírce *Mexico City Blues* se například vyjádřil, že jej naučila poezii.⁹ Ostatně nebyl sám, podobně pochvalně se o ní vyjádřili také písničkářský velikán Bob Dylan¹⁰ a Ginsbergův pozdější mentor a duchovní guru, tibetský láma Chögyam Trungpa. Kerouac je také autorem eseje „Základy spontánní prózy,“ který svůj význam v rozšíření techniky spontánního psaní prozrazuje už svým názvem. V neposlední řadě to byl právě Kerouac, kdo Ginsberga seznámil s buddhismem, který později zásadně ovlivnil charakter Ginsbergovy poezie a způsob, jakým pohlížel na lidskou mysl.

Ginsbergův zájem o zenový buddhismus se dále prohloubil během několika měsíců, které strávil v Indii v letech 1962 a 1963. Na rozdíl od sanfranciských beatníků Garryho Snydera a Philipa Whalena se mu však věnoval bez hlubšího pohroužení pouze povrchně, jak ostatně činil u většiny dalších disciplín.¹¹ Obrat přišel v podobě náhodného, nebo naopak osudového setkání s výše zmíněným Chögyamem Trungpou, kterého Ginsberg kvůli svému otci předběhl při nastupování do Trungpou

⁸ See Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 166.

⁹ See Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 274.

¹⁰ See Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 504.

¹¹ See Morgan, 479.

přivolaného taxi. S myšlenkou vlastního učitele meditace si pohrával již nějakou dobu,¹² a tak se jejich setkání stávala pravidelnějšími, až přerostla v dlouholeté přátelství, které trvalo až do Trungpovy předčasné smrti. Jejich spolupráce vedla mimo jiné k artikulaci myšlenek a teoretickému vymezení metody psaní vlastní mysli. Pod její hlavičkou mohl Ginsberg následně shrnout své názory (a nejen své) na stav, vývoj a směr současné americké poezie, názory, které se do té doby objevovaly pouze izolovaně v nesčetných rozhovorech a přednáškách, jež Ginsberg s obrovským elánem poskytoval od padesátých let až do své smrti.¹³

Trungpa s Ginsbergem rovněž stáli v roce 1974 u zrodu Narópoova institutu, který se později stal první akreditovanou budhistickou univerzitou západního světa a pod jehož záštitou následně Ginsberg založil s básnířkou Anne Waldmanovou (která jej v roce 1990 doprovázela v rámci turné po znovuotevřené východní Evropě i do Olomouce) Školu odtělesněné poetiky Jacka Kerouaca (Jack Kerouac Disembodied School of Poetics). „Odtělesněnou“ ji pojmenovali v žertu, jednalo se o poněkud morbidní narážku na fakt, že Kerouac byl tou dobou už mrtvý a tudíž odtělesněný, nikoliv že by taková byla či měla být spontánní poetika, která naopak hlásá návrat k tělu a myšlenkám.¹⁴ Zde následně po dobu deseti let nepřetržitě učil a i poté, co se opět začal naplno věnovat své tvorbě, se do Narópoova institutu pravidelně vracel alespoň v rámci letních kurzů poezie.¹⁵

¹² See Morgan, 479.

¹³ See Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 67.

¹⁴ See Anne Waldman and Marilyn Webb, eds. *Talking Poetics from Naropa Institute, Volume 2* (Boulder: Shambala, 1979), 411.

¹⁵ See Morgan, 572.

2 K povaze přednášek

Záměrem této krátké kapitoly je vytvořit v mysli čtenáře přibližnou představu o podobě Ginsbergových olomouckých přednášek a stručně zde shrnout ty postřehy a dojmy, které svou podstatou nezapadají do rámce ostatních kapitol.

Ginsberg svou metodu spontánního psaní vysvětloval v průběhu celkem čtyř přednášek mezi 24. listopadem a 2. prosincem 1993. Tyto přednášky souhrnně pojmenoval „Psaní vlastní mysli“ („Writing your mind“). Výuka probíhala za pomoci tzv. „sloganů pro psaní mysli“ („mind writing slogans“), kterým se podrobně věnuji v samostatné kapitole.

Pomineme-li tedy prozatím roli sloganů v tematickém rozdělení výkladu, snažil se Ginsberg ve svých přednáškách obsáhnout dva hlavní aspekty — historický a textový vývoj moderní, především americké, poezie a pohled na proces psaní očima spisovatele.¹⁶ Věnuje se však spíše aspektu praktickému — přestože v úvodní přednášce hledá kořeny současné americké poezie v tvorbě evropských básníků počátku dvacátého století, omezuje se spíše na výčet jmen k pozdějšímu nastudování. Podobným způsobem přistupuje i k roli buddhismu ve spontánní tvorbě, kterou odbude několika tituly doporučené literatury. Čistě praktická je pak poslední přednáška, v níž se Ginsberg omezil výhradně na čtení ukázek z tvorby současných, z valné části beatnických, autorů.

Aby se posluchači mohli lépe zapojit do výuky a snáze pochopit smysl Ginsbergových slov, zadal postupně také tři praktická cvičení, která se kvůli nedostatku času následně změnila v domácí úkoly. Do nich se však většinou ke Ginsbergovu zklamání zapojila jen malá část účastníků.¹⁷ V prvním takovém cvičení měli s cílem uvolnit si mysl participantů za úkol sestavit deset nepravděpodobných dvojslovných kombinací (jako nejlepší příklad ze studentské tvorby uvádí Ginsberg spojení „nacistické mléko“)¹⁸ a nejoriginálnější z nich označit hvězdičkou. Při druhém cvičení se studenti

¹⁶ See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 74.

¹⁷ See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 105.

¹⁸ See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 136.

rozvzpomínali na nejméně živější životní okamžiky, které jsou soběstačným námětem pro poezii. A do třetice se jednalo o bezprostřední zápis myšlenek běžících myslí při meditaci. Praktický přínos těchto cvičení však ze znění přednášek není patrný, protože pokud své výtvořky studenti s Ginsbergem probírali, činili tak zřejmě v rámci individuálních konzultací, ke kterým Ginsberg vyzýval pravidelně po skončení každé přednášky.

Jak už je u českého studentstva zvykem, bylo Ginsbergovo obecenstvo na dotazy skoupé, přestože v průběhu přednášek Ginsberg opakovaně vybízel k jakékoliv aktivitě¹⁹ a dotazoval se, zda jeho výklad není nudný, k čemuž mu posléze bylo vysvětleno, že český národ „souhlas a nesouhlas vyjadřuje tichem.“²⁰ Ginsberg měl navíc na shrnutí svého celoživotního díla i tvorby řady dalších autorů k dispozici pouhých šest hodin. Proto na některých místech komentáře kladu otevřeně otázky, na které podle mého názoru mělo být odpovězeno a snažím se, aby neměly lamentační či řečnickou povahu, ale aby po vzoru Allena Ginsberga v mysli čtenáře otevřely prostor pro lepší pochopení dané problematiky.

¹⁹ See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 129.

²⁰ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 129.

3 Technické východisko

Záznamy Ginsbergových přednášek pochází ze soukromého archivu prof. Josefa Jařaba. Jedná se o čtyři stodvacetiminutové audiokazety opatřené na štítcích popiskem a datem. Díky tomu je možno přednášky s jistotou datovat na středu 24. 11., pátek 26. 11., úterý 30. 11. a pátek 2. 12. 1993. Nahrávky byly z audiokazet převedeny s použitím přístroje ION Tape 2 PC a zaznamenány pomocí volně dostupného programu Audacity verze 2.0.3, ve kterém byly následně provedeny nejnnutnější úpravy. Optimální úroveň vstupní hlasitosti byla nastavena pro každou stopu zvlášť, nebyly aplikovány žádné filtry ani korekce šumu. Všechny nahrávky jsou pod příslušným označením k dispozici na přiloženém DVD, z kapacitních důvodů jsou uloženy ve formátu MP3 se stálým datovým tokem 256 Kb/s.

Jelikož byly přednášky profesionálně ozvučené, jsou nahrávky veskrze srozumitelné a kompletní. Výjimku tvoří místa, kdy bylo nutné otočit záznamovou audiokazetu na druhou stranu. V těchto případech část přednášky chybí. Podobně je tomu u dotazů posluchačů, kteří na rozdíl od Ginsberga neměli k dispozici mikrofon a nelze jim proto místy rozumět. Tyto případy jsou v textu označeny poznámkou.

Při samotném přepisu pak vyplul na povrch rozpor mezi snahou o co nejvěrnější zachování originálu na jedné straně a poskytnutím čitelného a srozumitelného textu na straně druhé. Mluvený projev trpí ve srovnání s předem promyšleným textem přirozeně celou řadou neduhů. Těm se nevyhnul ani natolik zkušený řečník, jakým byl Ginsberg. Určitá míra editace byla tedy nevyhnutelná. Aby však přepis neztratil osobitý ráz Ginsbergova projevu, uchyloval jsem se k ní pouze v místech, kde by přílišná věrnost originálu byla na úkor koherence a gramatičnosti. Snažil jsem se tedy vyhnout nadměrnému užívání výpustek, které text opticky rozbíjí, a použít je pouze v místech, kde Ginsberg přerušil myšlenku a následně na ni již nenavázal, nikoli pokaždé, když se jen na chvíli odmlčel. Odstraněny byly také repetice a evidentní přeřeknutí vyjma těch, která svým charakterem odpovídají podvědomým přeřeknutím ve Freudově pojetí. Hovorové výrazy a

obraty byly v co největší míře zachovány, pouze na místech, kde by případná negramatičnost mohla vést k neporozumění textu, jsem doplnil chybějící výraz.

Aby byl zachován správný formát citovaných básní, jsou v textu uvedeny v takové podobě, v jaké byly publikovány. Pokud byly obsaženy v antologii *Clear Seeing Poetics*, kterou Ginsberg sestavil pro potřeby semináře a kterou měla část posluchačů k dispozici, uvádím je v této podobě. V případě, že se ve svém podání básně od originálu Ginsberg odchýlil zásadněji, například jej v návalu spontánnosti doplnil o nový verš, objevuje se báseň v textu v upravené podobě. Samotná antologie byla naskenována a zpracována pomocí technologie optického rozpoznávání znaků a je v elektronické podobě k nalezení na přiloženém DVD.

Bylo by s podivem, kdyby přítomnost tak významného hosta nevyústila mimo zmíněné přednášky také ve veřejná autorská čtení. Součástí přílohy práce je záznam ze dvou z nich. První vystoupení se konalo v sobotu 27. listopadu a Ginsberg během něj přednášel pouze své básně, které byly nejprve přečteny v českém překladu Mikulášem Pánkem. Při představování svých básní prozradil Ginsberg několik zajímavostí ze svého života a tvorby. Druhé vystoupení se pod názvem „Kvílení, zpívání a blues“ konalo následující večer a kromě Ginsbergových veršů zde zazněly také jím zhudebněné básně Williama Blakea. Na rozdíl od předchozího vystoupení, při kterém se Ginsberg doprovodil sám na přenosné harmonium, se zde hudebního doprovodu ujal vynikající jazzový pianista Emil Viklický. Obě vystoupení, třebaže přímo nesouvisí s teorií tvůrčího či spontánního psaní, jsou cennou ukázkou Ginsbergova nezaměnitelného básnického projevu a muzikálnosti. Profesor Josef Jařab, který obě vystoupení uvádí, rovněž tlumočí Ginsbergova slova do češtiny, což je velkým přínosem pro případné pouze češtinou vládnoucí posluchače.

Mimo výše zmíněných vystoupení ještě Ginsberg přijal pozvání předčítat středoškolákům na olomouckém Slovanském gymnáziu z iniciativy Davida Hrbka, který zde tou dobou působil. Záznam z tohoto vystoupení byl

v době psaní této práce ke zhlédnutí v šesti částech na internetovém serveru Youtube.com pod názvem „Allen Ginsberg in Olomouc“.

4 Spontánní psaní v Ginsbergově pojetí

Na úvod si položíme otázku, zda se dá vůbec psaní poezie naučit a zda toto není v rozporu s celým přístupem spontánního psaní. Pokud spisovatel jedná na základě naučených pouček, kam se poděla bezprostřednost?

Ginsberg nepochybně věřil, že se poezie naučit dá, jinak by jistě nemarnil čas dlouholetým pedagogickým působením v Naróповě institutu a svá turné, jako bylo to, při kterém zavítal do Olomouce, by pravděpodobně omezil na pouze na básnicko-hudební vystoupení. Ginsberg však byl i na sklonku svého života, pokud mu to dovolilo zdraví, známý pro svou neúnavnost při poskytování přednášek a rozhovorů (nebylo u něj výjimkou, že se rozhovor natáhnul i na několik hodin) a snahu co nejzřetelněji předat své poselství.

Svým posluchačům se nesnažil předložit výčet pravd, kterými se musí řídit. Působení dogmatických učení, jako například katolicismu nebo marxismu, považuje za základní překážku ve spontánním psaní. Jeho výuka spočívala ve stimulaci myšlení a odstraňování bariér, kterými je limitováno. „Dělám to, že předkládám texty, které studentům dávají oprávnění být tak inteligentními, jak ve skrytu jsou,“²¹ říká na toto téma. Potvrzuje to i jeho metoda výuky pomocí sloganů. Chtěl se tak „dostat studentům pod kůži a vzbudit u nich dostatečné nadšení, aby se oni dostali pod kůži sami sobě.“²² Těmito zásadami se také řídil, když svému olomouckému obecnstvu vysvětloval princip a techniku spontánního psaní.

Nalézt počátky této metody, ať už ji nazveme „spontánním psaním“ (spontaneous writing) nebo v duchu rozebírané přednášky „psaním vlastní mysli“ (writing your mind) je stejně obtížné, jako ji definovat. Především je potřeba odlišit spontánní psaní od psaní automatického, které Ginsberg považuje za nevědomou záležitost, při níž ruka zapisuje cosi, čeho si mysl není vědoma.²³ Spontánní psaní je přitom záležitost zcela vědomá a v principu se snaží zachytit myšlenky v jejich nejčistší podobě tak, jak se

²¹ Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 422.

²² Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 422.

²³ See Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 358.

nalézají v lidské mysli. To si lze názorně představit jako rybu plovoucí v „bystřině celého fenoménu povědomí.“²⁴ Spontánní básník má za úkol takovou rybu popsat, ale musí tak udělat s rozmyslem, protože všechno běží příliš rychle a nejde proto obsáhnout celou rybu ani celou bystřinu.²⁵ Základním problémem, se kterým se spontánní tvorba musí vypořádat, je odpověď na otázku jak uchopit myšlenku a jak s ní následně naložit.

To však představuje mnohem složitější problém, než by se na první pohled mohlo zdát. S mylným výkladem, že spontánní psaní spočívá v prostém necenzurovaném zápisu všech myšlenek, tak jak proběhnou hlavou, se Ginsberg potýkal poměrně často.²⁶ Nicméně i spontánní tvorba se musí řídit určitými zásadami. Kdyby tomu tak nebylo, mohl by si Ginsberg odpustit svých čtyřiaosmdesát sloganů pro psaní mysli a kdokoliv by na počkání mohl vychrlit poezii stejně hodnotnou a uznávanou, jako je ta Ginsbergova. Naše myšlení je však zatíženo celou řadou předsudků a mylných představ o poezii, které nám brání ve volném přístupu k myšlenkám. Tyto předsudky může odbourat pouze mysl náležitě poučená, kterou Ginsberg trochu paradoxně s využitím zenové terminologie nazývá myslí obyčejnou. „Většina lidí si svou obyčejnou mysl nepřipouští; používají ji pořád, ale používají ji selektivně, jen pro nejvýznamnější události.“²⁷

Pojem spontánní psaní přitom většinou zaznívá ve spojení s tvorbou Jacka Kerouaca, především pak jeho slavným románem *Na cestě*, který byl údajně touto metodou celý napsán. Výchozím textem pro psaní vlastní mysli by pak mohl být Kerouacův esej „Základy spontánní prózy“, jehož samotný text je podřízen zásadám, které jsou v něm uvedeny, což se do jisté míry projevuje na jeho srozumitelnosti. Ginsberg rovněž opakovaně označil Kerouaca za člověka, který stál u zrodu jeho poezie,²⁸ především prostřednictvím básnické sbírky *Mexico City Blues*.²⁹ Spontánní psaní v Ginsbergově pojetí se však od Kerouacova v řadě aspektů liší. Kerouac

²⁴ Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 365.

²⁵ See Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 365.

²⁶ See Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 503.

²⁷ Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 411.

²⁸ See Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 274.

²⁹ See Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 290.

například nepřipouští revize („Nikdy nemysli ex post, abys ‚zdokonalil‘ či propracoval dojmy [. . .]”),³⁰ Ginsberg se jim nebrání. Už v dopise ze září 1955, který je odpovědí na zasláný rukopis „Kvílení“, vyčítá Kerouac Ginsbergovi škrty v průběhu psaní.³¹ V souvislosti s „Kvílením“ Ginsberg ještě například přiznává, že spíše než spontánně vznikala fráze „Molochu, tvé oči jsou tisíc slepých oken!“³² po částech a promyšleně a slovo „okna“ použil pouze proto, že to pak dobře vypadalo.³³ Také tím se protíví Kerouacovi, který hlásá „žádné přestávky k myšlení nad správným výrazem“ a „žádná selektivita výrazu.“³⁴ Jindy zase vypouští slova a spojuje řádky dohromady³⁵ nebo dodatečně nahrazuje použité slovo jiným, na které si v procesu psaní nemohl vzpomenout.³⁶

Dalším předsudkem, se kterým spontánní básník musí bojovat, je stále obecně rozšířený dojem, že poezie má být cosi rýmovaného s pravidelnou formou a tradiční představa, že básník je někdo, „kdo se posadí a pak píše a píše a píše, dokud to není perfektní.“³⁷ Z pohledu takto tradičně smýšlejícího člověka působí iracionálně například surrealismus; Ginsberg naopak považuje za iracionální přeskládat obsah vědomí v souladu se syntaktickými formami, které nemají s tím, co probíhá v mysli, nic společného.³⁸ Rýmovaný verš se tudíž se spontánní poezií neslučuje, protože by to znamenalo vybírat pouze ty myšlenky nebo taková jejich slovní vyjádření, která zapadají do stanoveného veršovaného schématu. Je to jako vyplňovat předtištěné úřední lejtstro.³⁹

Pravidelný rým označuje Ginsberg za nezbytnou mnemotechnickou pomůcku v orální tradici,⁴⁰ nicméně jeho zarputilé používání a standardizace v poezii až do konce devatenáctého století vedly k tomu, že poezie ztratila

³⁰ Jack Kerouac, *Rozprášené básně* (Olomouc: Votobia, 1995), 144.

³¹ See Allen Ginsberg, *Howl*, ed. Barry Miles (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1986), 150.

³² Allen Ginsberg, *Karma červená, bílá a modrá*, ed. Josef Jařab (Praha: Mladá fronta, 2001), 47.

³³ See Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 26.

³⁴ Kerouac, 143.

³⁵ See Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 130.

³⁶ See Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 372.

³⁷ Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 369.

³⁸ See Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 155.

³⁹ See Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 107.

⁴⁰ See Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 155.

schopnost vyjádřit autorské sdělení nejen z hlediska limitací působících na básníka, ale také kvůli otupělosti jeho čtenáře či posluchače. Ten namísto aby věnoval pozornost tomu, co se poezie snaží říct, se pouze nechává zhyponotizovat jejím rytmem, v důsledku čehož začala poezie brzy sdělovat stále jedno a to samé.⁴¹ „Stará prozodická rytmická forma už nereflektovala emoce a proměnlivou kadenci řeči.“⁴² Na druhou stranu, i pevná básnická forma si ve spontánní poezii může nalézt své místo za předpokladu, že se v ní odráží tvůrčí mysl básníka. Ani jambický pentametr není v takovém případě na škodu, „pokud pramení za zdroje hlubšího, než je mysl — jinými slovy, pokud vychází z dechu, břicha a plic.“⁴³

O dalších aspektech své poetické metody a uměleckých vzorech se Ginsberg zmínil během výkladu svých sloganů, na jejichž příkladech jsou podrobně rozebrány v následující kapitole.

⁴¹ See Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 104.

⁴² Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 105.

⁴³ Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 19

5 Slogany pro psaní mysli

Původ své výukové metody Ginsberg svému posluchačstvu neobjasnil, jenom s nadsázkou poznamenal: „Budu vás učit pomocí sloganů, zrovna jako předseda Mao.“⁴⁴ Ne, že by snad chtěl po vzoru čínského vůdce nastolit kulturní revoluci, ta už ostatně v básnictví za jeho přičinění dávno proběhla. Podle Ginsbergovy předmluvy ke kompletnímu výčtu těchto sloganů, které knižně vyšly až po autorově smrti v knize *What Book!?: Buddha Poems from Beat to Hip-hop*, jsou výsledkem více než pětadvaceti let výuky poetiky, z nichž vzešla tato „mota z mnoha zdrojů, která [jeho] a jiné provází napříč poznatkem psaní vlastní mysli.“⁴⁵

Podle Jacqueline Gensové, která pro Allena pracovala v jeho newyorské kanceláři mezi lety 1989-1994, začal tyto slogany formulovat a učit podle nich na sklonku osmdesátých let.⁴⁶ Řada z nich se již předtím objevila v básni „Kosmopolitní pozdravy“ (1986), označeném Gensovou za „politicko-literární manifest jeho estetiky.“⁴⁷

Je tedy zřejmé, že nelze k těmto sloganům přistupovat jako k jakémusi desateru (skutečný počet teď ponechme stranou), které Ginsberg sestavil na počátku své básnické kariéry a po její zbytek se tímto bezvýhradně řídil. Spíše než preskriptivní mají slogany charakter deskriptivní, a přestože je řada v nich v imperativu, jejich význam nespočívá v slepém dodržování. Naopak, Ginsbergovou primární snahou bylo zpřístupnit prostřednictvím těchto hesel svým studentům jejich prvotní myšlenky, zbavit je zažitých návyků a názorů na poezii a oprostít je od obav, že existují myšlenky ostudné, hříšné a nehodné uveřejnění. Jinými slovy neučil, co by lidé měli psát, ale spíše jak najít cestu k tomu, co za napsání stojí.

Původ a forma sloganů se různí, jejich společným jmenovatelem je však silně praktický charakter. Ginsberg nečerpá z oblasti literární teorie a kritiky (snad se spornou výjimkou „Projective Verse“ od Charlese Olsona), půjčuje si

⁴⁴ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 75.

⁴⁵ "Mind Writing Slogans of Allen Ginsberg," Poetrymind, <http://tsetso.blogspot.cz/p/allen-ginsbergs-mind-writing-slogans.html>.

⁴⁶ See "Mind Writing Slogans of Allen Ginsberg"

⁴⁷ "Mind Writing Slogans of Allen Ginsberg"

citáty a výňatky z básní rozličných osobností, mezi slogany nalezneme i haiku. Svou motivaci Ginsberg výstižně shrnul v úvodu své první přednášky: „[. . .] Důvod, proč takto učím je, že tomu nejlíp rozumím. A radši budu učit něco, čemu nejlíp rozumím, než blbosti ohledně něčeho, co mě zas až tak nezajímá. Jinými slovy učím to, co sám praktikuji a dobře znám. Je to tedy vcelku osobní záležitost a nedělám si nárok na objektivnost [. . .] či akademickou úplnost.“⁴⁸

Zajímavé je, jak se zde co do počtu příspěvků odráží Ginsbergovy tvůrčí a životní vzory — patnácti slogany je zde zastoupen Ginsberg sám. Následován je Chögyamem Trungpou, kterého uvádí krom deseti jiných i jako autora prvního a nejzásadnějšího sloganu „první myšlenka, nejlepší myšlenka“. Více slogany jsou zastoupeni také autoři, o kterých ve svých přednáškách hovoří jako o hlavních tvůrčích vlivech v oblasti spontánního psaní. Překvapením může být skutečnost, že od Jacka Kerouaca zde pochází pouze tři slogany ve srovnání například s jedenácti slogany Ezry Pounda.

Již od počátku bylo zřejmé, že se Ginsbergovi nedaří zcela dodržet zamýšlenou podobu přednášek. Z plánovaných 84 sloganů jich i tak nakonec zaznělo úctyhodných 66. Při hlubším pohroužení do výkladu vychází nicméně najevo, že si kromě již zmíněné objektivnosti či encyklopedičnosti nemůže Ginsberg dělat nárok ani na přílišnou systematickост. Třebaže strukturu svých přednášek v úvodu nastíní a slogany, které mají tvořit jakousi jejich páteř, rozdělí do tematických skupin, řídí se při výkladu spíše svými myšlenkovými pochody než předepsanou osnovou. Na tomto místě se sluší poznamenat, že od spontánního básníka ani nic jiného očekávat nelze.

Bylo proto těžké nenechat se příslovečně „vodit za ruku“ a nepostupovat při analýze textu obdobně nesystematicky. Autor dělí slogany podle tradiční buddhistické tripartity⁴⁹ do tří skupin na „Ground“, „Path“ a „Fruition“. Pro potřeby komentáře jsem se rozhodl přeložit tyto názvy do češtiny jako slogany z úrovně „základů“, „cesty“ a „naplnění“. Ne všechny slogany se však významově omezují na skupinu, do které jsou zařazeny na

⁴⁸ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 79.

⁴⁹ See "Mind Writing Slogans of Allen Ginsberg"

seznamu. Část jich je například jednoslovná s vcelku obecným zněním a Ginsberg je proto bez ohledu na příslušnost vysloví na různých místech výkladu. Aby se tedy v komentáři bylo vůbec možné zorientovat, rozhodl jsem se nenásledovat Ginsbergovu spontánní naraci, ale extrahovat slogany z textu a zařadit je v souladu se seznamem do příslušných oblastí. Rozvržení struktury komentáře dále komplikuje fakt, že je Ginsberg schopen zaobírat se jedním sloganem polovinu přednášky, zatímco jiný pouze zmíní bez dalšího vysvětlení. V důsledku toho některé slogany vydaly na samostatnou kapitolu, jiné bylo třeba sloučit do skupin na základě jejich společných charakteristik.

Kompletní seznam sloganů v té podobě, v jaké byl knižně publikován, je součástí textové přílohy této práce. Slogany, které v přednáškách zazněly, jsou zvýrazněny tučným písmem. Pakliže byly slogany v nějaké podobě publikovány v češtině, použil jsem ve většině případů oficiální překlad. Pouze v případech, kdy se mi český překlad nepodařilo dohledat nebo u překladů, které přes svoji uměleckou hodnotu nevystihují podstatu a sdělení toho kterého sloganu, jsem se uchýlil k překladu vlastnímu. Pro lepší srozumitelnost jsou slogany při prvním výskytu vždy uvedeny spolu s anglickým originálem.

5.1 Slogany z úrovně „základů“

Při překladu anglického „Ground“ jsem se rozhodl dát přednost základům před živelnou a libozvučnější zemí proto, že se slogany v této skupině zaobírají myšlenkovým východiskem a skutečně ustanovují základy pro psaní mysli. V průvodním slovu ke svým publikovaným sloganům se Ginsberg vyjadřuje následovně: „Ve čtení mysli jsme všichni amatéry, ale právě a pouze s tím musíme pracovat, nestálost vědomí, projevy chaosu, naše vlastní zmatky, nesrovnalosti, uvědomění, nálady a duchovní informace.“⁵⁰

Podle toho, co o této rovině říká ve své přednášce, se zde budeme zabývat „situací, ve které se nacházíme ve vlastním vědomí, vlastní mysli [. . .] Pokud psaním myslíme psaní vlastní mysli, co je mysl? [. . .] Jaká je

⁵⁰ “Mind Writing Slogans of Allen Ginsberg”

podstata mysli a jak na ni nahlížet?“ Také na tyto otázky budeme hledat odpověď v následujících řádcích.

5.1.1 „Otevřenost“ („Candor“)

Třebaže na seznamu sloganů figuruje otevřenost až ve třetí úrovni, v přednášce zazněla jako první. Ginsberg tak mimoděk ilustruje propojenost celého výkladu a sloganů navzájem. Jako výchozí bod ustanovuje tvůrčí osobnost Walta Whitmana a jeho naději, že se „američtí básníci v budoucnu zaměří na otevřenost,“⁵¹ vyjádřenou v předmluvě k dílu, kterému zasvětil celý život, *Stébla trávy*.

Otevřenost bude tedy klíčovým heslem celého výkladu a cokoliv během něj nadále zazní, bude se k ní nějakým způsobem vztahovat.⁵² Dokladem je bezprostředně navazující slogan, který v sobě slovo „otevřenost“ přímo obsahuje.

5.1.2 „Má mysl je otevřená sobě samé.“ („My mind is open to itself.“)

Zde Ginsberg vychází z předpokladu, že lidská mysl je ve dvacátém století „fragmentovaná, jako videoklip, který je sledem nesouvislých obrazů.“ Aby s ní poezie udržela krok, začaly se v ní užívat moderní formy, především montáž a juxtaopozice.⁵³ Ginsberg zde využívání těchto metod zjevně spojuje s rozmachem dadaismu a surrealismu. Přesto juxtaopozici nalezneme už v haiku, na které se v pozdější části výkladu hojně odkazuje, a třeba oxymóron, který oceňuje v básni surrealisty Andrého Bretona, lze vystopovat až Shakespeareovi. Tak či onak je třeba souhlasit, že nástup zmíněných směrů na počátku dvacátého století vedl k rapidní popularizaci těchto technik.

První odraz tohoto vnímání v poezii nachází v básni „Voyage Transsibérien“, jejímž autorem je Švýcarský modernista Blaise Cendrars a v níž je narativní přístup vytlačen útržkovitými poznámkami, „záblesky“, které jako by byly zapsány v souladu se sloganem „první myšlenka, nejlepší myšlenka.“ Zde je podle Ginsberga vidět „počátek rozpadu celistvé mysli na to, co máme dnes: nesouvislejší, fragmentovanou mysl [. . .], jako jeden za

⁵¹ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 75.

⁵² See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 75.

⁵³ See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 75.

druhým přepínáme televizní kanály.“⁵⁴ Není-li televize celkově zodpovědná za stav lidské mysli na sklonku dvacátého století tak, jak jej zde Ginsberg popisuje, zjevně jí v tomto ohledu připisuje zásadní úlohu.

Otázku, jak vypadala lidská mysl v době před dvacátým stoletím, nicméně neřeší. Za předpokladu, že současná poezie reflektuje svou formou útržkovitou a nesouvislou mysl současného člověka, lze na základě obdobného předpokladu tvrdit, že byla lidská mysl v minulých stoletích lineární a předvídatelně uspořádaná, protože jejím odrazem byla poezie psaná rýmovaným veršem a předem stanovenou formou? Měly například myšlenky Williama Shakespeara podobu blankversu? Ostatně Shakespeara označil Ginsberg za spontánního básníka schopného hbitě psát pro divadlo. „Shakespeare nikdy neškrtnul ani řádku,“⁵⁵ cituje Ginsberg Shakespeara současníka Bena Jonsona. V takovém případě by se dal Shakespeare označit za básníka mnohem spontánnějšího, než byl Ginsberg sám.

5.1.3 „První myšlenka, nejlepší myšlenka.“ („First thought, best thought.“)

Autorství tohoto nejzásadnějšího sloganu pro psaní mysli je sporné — v seznamu Ginsberg uvádí jako autora Chögyama Trungpu, jinde bývá označována jako výsledek jeho spolupráce s Ginsbergem,⁵⁶ čemuž nahrává i Ginsbergovo vyjádření: „Nevím, jestli jsem to první vyslovil já nebo on. Podle mě si to přisvojil, ale spíš jsme na to přišli společně.“⁵⁷

V čem tedy hledat genialitu této poučky, která stála věhlasnému tibetskému lámovi za to, aby si ji přisvojil? Prvně je to její udivující jednoduchost a univerzálnost. Až na pár výjimek nelze ve výčtu sloganů hledat nějaký, který by se s tímto zásadně rozcházel. Proto se na něj Ginsberg pružně odkazuje během celého výkladu. A není divu, těžko vymyslet vhodnější poučku pro spontánní vyjádření, než použít první myšlenku, která člověku proběhne hlavou.

⁵⁴ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 78.

⁵⁵ Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 369.

⁵⁶ see "Mind Writing Slogans of Allen Ginsberg"

⁵⁷ Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 406.

S jednoduchostí se však pojí určitý problém tohoto sloganu, kterým je jeho neúplnost. Položíme-li si otázku, zda každý náš první nápad v životě byl ten správný, pravděpodobně si odpovíme záporně. Nebo v nás tento slogan naopak vzbudí dojem, že pokud bezmyšlenkovitě napíšeme, cokoliv nás napadne, bude výsledkem hodnotná literatura. S problémem desinterpretace této myšlenky se Ginsberg potýkal často.⁵⁸ V jednom rozhovoru k tomu říká: „První myšlenka, nejlepší myšlenka‘ je nakonec něco, co říká Tibetský láma básníkovi ovlivněnému Zenem a [ten], kdo by si to vykládal jako: ‚každá blbost, kterou vyslovíš bez duchovní průpravy, je nejlepší,‘ by musel ignorovat celou historii poloviny světa.“⁵⁹

Ukázkou užití v praxi je báseň od W. C. Williamse, „The Great Figure“, která je popisem požárního vozu, jež se s rachotem řítí newyorskými ulicemi. Vyčnívajícím obrazem je zlatá číslice 5 (Among the rain / and lights / I saw the figure 5 / in gold / on a red / firetruck [. . .]), která dává básni název. Jinak však jde o přímý zápis prvních myšlenek vyvolaných pohledem na daný výjev — déšť, světlo, 5, zlaté, červená, hasicí vůz — tak, jak projdou během vzpomínání na danou událost před očima, bez dodatečných úprav a poetického obohacování. Ginsberg tvrdí, že báseň byla inspirovaná obrazem modernistického malíře Charlese Sheelera.⁶⁰ Pravdivost tohoto tvrzení se však nepodařilo ověřit. Kdyby tomu tak skutečně bylo, jednalo by se o ryzí interdisciplinární kuriozitu, protože se právě touto Williamsovou básní prokazatelně inspiroval jiný modernistický malíř, Williamsův blízký přítel Charles Demuth.⁶¹ Ve svém obraze *The Figure 5 in Gold* převádí na plátno věrně to, co Williams bezprostředně vyjádřil ve své básni. Ústřední prvek, zlatá číslice 5 je zde vyobrazena ve třech velikostech a vytváří dojem přibližujícího se vozu umocněný obdobně vyvedenými reflektory. Do obrazu navíc Demuth zakomponoval slova „BILL“, „CARLOS“ (jehož poslední písmeno obětoval perspektivě) a do spodní části umístil kromě svých také Williamsovy iniciály. Takže třebaže směr inspirace je oproti tomu, co tvrdí

⁵⁸ See Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 503.

⁵⁹ Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 503.

⁶⁰ See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 81.

⁶¹ Judith H. Dobrzynski, "Where Paint and Poetry Meet," *The Wall Street Journal* (July 2010), <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748704002104575291183951560378>

Ginsberg, obrácený, jedná se o vítaný exemplář přesahu spontánního psaní do jiného odvětví.



Charles Demuth, *The Figure 5 in Gold*⁶²

Nebude jistě překvapením, že další ukázka pochází od Jacka Kerouaca, neboť Ginsberg pokládal heslo „první myšlenka, nejlepší myšlenka“ za etalon Kerouacova spontánního psaní,⁶³ třebaže se v této podobě v jeho stati „Základy spontánního psaní“ nevyskytuje. Zároveň mohla tato ukázka být hodnotným svědectvím o roli drog ve spontánní tvorbě nebo při výběru první myšlenky. O této souvislosti se Ginsberg však bohužel nezmiňuje vůbec. Pokládal bych to za důležité z toho důvodu, že veskrze celá beatnická tvorba je s užíváním různých omamných látek otevřeně spjata (v tvorbě Williama Burroughse byla dokonce klíčovým tématem a nelze opomenout ani hipstery „vztekle shánějící dávku drogy“⁶⁴ v Ginsbergově „Kvílení“). Této problematice se však Ginsberg dotkne pouze okrajově, když pomocí

⁶² Source: <http://www.lancasterinnandsuites.com/blog/the-demuth-museum-lancaster-pa/>

⁶³ See Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 366.

⁶⁴ Ginsberg, *Karma*, 40.

Kerouacovy poezie přibližuje slogan „první myšlenka, nejlepší myšlenka“ na ukázce z *Mexico City Blues*. Těchto 242 údajně navzájem propojených básní, jež spolu s Trungpou považoval za „dokonalé předvedení mysli“⁶⁵ a jak už zde zaznělo na jiném místě, jež označoval dokonce za dílo, které ho naučilo poetice.⁶⁶ *Mexico City Blues* napsal Kerouac během svého pobytu v nuzných podmínkách v Mexico City, kdy „každé ráno vstal, vypil šálek kávy, vykouřil cigaretu marihuany [. . .] a zapsal si první, co mu problesklo hlavou, když se probudil.“⁶⁷ Ginsberg už byl k stáru přece jen názorově umírněnější⁶⁸ a zjevně nechtěl v cizí zemi provokovat a dotýkat se choulostivé otázky užívání drog. Přesto však zůstává ve vzduchu viset otázka, do jaké míry a jakým způsobem se na přístupu k prvním myšlenkám projeví požití omamných látek, se kterými měl Ginsberg bohatou zkušenost. V tomto případě se mohu odkázat například na jeho dřívější vyjádření k básni „Navštívení Walesu“ napsané pod vlivem LSD, které mu „vyjasnilo mysl a ponechalo ji otevřenou pro pocit obrovského, širého vědomí.“⁶⁹

Třetí ukázka reprezentuje spontánní psaní o to lépe, že vznikla naprosto neplánovaně během výkladu. Jde o krátkou báseň, kterou Ginsberg vyslovil během přednášky v reakci na jeden z mála položených dotazů. Ten se týkal rozpoznání první myšlenky vhodné pro poezii od myšlenek běžných nebo nepříjemných. Zde je potřeba si uvědomit, že žádná myšlenka není nevhodná. „Vaše první myšlenka po ránu rozhodně nebude na anděly slétající z nebes, aby se s vámi mohli pomilovat v posteli. Bude to spíš, že vás bolí záda nebo halva, že máte v pokoji zimu...“⁷⁰ Jeho vlastní myšlenka toho rána byla, že ztratil svoji kartu American Express. Následně dokládá, že i taková myšlenka může být podkladem pro báseň:

Ach, ta zelená karta American Express
Že bych ji byl zapomněl na recepci v hotelové hale
V hale hotelu Excelsior v Berlíně?
Musím poslat fax

⁶⁵ Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 380

⁶⁶ See Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 274

⁶⁷ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 80.

⁶⁸ See Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, xiv.

⁶⁹ Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 91.

⁷⁰ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 84.

Je to ukázka o to vzácnější, že zachycuje básníkovu tvorbu v procesu. Finální báseň by nepochybně vypadala jinak, neboť jak už v této práci bylo vysvětleno, Ginsbergova tvorba nebyla prostá škrťů a dodatečných úprav.

Spíše než jakýsi filtr, který oddělí dobrou myšlenku od špatné, musíme chápat slogan „první myšlenka, nejlepší myšlenka“ jako návod, jak první myšlenku uchopit, „aniž bychom ji změnili, vzali jí šťávu, páru, nedostatky, otevřenost.“⁷¹ Z pohledu spisovatele je pro poezii zajímavá ta myšlenka, která nám přijde na mysl, když jsme neměli v úmyslu psát poezii.⁷² Tento přístup je pak v přímém kontrastu s klasickou představou básníka, který usedne ke stolu s úmyslem psát poezii a myšlenku následně dvě hodiny přehodnocuje.⁷³ Kerouac totéž popisuje na konkrétní situaci: „Zvuk ve tvé mysli je první zvuk, který zazpíváš, když si prozpěvuješ v obchodě u pokladny a na nic nemyslíš.“⁷⁴ Onen zvuk, který se Ginsberg snažil neúnavně promítnout do své poezie.

Posledním společným rysem uvedených básní, který by mohl zabránit dalšímu mylnému výkladu sloganu, je skutečnost, že se zde jedná o vybavování, zpětné promítání myšlenek. Okamžitý zápis myšlenky není možný vzhledem k nepoměru mezi rychlostí myšlení a zápisu. „Ruka nezvládne přenést více než dvacetinu toho, co probleskne myslí a zapisování samotné narušuje myšlenkové obrazy a odvádí pozornost od myšlenky k aktu psaní.“⁷⁵ Jediným problémem jsme tedy my sami, naše podvědomá snaha o vylepšování prvotních myšlenek a ignorování těch, které nepovažujeme za vhodné pro poezii, například na základě naučeného dojmu, že by se v básních měly objevovat pouze romantické myšlenky a obrazy. Podaří-li se nám s pomocí zásady „první myšlenka, nejlepší myšlenka“ tyto předsudky odbourat, vznikne pevný bod, od kterého se při psaní básně můžeme odrazit. „Pod pojmem ‚první myšlenka, nejlepší myšlenka‘ rozumíme to, co nám vyvstane v mysli, jakmile se dostaneme přes barikády ostychu. [To pak] může být přepsáno, jako když píše sekretářka nebo někdo

⁷¹ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 79.

⁷² See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 81.

⁷³ See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 81.

⁷⁴ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 80.

⁷⁵ Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 250.

spěšně popisuje běh filmu, který zrovna sleduje.“⁷⁶ Jack Kerouac byl na psacím stroji schopný takto přepisovat tempem údajně až 120 slov za minutu, tedy skoro stejnou rychlostí, jakou běží myšlenky.⁷⁷ To je vskutku ukázkový příklad přiblížení se ideálu spontánního psaní.

5.1.4 „Chovejte se přátelsky k vlastním myšlenkám.“ („Take a friendly attitude toward your own thoughts.“)

Nejen ke svým myšlenkám, ale k celé své mysli i sobě samému, by měl člověk zaujmout přátelský, otevřený postoj. Tento slogan je vyňatý z instrukcí pro meditaci v tradičním zenovém pojetí. Ginsberg jej zopakoval během každé přednášky, z nichž se jediná neobešla bez několika minut meditace vsedě. Tuto praxi považuje pro psaní za důležitou zejména proto, že si při ní může člověk uvědomit, že myslí.

Meditace spočívá ve správném posedu, oči, které jsou otevřené, nesmí být upřeny na konkrétní objekt, spíše směřují do střední vzdálenosti.⁷⁸ Tento trochu toporný popis bych se nebál lidově vyložit jako „hledět do prázdna“, tedy ten druh pohledu, který se na naší tváři rozhostí, když začneme podvědomě bez vlastní vůle přemýšlet. Ginsberg, poučen buddhistickou meditační praxí, pak tento indikátor zpětně využívá k navození kýženého stavu, kdy náš mozek začne podvědomě přemýšlet. Vzniklé myšlenky, bez ohledu na jejich charakter, je třeba předem neodsuzovat či nezahazovat, ale zachovat se k nim přátelsky.

Proč by mohl být tento přístup západnímu myšlení cizí, dokládá na příkladu učení a náboženství, kterými je mysl průměrného Američana či Evropana formována. „[. . .] V primitivním pojetí marxismu a konzervativním katolictví, židovství a islámu by vás správně některé myšlenky vůbec neměly napadnout, mít takové myšlenky je prý hřích.“⁷⁹ Na tenký led polemiky, zda je vůbec možné určité myšlenky úplně zapudit, se nechal Ginsberg zatáhnout například v rozhovoru s Johnem Loftonem, dle vlastních slov znovuzrozeným křesťanem a fejetonistou píšícím pro Washington Post. Během rozhovoru

⁷⁶ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 143.

⁷⁷ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 143.

⁷⁸ See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 103.

⁷⁹ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 88.

Ginsberga opakovaně zesměšňoval, jeho filozofii označoval za špatnou a amorální. Ginsberg označil jeho přístup za sadomasochismus, což Lofton označil za zvrhlé sexuální fantazie. Ginsberg se ho tedy zeptal, zda nemá vůbec žádné sexuální fantazie. „Žádné, které by se netýkaly mé ženy. Je úžasné, co pro člověka dokáže Ježíš udělat.“⁸⁰ Z tohoto vyplývá, že lidé ovlivnění silným přesvědčením potlačují některé myšlenky zcela vědomě a otevřeně.

Abychom tedy mohli vystoupit z řady básníků píšících pod vlivem těchto omezení, musíme se naučit vážit si svých myšlenek. V básni „Smell“ W. C. Williams vede vnitřní monolog adresovaný jeho vlastnímu nosu („Can you not be decent? / Can you not reserve your ardors / for something less unlovely?“), který čichá k „růžím i lejnu.“⁸¹ V „Danse Russe“ zase poté, co večer usne celá jeho rodina, tančí nahý před zrcadlem a obdivuje svoji nahotu. „No, prošli jsme si tím všichni,“⁸² komentuje to Ginsberg. Nicméně rozdíl mezi „všemi“ a Williamsem v tomto případě je ten, že se dotyčný nebál pro své verše použít právě ty myšlenky a vzpomínky, které by si ostatní v souladu s vypěstovanými mravními bariérami nejspíše nechali pro sebe.

V básni „The Shoemaker“ od objektivistického tvůrce Charlese Reznikoffa pracuje švec ve své sklepní dílně na posledním páru bot v předvečer Pesachu, na kamnech se vaří v hrnci ryby. Do dílny vstoupí přítel a pochválí krásné počasí. Na první pohled se nabízí řada výrazných motivů k analýze: pracovní izolace a přítmí uzavřeného sklepa versus oslavující společnost v slunné ulici nad ním nebo symbolický význam vzezření přítele ševce, který přišel ve špinavých a roztrhaných šatech, ale jeho boty jsou nově vyspravené a nakrémované. Ginsberga ale zajímá úplně jiný výjev — ryby vařící se v hrnci na kamnech. („Sometimes the water bubbled over and hissed. The smell of the fish filled the cellar.“) Zápach ryby zaplňující sklep právem považuje za „jeden z nejodpornějších námětů v poezii.“⁸³ Je to

⁸⁰ Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 476.

⁸¹ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 89.

⁸² Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 90.

⁸³ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 91.

nicméně zastoupení reality, stejně tak jako Williamsovy nahé kreace před zrcadlem.

Přátelský přístup k vlastním myšlenkám, absence autocenzury nebo snahy o romantickou abstrakci jsou ingredience, bez kterých by tyto básně nemohly vzniknout. Jsou to zároveň výzvy, které Ginsberg opakovaně vyslovuje napříč svým přednáškovým cyklem a které také v kostce vystihují tento slogan.

Williams viděl v odklonu od umělecké abstrakce a romantičnosti nástroj pro boj s klíčovými problémy lidstva ve dvacátém století, neboť tyto nás odvádějí od skutečnosti, se kterou se po umělecké stránce doopravdy musíme zabývat.⁸⁴ Když se později Ginsberg k této otázce vrací, nedá se už ubránit dojmu, že Williamsova slova do značné míry překrucuje: „Williams říká, že naše těla a základní sexuální funkce jsou zdrojem všeho dobrého a že filozofie a věda, které nás odvádí od požitku z vlastního těla, představují perverzi, která přivedla svět k zlovolnému ničení na konci tohoto milénia, ať už se bavíme o nukleární katastrofě nebo ekologické degeneraci, to vše skrze abstrakce vědy a filozofie.“⁸⁵ To je poněkud radikální výklad Williamsova názoru, podle kterého by hlubší lidské uvědomění vlastního těla a pochopení základních biologických potřeb vedlo k lepšímu poznání lidské psychiky.⁸⁶ Ginsberg nezávisle na tématu neváhal protlačit do popředí své ekologické poselství a varování před nukleární válkou. Nicméně tvrzení, že prvním krokem k přátelskému přístupu ke svým myšlenkám je pozitivní přístup k vlastnímu tělu, nelze fakticky nic vytknout.

5.1.5 „Mysl musí být uvolněná.“ („The mind must be loose.“)

Slogan druhého amerického prezidenta Spojených států amerických, Johna Adamse, se skvěle snoubí se zenovým dvojverším: „V nekonečné prázdnotě neexistuje vpředu a vzadu. Ptačí let stírá rozdíl mezi východem a západem.“⁸⁷ Mysl je uvolněná v tom ohledu, že nelze předvídat nebo ovlivňovat, co si budeme myslet v příštím okamžiku. Stejně jako se pták za letu může

⁸⁴ See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 92.

⁸⁵ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 93.

⁸⁶ See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 93.

⁸⁷ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 93.

pohybovat bez omezení kterýmkoliv směrem, může se i myšlenka v uvolněné mysli pohybovat bez bariér. Nalézáme v ní jak výchozí předpoklad pro aplikaci ostatních sloganů z úrovně základů, tak jejich shrnutí. Báseň „Cynical Song“ od Philipa Whalena, třebaže balancuje na pomezí nihilismu, reprezentuje uvolněnou mysl jak ideově, tak verbálně.

You do what you do
Fucky-ducky
You do it anyhow
People don't like it
Fucky-ducky [. . .]⁸⁸

V básni „Waste. Profligacy. Fatuity“ Whalen výlučně sleduje pochody vlastní mysli.⁸⁹ Začíná filozofováním nad lidskou nepoučitelností („Thank God that's over, Never again will I do thus & so.“), volnými asociacemi se dostává k popisu večere („Unlimited cookies / Baked ananas / Booby Pie / Cinnamon infested coffee (blarp)“) a končí kritickým zhodnocením svého výtvoru (“To think that anyone could SAY such a thing, much less write it / down!”).⁹⁰ Ginsberg se snaží ve svém výkladu odborné terminologii vyhýbat, v próze bychom tento přístup označili za proud vědomí, modernistickou techniku, která se shoduje s principem spontánního psaní a je rovněž příkladem uvolněné mysli v takové podobě, v jaké se ji Ginsberg snaží vystihnout tímto sloganem.

Zásadním textem nejen pro pochopení uvolněné mysli ale do jisté míry také pro celou Ginsbergovu tvorbu je báseň „Free Union“ od Andrého Bretona, která měla „značný dopad na [Ginsbergovy] básně včetně ‚Kvílení‘.“⁹¹ Inspirace je patrná přinejmenším v repetici uvozovacích výrazů. Breton v této básni popisuje svoji ženu a postupně se propracovává k stále abstraktnějším přirovnáním („My wife with sex of an iris / A mine and a platypus“).⁹²

⁸⁸ Allen Ginsberg, ed., *Clear Seeing Poetics* (Unpublished collection, 1993), 63.

⁸⁹ See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 94.

⁹⁰ Ginsberg, *Clear Seeing Poetics*, 63.

⁹¹ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 96.

⁹² André Breton, *Selected Poems of André Breton* (Cape May: Cape Publishing, 1969), 31, <http://books.google.cz>.

Juxtapozici, kterou zde Breton využívá, resp. její výsledný obraz, označuje Ginsberg za snový.⁹³ Právě pouze v rámci tohoto sloganu se dotkne otázky snů, třebaže jen letmo: „Mysl si nemůžete naplánovat, stejně jako si nemůžete naplánovat sny.“⁹⁴ Jejich význam ve spontánním psaní však nerozebírá. Nerozvíjí ani otázku, do jaké míry by měly být zdrojem inspirace, zda reprezentují naše nejniternější a tudíž první myšlenky, či do jaké míry můžeme na jejich základě upravit přístup k interpretaci vlastní mysli. Tyto otázky nutně musí napadnout člověka poučeného základy psychoanalýzy, Ginsberg se však pravděpodobně v zájmu praktičnosti a srozumitelnosti svého výkladu snaží vyhnout přemíře teorie a abstrakce.

K uvolnění mysli vybízí také Kerouac v 17. sloce svého *Mexico City Blues*. Ginsberg tuto báseň vykládá tak, že ničím nelimitovaná mysl dítěte běží všemi směry, zatímco mysl dospělého je usměrněná působením televize, filozofie nebo vědy. Proto vyzdvihuje Kerouacovo sdělení: „Neignoruj ostatní části své mysli.“

5.1.6 „Obyčejná mysl obsahuje věčné postřehy.“ („Ordinary Mind includes eternal perceptions.“)

„Obyčejná mysl“ je fráze užívaná v zenovém buddhismu. Zde platí, že „každodenní, průměrná [. . .] nudná mysl je myslí nejvyšší.“⁹⁵ Její posvátný ráz však nejsme schopni rozpoznat, protože podvědomě hledáme vysoké emotivní a intelektuální podněty, v důsledku čehož nám uniká to, co máme před očima. Aby dokázal, že se pod správným úhlem pohledu může i to nejnudnější stát zajímavým, popsal Ginsberg zdánlivě nezajímavý kout přednáškové místnosti, kterému by normálně těžko někoho napadlo věnovat pozornost. Popisovaný předmět nebo okamžik nemusí sám o sobě vykazovat zvláštní kvality, teprve pozornost básníka jim věnovaná je odkrývá.

Ginsberg nicméně na okraj zmíní, že pozorovatel musí být inteligentní. To by v přeneseném významu mohl být další požadavek na spontánního autora. Ginsberg však nevysvětluje, zda je inteligence důležitá z hlediska

⁹³ See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 93.

⁹⁴ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 107.

⁹⁵ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 115.

kvality výsledného popisu nebo zda je nezbytným předpokladem pro to, aby se mysl popisem něčeho na první pohled nezajímavého vůbec zaobírala.

Tento slogan, který Ginsberg považuje za zásadní pro moderní americkou poezii dvacátého století, vyjadřuje také směr, jímž se současná poezie ubírá.⁹⁶ Vystihuje její snahu „[vyjádřit] univerzální sdělení prostřednictvím lokálního, konkrétního detailu.“⁹⁷ Dokladem tohoto tvrzení může být kterékoliv báseň od W. C. Williamse. Nicméně příklad, na kterém tyto věčné postřehy Ginsberg rozebírá, pochází z pera Charlese Reznikoffa. Báseň, která svým charakterem připomíná haiku (o významu této formy více později), nemá název, kterým by odváděla pozornost od obsahu. Skupinka chodců si ve větru a dešti razí cestu ponurou krajinou, až dorazí k chodníku, na jehož okraji se zmítají vyplavené žížaly, popsaného v závěrečném dvojverší: („[. . .] until we reach at last the crushed earthworms / stretched and stretching on the wet sidewalk“).⁹⁸ V mysli dítěte může pohled na topící se žížaly vyvolat hrůzu a lítost nad jejich osudem, mysl člověka opakovaně tomuto pohledu vystavenému časem otupí. Úkolem básníka je tuto vzpomínku pomocí správného pozorování a zručného popisu zprostředkovat čtenáři tak, aby v něm vyvolala pocity pozorovatele, který něco podobného vidí prvně. Další báseň se haiku přibližuje i svojí délkou. Popisuje automobily rozstříkující vodu při průjezdu kalužemi, tedy obraz, který by netrénovaná mysl vyhodnotila jako všední. Pokud se však na chvíli zastavíme a zaměříme vnímání na detail, vznikne v naší mysli otisk, který, říká Ginsberg, můžeme následně „přesně popsat a přenést napříč stoletími. V ideálním případě.“⁹⁹ A pokud se daný postřeh podaří přenést napříč stoletími, což se bez pochyby podařilo předním básníkům minulosti, stává se, navzdory tomu, že má původ v obyčejné mysli, věčným.

Nejvýraznější obraz ale nalezneme v poslední ukázce, rovněž od Reznikoffa, „Sunday Wlaks in Suburrbs“. Ginsberg u této básně Rezkinoffovi vytýká přílišnou poetičnost, když přirovná vrásky starých mužů ke kloubům

⁹⁶ See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 116.

⁹⁷ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 117.

⁹⁸ Ginsberg, *Clear Seeing Poetics*, 36.

⁹⁹ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 118.

na prstech („[. . .]old men, wrinkled as knuckles, on the stoops“).¹⁰⁰ Na tomto místě se musím ohradit a vytknout Ginsbergovi poetičnost mnohem větší, když se na příklad ve svém „Kadiš“ obrací na svou zemřelou matku „s prsty rozbitých mandolín.“¹⁰¹ Důležitější než vrásčití muži je však bezzubá žena žvýkající plátek slaniny. Váhání mezi slovy slanina a špek, když se Ginsberg zajímá o překlad anglického „bacon“, je názornou ukázkou toho, jak důležitá je volba správného slova při překladu básně — plátek slaniny a kus špeku vyvolají totiž v mysli čtenáře zcela odlišnou představu.

Shrnutí sloganu „obyčejná mysl obsahuje věčné postřehy“ lze vyjádřit jako zaměření na konkrétní objekt a jeho pravdivý popis s co největším oproštěním od abstrakce. Stojí za povšimnutí, že se v tomto duchu ponese všechny zbylé slogany z úrovně „základů“, což by mohlo napomoci jejich lepšímu pochopení.

5.1.7 Postřehové slogany

Název „postřehové“ jsem pro tuto skupinu zvolil proto, že všechny slogany zde zařazené radí, jak se „rozvzpomenout na to, co se dělo v naší mysli, než jsme si jí začali všímat.“¹⁰² To je další z cest k tomu, co chceme vyjádřit v poezii — první myšlenka. Jednou z rad, jak tohoto docílit, je Ginsbergova slovní hříčka **„Všímej si, čeho si všímáš.“** („**Notice what you notice**“) Obdobné sdělení se skrývá v idiomu běžně užívaném v americké angličtině, během přednášky trochu toporně přeloženém jako **„Přistihni se při myšlení“** („**Catch yourself thinking**“), přesto tento překlad vystihuje podstatu sloganu lépe, než „přemýšlej vědomě“,¹⁰³ jak jej v „Kosmopolitních pozdravech“ přeložil Jaroslav Kořán. Jednoduše řečeno se jedná o okamžik, kdy na něco myslíme podvědomě a tuto skutečnost náhle zaregistrujeme v našem vědomí. Obdobný myšlenkový pochod musí existovat v každé kultuře, přesto pro něj ne každý jazyk má ustálenou frázi. Idiomatický překlad jednoho z příkladů vyřčených Ginsbergem („I caught myself thinking

¹⁰⁰ Ginsberg, *Clear Seeing Poetics*, 32.

¹⁰¹ Ginsberg, *Karma*, 137.

¹⁰² Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 100.

¹⁰³ Ginsberg, *Karma*, 271.

about the first night with my husband“),¹⁰⁴ by pravděpodobně začínal: „Vzpomněla jsem si [. . .]“ Zde však chybí prvek uvědomění, překvapení a určitého vyjádření rozpaků. Doslovný překlad: „Přistihla jsem se, jak myslím [. . .]“ naopak postrádá přirozenost. Odpovídající idiom v češtině se Ginsbergovu olomouckému obecenstvu najít nepodařilo, stejně jako se to nezdařilo ani předtím v Německu.¹⁰⁵ To je důkazem hloubky tohoto zdánlivě jednoduchého pořekadla — „[. . .] ukazuje, že nejste uvěznění vlastní myslí, ale že jste mimo ni, pozorujete ji zvenčí.“¹⁰⁶ Polemika o tom, kdo nebo co nás vlastně přistihne při myšlení, by mohla vyústit až v tezi, že existují mysli dvě. Z pohledu zenového buddhismu lze hovořit o běžné mysli a „velké“ mysli. K snazšímu pochopení sahá Ginsberg po komiksu: běžnou mysl si můžeme přestavit jako myšlenkovou bublinu u hlavy postavy, celý rámeček pak představuje „velkou“ mysl.¹⁰⁷

Jakmile se tedy přistihneme při myšlení, výběr vhodného námětu pro poezii usnadní slogan **„Všímej si toho, co je výrazné.“** (**„Observe what's vivid“**) Podobně jako předchozí slogany se i tento zaobírá výběrem vhodné (první) myšlenky a jejím odlišením od myšlenek sekundárních. Problémem se tu stává opět překlad, kdy české „výrazné“ nevystihuje plně anglický protějšek „vivid“, tedy „jasné, svěží, syté co do barvy“. Mimo to není potřeba hlubší výklad, tento slogan obstojí bez problémů sám o sobě. Také Ginsberg jej shrnuje veskrze polopaticky: „Jak poznáme, co je výrazné? Výrazné je výrazné. Pokud to není výrazné, není to výrazné. Neutkví vám to v mysli. Neuvidíte to.“¹⁰⁸ Bavíme se tedy o obrazech, které v mysli jasně vyčnívají nad ostatní: „Cokoliv vyzařuje obraz dostatečně jasný na to, abyste jej uviděli a byli schopni reprodukovat, je vhodným tématem pro báseň.“¹⁰⁹ Připomeňme si příkladem výjevy z poezie Charlese Reznikoffa z kapitoly obyčejné mysli: žížaly v dešti na okraji chodníku, automobily rozstříkující kolem sebe v půlkruzích vodu, žena žvýkající kus salniny.

¹⁰⁴ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 121.

¹⁰⁵ See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 120.

¹⁰⁶ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 122.

¹⁰⁷ See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 122.

¹⁰⁸ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 123.

¹⁰⁹ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 123.

Shrnutí pak představuje navazující slogan: „**Výrazné se přebere samo**“ („**Vividness is self-selecting**“), rovněž z Ginsbergova pera. I výrazné ale může utéct naší pozornosti, pokud si nebudeme neustále vědomi svých smyslů a nebudeme je pravidelně kontrolovat. Podobně jako když tak dlouho sledujeme, co běží v televizi,¹¹⁰ dokud nenarazíme na něco, co nás zajímá. K tradiční pěti smyslů v Aristotelově pojetí přidává Ginsberg ne úplně překvapivě ještě šestý — mysl. Báseň „Jen bzukot mouchy“ je klasickým dílem americké básnířky Emily Dickinsonové. Ač byla Whitmanovou současnicí, její tvorba je podřízena pravidelnému veršovanému schématu. Přesto však je tato báseň výtečnou ukázkou zapojení smyslového vnímání pro získání podnětu — autorka v ní popisuje svou uměleckou smrt prostřednictvím pouhého mušního zabzučení.

Na výrazné vystupující obrazy je bohatá poezie Roberta Creeleyho. Báseň „Memory, 1930“ se také zaobírá smrtí a zároveň je do určité míry popisem procesu spontánního psaní. Autor se na začátku snaží rozvzpomenout na smrt svého otce, který zemřel, když Creeleymu byly čtyři roky. (There are continuities in memory, but / useless, dissimilar. My sister's / recollection of what happened won't / serve me.)¹¹¹ Jediným pevným bodem je tak pro něj vzpomínka na sanitku odjíždějící přes zasněžený trávník. Ve „First Rain“ odkrývá první déšť, co bylo v zimě skryto pod sněhovou přikrývkou, podobně jako když se rozvzpomínáme na věci, které jsme již zapomněli.

5.1.8 „Pokud to nikomu neukážeme, můžeme napsat, co chceme.“ („If we don't show anyone, we're free to write anything.“)

Jak se vyrovnat se strachem z reakce okolí na myšlenky, trápilo Ginsberga už při psaní „Kvílení“. Obával se například, jak bude jeho otec reagovat na otevřený popis promiskuitních homosexuálních praktik a zda tím nemůže pošpinit dobré jméno rodiny.¹¹² Jemu samotnému pomohlo přesvědčení, že „Kvílení“ nebude nikdy publikovat. Obavy však nemusí být nutně morálního

¹¹⁰ See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 123.

¹¹¹ Ginsberg, *Clear Seeing Poetics*, 32.

¹¹² See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 128.

charakteru — jako příklad uvádí Ginsberg sovětské autory píšící „do šuplíku“ ve strachu před persekcí stalinistickým režimem.

Další možnost, jak čelit strachu z reakce okolí, představuje technika, kterou praktikoval Jack Kerouac. Ten se rozhodl, že bude po dobu jednoho roku každý den psát a své výtvořky okamžitě pálit. Tímto cvičením prý „otevřel světu celou oblast svého soukromí a po roce se už nestyděl za vlastní myšlenky.“¹¹³ To je ale nepravdivé tvrzení, protože, jak dokládá jiný rozhovor z kraje devadesátých let, tedy dlouho po Kerouacově smrti, jeho fixace by mu nedovolila „[. . .]judělat na veřejnosti nic, s čím by jeho matka nesouhlasila. Nebo napsat něco, co by si mohla přečíst, například jak mu ho kouřím nebo tak [. . .] Takže to ovlivňovalo, co si dovolil říct.“¹¹⁴ Minimálně na tomto příkladu lze prokázat, že dodržování tohoto sloganu nemusí mít nutně za následek odbourání obav z reakce našeho okolí.

5.1.9 „Jeden postřeh musí neprodleně a přímo vést k postřehu dalšímu.“ („One perception must immediately and directly lead to a further perception.“)

Ačkoliv se o něm Ginsberg nezmiňuje tak často jako o svých dalších básnických vzorech, Charles Olson má na tvorbu Allena Ginsberga podle mého názoru stejně razantní dopad jako Walt Whitman a W. C. Williams. Vždyť po tom, aby byla délka řádku podřízena dechu, tak jak to nalézáme v „Kvílení“, volal Olson ve svém manifestu „Projective Verse“ v době, kdy Ginsberg ještě psal jambem.

Netvrdím, že by snad Olson touto formulací položil základy Ginsbergova spontánního psaní, velmi výstižně je však shrnul. Představa jednoho postřehu vedoucí k druhému v sobě zahrnuje obraz fragmentované mysli (později ještě umocněný Ginsbergovou implementací techniky filmového střihu) a znovu shrnuje doposud uvedené slogany. Svým principem znovu vymezuje spontánní psaní vůči veršovaným schématům a plánování. Básník by měl zaznamenávat změny v mysli během procesu psaní, ne se řídit dopředu vymezeným tématem a schématem, v takovém případě by naopak

¹¹³ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 101.

¹¹⁴ Ginsberg, Spontaneous Mind, 544.

musel svou mysl podřizovat jim. Pokud během psaní „vyvstane v jeho mysli nová myšlenka, měl by ji zahrnout do věty.“¹¹⁵ Tak povede jeden vjem přímo k druhému a vznikne obraz naší fragmentované mysli, jak o ní hovoří Ginsberg v úvodu své přednášky. Ten se odráží nejen v surrealismu, ale za pomoci techniky stříhu také ve filmové tvorbě.

Philip Whalen, další z řady beatníků zásadně ovlivněných buddhismem, nabízí obraznější pojetí výše zmíněného v sloganu: **„Mé psaní je obrazem pohybující se mysli.“** („**My writing is a picture of the mind moving.**“) Whalen tuto ideu formuloval ve skutečnosti techničtěji, jako „mé psaní je *grafem* pohybující se mysli.“ Toto vyjádření se zdá být vhodnější — křivka grafu reprezentuje představu průběhu změn v mysli a její pohyb lépe, než statický obraz. Těžko tedy říct, proč podobu sloganu Ginsberg takto upravil. K těmto vyjádřením přidává ještě jeden svůj, lakonický slogan **„Překvapivá mysl (Surprise mind)“**. Ten je pouze opisem toho, co již bylo jedenkrát vyřčeno ve výkladu uvolněné mysli: „Má mysl je pro mě vždy překvapením, nikdy nevím, co si budu myslet v další chvíli.“¹¹⁶

5.1.10 „Do staré tůně / skočila žába, / žbluňk!“ („An old pond, a frog jumps in, kerplunk!“)

Básnická forma Haiku, kterou Ginsberg označuje bezvýhradně za Japonskou, je z jeho pohledu pro psaní mysli klíčová. Nejen že se (ať už v konkrétní podobě nebo zastoupena juxtapozicí) objevuje ve všech stádiích procesu psaní, zároveň je jedním ze zdrojů inspirace, ke kterým se Ginsberg hlásí už v rané obhajobě svého „Kvílení“. Zde nabízí přílehlavý příměr elektrického náboje mezi dvěma elektrodami, který je tím větší, čím větší je vzdálenost mezi dvěma póly.¹¹⁷ Olomouckým studentům jej neméně výstižně popisuje jako „sedmnáctislabičnou verbální fotografii“¹¹⁸ ovlivněn snad svou vášní pro fotografii, které se v pozdější fázi života věnoval i profesně. Dalším důležitým prvkem je pocit prázdnoty (zásadní pro řadu navazujících sloganů).

¹¹⁵ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 108.

¹¹⁶ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 108.

¹¹⁷ See Ginsberg, *Howl*, 153.

¹¹⁸ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 108.

Použité Bashovo haiku je velmi slavným zástupcem tohoto žánru a je zde uvedeno v Ginsbergově vlastním překladu dokládajícím, že své zásady spontánního projevu nehodlá porušit ani při překladu natolik etablované formy, jakou je haiku (ze všech uvedených příkladů nemá předepsaných sedmnáct slabik jediná, o posloupnosti 5-7-5 slabik nemluvě), důležité je, co a jakým způsobem je vyjádřeno. Dva rozdílné obrazy — klidná hladina starého jezírka versus narušení, šplouchnutí vody v pohybu — vytvoří v mysli obraz žáby skákající do vody, která se údajně¹¹⁹ v původním zápisu vůbec neobjevuje. Jak bylo řečeno o „překvapivé mysli“, i zde může náhle vyskočit myšlenka „ve starém jezeře mysli“.¹²⁰

Dalším pojitkem mezi haiku a spontánním psaním je bezesporu fakt, že duchovního otce této disciplíny označil Ginsberg za mistra haiku. „[Kerouac] vykazuje hlavní znak velkého básníka, je jediný ve Spojených státech, kdo umí napsat haiku. [. . .] A haiku přitom píšou všichni.“¹²¹

5.1.11 „Kouzlo spočívá v naprostém docenění náhody.“ („Magic is the total appreciation of chance.“)

Aleatorický experimentální skladatel John Cage a jeho tvorbou silně ovlivněný Jackson Mac Low byli v Naróповě institutu častými hosty. Cílené využívání náhody v jejich díle muselo tedy nutně zaujmout i spontánního ducha Allena Ginsberga. Přesto se může zdát, že tento Trungpou zformulovaný slogan do dosavadního diskurzu až tak hladce nezapadá. Ginsberg se vůbec nezdržuje vysvětlováním, co má vlastně ono „kouzlo“ znamenat a jak se má projevit v poezii, jen konstatuje, že „každý chce, aby jeho poezie byla kouzelná“.¹²²

Opět přichází na řadu videoklip, ve kterém nalezneme „obrázkovou ruletu, kolotoč náhodných obrazů spojených dohromady snad náhodou, trochu záměrně, ale taky zapadají na místo a jeden obrazec překvapivě přeskakuje k druhému.“¹²³ Ani tento ambivalentní komentář ale roli náhody

¹¹⁹ See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 110.

¹²⁰ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 110.

¹²¹ Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 51.

¹²² Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 111.

¹²³ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 111.

úplně neobjasňuje. Jako skutečně definitivní příklad tak Ginsberg srovnává umírajícího člověka, který svoji situaci přijme a pozoruje (doslova se do ní „ponoří“) a člověka, který zaujme odmítavý postoj, je nešťastný, že umírá, odmítá se s tím smířit a tím se postupně propadá do hlubší a hlubší bolesti, „[. . .] rozdíl mezi člověkem žijícím s AIDS a umírajícím na AIDS, dalo by se říct.“¹²⁴ I smrt a smrtelné nemoci tedy považuje pouze za další náhody v lidském životě.

Ginsberg v této době netušil, že má před sebou necelé čtyři roky života a nevyprávěl tudíž z pozice člověka, který si je vědom blízkého se konce. Sluší se však podotknout, že když mu lékař o několik let později sdělil nevyčísitelnou diagnózu, přijal ji Allen bez výhrad a odebral se z nemocnice do svého bytu, kde trávil své poslední dny obklopený přáteli.¹²⁵ Stejně smířeně, třebaže trochu sentimentálně, působí i jeho poslední báseň přiléhavě nazvaná „Co už neudělám (Nostalgie)“, která je důležitým svědectvím o pohybu mysli v posledních dnech před smrtí. Jednou z položek na seznamu věcí, které už Ginsberg nestihne dokončit, jsou také „mind writing slogans“, v českém překladu „slogany psané v mysli“¹²⁶ (překladatel zde zjevně zaměnil přičestí za gerundium, pro naše potřeby zůstaneme u překladu „slogany pro psaní mysli“). Každopádně zde vychází najevo, že ani ve svých sedmdesáti letech neřekl ještě k otázce spontánní poezie Ginsberg poslední slovo a nebyť jeho náhlé smrti, nepochybně by se počet sloganů dále rozrůstal, čemuž nasvědčuje i fakt, že za Ginsbergova života nebyly v úplném znění publikovány.

5.1.12 Slogany vnitřního rozporu

Tematiku náhody v básnické tvorbě volně rozvíjí druhý slogan od Walta Whitmana, opět z jeho klíčové sbírky *Stébla trávy*: „**Že si odporuji? / Dobrá, odporuji si / (Jsem široký, jsou ve mně davy).**“ („**Do I contradict myself? Very well, then I contradict myself, [I am large. I contain multitudes].**“) Ginsberg tyto verše vykládá jako svolení, které Whitman dává svému

¹²⁴ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 111.

¹²⁵ Morgan, 647.

¹²⁶ Ginsberg, *Karma*, 305.

publiku, aby si mohlo lépe uvědomit náhodné (a často rozporuplné) fungování lidské mysli, v souladu s následujícím sloganem Johna Keatse. Ginsberg vysvětluje pojem jedince obsahujícího davy tak, že „neexistuje jedno jediné ego, jedno ‚Já‘. Existuje bezpočet ‚já‘.“¹²⁷ Nejde o potlačení individuality, které by se v důsledku nesneslo s Whitmanovou inspirativní oslavou sebe sama v prvních verších básně „Sám sebe slavím“. Ginsberg rozvádí absenci ega na pozadí japonské budhistické estetiky, kde toto reprezentuje velkou, rozlehlou a uvolněnou mysl (pozitivní charakteristika) v protipólu egocentrické sebestřednosti (charakteristika negativní).¹²⁸

Že i teorie moderní poezie může čerpat z poezie mnohem starší, například romantické, dokazuje výňatek z dopisu Johna Keatse jeho bratrům: **„[. . .] Jakou předností se vyznačuje úspěšný jedinec, zejména v literatuře? [. . .] Negativní schopností, totiž když je člověk schopen existovat v nejistotě, záhadách, pochybách, aniž by se zatvrzele domáhal pravdy a rozumu.“** („[. . .] **What quality went to form a man of achievement, especially in literature? [. . .] Negative capability, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason.**“ Frází „negativní schopnost“ rozumíme ochotu přijmout dvojakou podstatu věcí a netrvat na tom, že něco je buď to, nebo ono a nic mezi tím. Tento způsob uvažování, vlastní každému dogmatickému náboženství (což na tomto místě výjimečně opomíná komentovat), se v době Ginsbergovy návštěvy Olomouce nejvíce odrazil na válečném konfliktu v někdejší Jugoslávii, který byl tou dobou v plném proudu a který jej dříve toho roku inspiroval k napsání básně „Peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina“. Stejně ostře jako o náboženské nesnášenlivosti se v rámci negativní schopnosti vyslovil o homofobii: „Buď je to černé, nebo bílé. Buďto jsi teplouš, nebo hetero. Buďto jsi Srb, nebo Bosňák. [. . .] Buďto jsi Chorvat, nebo muslim. Buďto jsi Američan, nebo komunista. [. . .] Můžeš

¹²⁷ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 114.

¹²⁸ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 110.

být oboje! Nebo jak říká Gregory Corso: „Máš-li na výběr ze dvou věcí, vyber si obě.“¹²⁹

5.1.13 Slogany formy

Zavedené básnické formy nevyhovují potřebám spontánní poezie jednoduše proto, že spontánnost z principu neumožňují. Je-li básníková tvorba podřízena veršovanému schématu, je jako malíř vybarvující předem předtištěné kontury. Slogan Roberta Creeleyho citovaný Charlesem Olsonem v jeho „Projective Verse“ zní: „**Forma není nikdy víc než rozšířením obsahu.**“ („**Form is never more than extension of content.**“) Ginsberg to ještě podpoří ústřední myšlenkou funkcionalismu, jejíž autorství neprávem přisuzuje F. L. Wrightovi: „**Forma následuje funkci.**“ („**Form follows function.**“) Přestože jsme zvyklí funkcionalismus spojovat výhradně s architekturou, stojí za úvahu, zda právě spontánní psaní není příkladem užití zásad funkcionalismu v literatuře. Pakliže jsme naši mysl definovali jako nekonečný zdroj fragmentovaných a rozporuplných obrazů, musí tomuto faktu podléhat i forma jejího vyjádření. Ta bude mít ideálně tolik variant, kolik existuje variant lidských myslí. V opačném případě by šlo o napodobování, které se překvapivě nevyhýbá ani spontánnímu psaní, dokonce ani Ginsbergovi samotnému (například v básni „Returning to the Country For a Brief Visit“ se dle vlastních slov otevřeně inspiroval starou čínskou poezií).¹³⁰

Ani tak spontánnímu básnickému duchu nebyl tento přístup od počátku zřejmý. Když se Ginsberg ptal W. C. Williamse, jakou formu by měla mít dlouhá báseň, dostalo se mu odpovědi: „Mnoho různých forem.“ „To mě předtím nikdy nenapadlo, myslel jsem, že je na to jedna forma nebo jeden jambický pentametr,“¹³¹ přiznává Ginsberg a jedním dechem dodává, že ve všech velkých básních dvacátého století je najednou užito mnoha různých forem, příkladem může být T. S. Elliotova „Pustá země“, „Cantos“ Ezry Pounda nebo Williamsův „Paterson“, ve kterém byl například použit i

¹²⁹ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 113.

¹³⁰ See Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 412.

¹³¹ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 114.

„přehled jednotlivých geologických vrstev města Paterson [a] novinové výstřižky.“¹³² Hlavní důraz nicméně Ginsberg znovu klade na koláž a montáž, které nejlépe vystihují podobu roztržité lidské mysli.

5.1.14 „Nic není vhodnější pro věčné bytí / nebo tak bílé jako bílá, která zmírá na sklonku dne.“ („Nothing is better for being Eternal / nor so white as the white that dies of a day.“)

Na první pohled snad trochu matoucí dvojverší u nás poměrně neznámého a bohužel nepřeloženého, přesto předního představitele a spoluzakladatele objektivistické školy Louise Zukofskyho, je ve své podstatě oceněním prchavé povahy lidských myšlenek. Srozumitelnější je slogan v Ginsbergově úpravě: „Nic není vhodnější pro věčnou existenci než tradiční červená růže, která uvadne na konci dne.“ Růže je odvěkým symbolem krásy a něžnosti právě pro svou pomíjivost, a pokud bychom ji o ni připravili, růže by ztratila svůj smysl a nám by zbyla pouze jakási „dekorace z budoáru.“¹³³ Zachycení čisté, původní a prchavé myšlenky bude mít v poezii mnohem větší cenu, než cílený pokus o napodobení hlubokých a vysoce estetických myšlenek, stejně jako živá růže bude mít vždy větší cenu (nerozumíme cenu monetární) než napodobenina růže ze dřeva či kovu.

5.1.15 „Místa v čase“ („Spots of time“)

Třebaže se o Williamu Wordsworthovi, velkém duchu romantické poezie, nedá mluvit jako o spontánním básníkovi, jeho snaha přiblížit poezii jazyku prostého lidu představovala v tomto ohledu bezesporu krok správným směrem. Mimoto ve své poezii použil termín „místa v čase“ — odrazy výrazných prožitků v naší paměti, na které si opakovaně vzpomeneme v nejrůznějších situacích. Nazývám je pro lepší představu „místa v čase“, přestože v překladu Zdeňka Hrona se hovoří prostě o „chvilích“: „V životě na nás přicházejí chvíle, jež nad ostatní vyniknou a cnost, jež obnovuje, uchovají [. . .].“¹³⁴ Jsou to ony věčné postřehy z kapitoly o obyčejné mysli, Creeleyho vzpomínka z dětství na úmrtí otce nebo jeho kratičká báseň „Echo“, která je

¹³² Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 132.

¹³³ "Allen Ginsberg & Steven Taylor at Texas State 1996 - Q & A -1," The Allen Ginsberg Project, http://ginsbergblog.blogspot.cz/2014/10/allen-ginsberg-steven-taylor-at-texas_11.html

¹³⁴ William Wordsworth. *Podzemní hudba* (Praha: BB/art s.r.o., 2009), 118.

zároveň „útržkem živého jazyka“.¹³⁵ Tyto okamžiky epifanie, jak je Ginsberg označuje, přitom nemusí naplňovat podstatu použitého výrazu, může se jednat o „naprosto obyčejné momenty, které nám z toho či onoho důvodu utkví v hlavě.“¹³⁶ Znovu zde vyplouvá na povrch důležitost básnickovy sebedůvěry zmiňované již při debatě o výběru první myšlenky, protože právě to dělá básníka básníkem, jak Ginsberg zdůrazňuje svému posluchačstvu: „Všichni máte mozky [miliardy let staré] co do vývoje, [. . .] nekonečné vědomí a nekonečně velkou mysl, [. . .] dvacet třicet či víc let zkušeností a míst v čase. Máte všechny předpoklady stát se básníky kromě jedné věci, a tou je pamatování si a docenění vlastního života.“¹³⁷ V tom také tkví význam Whitmanových veršů z první části básně „Zpěv o mě“:

Sám sebe slavím, sám sebe opěvám,
Co já si troufám, ty též si troufni,
Neboť každý atom, který mi patří, i tobě patří.¹³⁸

Pokud se naučíme vidět svůj život stejně důležitý jako ten Whitmanův, podařilo se Whitmanovi přenést pomocí tohoto trojverší své sdělení, souhlas a povzbuzení — „Nezávislost. Jste vlastními pány [. . .] Vaše mysl je pro vás i ostatní nejvyšší autoritou.“¹³⁹

5.1.16 „Každý si na posteli mluvil pro sebe, bez hlesu.“ („Each on his bed spoke to himself alone, making no sound.“)

Výňatek z básně Louise Zukofskiho, který je zároveň posledním sloganem z oblasti základů, popisuje stav těsně před usnutím, kdy člověk hovoří sám se sebou. Myšlenky, které nás v těchto okamžicích napadají, patří prý k nejdůvěrnějším za celý den a jsou skutečným příkladem sloganu „má mysl je otevřená sobě samé“,¹⁴⁰ což z nich dělá ideální materiál pro poezii. Opět však vyvstává otázka, jak je věrně zreprodukovat. Ze zdánlivě jednoduchého úkolu se stává nepřekonatelná překážka. „Kdybyste to dokázali, byli byste Shakespeare,“ komentuje problém se smíchem Ginsberg. „Každý chce vědět,

¹³⁵ See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 125.

¹³⁶ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 127.

¹³⁷ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 127.

¹³⁸ Walt Whitman, *Stébla trávy* (Praha: Naše vojsko, 1955), 69.

¹³⁹ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 128.

¹⁴⁰ See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 128.

co si lidé ve skutečnosti myslí. Ne co říkají, že si myslí, ne co chtějí, aby si ostatní mysleli, že si myslí, ale co si doopravdy myslí. To by byl zázrak.”¹⁴¹

Nefalšované spontánní psaní může ve světle (nebo stínu) právě řečeného vypadat jako iluze a může být dokonce v rozporu s podstatou našeho uvažování. Úkolem spontánního básníka je se s pomocí sloganů pro psaní myslí tomuto ideálu co nejvíce přiblížit. Bylo by pošetilé myslet si, že z nás sebevětší množství pouček udělá nového Whitmana či Ginsberga, můžou nám však pomoci odhalit náš skutečný potenciál a umožnit nám psát bez masky tak, jak to doopravdy cítíme.

5.2 Slogany z úrovně cesty

Pomyslná cesta v názvu druhé úrovně sloganů vede od výběru vhodných myšlenek až k jejich realizaci a k básnickému vyjádření. Slovy Ginsberga: „Jak použít, seřadit a přetřídit jednotlivé aspekty myslí, jak přijmout obyčejnou mysl a jak s ní pracovat? Psát a učit můžeme pouze to, co známe. Jaké triky a techniky soustředění lze praktikovat?“¹⁴² Pokud se první úroveň sloganů zaobírala správnou orientací v mysli spontánního autora, druhá vychází ze spontánní povahy čtenářovy myslí. Jak formulovat dané myšlenky tak, aby měly na příjemce požadovaný dopad?

5.2.1 „Nezastavuj se, abys přemýšlel nad slovy, ale abys lépe uviděl obraz.“ („Don't stop to think of words but to see the picture better.“)

Přes nesporný půvab Ginsbergovy heslovité metody výuky je třeba čas od času poznamenat, že by místy mohl upřednostnit vlastní výklad před hledáním vhodného citátu u kolegů. Dokladem toho je zde použitý slogan od Jacka Kerouaca, u kterého není mimo významu jisté ani znění — v přednáškách opakovaně zaznívá v jiné podobě, než v jaké je uveden na seznamu sloganů („Don't think of words when you stop but to see the picture better.“).¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 129.

¹⁴² "Mind Writing Slogans of Allen Ginsberg"

¹⁴³ Gary Gach, ed., What Book!?: Buddha Poems from Beat to Hiphop (Parallax Press, 2013), 198, <http://books.google.cz>.

Daný slogan je přitom možné formulovat veskrze polopaticky: vybavíme si obraz a z něj odvodíme potřebná slova, než abychom se snažili vymýšlet slova, která k ničemu neodkazují. „Pokud si vybavíte scénu nebo osobu, kterou popisujete, nebo starou čajovou konvičku, jako zátiší, [. . .] uvidíte obraz lépe, slova pak přijdou sama, protože máte podle čeho psát.“ To ale neznamena, že Ginsberg znevažuje ostatní druhy poezie — jakou je poezie zvuková, čistě abstraktní nebo filozofická — pouze se ve svém výkladu zaměřuje na východisko moderní Americké poezie, obzvláště ve vztahu k té beatnické.¹⁴⁴ Proto zde, jak už je v této fázi Ginsbergova výkladu patrné, sehrává klíčovou roli vizuální vjem. Kupříkladu Kerouac měl v úmyslu napsat román, jež by byl jakýmsi filmem či kinematografem myslí, William Burroughs zase údajně přemýšlel výhradně v obrazech.¹⁴⁵

5.2.2 „Vychutnávej samohlásky, važ si souhlásek.“ („Savor vowels, appreciate consonants.“)

Podle Ginsbergových slov byla poezie zpívaná od svého počátku. Homér zpíval svoji Odyseu a Sapphó recitovala básně za doprovodu pětistrunné lyry.¹⁴⁶ Zvuk, resp. hudba byly tedy vždy důležitou složkou poezie obecně a neméně poezie Ginsbergovy, kdy toto platí od počátku jeho tvorby. Dokladem je instrukce zahrnutá v post skriptu dopisu, kterým Ginsberg uvádí své básně zaslané W. C. Williamsovi v roce 1955: „Tyto básně [. . .] vyznějí nejlépe a nejzřetelněji čtené nahlas.“¹⁴⁷ Skutečně, už z raných zvukových nahrávek Ginsbergovy recitace vyzařuje nezaměnitelná melodičnost a elán, které dávají básním doslova nový rozměr. Úloha interpreta je tak u Ginsberga neméně důležitá než je tomu u hudebních interpretů. Hranice mezi poezií a hudbou je u něj však obtížně definovatelná. Samotné spontánní psaní bylo motivováno touhou dosáhnout na poli literatury toho, čeho dosahoval černý americký jazz v hudbě.¹⁴⁸ Postupem času se navíc v Ginsbergových vystoupeních stávala hudba stále zásadnějším

¹⁴⁴ See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 141.

¹⁴⁵ See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 144.

¹⁴⁶ See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 106.

¹⁴⁷ Ginsberg, *Howl*, 150.

¹⁴⁸ Kerouac, 143.

prvkem — od zhudebněných veršů Williama Blakea (které se postupem času staly nedílnou součástí jeho veřejných čtení, při nichž zpíval a sám se doprovázel na přenosné harmonium), přes řadu bluesových písní, až po spolupráci se zvučnými jmény hudební scény, jako např. Phillipem Glassem nebo Paulem McCartneym.¹⁴⁹ Pro lepší ilustraci odkazuji na audio přílohu této práce, v níž jsou k nalezení záznamy z Ginsbergových hudebně-poetických olomouckých vystoupení.

Výklad tohoto sloganu však nemusí nutně souviset s hudbou, může zcela jednoduše znamenat, že básník by měl zřetelně a pomalu vyslovovat, jak se o to po dobu výkladu sloganu snaží Ginsberg sám a jak například oceňuje u vystoupení Boba Dalyna, kterému přísluhuje velkou zásluhu na návratu poezie do populární hudby.¹⁵⁰ Snahou o srozumitelnost vysvětluje Dylanův charakteristický „úšklebek“ při zpěvu, který se mu na tváři objevuje v důsledku pečlivého vyslovování každé slabiky, aby mu početné obecenstvo snadno rozumělo.¹⁵¹

5.2.3 Slogany věcné

Pod tímto pracovním označením si shrneme slogany, které přes rozdílný původ a znění „v podstatě znamenají totéž,“¹⁵² jak přiznává sám Ginsberg. Zajímat nás opět bude to, co je hmatatelné nebo dobře popsatelné a stranit se naopak budeme abstrakce a generalizace — přístup, který techniku psaní myslí prostupuje skrz naskrz, si tedy rozebereme v jiné rovině, přičemž se posuneme od výběru myšlenek k metodě jejich záznamu.

Tři slogany si zde Ginsberg vypůjčil od W. C. Williamse. O prvním z nich hovoří jako o „velmi slavném sloganu v americké poezii, kterému všichni básníci rozumí nebo o něm mají ponětí, ať už se jej rozhodnou praktikovat nebo ne.“¹⁵³ Toto je skutečně heslo, které by se mohlo objevit v erbu spontánní poezie: **„Žádné myšlenky než ve věcech.“** („**No ideas but in things**“) Baterie výrazů, kterých se rozhodneme užít při přenosu našich

¹⁴⁹ Morgan, 639.

¹⁵⁰ Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 302.

¹⁵¹ See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 107.

¹⁵² Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 137.

¹⁵³ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 137.

myšlenek, by se měla skládat ze slov odkazujících k věcem a faktům, „jako u novinové reportáže — Kdy? Kde? Jak?“¹⁵⁴ Možným výsledkem je pak jazyk, který Ginsberg záměrně používá ve své první publikované básnické sbírce „Prázdné zrcadlo“.¹⁵⁵ Nebo ještě jednodušeji řečeno — zvolit to, co máme „blízko u nosu“ („close to the nose“), co je blízko našemu životu. Stejně tak výzva „upni svou mysl na věci“ („clamp down the mind on objects“) srozumitelně vyjadřuje princip, který zastává. Williams si v jednotlivých básních neprotiřečí — pokus o důslednou analýzu by byl bohužel nad rámec tohoto komentáře, přesto kterákoliv jeho namátkou vybraná báseň bude beze zbytku splňovat výše napsané. To se ale s klidným srdcem nedá říct o Ginsbergovi; snad si nedovolím příliš, když jeho ikonické „Kvílení“ označím za dílo, které se bez poznámkového aparátu nedá pochopit, což se s kýženou univerzálností Ginsbergovy poezie neslučuje. Obraty jako „nebeský kontakt s hvězdným dynamem ve strojovně moci“, „vodíková hrací skříň (hydrogen jukebox)“, kterou uvedl v závěru první přednášky jako nejlepší příklad první myšlenky v celé své poezii, či všeobjímající „Moloch“ — ty všechny mohou být učebnicovými příklady první myšlenky a uvolněné mysli. Zároveň jsou však v rozporu s většinou sloganů z druhé úrovně, na kterou jsou jednoduše příliš abstraktní. Dlužno podotknout, že si byl Ginsberg tohoto problému vědom a během svých přednášek se o něm zmínil. „Má mysl má skony k abstrakci, generalizaci a kecání hovadin, jak tady předvádím. [. . .] Proto věnuji velkou pozornost radám, kterých se mi dostalo od W. C. Williamse, abych upnul mysl na věci, vrátil se na pevnou zem a zůstal blízko u nosu.“¹⁵⁶

Kontroverzní jsou také následující slogany, které Ginsberg doprovází improvizovanými příklady. Např. „**přímé zacházení s předmětem**“ („direct treatment of the thing“) od E. Pounda ilustruje tak, že namísto prostého „vyšel jsem ven“ říká „vyšel jsem do břechky na Dómské ulici.“¹⁵⁷ U lidového sloganu „**dej mi příklad**“ („give me a for instance“) rozvede prosté konstatování „jídlo je dobré“ do podoby rozvleklého souvětí: „Když člověk

¹⁵⁴ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 137.

¹⁵⁵ See Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 71.

¹⁵⁶ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 142.

¹⁵⁷ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 138.

celý den nic nejedl a přijde zvenku ze sněhu a čeká na něj horké jídlo, knedlíky s omáčkou, je to fajn.“¹⁵⁸ A do třetice „**Přirozený objekt je vždy příhodným symbolem**“ („**The natural object is always the adequate symbol**“), čímž chtěl Pound poukázat na soběstačnost prostých věcí, které není třeba rozvíjet a nahrazovat. Ginsberg prezentuje tento slogan způsobem, že nahradí „byl jsem v jednom malém městě v České republice“ poetičtějším, leč obšírným, „Byl jsem v Olomouci, kde co pět minut uháněly zasněženými ulicemi s burácením tramvaje.“¹⁵⁹ Nehodlám na tomto místě zpochybňovat na základě několika nešťastně zvolených příkladů platnost a přínos těchto sloganů. Zaměřením na věci dosáhl Ginsberg konkrétnějšího popisu s hlubší atmosférou, stalo se tak nicméně na úkor stručnosti a výstižnosti. Jeden výrazný symbol by snad vystihnul původní myšlenku lépe, než deset náhodně vybraných.

Jedná se rovněž o prohrěšek vůči další z řady tvůrčích rad, které Ginsbergovi poskytnul W. C. Williams: „Omez se na to živé.“¹⁶⁰ Ve svých olomouckých přednáškách se o ní nezmiňuje, přestože tato si už svou heslovitou povahou a jasným zněním přímo říká o zařazení mezi slogany (jediným podobným je snad „nejlepší jsou útržky živého jazkya“).¹⁶¹ Jinak řečeno: „Je lépe mít jednu živou řádku než stránky neaktivního, neutrálního materiálu.“¹⁶² Paradoxně úspěšnějším se v aplikaci této zásady jeví klasicky odchovaný irský básník William Butler Yeats (třebaže jeho pozdní tvorbu spojuje Kerouac se spontánním psaním),¹⁶³ jehož dvojverší považoval Ginsberg za natolik důležité, že se jej rozhodl zařadit po bok již tak dost početných sloganů na téma věcné substituce. Byly-li tyto verše kdy přeloženy do češtiny, nepodařilo se mi překlad dohledat, proto pro potřeby sloganu uvádím vlastní: „**A že byla stará, potáhla kůží / všechno, co řekla**“. (**And being old she put a skin / on everything she said.**) Podle Ginsberga to, co je zde vyjádřeno idiomem (put a skin on . . .), jehož význam je i v angličtině

¹⁵⁸ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 138.

¹⁵⁹ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 138.

¹⁶⁰ Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 423.

¹⁶¹ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 144.

¹⁶² Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 371.

¹⁶³ See Kerouac, 144.

poněkud vágní, mohl Yeats opsat jako „jelikož byla stará a moudrá byla konkrétní v způsobu, jakým vyjadřovala myšlenky,‘ což je velmi obecný způsob, jak to říct.“¹⁶⁴ Nakolik je tento způsob obecný, ponechme na individuálním posouzení. Použitá fráze nicméně splňuje požadavky kladené na autora sesterskými slogany a na rozdíl od Ginsbergových příkladů má navíc pozitivní dopad v podobě aktivní fráze a úspory slov.

Svým dalším sloganem se Ezra Pound definitivně stává Ginsbergovým oblíbeným pramenem pro tuto oblast. **„Ukazování namísto odkazování“ („Presentation, not reference“)**, v techničtějším výrazivu „prezentace namísto reference“. Reference nás odkáže někam mimo stránku, kdežto za pomocí prezentace lze snáze popsat, co máme na mysli, jako když svůj oblíbený poetický obraz — paprsky slunce odrážející se od hladiny Středozevního moře — shrne Ezra Pound jako „plechové záblesky slunečního svitu (the tin flash of sun dazzle).“¹⁶⁵ Carl Rakosi, americký objektivistický básník maďarského původu, poskytuje ve své básni „To a Collie Pup“ nebývale věcný popis externího světa, neboť na něj nahlíží očima štěněte, jehož realita se skládá výhradně ze známých věcí a obličejů. („Why, you are hardly old enough / to know the difference / between your tail and a shadow, / yet the warm radiator / and your bowl of water / are already old friends.“)¹⁶⁶ Radiátor a miska, zdroje tepla a vody, se pro štěně přirozeně stávají krajně důležitými a v přeneseném významu se stávají klíčovými i pro básníka, protože ten upíná svou pozornost na to, co je důležité pro subjekt, který popisuje (jak dokazují také další příklady v textu básně — „slepice“, „sousedova popelnice“, „tkanička u boty“). Čtenář si pak z těchto zdánlivě nesouvislých prvků dokáže vytvořit obraz štěněcího života mnohem lépe, než kdyby mu byl básníkem předložen v předem naformulované podobě.

Abychom ale nenabýli dojmu, že je orientace na předměty výsostnou doménou Williamse, Pounda a objektivistů, nabízí Ginsberg ukázkou mnohem

¹⁶⁴ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 139.

¹⁶⁵ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 141.

¹⁶⁶ Carl Rakosi, *Man and Poet*, ed. Michael Heller (University of Maine, 1993), 68, <http://books.google.cz>.

starší — slavné Shakespearovy verše o zimě ze závěru hry *Marná lásky snaha*, zde uvedené v překladu Martina Hilského.

Když rampouchy střechy zdobí
a mráz za nehty leze hned,
Tom štípe dříví do zásoby
a v díži s mlékem chrastí led,
když zebe krev a vítr fouká, [. . .]
Když meluzína zaburácí
a lidi chrchlaj v kostelích,
na bílých polích černí ptáci
a Máří smrká v posteli [. . .]¹⁶⁷

Shakespeare zde prezentuje věci a výjevy spojené s mrazivým počasím a s jejich pomocí buduje živý obraz třeskuté zimy, aniž by slovo zima musel jedinkrát použít.

Z oblasti moderních vypravěčských technik doplňuje skupinu slogan **„nevyprávěj, ale ukazuj“** („**show not tell**“), podstata úsporného stylu Ernesta Hemingwaye. A třebaže právě jeho machistický a vojenský styl staví Ginsberg proti Whitmanově upřímnosti a citové křehkosti,¹⁶⁸ zásadní vliv na poválečnou prózu mu neupírá. A ať už byl Kerouac ve svém spontánním přístupu k psaní ovlivněn Hemingwayem do jakékoliv míry, nelze popírat, že se oba stali mluvčími přinejmenším jedné generace.

„Věci jsou symboly sebe samých.“ („**Things are symbols of themselves.**“)
Zenový buddhismus nahlíží na obyčejnou mysl jako na vrcholný stav vědomí, ve kterém objekty nerepresentují nic než samy sebe. Naše mysl je naučena interpretovat věci, jimiž jsme obklopeni, na základě jejich symbolického významu (krucifix si spojíme s křesťanstvím a ležatou osmičku s nekonečnem). S pomocí tohoto sloganu můžeme věci uvidět v jejich nahotě, „věcnosti“, jak říká Ginsberg, tak, že pro nás „už nebudou symbolem Boha nebo existence nebo čehokoliv jiného.“¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ William Shakespeare, *Dílo*, trans. Martin Hilský (Praha: Academia, 2011), 186.

¹⁶⁸ See Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 316.

¹⁶⁹ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 138.

5.2.4 Slogany struktury textu

Množina sloganů pojmenovaná Ginsbergem samotným (texture of the text) se už nezabývá tolik myšlenkovými pochody básníka, jako spíš jeho poetickou technikou.¹⁷⁰

První slogan pochází od Ginsberga, který se ale zjevně inspiroval u W. C. Williamse, na jehož básních slogan ilustruje — „**Nejlepší jsou útržky živého jazyka.**“ („**Intense fragments of spoken idioms are best.**“) Jedná se tedy o implementaci techniky, která není pro básnickou tvorbu typická (přerušeni sdělení v půlce věty — nebo i slova — a nevázaní zcela jinou myšlenkou), třebaže se jedná o častý aspekt mluveného projevu. Uplatněním tohoto postřehu se jazyk básnického projevu přiblíží k jazyku mluvenému a stane se odrazem uvolněné mysli, u které nelze předpokládat, co si budeme myslet v příští chvíli. Navíc zde podobně jako u haiku může vzniknout, coby výsledek juxtapozice dvou odlišných obrazů, obraz třetí. Pro ilustraci v básni „For Eleanor and Bill Monahan“ blahopřeje starý muž novomanželům a během proslovu postupně „ztrácí nit,“ až za pomoci nejrůznějších asociací skončí zpochybněním významu přistání na měsíci a na úplný závěr přeruší tok svých myšlenek s komentářem, že už je no to starý. („Their ships / should be directed / inwards upon . . . But I / am an old man. I / have had enough.“)¹⁷¹ „To je fakt úžasné,“ komentuje to Ginsberg, „nedokončil větu, přerušil ji, jak se mu přerušilo myšlení. [. . .] Přesně takhle by to někdo řekl.“¹⁷² Dalším příkladem je citoslovce z druhé uvedené básně, kde si adresát v podobně iracionálním duchu stěžuje listonoši na doručené dopisy a ptá se ho, proč mu nepřinese nějaký se spoustou peněz, načež ho počastuje oslovením „Atta boy!“, které je v angličtině pochvalou poslušného psa. (Why'n't you bring me / a good letter? One with lots of money in it. / [. . .] Atta boy! Atta boy!)¹⁷³ Jak říká Ginsberg, význam těchto slovních hříček spočívá jednoduše v tom, že něco podobného „v básni nikdy předtím

¹⁷⁰ See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 144.

¹⁷¹ William Carlos Williams, *The Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams: 1939-1962* (New York: New Directions Publishing, 1991), 252.

¹⁷² Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 145.

¹⁷³ Williams, 458.

neviděl.“¹⁷⁴ „Dva sousedé na maloměstě vtipkují ve svém skutečném jazyce, což jako námět pro americkou poezii nikdy předtím vhodné nebylo.“¹⁷⁵

U následujících sloganů je nelehké určit, zda svou podstatou spíše neodporují principu spontánního psaní. Všechny by se daly shrnout pod hlavičku jednoho z nich jako „**maximum informací, minimální počet slabik**“ („**Maximum information, minimum number of syllables**“). Z praktického hlediska je dobrým reprezentantem použití tohoto sloganu haiku. „**Přešívání**“ („**Tailoring**“) — termín, který si Ginsberg vypůjčil od Gregoryho Corsa — v podstatě nabádá k dodatečné editaci a odstranění přebytečných slov. V literatuře se mi k němu nepodařilo dohledat definici, z archivních nahrávek Corsoových rázovitých přednášek pro Narópvův institut¹⁷⁶ lze alespoň dešifrovat, že se nejedná o nic jiného, než revizi hotového díla a dodatečné škrty — tedy proces nastupující až po výběru myšlenky a jejím zápisu, jako bychom, říká Ginsberg, „stříhali báseň jako kalhoty, tak, aby padla.“¹⁷⁷

Na stejnou úroveň je možno zařadit „**economy of words**“ („**slovní hospodárnost**“), slogan, který se do této kategorie dostal od Basila Buntinga přes Ezru Pounda. Ten by se, myslím, na rozdíl od předchozího dal vyložit jako slogan ovlivňující mysl v procesu tvorby, kdy ta na jeho základě vybere jen vhodné myšlenky. To však opět představuje kámen úrazu, protože dle Ginsbergových slov není žádná myšlenka pro poezii nevhodná. Teprve na ukázce z Buntingovy obšírné básně *Briggflatts* je patrný správný výklad sloganu, který se nese v duchu předchozího „upnutí mysli na věci“, v tomto případě na věci a zvuky. („[. . .] harness mutter to shaft, / fellow to axle squeak, / rut thud the rim, / crushed grit.“)¹⁷⁸ Bunting zde za pomoci hojně užitých citoslovcí vytváří přímý popis obrazu mysli, na jehož základě si lze vybavit celou scénérii. Fráze „rut thud the rim“, volně přeloženo jako „obruč dunící ve vyjeté koleji“, poskytuje úsporným způsobem všechny potřebné

¹⁷⁴ see Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 145.

¹⁷⁵ Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 113.

¹⁷⁶ "Gregory Corso continues (NAROPA 1975 Class - 5)," The Allen Ginsberg Project, http://ginsbergblog.blogspot.cz/2012/01/gregory-corso-continues-naropa-1975_26.html

¹⁷⁷ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 145.

¹⁷⁸ Basil Bunting, *Collected poems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 41, <http://books.google.cz>.

indicie čtenáři, který si na jejich základě vybaví dřevěný vozík tažený koňmi na rozbité, prašné cestě v krajině.

„Zhuštěná syntaxe, plný zvuk“ („Syntax condensed, sound is solid“) je sesterským sloganem k „Vychutnávej samohlásky, vař si souhlásek.“ Oficiální překlad „úsporná syntax dodává pevný tvar“¹⁷⁹ bohužel zcela ignoruje zvukový aspekt, který zde hraje zásadní úlohu. Po dobu výkladu tohoto sloganu se Ginsberg opět soustředil na to, aby pomalu mluvil a zřetelně vyslovoval, syntaktické hledisko zde však vůbec neřeší. Jakým způsobem by tedy měla být syntax zhuštěná či úsporná se nedozvíme. Zjistíme ovšem alespoň, že v jejím důsledku dosáhneme plného zvuku. „Jako jste si vědomi dechu, můžete si být vědomi i zvuku samohlásek.“¹⁸⁰ Ezra Pound doporučuje následovat tónické vedení samohlásek, jako když například mluvíme vysokým hlasem s malými dětmi. Toho je prý možné docílit i v básni. Ginsberg to ilustruje na upraveném výňatku ze své vlastní básně „Bílý rubáš“ a recituje se stoupavou intonací otázku, kterou si vnitřně položí, když ve snu potká svou matku a je zděšen stavem jejího chrupu: „How could she live with that, I thought?“ („Jak takhle může žít, říkám si [. . .]“)¹⁸¹. Problém ale tkví v zápisu básně, kde za pomoci běžných interpunkčních znamének nelze kýženou melodiku vyjádřit. Otazník na konci věty čtenáře pravděpodobně přinutí použít intonaci spojenou s otázkou, ta ale může mít mnoho podob. Grafické vyjádření Ginsbergovy intonace, kde poloha slov odpovídá poloze hlasu, podobně jako u notového zápisu, by mohlo vypadat přibližně takto:

that,

live with

she

How could I thought?

¹⁷⁹ Allen Ginsberg, *Neposílejte mi už žádné dopisy* (Praha: Mat'a, 2012), 326.

¹⁸⁰ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 146.

¹⁸¹ Ginsberg, *Neposílejte mi už žádné dopisy*, 309.

Melodický aspekt spontánního zápisu je ve výsledku podřízen přinejmenším dvěma faktorům: spontánnímu čtení (individuálnímu výkladu čtenáře) a případnému překladu, kdy se myšlenky zachycené v určitém jazyce ocitnou ve zcela odlišném jazykovém systému. Pro ilustraci poslouží kterákoliv báseň z veřejného vystoupení v audio příloze, při kterém znějí Ginsbergovy básně v českém překladu následované originálem v autorově podání. Rozdíl mezi nimi je dramatický.

5.2.5 „Pouze zhmotnělá emoce přetrvává.“ („Only emotion objectified endures.“)

Poslední slogan této skupiny předjímá svým poselstvím slogany z následující roviny splnění. Z toho, co Ginsberg stihne říct o smyslu poezie, vyplývá, že jedním z hlavních úkolů básníka je přenést emoce.¹⁸² To potvrzuje i v jednom rozhovoru: „Nikdy jsem nechtěl psát básně, jen abych psal básně. Poezii jsem psal, abych vyjádřil určité pocity. Pokud nejsou pocity k vyjádření, není co vyjadřovat [. . .] Tak to prostě je.“¹⁸³ I tyto pocity ale musí být zapsány věcně, abychom při jejich vyjadřování nesklouzli ke klišé, sentimentu a patosu.

Marie Syrkinová, manželka známějšího Charlese Reznikoffa, byla slovy Ginsberga „velmi inteligentní žena a napsala malou sbírku básní.“¹⁸⁴ V básni „Finality“ popisuje události, jež doprovázely smrt jejího manžela, tedy okamžiky, které jsou pravděpodobně těmi nejhoršími v jejím životě a hýří emocemi. Přesto se jí v duchu „upnutí mysli na věci“ daří naložit s touto látkou bez patosu a neobyčejně působivě.

Povídali jsme si u večere,
[Smrt] vtrhla dovnitř s dvěma vlídnými, černými zřízenci
a hlučnou sanitkou.
Když jsem se nad ránem vrátila domů
na stole pořád stály sklenice
A já byla sama¹⁸⁵

Bylo by například možné napsat: „Když jsem se vrátila, nebyl jsi tam, byl jsi navždy pryč,“¹⁸⁶ míní Ginsberg. Na takové obecné zhodnocení je ale

¹⁸² See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 153.

¹⁸³ Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 450.

¹⁸⁴ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 148.

¹⁸⁵ Vlastní překlad.

¹⁸⁶ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 149.

čtenář zvyklý a přejde jej bez zájmu. Stačí však jeden na detail zaměřený popis, v tomto případě sklenice na stole, a čtenářovo myšlení je aktivováno: Pokud sklenice zůstaly na stole, stalo se něco nečekaného v průběhu večere. Pokud na stole stojí dvě sklenice, chybí zde druhý člověk. Pokud sklenice nikdo neuklidil, znamená to, že je dům prázdný. A podobně. Rázem se dokážeme mnohem lépe vžít do situace a pocítit každý v rámci vlastní percepce alespoň část emocí, které se na nás autorka snažila přenést.

5.3 Slogany z úrovně naplnění

Od „základů“ se po „cestě“ dostáváme až ke kýženému cíli, „Fruition“, jak tuto rovinu Ginsberg nazývá. Jako překlad se nabízí „splnění“, „dosažení cíle“, zároveň však slovo také vyjadřuje požitok s dosažením cíle spojený. Slogany v této skupině zahrnuté se však nezabývají pouze dokončenými výtvary psaní vlastní mysli, ale také jejich působením a dopadem na obecnost. Proto jsem se rozhodl pro výraz „naplnění“, který v sobě shrnuje naplnění vytyčených cílů při psaní, vnitřní duchovní naplnění básníka při dokončení básně, ale i to, jak naplní básník (kupříkladu výše diskutovanými emocemi) mysl svého čtenáře.

Všudypřítomný Whitmanův důraz na otevřenost je zde vyzdvihnout ještě výše: „Otevřenost: odhalit se sobě samým, odhalit se ostatním, naložit se zmatečnou úzkostí a zmírnit utrpení své i ostatních,“¹⁸⁷ formuluje Ginsberg požadavky kladené na poezii. Zároveň bychom však v souladu s nevypočitatelnou povahou mysli měli dostat odpověď na otázku: „Co můžeme očekávat?“

5.3.1 „Spiritus = dýchání = inspirace = volný dech“ („Spiritus = Breathing = Inspiration = Unobstructed Breath“)

U poslední roviny sloganů vyvstává častěji než u předchozích otázka, nakolik si její zástupci zaslouží být zařazeni právě do této kategorie a jestli by se nemohli stejně dobře uplatnit v kategorii jiné, případně na kolik je Ginsbergovo členění do kategorií směřodonné? Ne příliš, dle mého názoru. Dokládá to např. Whitmanova „otevřenost“, která na seznamu figuruje

¹⁸⁷ „Mind Writing Slogans of Allen Ginsberg“

s pořadovým číslem 60 jako desátý slogan třetí skupiny, přesto jej ve svých přednáškách uvádí Ginsberg jako první a výchozí myšlenku psaní vlastní mysli. Nejinak je tomu u sloganu z názvu této kapitoly. Jelikož každý chce mít ve své poezii poetickou inspiraci, je třeba si uvědomit, že je slovo inspirace odvozeno od latinského výrazu pro dech — „spiritus“,¹⁸⁸ zdůrazňuje Ginsberg. Jenomže spíše než do této skupiny zapadá inspirace mnohem lépe do oblasti základů, neboť kdy potřebujeme inspiraci více než právě na začátku procesu psaní?

Dech je zároveň ústředním prvkem meditace v sedě, jedné z inspirativních technik, se kterou ve svém výkladu Ginsberg nejčastěji pojí jiný slogan z oblasti základů, „chovej se přátelsky ke svým myšlenkám.“ Nakolik je tento přístup inspirativní, dokládá Ginsbergova báseň „Dech mysli“, která vznikla coby „vedlejší produkt meditace v sedě.“¹⁸⁹ Aby byl možné otázku inspirace správně uchopit v oblasti třetí roviny, je potřeba odlišit poezii inspirovanou (ta bude důležitá v prvních dvou rovinách) od poezie inspirativní. Ginsberg na konkrétních příkladech rozebírá, jak častým prvkem je dech v romantické poezii. P. B. Shelley v závěrečných verších své básně „Óda na západní vítr“ chce s tímto větrem splynout, aby hnal jeho myšlenky napříč vesmírem, podobně jako když Ginsberg ve výše zmíněném „Dechu mysli“ sleduje svůj dech, který po vypuštění putuje kolem země, až se nakonec vrátí zpátky k jeho nozdrám. „[. . .] Jeho dech je západní vítr a [. . .] kdokoliv přečte tuto báseň nahlas se stává Shellyho dechem, stává se západním větrem, získá onu inspiraci.“¹⁹⁰ To je jeden ze způsobů, jak lze na čtenáře přenést poetickou inspiraci. Ginsberg dokonce tvrdí, že při správném čtení básně je možné dostat se do opojného stavu, což přisuzuje hyperventilaci.¹⁹¹ To nepovažuje za náhodu, ale za Shellyho záměr, který s dechem pracoval velmi přesně a cíleně. „Pokud z toho uděláte hromadné cvičení ve třídě, všichni budou na konci omámení a v náladě.“¹⁹² To by znamenalo skutečný posun ve výkladu slova inspirace a je zvláštní, že

¹⁸⁸ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 150.

¹⁸⁹ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 157.

¹⁹⁰ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 153.

¹⁹¹ See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 153.

¹⁹² Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind*, 568.

Ginsberg, ostřílený performér zvyklý číst desítky dlouhých básní za večer, pozoruje tuto zvláštnost právě a pouze u této básně. Osobně se mi pravdivost této domněnky nepodařilo ověřit ani po několikerém čtení a nechávám ji proto na individuálním posouzení.

Za zmínku stojí i myšlenka, že je dech prostředkem poezie, a to doslova prostředkem dopravním. Bez dechu nelze mluvit a bez mluvení neexistuje poezie. Ginsberg považoval zvukovou složku poezie za velmi důležitou, což není společný znak všech Beatnických autorů. Například Gregory Corso říká: „Mám rád, když je poezie na stránce a vy sedíte v knihovně a máte před sebou tu stránku, pak to pochopíte.“¹⁹³ Teprve při čtení poezie nahlas jsou však „nehmotné myšlenky vědomí spojeny s fyzickým dechem těla v podobě hlasu“¹⁹⁴, což je podstata sloganů **„řeč synchronizuje mysl a tělo“** („**Speech synchronizes mind & body**“) a **„Císař sjednotí Nebe a Zemi“** („**The Emperor unites Heaven & Earth**“), které oba pochází z Trungpova pera a, jak už je u sloganů pro psaní mysli dobrým zvykem, oba znamenají totéž: „Nebe“ — „mysl“ — nehmotné myšlenky, „Země“ — „tělo“ — fyzický dech, „Císař“ — „Řeč“ — hlas. Pakliže tělo a mysl spolupracují, poezie přestává být „přecitlivělým blábolním duševně chorých jedinců a jejich neuróz a [stává se] proklamací inspirovaných výplodů mysli z pozice masa, pomocí dechu uvedenou do fyzické podoby.“¹⁹⁵

5.3.2 Slogany prázdnoty

Prázdnota nebo neohrazený, otevřený prostor, jehož roli ve východním myšlení dává Ginsberg na zřetel pomocí sloganu **„Sunyata (Sánskrit) = Ku (Japonština) = Prázdnota,**“ se v zenovém pojetí od prázdnoty v Evropském pojetí zásadně liší. Zatímco západ ji vnímá jako „obrovské, děsivé, černo bez boží přítomnosti,“¹⁹⁶ beatnici a východní filozofie ji vidí jako „otevřený prostor bez překážek, v němž můžete mít neomezený dech.“ Takový prostor je nekonečný, neklade žádné morální nebo teologické zábrany a je tedy ideální pro spontánní tvorbu, neboť se rozpíná stejně jako naše vědomí. Jak

¹⁹³ „Gregory Corso continues (NAROPA 1975 Class - 5)“

¹⁹⁴ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 151.

¹⁹⁵ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 151.

¹⁹⁶ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 154.

vtipně glosuje Ginsberg: „Vesmír nemá pokličku. [. . .] Není tam žádný Bůh Otec, který by tě okřiknul, ať držíš hubu.“¹⁹⁷ Řecký filosof Plotinos pocit prázdnoty vyjadřuje v sloganu **“Sám se samotou. (Alone with the alone.)”** Šok a náhlý pocit prázdnoty, který člověk intenzivně pocítí například při úmrtí někoho ve svém okolí, je také důležitým nástrojem pro přenos emocí z básníka na čtenáře, jak bylo popsáno na příkladu básně Marie Syrkinové.

5.3.3 Koány

Mezi slogany zahrnul Ginsberg také dva koány, krátké iracionální hádanky nebo příběhy, „výroky a výstupy [zenových] mistrů. Často ne příliš srozumitelné, protože nadmíru stručné, zjevně velmi konkrétně situované a přitom z kontextu vytržené [. . .] Paradoxní, nebo paradoxně působící.“¹⁹⁸ Ginsberg vidí jejich význam v tom, že mohou „otevřít mysl tomu nekonečnému prostoru, což je jedena z úloh poezie v čínské a tibetské praxi.“¹⁹⁹ Pro potřeby spontánní tvorby vybral Ginsberg dva populární koány, které mohou být známé i člověku dálnévýchodním myšlením nepoznamenanému, což je zároveň dokladem jejich univerzálního působení: **„Jak zní potlesk jedné ruky?“ („What is the sound of one hand clapping?“)** a **„Jak vypadala tvoje tvář před narozením?“ („What is the face you had before you were born?“)** Někdo by mohl s úšklebkem tlesknout prsty o dlaň a tvrdit, že tvář je stejná před narozením i po něm. Naše vědomí se otevře pouze v případě, že zapojíme svoji negativní schopnost a odhodláme se hledat odpovědi na otázky, na které neexistuje odpověď.

Ostatně nezodpovězených otázek stran prázdnoty a osamění zůstalo na konci Ginsbergových přednášek dost. Na otázky: „K čemu je dobrá tato samota a prázdnota a nezměrnost? Jak s ní naložit? Jak se v rámci ní chovat? Jak ji vyjádřit v poezii a jaký užitek z ní mohou mít ostatní?“²⁰⁰ slíbil Ginsberg odpovědět v posledním setkání, v něm se však omezil na čtení ukázek z tvorby současných amerických básníků a smysl a přínos poezie, který dle

¹⁹⁷ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 154.

¹⁹⁸ Wumenguan, *Brána bez dveří*, trans. Oldřich Král (Praha: Maxima, 2007), 30.

¹⁹⁹ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 154.

²⁰⁰ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 154.

dosavadních informací spočívá v předání inspirace a přenosu emocí, tak shrnul pouze v několika větách na úplný závěr: „Význam poezie a veškeré lidské činnosti může být spatřen ve zmírnění masy utrpení v existenci na zemi.“²⁰¹ To je prakticky doslovná parafráze posledního sloganu, od tibetského lámy Geleka — **„Zmenšit objem lidského a vědomého utrpení.“** („**To diminish the mass of human and sentient sufferings.**“) Toho lze poezií dosáhnout tehdy, když si díky ní lidé „lépe uvědomí sami sebe a svoji situaci.“²⁰² Na milost bere také vědní a filozofické disciplíny, které také mohou zmírnit lidské utrpení, přestože na ně v úvodní přednášce pohlíží Williamsovou optikou jako na původce utrpení.²⁰³ Tento Ginsbergův protimluv nelze shrnout jinak než opětovným užitím Whitmanových veršů: „Že si odporuji? Dobrá odporuji si (Jsem široký, jsou ve mně davy).“

Přísllovečnou tečku za diskuzí o spontánním psaní mysli udělal Ginsberg příznačně stejnými verši, kterými udělal tečku za životem člověka, jenž stál u jeho zrodu. Výňatek ze žalozpěvu na Jacka Kerouaca „Zahrady paměti“ je jímavým zhodnocením poslání básníka a zároveň i posledním sloganem.

Dobrá, dokud tu jsem, budu
tu práci dělat já —
a jakou práci?
Mírnit bolest žití.
Všechno ostatní je opilá
němohra.²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 191.

²⁰² Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 191.

²⁰³ See Ginsberg, "Writing Your Mind", 93.

²⁰⁴ Ginsberg, *Neposílejte mi už žádné dopisy*, 233.

Závěr

Pochybuji, že by se některý jiný básník opravdu světového významu vracel do země, z níž byl kdysi deportován, s takovou ochotou, jako Allen Ginsberg, který neváhal opakovaně přijmout pozvání přednášet na malé východoevropské univerzitě. Ginsberg však nebyl světový pouze svým významem, ale hlavně svým duchem.

Jsem proto upřímně rád, že se v podobě této práce naskytla možnost Allenu Ginsbergovi nebo alespoň jeho odkazu něco vrátit, a že po dlouhé době opět spatřily světlo světa materiály, které si snad své obecnostvo najdou stejně snadno, jako si je v Olomouci před více než třiceti lety našel Ginsberg sám.

Hlavním přínosem této práce je pak kromě vyhotovených prepisů teoretický komentář, jehož tvorba byla nesnadným úkolem už z toho prostého důvodu, že snažit se zmapovat prakticky nekonečně objemnou a proměnlivou lidskou mysl a přehledně ji „rozškatulkovat“ je úkolem v podstatě neřešitelným, notabene jedná-li se o mysl Ginsbergovu. Jak z dílčích závěrů obsažených v komentáři vyplývá, nepodařilo se to úplně ani jemu samotnému. Ale co na tom, že si místy protiřečí, že jeho výklad není tak úplně konzistentní a že by si některé jeho slogany zasloužily mnohem více pozornosti — i tak ve svých přednáškách dává Ginsberg jedinečnou možnost nahlédnout „pod pokličku“ spontánního psaní.

Kompletně zmapovat a analyzovat tvorbu Allena Ginsberga na pozadí jeho teorie psaní vlastní mysli nebylo ambicí této práce a nebylo to ani v jejích možnostech. Doufám však, že ti, kdo by se v budoucnu chtěli podobného úkolu zhostit, naleznou i prostřednictvím této práce v Ginsbergově tvorbě a učení potřebnou inspiraci.

Summary

Allen Ginsberg, one of the leading figures of the so-called Beat Generation and (according to his own words) possibly the best known poet on the planet in his day, visited the Czech Republic multiple times. First he came to the former Czechoslovakia in 1965, when he was famously crowned the King of May (or “Král Májáles” in Czech, which is reflected in his writing with a poem of the same name) and subsequently deported, officially for obscene behavior. The young poet’s rebellious nature, best reflected in his spontaneous approach to writing, didn’t go well with the communist regime of the time. He returned to Prague only in 1990, after the fall of the Iron Curtain, and this was his first visit to Olomouc as well, to which exclusively he returned in 1993 and gave, apart from several public readings, a series of lectures on the subject of spontaneous writing called „Writing your mind“. Unfortunately, little has survived from his public appearances and only a single collection which bears any connection with Ginsberg’s visits to Prague, has been published.

The goal of this diploma thesis was to collect and process the available materials connected to Ginsberg’s 1993 visit to Olomouc, mainly his lecture on the subject of spontaneous poetry he gave there at Palacký University. Recordings from this lecture have been preserved in private archives of Prof. Josef Jařab, who invited Allen Ginsberg to come and teach in Olomouc that year. Several recordings from Ginsberg’s public readings have been found as well.

Since all Ginsberg’s public appearances were recorded on compact cassettes, the first step was to convert these into digital form. The recordings were subsequently edited where required. Audio files of all the available recordings can be found in a compressed format on the enclosed DVD.

The next step was to carefully transcribe the recordings, in order to create meaningful text, which could be eventually used for further research. Ginsberg’s lecture on spontaneous writing was also the source text for the theory part of this paper, which briefly comments on Ginsberg’s life and

career in relation to spontaneous writing, the essentials of his spontaneous poetic method and it chiefly deals with his mind writing slogans, a set of eighty-four mottos which he would use in order to define and structure his approach to teaching poetics.

The roots of Ginsberg's revolutionary poetic method, which he eventually used to create a whole new voice in American poetry, go back to Europe, as far back as Shakespeare, and then to Romantic poets and members of the Surrealistic and Dada movements in the twentieth century. Yet his source of inspiration in American poetry was Walt Whitman with his specialization in candor, which is the basic requirement for spontaneous writing – a frank approach to our minds and our raw, primordial thoughts, which serve as the source material in this kind of poetry. Whitman's celebration of self is also useful, since the one thing spontaneous poets must learn is to appreciate their thoughts and do not discard them as not worthy to be used in poetry.

Another distinct and unique voice in American poetry that greatly influenced Ginsberg's style was Williams Carlos Williams, with whom Ginsberg consulted his work actively and who also wrote a preface to the Ginsberg's first book of poetry. Williams, with his sketchy and economic style, also made Allen aware of his natural tendency towards abstraction and generalization.

It is, however, Jack Kerouac's name that is most often connected with spontaneous writing, although mostly in prose through the medium of his iconic novel *On the Road* and not his poetry, which Ginsberg highly praised and considered the ultimate source of inspiration for his own work. Nevertheless, Ginsberg's spontaneity differs from that of Kerouac's, as Kerouac for instance wouldn't allow revisions and cross outs, which Ginsberg used and did not consider to go against the idea of spontaneous writing.

Meeting a Tibetan lama Chögyam Trungpa in the early 1970s resulted in Ginsberg's full devotion to Zen Buddhism, in which he had merely dabbled up to the point and which further influenced his approach to mind and

thoughts within. This phase of his life also gave him the first impulses to his mind writing slogans, some of which were a result of his cooperation with Trungpa. The two of them also cofounded the Naropa Institute, a Buddhist university where Ginsberg would eventually stay to teach courses in poetics for several years to come.

Ginsberg's mind writing slogans come from various sources in various historical and cultural backgrounds, but they are based in poetry practice rather than theory — examples of poetry from Shakespeare through Romantics to the Beats, quotations of various personalities, vernaculars and even a haiku can be found here. Ginsberg started collecting them in the late 1980s and they were published in their entirety only after Ginsberg's death, although some of them were included in his poem „Cosmopolitan Greetings“. There are eighty-four slogans in total and they are divided into three categories called “Ground”, “Path” and “Fruition”, each representing a different stage of the writing process.

Ginsberg stayed true to this division in his Olomouc lectures as well. However, due to the fact that his discourse could be as spontaneous as the subject he was dealing with, and partly because of the time pressure towards the final lectures, he only managed to go through sixty-six slogans, omitting for example most of slogans in “Fruition” category. He was also able to spend most of a lecture dealing with one slogan he considered important, whereas other slogans were hardly mentioned at all. Since some of them are rather general in their meaning and many of the slogans are repetitive, Ginsberg mentioned certain slogans when dealing with a category they did not belong to. Therefore, one of the main goals of this paper was to take Ginsberg's discourse apart, reorganize it in accordance with the intended structure and put it “back on track” where necessary.

Leaving the aforementioned division aside, there are two main aspects Ginsberg tried to cover in his lectures. The first are the history and technique of modern American poetry, the second is poetic practice, where he gave practical insight to poet's mind and thinking during the process of writing. This aspect forms the major part of the lectures, as Ginsberg wanted

them to represent his way writing poetry, which he knew best, rather than academic theory he didn't enjoy or understand so well. To make his lectures more interactive, Ginsberg also came up with three little practical exercises in which his students could participate in order to better understand his discourse.

The slogans contained within the first category, "Ground", are concerned with the first stage of the writing process, in which the poet is exploring his thoughts and selecting those appropriate for poetry. Here all thoughts are suitable, as long as they are the primary thoughts in their raw, undistorted, candor form. We tend to enhance our thoughts, because we think they are not suitable for poetry. The spontaneous method therefore teaches us to take a friendly attitude towards our thoughts, to accept them and not to be ashamed of them. The requirements are that the mind be loose and that we learn to accept its contradictory nature rather than insist that there is only one truth and that there are wrong thoughts we should be ashamed of, as certain religions tell us.

As for the shape our poetry should have, there is no single form to follow, as there is no single consciousness – there should be as many forms of poetry as there are poets, since everyone's mind is unique. This is why there is no place for traditional fixed rhyming schemes in spontaneous poetry, since we would have to restrain and twist our thoughts in order to put them in a form that does not reflect our mind, as if we were filling out empty boxes in a form.

"Path", as the second group of slogans is called, represents the journey from the point where we have dealt with the illusive nature of our mind and organized our thoughts, to a complete poem. There are numerous techniques to be followed in order to reflect the original thought in its nakedness in our poetry, for example focusing on the clear picture in the mind and describing it accurately, rather than trying to invent words that have no reference. Reference is very important here, because in order to avoid abstraction in our poetry we need focus on objects and their unbiased description. Our mind tends to look on objects as symbols of something else, rather than see

them in their absolute form. Our thoughts are objects as well and should be accordingly treated in the same manner. The poet should also be mindful of sound, since reflecting the sound patterns of actual speech also plays a major part in poetry, although this is, if the poem is not read by the author, largely dependent on reader's interpretation.

Certain slogans in this section are debatable. For instance, the slogans which tell us to focus on objects often lead, at least in the way that Ginsberg handles them, to much lengthier descriptions, which goes against his principle of word economy. On the other hand, stubborn aspiration for word economy can result in revising and deletion of words after the process of writing has been completed, which to some extent violates the whole idea of spontaneous composition.

In the parts of his lecture dedicated to „Fruition“, the last category of mind writing slogans, Ginsberg was trying to answer the question what is the purpose of poetry and what good can it do. We can use our poetic breath to inspire others and to transfer our emotions. But most importantly, the purpose of poetry should be to diminish the amount of human suffering. This should be the main focus not only in poetry, but in all human endeavor.

The purpose of poetry is therefore clear — the purpose of this work is to pass Ginsberg's message further, to bring his teachings back to life after more than thirty years and save them for further readers and, through the means of translations and commentaries, possibly reintroduce this subject to the Czech audience.

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Příloha I — Mind Writing Slogans

I Background (Situation, Or Primary Perception)

1. **"First Thought, Best Thought"** — Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche
2. **"Take a friendly attitude toward your thoughts."** — Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche
3. **"The Mind must be loose."** — John Adams
4. **"One perception must immediately and directly lead to a further perception."** — Charles Olson, "Projective Verse"
5. **"My writing is a picture of the mind moving."** — Philip Whalen
6. **Surprise Mind** — Allen Ginsberg
7. **"The old pond, a frog jumps in, Kerplunk!"** — Basho
8. **"Magic is the total delight (appreciation) of chance."** — Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche
9. **"Do I contradict myself? / Very well, then I contradict myself. / I am large. I contain multitudes."** — Walt Whitman
10. **". . . What quality went to form a man of achievement, especially in literature? . . . Negative capability, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason."** — John Keats
11. **"Form is never more than an extension of content."** — Robert Creeley to Charles Olson
12. **"Form follows function."** — Frank Lloyd Wright*
13. **Ordinary Mind includes eternal perceptions.** — A. G.
14. **"Nothing is better for being Eternal / Nor so white as the white that dies of a day."** — Louis Zukofsky
15. **Notice what you notice.** — A. G.
16. **Catch yourself thinking.** — A. G.
17. **Observe what's vivid.** — A. G.
18. **Vividness is self-selecting.** — A. G.
19. **"Spots of Time"** — William Wordsworth
20. **If we don't show anyone we're free to write anything.** — A. G.
21. **"My mind is open to itself."** — Gelek Rinpoche
22. **"Each on his bed spoke to himself alone, making no sound."** — Charles Reznikoff

II Path (Method, Or Recognition)

23. **"No ideas but in things." " . . . No ideas but in the Facts."** — William Carlos Williams
24. **"Close to the nose."** — W. C. Williams
25. **"Sight is where the eye hits."** — Louis Zukofsky
26. **"Clamp the mind down on objects."** — W. C. Williams
27. **"Direct treatment of the thing . . . (or object)."** — Ezra Pound, 1912
28. **"Presentation, not reference."** — Ezra Pound
29. **"Give me a for instance."** — Vernacular

30. **"Show not tell."** — Vernacular
31. **"The natural object is always the adequate symbol."** — Ezra Pound
32. **"Things are symbols of themselves."** — Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche
33. **"Labor well the minute particulars, take care of the little ones.
He who would do good for another must do it in minute
particulars.
General Good is the plea of the Scoundrel Hypocrite and Flatterer
For Art & Science cannot exist but in minutely organized
particulars."** — William Blake
34. **"And being old she put a skin / on everything she said."** — W. B. Yeats
35. **"Don't think of words when you stop but to see the picture
better."** — Jack Kerouac
36. **"Details are the Life of Prose."** — Jack Kerouac
37. **Intense fragments of spoken idiom best.** — A. G.
38. **"Economy of Words"** — Ezra Pound
39. **"Tailoring"** — Gregory Corso
40. **Maximum information, minimum number of syllables.** — A. G.
41. **Syntax condensed, sound is solid.** — A. G.
42. **Savor vowels, appreciate consonants.** — A. G.
43. "Compose in the sequence of musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome." — Ezra Pound
44. **". . . awareness . . . of the tone leading of the vowels."** — Ezra Pound
45. ". . . an attempt to approximate classical quantitative meters . . ." — Ezra Pound
46. "Lower limit speech, upper limit song" — Louis Zukofsky
47. **"Phanopoeia, Melopoeia, Logopoeia."** — Ezra Pound
48. **"Sight. Sound & Intellect."** — Louis Zukofsky
49. **"Only emotion objectified endures."** — Louis Zukofsky

III Fruition (Result, Or Appreciation)

50. **Spiritus = Breathing = Inspiration** = Unobstructed Breath
51. **"Alone with the Alone"** — Plotinus
52. **Sunyata (Sanskrit) = Ku (Japanese) = Emptiness**
53. **"What's the sound of one hand clapping?"** — Zen Koan
54. **"What's the face you had before you were born?"** — Zen Koan
55. **Vipassana (Pali) = Clear Seeing**
56. "Stop the world" — Carlos Castafleda
57. "The purpose of art is to stop time." — Bob Dylan
58. "the unspeakable visions of the individual — J. K.
59. "I am going to try speaking some reckless words, and I want you to try to listen recklessly." — Chuang Tzu (Tr. Burton Watson)
60. **"Candor" — Whitman**
61. "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin." — W. Shakespeare
62. "Contact" — A Magazine, Nathaniel West & W. C. Williams, Eds.

63. "God appears & God is Light / To those poor souls who dwell in Night.
/ But does a Human Form Display / To those who Dwell in Realms of
Day." — W. Blake
64. "Subject is known by what she sees." — A. G.
65. Others can measure their visions by what we see. — A. G.
66. Candor ends paranoia. — A. G.
67. "Willingness to be Fool." — Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche
68. "Day & Night / you're all right." — Gregory Corso
69. Tyger: "Humility is Beatness." — Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche & A. G.
70. Lion: "Surprise Mind" — Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche & A. G.
71. Garuda: "Crazy Wisdom Outrageousness" — Chogyam Trungpa,
Rinpoche
72. Dragon: "Unborn Inscrutability" — Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche
73. "To be men not destroyers" — Ezra Pound
74. **Speech synchronizes mind & body** — Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche
75. **"The Emperor unites Heaven & Earth"** — Chogyam Trungpa,
Rinpoche
76. "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world" — Shelley
77. "Make it new" — Ezra Pound
78. "When the music changes, the walls of the city shake" — Plato
79. "Every third thought shall be my grave — W. Shakespeare, The
Tempest
80. "That in black ink my love may still shine bright." — W. Shakespeare,
Sonnets
81. "Only emotion endures" — Ezra Pound
82. **"Well while I'm here I'll / do the work — / and what's the
Work? / To ease the pain of living. / Everything else, drunken /
dumbshow."** — A. G.
83. ". . . Kindness, sweetest of the small notes in the world's ache, most
modest & gentle of the elements entered man before history and
became his daily connection, let no man tell you otherwise." — Carl
Rakosi
84. **"To diminish the mass of human and sentient sufferings."** — Gelek
Rinpoche

Příloha II — „Writing your Mind“, přednáška Allena Ginsberga o spontánním psaní

Olomouc, 24. 11. – 2. 12. 1993

24. 11. 1993

Josef Jařab: Dear friends, good afternoon. This is another session of our regular course on American Open Poetics, only besides the core fifteen to twenty people that we see every week, this time we have many visitors. Welcome to all those visitors. But of course the greatest welcome is to the visitor who is stepping in today for me in my class on American open poetics, a man who, as they say in a cliché, needs no introduction, but I would say we can go well beyond that—not only does not our guest need any introduction, I don't think there're very few people, very few people indeed, who can be introduced with two words only and this introduction would be satisfactory—Allen Ginsberg. (*Applause*) So I will not interfere from now on and will be just one of the listeners. Allen, the class is yours.

Allen Ginsberg: Thank you. (*speaks very slowly, putting stress on each syllable*) Good afternoon. I will try to speak distinctly (*audience laughter*) and slowly, if . . . I'll be speaking in English, if what I am saying sometimes seems unclear, it will be all right to interrupt and ask for clarification or translation.

The course basically is on writing the mind, poetry as writing your mind. So it has two aspects: one, historical and textual, that is I will try to recount some of the story of the development of modern poetry in the United States primarily. The second aspect will be from the point of view of a writer, rather than of an academician or a historian. Writing as seen from the inside, as a poet approaches it. So the technique of writing. For those of you who are just interested in literary history and theory it might be useful to understand how American writers approach the page and approach poetry, and for those

of you who yourselves are interested in writing, this might provide some suggestions for how to approach your own writing.

When I say writing the mind, or writing your mind, I'm taking off from or beginning with Walt Whitman, who in his introduction to *Leaves of Grass*, his big book of poems, in 1855, said that he hoped American poets in the future would specialize in candor. Candor. Now, what would be the Czech word for candor, frankness? Candor. What would be the Czech word? (*mutterings in the audience, occasional laughs*) Huh? Could we hear it aloud, loud enough for everybody to hear? (*indistinct reply*) But what's the word? It's a simple question. (*more laughter from the audience*) What is the word?

Student: Otevřenost.

AG: O . . .

JJ: Otevřenost.

AG: Otevřenost. Now does that mean objectivity or candor?

JJ: No, no, no, it means candor, openness.

AG: Openness, good. So what we say will have relation to openness, in fact one of many slogans, which is indicative, is by a Tibetan Lama: "My mind is opened to itself." (*repeats*) I will be teaching this first class by means of slogans, just like Chairman Mao. Single one-line sentences or slogans.

We have a sort of modern mind in the 20th century, somewhat fragmented, like in music video, where there's a series of discontinuous images. And so poetry has come, like television, to use modern forms, primarily montage, juxtaposition, images set by each other with no linear explanation, like music video. We're all familiar with music video? Is that visible here?

So American poetry actually has roots in modern European poetry, for those of you who have some familiarity with the range of European poetry, you might take down the names as background, some day to check out. In Russia: Khlebnikov, how many know Khlebnikov? How many here have read some Khlebnikov? (*audience laughter*) Ok, so in Moscow, if you ask young poets, Khlebnikov is the one Russian poet that most post-Stalinist poets, post-Soviet poets go back to. He was a futurist and signed the Futurist Manifesto along with Mayakovsky, Kruchenykh and Burliuk. He was interested in sound poetry, pure language poetry, like: (*gives an impromptu example of sound poetry*) The sound poetry, some of you may have heard of that. Yesenin, for large voice, Mayakovsky, also for large voice, although Stalin liked him as a poet and so he's not so much in favor now.

In France there is a lineage or line of poetry from Baudelaire through Rimbaud through Guillaume Apollinaire, Blaise Cendrars, Tristan Tzara and André Breton (*coughs heavily*) I might get some water somewhere or tea or something, if there's any? I have a cold so . . . Cough here and there. Are you familiar at all with that line, up through Antonin Artaud, in France, at all? Somebody here? Has anybody here read Artaud? Raise your hand. One? Cendrars, Blaise Cendrars? At all? Ok, Apollinaire? More, good. Ok, so . . . That's fine, they're all in the same constellation, Artaud later and maybe more intense and crazy than Apollinaire, and everybody here has a little bit of Rimbaud? Well, that line. In twentieth century also you might be interested in Cendrars, Tristan Tzara and André Breton, the Surrealists. And Dadaists. In nineteenth century, French also, Jules Laforgue and Tristan Corbière had big influence on Ezra Pound and T. S. Elliot.

In Spanish there is Federico García Lorca, who went through a surrealist period, and is an influence on American poetry, in Germany there is Kurt Schwitters, has anybody heard? The "Ursonate" or "(An) Anna Blume"? Schwitter is like a . . . One short poem:

Priimiititii
Priimiititii
Priimiititii
Priimiititii

Priimiititii too
Priimiititii taa
Priimiititii too
Priimiititii taa
Priimiititii tootaa
Priimiititii tootaa
Priimiititii tootaa
Priimiititii tootaa
Priimiititii tootaatuu
Priimiititii tootaatuu
Priimiititii tootaatuu

Sound poetry. As we have today with Ernst Jandl in Austria or Bernard Heidsieck in France. “Ursonate” by Schwitters is a very interesting long musical piece made up of sounds that can be made from the mouth, with musical construction, like a sonata. The ultimate sonata, *Ur-sonate*.

Lorca has interesting juxtapositions, putting together interesting words, thank you, like his “Ode to Walt Whitman”. Lorca is Spanish poet of this century, killed during the Spanish Civil War, gay, wrote an homage to Walt Whitman that began

Not for one moment, Walt Whitman,
have I failed to see your beard full of butterflies
Your corduroy shoulder worn down by the moon
Your voice like a pillar of ashes
Ancient and beautiful as the mist

So that trick image of “beard full of butterflies”, because there is a photograph of Walt Whitman with a butterfly on his finger near his beard, but the notion of “corduroy shoulder worn down by the moon . . .” Corduroy? Everybody knows what that is? Is that a clear word? Loud! I think when there’s a specialized word, we really need someone to pronounce it in Czech. Quite loud, so that everybody could hear. Corduroy is what?

JJ: We use “manšestr.”

AG: Manchester. Ok. Manchester shoulder worn down by the moon. It’s sort of like putting two things together in an optical trick.

Corbière had a kind of modern irony, or humor, as in the poem the “Rhapsody of a Deaf Man“, Rhapsodie de Sord. Which begins: “All right, said the doctor, the treatment is finished. You’re deaf.” (*audience laughter*)

Laforgue, also, had a conversational verse-line. Instead of a regular Alexandrine in French, instead they were actual conversational passages where people were talking to each other in the poems just like people talk to each other in a bar or in a “salon”.

Cendrars, Blaise Cendrars, wrote a long poem called “Voyage Transsibérien”, Trans-Siberian Train Trip poem, which he made notes on a journey across from Moscow to Vladivostok. Poetry written on the road, so to speak. Notations, like postcards. Flashes or epiphanies or little snap-shots, across the planet. So again some sense of discontinuity instead of a story, instead of a narrative, like in older poems. Just impressions—a kind of impressionistic poetry. Little picture, impressions. A beginning of the break-up of a solidified mind into what we have now: a more discontinuous, fragmented mind or fragmented consciousness, as you can see by simply turning all the channels on a TV set. Though I think here you only have two channels, (*audience laughter*) but then you can turn the dial and see black dots dancing in space, also.

So I will begin then with . . . That was something of trace the roots of where American poetry comes from in a line that goes through T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound and my own teacher, William Carlos Williams.

So the way I proceed on in this particular case, now that all the flashing is over (*audience laughter*), is with single slogans and illustrations of those slogans, and those of you who are in the class have a little workbook, a little anthology that I made. I think there are not so many of them, twenty-five or so, is that right? And it’s basically called Clear Seeing Poetics, and the emphasis is on visual aspect, picture, image. And I’ve divided this particular aspect of the discourse into three parts: the Ground, that is to say, the situation where we are in our own consciousness, our own mind, what is the nature of the mind itself that we’re dealing with. If writing is writing the mind, what is mind? And what are we looking at as the basis of the writing?

What is the nature of the mind and how can we look at it? Then the second aspect is: once we have some idea of the mind itself, how do we approach it, what techniques do we use to write it down? And the third aspect is: what can we expect? What is the fruition, what are we seeking or what is the result of this way of thinking?

Now, this is a very specialized way of approaching poetry, it is my own way and many American poets', and the reason I am teaching this is because this is what I know best. I would rather teach something that I know best than bullshit about something that I'm not that interested in. So in other words, I'm teaching only what I do myself practice and know best. So this is quite personal and makes no claim at all to objectivity or encyclopedic range or academic completeness. Only this one specialized aspect—writing your mind.

So the first slogan is that pronounced by a Tibetan lama Chögyam Trungpa, a very famous teacher who lived in America and died of alcoholism, a very famous Tibetan meditation teacher, whose works have been translated, I believe, into German and some into Czech. I think *Meditation in Action* has been translated here, but I'm not sure. So, his slogan was: "First thought, best thought." But the question is: what do we mean by first thought? This aims at the direction of spontaneous mind. Literally, what rises in your mind and how do you recognize it without changing it to take the flavor, the sting, the embarrassment, the candor out of it? How do you keep the candor, the embarrassment, the reality . . . The raw thought, the primordial thought?

So I will read a couple poems that give some idea in this direction. First by Jack Kerouac, who has a long book called *Mexico City Blues*, which this Tibetan lama read and thought was a perfect manifestation of mind, because of the spontaneousness of the style. And what Kerouac did in writing was . . . Living in Mexico City in 1954, in poverty, in a small room on the roof of an apartment house—he was sleeping in a sleeping bag—he got up every morning, drank a cup of coffee, smoked a joint of marijuana, then took out his notebook from his pocket, this size, pocket notebook, and wrote down

the first things that came to his mind when he woke up. The first thoughts of the day. So there are two hundred and forty-two short poems and I'll be referring to them as we go along, since they are a major work that many American poets have appreciated. And there are some samples of these Mexico City Blues in your anthology that I gave you. But the one that refers to "first thought, best thought" is 195 Chorus. But before I continue—am I speaking slowly enough and clearly enough? Is there anybody that can't follow? Or is there any improvement that I can make in my delivery? Ok so far? OK. 195th Chorus.

The songs that erupt
Are gist of the poesy,
Come by themselves, hark,
Stark as prisoners in the cave
Let out to sunlight, ragged
And beautiful when you look close
And see underneath the beards
the holy blue eyes of humanity
And brown

The stars on high sing
songs of their own, in motion
that doesn't move, real,
Unreal, singsong, spheres: —

But human poetries
With God as their design
Sing with another law
Of spheres & ensigns
And rip me a blues.
Son. blow me a bop.
Let me hear 'bout heaven
In Brass Fluglemop

So it's just sound poetry at the end, but the beginning is, "The songs that erupt . . ." from your mind, coming out of your sleeve are the gist of poetry that „Come by themselves, hark, / Stark as prisoners in the cave / Let out to sunlight, ragged / And beautiful when you look close / And see underneath the beards / the holy blue eyes of humanity / And brown". And another way of saying a similar thing is, "the sound in your mind is the first sound that you could sing if you were singing at a cash register with nothing on your

mind.” (*repeats*) So in a way he’s distilling out the condition of relaxation and recollection of the mind, rather than a way of trying to synthesize a poem by being intellectual—figuring out a subject, figuring out a treatment and then writing it like a serious writer, sitting down in the morning with ink and pen and spending two hours revising your thought. He is saying the first sound that comes to your mind, the first words that come to your mind when you’re not intending to write poetry, are the interesting poetry. It’s what you think of when you were not planning a poem that is the raw material. Here are some samples from W. C. Williams of a quick flash, of a vision or recollection of the mind. The poem is called “The Great Figure” and it’s after a painting by Charles Sheeler of some fire engines rumbling through the city. And it’s just sort of a quick sketch, or impressionistic sketch, by W. C. Williams.

Among the rain
and lights
I saw the figure 5
in gold
on a red
firetruck
moving
tense
unheeded
to gong clangs
siren howls
and wheels rumbling
through the dark city.

Just this one „BAM!“, an impressionistic picture of the noise, wheels and speed of a fire engine, which is red in America, rumbling through Manhattan. (*reads the poem again*) I don’t know how he wrote that. I think it was just the first, every little . . . The first details that rose in his mind as he was writing he put down and then perhaps did not change. Or another aspect of that notion of first thought is a poem called “Thursday”, which is a really interesting poem, an intersection of what might be called Zen— Buddhist’s meditative awareness—and American modern Yankee pragmatic, practical observation. It’s called “Thursday”, which means any other day will do. Ordinary mind, ordinary day, Thursday, today it’s Wednesday, so it might be called Wednesday.

I have had my dream--like others--
and it has come to nothing, so that
I remain now carelessly
with feet planted on the ground
and look up at the sky--
feeling my clothes about me,
the weight of my body in my shoes,
the rim of my hat, air passing in and out
at my nose--and decide to dream no more.

So what happens here? All he's doing is recollecting a moment when there is no idea in his mind and he suddenly realizes he's standing on the ground, his feet are planted on the ground, he's looking up to the sky, he feels the clothes on his body, the weight of his whole body in his shoes, notices the rim of his head, notices that he's breathing, and realizes that that's the ultimate reality for him at that moment—that it's almost like being in space, seeing very clearly what is happening, with no conceptual framework. With no extra ideological, symbolic implication. Just being there all by himself. Alone in space. Which is actually where we all are right now, except that most people, because they are so much in their head, are not aware of the weight of their body on their behinds, when they're sitting down here in the room, not aware of the breath passing in and out of our noses, not aware of the weight of the clothes on our shoulders, maybe not aware of looking out from the inside of the skull to the space outside, but perhaps instead trying to figure out what I'm saying. (*laughs*) Rather than . . . And all I'm saying is that we're here in space. That's all there is. So I'll read that one more time. (*reads the poem again*) Well, as soon as he's decided to dream no more that's a dream already, that's another idea. His mind has begun moving again and he's already daydreaming.

Is this still on? (*taps the microphone*) Yeah. Is this clear? Or is this too abstract? It's so simple. What I'm trying to point out is different specimens of first thought, or primordial mind or primary mind, before it gets covered over with ideology, aesthetics, style . . . Trying to impress other people. Just what is first glimpsed before it is tailored to be presentable to the public, so to speak. So the effort here among these poets was to try and capture the first thought. That does not mean chronologically the first thought, because

chronologically you might say, “Oh my first thought was, ‘I am sitting here in front the piece of paper going to write a poem.’” But that’s a screen, or self-consciousness, it isn’t what you’re really thinking inside. That’s something you’re presenting to others out of embarrassment or inability to notice what you have just been thinking, for real, what you’re really thinking. Instead you get self-conscious and make a screen and say, “Oh, I’m writing here about writing about writing about writing about writing . . . And you can go on into infinite regress this way rather than noticing what is inside.

So that was the first—Ground. And maybe, because this is maybe the most important, this notion of spontaneous mind and first thought—first thought, best thought—maybe we could stop here and have questions, if anybody finds that my discourse is obscure, opaque, impenetrable and stupid. (*audience laughter*) Does everybody here understand what I mean by “first thought?” If so, it’s a miracle, but you could ask questions. If you’re confused by . . . Yes! Good and loud so everybody can hear, please, so we share the information.

S: Just ask you gave the example of somebody thinking that their first thought is “I want to write a poem” first take a piece of paper and “Oh my God, what should I write about?” I think that many of us are in the habit of thinking thoughts which are really just noise, distracting us maybe from some work worthwhile, so the first thought, so that the first thing you might think in the morning might be I have a headache or, “Oh no, I have to get out of bed, I have to go to school today” and this kind. So perhaps you can give us some advice about how to distinguish the first thought that you are talking about from these other thoughts that perhaps don’t make such inspirational poetry.

AG: Well, that’s a very good question. That’s exactly the question I was hoping someone would ask. (*audience laughter*) I would say there is no need to find a thought that is more inspirational. To have a headache and be depressed in the morning, maybe, is normal and might be your actual first

thought and it's perfectly ok to write it down. Your first thought certainly is not going to be about the clouds opening up and you seeing a band of golden angels coming down to make love to you in bed. (*audience laughter*) It's more likely to be that your back hurts, that you have a headache, that it's cold in the room . . . So it's a question of registering or recollecting what you were really thinking about, on a very simple level, without self-consciousness. That is, what you were thinking before you noticed you were thinking. What were you thinking or seeing, usually it's visual, or remembering, particularly getting out of bed in the morning. Very often there's some dream which leaves a little memory or some reminder that I forgot, I lost . . . Like my first thought this morning was, "I had lost my American Express Card." And I remembered it in the middle of the night, I remembered that I had to do something about it, then I forgot it and I had some kind of dream and as I put my feet on the floor I remembered, "Oh, that American Express Card, was it at the hotel lobby in Berlin?" So that would be the beginning of my poem:

Oh, that green American Express Card
Was it that I leave it on the desk at the hotel lobby
In the lobby of Hotel Excelsior, Berlin?
Gotta send the fax

Then the next thought might be, "Have to take a pee pee." (*audience laughter*) And that might be a complete poem. (*laughs*) That's it. That might be a complete poem. Let me read a poem by W. C. Williams that is very similar, which actually is merely a description of the sequence of thoughts in the mind. This is called "Good Night", I believe it's 1918, 1919, by W. C. Williams, who is a member of a group of . . . It's on page 24 of your workbook, for those of you who have it, a bottom right-hand side of the page.

W. C. Williams, does everybody know who he is? Or should I give some thumbnail history? He was a friend of Ezra Pound and Marianne Moore and Hilda Doolittle, they all went to college together in University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Around 1904, 1905, 1906. They all faced the same problem, how to create a new form of verse in American poetry—how to escape from nineteenth-century rhetoric. And began writing the way they talked. The idea was to have the poem using a living language, the way you

actually talk to your friends, using the rhythms and the diction, the kinds of words and the kinds of cadences: Ta da da daa-da? Ta da daa da. Ta-taa da da, ta da da daa da. In other words, how do you build poems out of the essentials or units of actually spoken language, rather than: “This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlocks.” Rather than classical nineteenth-century limited meters, how do you expand it to include all the variety and bebop of actual talk?

So, this is “Good Night”, 1919, Ezra Pound went to Europe, Marianne Moore stayed in Brooklyn in New York. W. C. Williams became a doctor and lived in New Jersey, about 13 miles from New York, began writing down the rhythms and the diction of the local speech of Rutherford, NJ, which is maybe ten miles from my own hometown, Paterson, NJ. “In brilliant gas light / I turn the kitchen spigot . . .” The faucet? This is special word for a faucet that makes the water—spigot. The key that you turn to open the water. “In brilliant gas light . . .” So this is 1919, it’s not electric yet. “In brilliant gas light / I turn the kitchen spigot / and watch the water splash / into the clean white sink. / On the grooved drain-board / to one side . . .” Drain board? It’s on the side of the sink, grooved, because it’s probably wood, so that the water runs down into the sink, when you put a wet glass or dish there. “On the grooved drain-board / to one side is / a glass filled with parsley . . .” Parsley? What’s the word for parsley?

S: Petržel.

AG: I can’t hear.

S: Pe-tr-žel.

AG: Could you repeat it? (*audience laughter*) Could you repeat it, please, and not waste time?

S: Pe-tr-žel!

AG: Thank you. “On the grooved drain-board / to one side is / a glass filled with parsley”—petržel, right? (*audience laughter*)—“crisped green. / Waiting / for the water to freshen...” Sometimes, when water comes out of the faucet, it comes out a milky color with a lot of air bubbles in it. Is that familiar? Yes. So waiting for the water to freshen— waiting for the water to clear. “Waiting / for the water to freshen— / I glance / at the spotless floor—: / a pair of rubber sandals / lie side by side / under the wall-table, / all is in order for the night. / Waiting, with a glass in my hand / —three girls / in crimson satin / pass close before me on / the murmurous background of the crowded opera— / It is memory playing the clown— / three vague, meaningless girls / the rustling sound of / cloth rubbing on cloth and / little slippers on carpet— / high-school French / spoken in a loud voice!” So what is that? He’s remembering perhaps his daughter or his grand-daughter and her girlfriends going to a ballet class with dancing slippers, maybe the little ballet tutu, “cloth rubbing on cloth”, young girls talking high-school French. So some slightly erotic image of young girls, but at the same time family situation. Then suddenly: “Parsley in a glass, / still and shining, / brings me back. I take a drink / and yawn deliciously. / I am ready for bed.” So now I’ll read it without explanation.

In brilliant gas light
 I turn the kitchen spigot
 and watch the water plash
 into the clean white sink.
 On the grooved drain-board
 to one side is
 a glass filled with parsley —
 crisped green.

Waiting

for the water to freshen —
 I glance at the spotless floor —:
 a pair of rubber sandals
 lie side by side
 under the wall-table,
 all is in order for the night.

Waiting, with a glass in my hand
 — three girls in crimson satin

instrument that determines the appearance of the external phenomenal world, that everything is, in a sense, subjective, since we are the measuring instrument, thus we have the theory of relativity and in all arts and sciences there's a return to the measuring instrument. Whether in painting—the beginnings of abstract expressionism and the realization of pure paint on a canvas, with Kandinsky and painters of the twenties, who began going into abstraction, realizing that a three-dimensional canvas was an illusion, that it might be interesting just to paint paint. Which leads into Willem de Kooning and Jackson Pollock later on painting paint rather than making believe you're painting an exterior picture. So, in a sense, this is like writing mind rather than writing descriptions of Prague, although the mind contains the outer world and so you still have the outer phenomenal world, but you have a direct view of how you yourself see it, when you write it in this form, when you're notating like a stenographer the procession of thoughts in your mind. Those which are vivid.

So does that answer, I wonder, lady who left in the middle of the answer of the question. But that was a long answer.

So however, I said I worried about my American Express card and then the next thought was that I had to take a pee pee. Now generally this would be considered not romantic enough and maybe a little bit too personal that I had to take a pee pee, but on the other hand one could see it as romantic, since that's the actual life that we live. That's the material which we experience every day rather than an abstraction that we would like to experience. So one important slogan is part of the instructions for meditation experience in traditional Zen in Tibetan Buddhist mediation practice, which is as follows: "Take a friendly attitude toward your own thoughts." Don't be angry at your mind for thinking something, but actually be friendly to your own mind, be friendly to yourself and take a friendly, affectionate attitude toward your own thoughts. There's no need to suppress them, to denounce them or to feel that they're the wrong thoughts. Now I know that in primitive Marxism and fundamentalist Catholicism and Jewish practice and Islamic practice you're not supposed to have certain thoughts. That it's a sin to have

some thoughts. But this is just the opposite. Here no thought is sinful. Your observation of them is what's interesting. Your observation of your own mind. So we have: "Take a friendly attitude toward your thoughts." And here are some illustrations of that particular notion. Notice I've covered just one slogan so far (*chuckle*) and we have eighty-four to go. (*audience laughter*) But many of them are repetitive and go around on a same subject. Let me see what we can have here . . . Yeah, here's an interesting one. Again Williams, "Smell".

Oh strong-ridged and deeply hollowed
nose of mine! what will you not be smelling?
What tactless asses we are, you and I boney nose,
always indiscriminate, always unashamed,
and now it is the souring flowers of the bedraggled
poplars: a festering pulp on the wet earth
beneath them. With what deep thirst
we quicken our desires
to that rank odor of a passing springtime!
Can you not be decent? Can you not reserve your ardors
for something less unlovely? What girl will care
for us, do you think, if we continue in these ways?
Must you taste everything? Must you know everything?
Must you have a part in everything?

So he's talking about his nose that can smell both roses and shit. (*audience laughter*) "Must you have a part in everything?" And he's taking a friendly attitude or rather mocking-friendly attitude toward his own smell. Or toward his nakedness in another poem, it's called Russian Dancer, "Danse Russe". I think these are all in that little workbook. Twenty-three? Yeah, very first of Williams there.

If when my wife is sleeping
and the baby and Kathleen
are sleeping
and the sun is a flame-white disc
in silken mists
above shining trees, —
if I in my north room
dance naked, grotesquely
before my mirror
waving my shirt round my head
and singing softly to myself:
"I am lonely, lonely

I was born to be lonely
I am best so!"
If I admire my arms, my face
my shoulders, flanks, buttocks
against the yellow drawn shades,—

Who shall say I am not
the happy genius of my household?

Well, we've all done that one time or other, so it's a question of whether he is ashamed of his nakedness or actually pleased and amused and sees this ordinary situation as an exemplary moment of self-recognition and self-acceptance—taking a friendly attitude toward his own thoughts and his own body—sufficient to be a moment of poetry.

Now I don't know, while I've been talking I was wondering, maybe all this seems too unpoetic to you. Not at all poetic. Not at all romantic. Nothing exalted and mystical and sublime, it's true. But then on the other hand it does represent our real lives rather than an imaginary life. And Williams's point and the point around the beginning of the century was that in order to avoid totalitarianism, Fascism, Catholicism, Ayatollah, Hitler, Stalin . . . we would actually have to deal with the actuality of our lives rather than some hyperbolic or hyper-romantic abstraction that removed us from the actual conditions in which we lived. So he was trying to make notations of the actual condition rather than a romantic exaggeration. Among the actual conditions certainly is a hope for romanticism, a desire for delight and mystical union with the community or with God, but that's just another thought and can be written down as just another thought. As he says, "who shall say I am not / the happy genius of my household?" By accepting his actual condition he's become the genius. Whereas a stupider person would say, "No, no, that's not at all romantic, that's not interesting. It's just me naked. Who's interested in that? I would rather appear on a white horse as a knight in armor, with a mustache (*chuckle*) and a lance." And there actually were pictures of Hitler as a knight in armor with a mustache and a big lance, as an exemplary ideal.

There's another poet, a friend of Williams's, in a school called the Objectivist school. The Objectivist school followed Pound and Williams in the

20th century in the school of poetry called Imagism. The Imagists thought it was primarily a brief picture flash that was interesting. The Objectivists said you can also include your thoughts. Your thoughts are things, just like the microphone or any other piece of furniture in the room that you're describing. They're not you, they're just thoughts passing through your mind, so you can include your thoughts as part of the objective notation of the phenomenal world. So this is a poem by Charles Reznikoff with perhaps the ugliest and most stinky human image possible. And yet, because he notices it, it becomes romantic in a strange or sacred, I should say, way. It's no. 48 in a series by Reznikoff *Picture Glimpses*, "The Shoemaker".

The shoemaker sat in the cellar's dusk beside his bench and
sewing-machine, his large, blackened hands, finger tips
flattened and broad, busy.
Through the grating in the sidewalk over his window, paper
and dust were falling year by year.

At evening Passover would begin. The sunny street was
crowded. The shoemaker could see the feet of those who
walked over the grating.
He had one pair of shoes to finish and he would be through.
His friend came in, a man with a long, black beard, in shabby,
dirty clothes, but with shoes newly cobbled and blacked.
"Beautiful outside, really the world is beautiful."

A pot of fish was boiling on the stove. Sometimes the water
bubbled over and hissed. The smell of the fish filled the
cellar.
"It must be beautiful in the park now. After our fish we'll take a
walk in the park." The shoemaker nodded.
The shoemaker hurried his work on the last shoe. The pot on the
stove bubbled and hissed. His friend walked up and
down the cellar in shoes newly cobbled and blacked.

Well, when it comes to "sometimes the water / bubbled over and hissed. The smell of the fish filled the / cellar," it's certainly one of the ugliest suggestions in poetry. Certainly, I don't know any romantic poet who would have the smell of the fish filling the cellar. But once you hear that you can actually smell it and it can become sort of permanent reference point of actual reality in poetry, because the point here is that it's the quality of affection, the quality of attention or the quality of affectionate, friendly

attention that makes the image or the situation of interest, that the smell of the fish filled the basement. There's a certain amount of art and actually writing it down accurately, but basically the primary thought there, the first thought there—the smell of the fish filled the basement—because it's so unromantic, becomes romantic. Or becomes interesting, because it's so real. So the romance in the poetry of this kind consists in its being real, rather than its being fancy, romantic, idealistic or transcendental. It's the actuality of our lives that becomes of interest, rather than an escape from that actuality. At least in this school of poetry.

And Williams has some things to say about that in early writing. Actually, in those days when he was writing there was a considerable . . . He was, in a sense, opposed to abstraction, to generalization, even to science and to philosophy, because they removed us, he felt, from our connection with our own bodies and with our experiences, and he thought that poetry was superior, 'cause poetry dealt directly with our experiences, mental and physical. And he says about Gertrude Stein, a great writer of the time, "Whatever the value of Miss Stein's work may turn out finally to be, she has at last accomplished her purpose of getting down on paper this much that is decipherable. She has placed writing on a plane, where it may deal unhampered with its own affairs, unburdened with scientific and philosophic lumber. For after all, science and philosophy are today in their effect on the mind little more than fetishes of unspeakable abhorrence. And it's through the subversion of the art of writing . . . (*End of tape. Part of the lecture missing*)

He's writing about the body itself and sex. He's reviewing a medical book. "This book presumes knowledge of the body itself as the source of all knowing, which should come as a refreshing novelty to post-Freudian men and women. It begins with a body as a unit. This is the one place that I should like to add something to this book. I should have liked the doctor who wrote it to have been much more the philosopher of the body as a whole, before he went on to other things, for we greatly need that emphasis today. This is of course what he does emphasize, but not sufficiently. It would have been

something to this effect, that whatever we see of worth in the world, the generation of it has been crude, corporeal as sex itself. Then that force begins to fan out, grows thinner, more fragile, as it gets further and further from the fountain-head. One thing, such an understanding would have once resolved the wonder we experience when 'fine souls', as we speak of them, revert, so we say, to low practices. When we think of the body as the sole source of all our good, the return of an attenuated or spent culture to that ground can never after be seen as anything but a saving gesture, perverted only by the surrounding stupidity." To put it a little more clearly, Williams is saying that our own bodies and ultimate sexual functions are the source of all good and that philosophy and science, which leads us away from an experience of our own bodies, including our minds, are a kind of perversion which has led the world to the evil destruction at the end of this millennium, either nuclear catastrophe or ecological degeneration, all through the abstraction of science and philosophy. So his remedy then would be coming back to the body and its thoughts, taking a friendly attitude toward the body and toward the thoughts within the mind, the first thoughts.

So for that, the third slogan is taken from an old American president, John Adams: "The mind must be loose." And there's a Zen couplet that goes with that: "In the vast inane there's no back or front. The path of the bird annihilates east and west." That may take a little thinking. In the vast inane—this very space we're sitting in, the big room and above the room, sky and above the sky, clouds and above the clouds, atmosphere, above the atmosphere, space—extending infinitely. "In the vast inane there is no back or front. The path of the bird annihilates east and west." The path of the mind annihilates east and west. So essentially this might well be . . . many little poems, and one poem that might be of interest is by Philip Whalen, a member of the Beat Generation group, who said a little "Cynical Song", it's a poem on page . . . I don't know it might be under the Whalen section.

You do what you do
Fucky-ducky
You do it anyhow
People don't like it

Fucky-ducky
People like it
Fucky-ducky
You do what you do
Fucky-ducky

(*Laugh*) You do what you do, so what? You do it anyhow, so what? People like it, so what? People don't like it, so what? You do what you do, so what? Except he says "fucky-ducky." He's even more silly. (*audience laughter*) And another poem by him, wastes. It's called "Waste. Profligacy. Fatuity."

We get ourselves into a mess when we say
"Thank God that's over," "Never again will I do thus & so."
Nothing is over and under; things is and then change,
We think of ourselves as we used to be
What is we now?
Bright cold moon
Too much dinner
Unlimited cookies
Baked bananas
Booby Pie
Cinnamon infested coffee (blarp)
And a salad full of nasty little surprises
(Creepy croutons, dead beans,
Unidentified glips, clots, paps)

("To think that anyone could SAY such a thing, much less write it down!")

That's the last line in the poem. He just followed his mind, whatever he thought, and then he ended it, quote in parentheses, "To think that anyone could SAY such a thing, much less write it down!" which might be a typical criticism of an elegant lady professor about this poem—"What? What's all this about?" You know, "Too much dinner / Unlimited cookies / Baked bananas / Booby pie / Cinnamon infested coffee (blarp) / And a salad full of nasty little surprises . . ." So this is "the mind must be loose". An illustration of the slogan "The mind must be loose". Kerouac says in 17th Chorus:

Starspangled Kingdoms bedecked
in dewy joint —
DON'T IGNORE OTHER PARTS
OF YOUR MIND, I think,
And my clever brain sends
ripples of amusement
Through my leg nerve halls

And I remember the Zigzag
Original
Mind

of Babyhood
when you'd let the faces
crack & mock
& yak & change
& go mad utterly
in your night
firstmind
reveries

talking about the mind

The endless Not Invisible
Madness Rioting
Everywhere

He's recollecting the mind of babyhood, when you're in a little trundle bed or a cradle, you're looking up and your mind is going in every direction and you see all sorts of phantoms. But the interesting slogan here is "don't ignore other parts of your mind," rather than the linear focus that is continually forced on us by television or philosophy or science. There are other parts of the mind: the observation of flies in the room, as Emily Dickinson's dying poem "I Heard a Fly Buzz—When I Died". You know, instead of talking about the grandeur of death, in this very famous poem Emily Dickinson said, "I heard a fly buzz when I died," which merely gave the vastness and the silence of the room, by that one little detail.

How many here know of André Breton, the surrealist? How many have read something of Breton? You know surrealism, you've heard the word, you know the general style, but in language the most important poem by André Breton is called "Free Union", which is to say a free union of words, that is to say putting words together freely, without worrying whether they make sense or not, without worrying whether they have a linear, literal meaning. And so there's this very famous poem from 1931, which is quite a big influence on my own poetry including "Kvílení"—"Howl".

My wife whose hair is a brush fire
Whose thoughts are summer lightning

Whose waist is an hourglass
Whose waist is the waist of an otter caught in the teeth of a tiger
Whose mouth is a bright cockade with the fragrance of a star of the first
magnitude
Whose teeth leave prints like the tracks of white mice over snow
Whose tongue is made out of amber and polished glass
Whose tongue is a stabbed wafer
The tongue of a doll with eyes that open and shut [. . .]

He's talking about his wife. So the question is, how can he get away with talking about his wife this way? This doesn't make any sense at all. But on the other hand what he's doing is improvising, like music, different images that juxtaposed, put together, words that, when they're put together, create mental pictures that have a little "flash" in them. In this case something like in dream, something like in, what, nightmare or fantasy. Because part of ordinary mind is actually the fantasy world also, if seen as such. So you can fantasize words put together that wouldn't normally be together and, in a sense, surrealism is the essence of the method there. It's a longer poem (*skips lines*):

My wife whose shoulders are champagne [. . .]
My wife whose wrists are matches [. . .]
Whose fingers are fresh cut hay [. . .]
My wife with the armpits of martens and beech fruit [. . .]

And it ends—we're going down to her genitals—

My wife whose calves are sweet with the sap of elder trees
Whose feet are carved initials [. . .]
My wife whose neck is fine milled barley
Whose throat contains the Valley of (sic) Gold
And encounters in the bed of the maelstrom
My wife whose breasts are of night
And are undersea molehills
And crucibles of rubies [. . .]
Whose belly is a fan unfolded in the light [. . .]
My wife with the thighs of a skiff
That are lustrous and feathered like arrows
Stemmed with the light tailbones of a white peacock
And imperceptible balance
My wife whose rump is sandstone and flax
Whose rump is the back of a swan and the spring
My wife with the sex of an iris
A mine and a platypus

Is anybody married, anybody's got a wife whose sex is platypus? Platypus, what's a platypus in Czech? It's an extinct Australian duck-like bird.

JJ: Ptakopysk.

AG: Ok. My wife whose sex is that of a ptakopysk. (*all laugh*) It's very odd combination. But it's quite memorable, I've always remembered that as a sort of sample of pure verbal invention.

My wife with the sex of an iris
A mine and a platypus
With the sex of an alga and old-fashioned candles
My wife with the sex of a mirror
My wife with eyes full of tears
With eyes that are purple armor and a magnetized needle
With eyes of savannahs
With eyes full of water to drink in prisons
My wife with eyes that are forests forever under the axe
My wife with eyes that are the equal of water and air and earth and fire

That's the end. Actually, it makes some sense. If you figure it out: "My wife [. . .] / With eyes full of water to drink in prisons," that's quite an emotional image. My wife who . . . Water to drink in prisons, for those who are shut away, thirsty and in suffering. My wife whose sex is water . . . her eyes are water to drink in prisons. There's a sort of unconscious common sense in it, in this combination.

Well, it's now 4:20 and what I would suggest we'll now have a little poetry exercise that you can do. So, can you take out your notebooks and your pencils or pens and follow me now, just a five-minute exercise before the class ends, so that you can be poets, too. Choose a two-syllable word in Czech, but a noun, like an icebox, refrigerator, automobile, platypus, shoestring . . . Choose one word and write it down. Any word, any common word, two or more syllables. Mine is shoeshine. C'mon, do it, write it down. Write down any word. Then, after you've done that, put another noun, a noun best of all, not an abstract word, something you can see, then put another noun or adjective next to it, that doesn't belong there, like shoeshine metaphysics or gorilla shoeshine. Something that, what do you call it, in

English it's a . . . The two words put together that don't belong together? Oxymoron! Oxymoron, is that right? Using that one word, shoeshine or whatever word you choose, using it ten times with different variant words connected to it. Like in this case I had shoeshine metaphysics, shoeshine gorilla, shoeshine president, shoeshine guru, airplane shoeshine, Nazi shoeshine, Marxist shoeshine, shoeshine fascists, shoeshine pee pee, shoeshine mama, shoeshine mug . . . So make a list of fifteen word combinations using your singular word. Just make a list in a column. Is the explanation clear, Professor Jařab?

JJ: Well, it's clear, there is one limitation that is due to the difference in languages, that is, if you use a noun, shoeshine, then another noun, your first noun is in function as a noun but also as a modifier for the next noun.

AG: Well, that's great. That's helpful.

JJ: That is great for you. (*audience laughter*) It's not so great for us.

AG: Why?

JJ: We have one noun, the noun remains a noun and does not change to an adjective . . .

AG: Ok, then use an adjective next to it.

JJ: But we have to start with the adjective there. Or not necessarily, I mean, it works even. . .

AG: If you start with the adjective then you can add a noun?

JJ: Yes.

AG: Ok, start with an adjective then.

JJ: Still, the limitation is inherent. What you do not have, we have gender. So if you use an adjective that is semantically masculine, you cannot use any other noun because that is not masculine. Anyway, I just think you should realize that in that case you know, there are limitations due to the nature of language.

AG: There may be some variant that can be figured out. So make a list of fifteen. Ok, this is homework. Make a list of fifteen and then—when you're home, do it at home, 'cause we're getting low on time. Make a list of fifteen word combinations, using one skeleton word that runs through all of them, and then make a star near the three most interesting. One star for the three most interesting, shocking or curious. Then make two more stars for the two others that are most interesting, then make a third star for the single most interesting of all the combinations. So it's three stars for the single most interesting, two stars for the next most interesting and one star for the almost interesting. So that you finally out of all of them, when you're done, you have to choose what you think is the best. The best I ever heard was something like, well, in my own poetry, "hydrogen jukebox." That combination, hydrogen jukebox, but from students, the best I ever heard was "Nazi milk." Those are two words that don't seem to fit together and yet when you put them together they make you laugh, because they're so opposite. Nazi—the dark, sadistic or whatever, milk—the innocent. So when you put the Nazi next to the milk . . . And yet, you could have, you could think of: "The German diary industry produced 250 million tons of Nazi milk for the Führer in 1939." It would actually have some sense. Ok, we have three minutes. Do you all understand the homework assignment?

JJ: Can it be in English?

AG: It can be in English or Czech, whatever language you're best at. Or Latin.
(*chuckle*)

JJ: I've done my part in Czech already, so . . .

AG: Ok. Does anybody else have any questions in the next four minutes that we have?

S: How do you keep yourself from ending these first thoughts in your mind? Before you put them down on paper?

AG: "Don't stop to think of words but to see the picture better." (*repeats*) That is, you're recollecting, probably . . . One, one recollects probably a visual image. So the question of looking back again, quote "at the scene of the crime" or to the mental picture and derive the words from the picture, rather than trying to invent words that have no reference. A picture is fixed and stable, so you don't have to worry about that. That comes under the slogan . . . The slogans continue very briefly in a logical form—if you want to get the first thought—"Notice what you notice." How do you do that? "Catch yourself thinking." The thing is only you notice you're thinking. Notice what you thought or notice what you're thinking. Catch yourself thinking. How? "Observe what's vivid." If it's vivid it's vivid, if it's not vivid it's not vivid, you can forget it. But if it's vivid, it's there, vivid. Then how do you decide what is vivid? "Vividness is self-selecting." If it's vivid it's vivid, if it's not vivid, you don't see it. Then next would be Kerouac's slogan, "Don't stop to think of words but to see the vivid picture better." He derived the words from the details in the picture. Does that make sense? It's very simple, actually. It's not that complicated, it's like rolling off a log, as they say. It's a question of just recollecting what happens in your mind before you begin noticing it. Or before you begin planning to write it down. Before you begin planning to edit it for your purposes. It's a question of going back to what happened with your mind before you thought of bringing it out as a poem. Is that clear? It's

actually almost like a meditation practice, where you're remembering your own mind. *Recollecting* your mind. Like Wordsworth said, "Poetry is emotion recollected in tranquility." So I'm just changing the word 'recollected' slightly, like *recollected*. You recollect, you remember what passed through your mind before you became self-conscious about presenting it, before the problem of editing rose. So if you stick to the picture—don't stop to think of words but to see the picture better—then you have no problem. Unless you're ashamed of the picture or don't want anybody to see that picture. In which case there's another slogan, "If we don't show anyone, we're free to write anything." (*chuckle*) So that's one condition, you can also write, as they say it in Russia, "for the desk" that nobody could see. Or Kerouac wrote many pages when he was young and burned them immediately, just to be free to write anything that comes in his mind. To have the liberty to be totally free, he determined in advance that for a period of about a year he would write every day and then burn it. And so he exercised, opened up a whole area of privacy and after a year he was no longer ashamed of his own thoughts.

Any other questions? Is this boring? Is this method of proceeding boring? 'Cause I'm going very slowly, talking slowly, I don't know if it's putting you all to sleep or amusing you. At best it might be amusing.

JJ: You're pensive now, you made us pensive.

AG: Pensive? Well, thinking.

JJ: I have a small question, if I may, does Wordsworth's quotation really fit that we put together for spontaneous writing. Isn't the recollecting of the emotion already something else? Are these spontaneous poets not rather collecting the emotions and that means recording the emotions?

AG: We have the "re-" in front of "cording". Fun to say re-collecting. But it's recollecting in the sense that you're remembering what you just thought before. It isn't that you might notice it on the spot, it's that you're checking

out what you thought a minute ago or last week when you remember it. I just used it for the word recollecting rather than recollecting in emotion recollected in tranquility. I would say pictures recollected later, because that seems to be a practical way of doing it. If you were trying to collect at the moment you were having the picture, the attempt at collection would displace the picture. If you tried to do it at that very moment, when you were having a picture . . .

JJ: Physically you're imagining that, yes.

AG: Yeah. I'm thinking, you know, remembering a picture, having a thought passed through your mind, then you catch yourself thinking. So you catch yourself thinking after you thought. You re-collect the thought, the picture, after you had the picture. The fact that you're not intending to make a poem of it at the moment that you have it keeps it kind of pure, 'cause it is really just a natural occurrence in the mind. What makes it a little bit more sophisticated is that you have one more level of awareness where you're observing your mind. So in that sense it's a part of classic meditation practice and maybe next time we might do that for five minutes, see what the comparison is between . . .

In fact, why not do it now. We've got another five minutes? Anybody gotta go? Ok, what I'd like to do then is take another five minutes if you can . . . We've got five minutes more? Ok. I would like to compare what I'm talking about with the traditional Buddhist meditation practice. So if you sit forward on your seat, keep your spine straight. Hands on thighs. This is for relaxed or restful mind. The main thing is that you can breathe easily because spine is straight, top of the head supporting heaven, so to speak, like a puppet hanging from a string, in a position of being completely awake. Not leaning back but actually sitting up, supporting yourself on your spine. So, completely awake, eyes open, eyes resting in the middle distance, not focused on a single point to bring an image into the eye, into the brain, but just resting in space and eyeballs relaxed. Belly relaxed, eyes open, nose in

line with belly button, ears in line with shoulders. So the question is what is the technique for meditation, and traditionally in Japanese and Tibetan Buddhist style it's following the breath, and in this case following the breath leaving the nose and dissolving in space. Identifying with the breath or following the breath out or being mindful of the breath, the out-breath, the breath leaving the nose, flowing along with the breath or becoming one with the breath or mixing your mind with the breath. So let's do that for . . . Come on, sit up again. Come on. You can sit up again. It's only two minutes, it's not gonna kill ya. (*chuckle*) Why don't we do that for just a couple of breaths. Two breaths or three.

Then you may notice that your mind is thinking, like moving back and forth from the breath to thoughts just like in Williams's poem. So, when you catch yourself thinking, when you notice you're thinking, take a friendly attitude toward your thoughts, acknowledge your thought, and then on the next out-breath switch your attention back to the breath. On the in-breath you don't have to do anything at all, just take a vacation or check you posture that you're still sitting up straight. That's all there is to it. It's very simple. And this is called in Sanskrit "Samatha"—quietening the mind, "Vipassanā"—clear-seeing. So that that flash bulb perhaps appeared more prominently in consciousness, because there was no activity going on. Or the event of somebody getting up and leaving perhaps might seem more awesome than if you were busy doing something else. So the basic practice is just observing the space around by means of coming back to yourself with the breath and, at the same time, noticing that you're thinking. So it's observing the outside and the inside, going back and forth. Like on a horse that has two stirrups, balancing back and forth.

It's impossible to stop the mind from thinking and there's no need to do that. It's just a question of taking a friendly attitude toward your thoughts, not getting attached to them and letting them go, as you let your breath go and returning your attention to your breath. In order to return to the space of the room here. Like Williams's poem: "I've had my dream [. . .] / and it has come to nothing, so that / [now I stand here] / feeling [. . .] / the weight of

my body in my shoes, / the coat hanging on my shoulders / the rim of my hat, breath passing in and out / at my nose and—resolved to dream no more.” (*applause*)

JJ: Thank you and we continue the day after tomorrow, that is Friday at three o'clock.

AG: And I'll try to go through the slogans much faster and spend more time on actual texts.

26. 11. 1993

JJ: It is very difficult to spoil such a beautiful sound. I just wanted to say hello to those who are here for the second time, hello also to newcomers. Here is the second of the series of lectures of Allen Ginsberg. I may have a few practical suggestions: People who may be coming late . . . We do hope nobody leaves if they really do not have to, you know, during the class. Could you possibly move a little bit to places so people who come late do not have to go all through the hall and look for a space there. But I know that you are in the privilege position so you want to be here. Alright. But maybe at least sit there, those who sit, and leave rather free seats on the aisle instead of in the middle. Do you understand what I mean? Yes, so move in to the . . . so that the aisle is available. You don't have to go back, just go into the middle, that's all. Also I would like to announce that professor Ginsberg is willing to see students who do have questions today and on the following two days when lectures are on, that means Tuesday and Thursday. After the lecture in my, that is his office, on this floor there. I hope that by the end of the lecture you will see besides Josef Jařab also Allen Ginsberg there. And we will leave the room at 4:30 and he will be available there for individual consultations and talks to students who are still interested in having some questions answered and having a chat. I will not keep Allen Ginsberg from having the second class and I will not keep you from hearing him.

AG: How many did their homework and wrote down the list of twenty . . . How many actually did that? Not very many. Could you, after class, give me the lists with your three choices of the three bests, the very best marked with a star? If you participate in these very simple exercises you'll find what I'm saying more fun.

So, I would like to very rapidly skim over the slogans that you were handed out, read them aloud and make brief comments on them, because otherwise we will go too slowly, and then I will focus in on specific poets, beginning with William Burroughs and going on to Kerouac, Philip Whalen,

Robert Creeley, Gregory Corso, Garry Snyder, Michael McClure, Peter Orlofsky, Diane di Prima, John Wieners, Anne Waldman and David Cope, the poets I selected and put in this anthology. But how much of that we can do, I don't know.

Meanwhile, I have been talking to you in English more or less slowly. What shall we do? Has this been satisfactory or is this too difficult? Do we need some translation? Would it be helpful to have somebody sitting here to translate a few things occasionally? What do you think? I mean, it's your class, so you should figure out how it will be best for you to understand. Or, do you have any suggestions for improving the communication? 'Cause I'm open to suggestions and I will be in Rector Jařab's office on this floor after class, after we leave here, if anybody wants to talk to me. If you have some idea that you don't want to express publicly but would like to still say, then I'll be around for a while.

Am I speaking slowly enough? Am I speaking distinctly enough? As you may have noticed, I'm trying to bite my consonants so that each word has a separate sound. Which is also one of the slogans: "Savor vowels, appreciate consonants," because poetry also has an element of sound. Words have sounds and from the beginning—Homer, Sappho—in ancient times, poetry was sounded aloud, in fact sung, just like Mick Jagger and Bob Dylan. Homer sang the *Odyssey* and Sappho is the first poet in Europe, the first individual poet, the first Rimbaud, so to speak, Sappho sang on a five-string tortoise-shell lyre, according to the rock'n'roll classicist of The Fugs, Ed Sanders.

So the element of sound, even music, always has been part of poetry. In Europe and America sometimes there's a tradition of sound, sounding the poetry aloud, as in Russia, with Khlebnikov or Yesenin or Mayakovski, and there may be a Czech tradition, I'm not sure, but I assume there is. And there is an African-American tradition of singing poetry as the blues, but for the most part, 19th century and 20th century English and maybe European poetry, especially right now German poetry and French poetry, is not used to be read aloud or if read aloud, it's read in a monotone. And the idea is a some form of monotonous meditation, where the poet does not look into the eyes

of the audience and deliver his words to the people who are listening as Homer did, or as Sappho did to her lady students to whom she taught sacred songs.

Nowadays in German language usually the poet is just reading from here in a monotone like this. And that's considered by some poets to be the ideal for reading poetry.

The tradition in Russia and America and African American mode is more of public communication. So from that point of view I will try to set an example by making the words distinct and clear for you to hear, and biting my consonants. And if you ever see films of Bob Dylan singing, you will notice that he has almost permanent sneer on his face when he's singing, because he is actually posing his mouth, so that he can enunciate clearly, because maybe ten, twenty, thirty, forty to a hundred thousand people have to hear him. So he's mouthing each word distinctly. That's the reason for the very strange look he has on his face when singing sometimes, as if he's embittered or sneering. He's just simply being a good musician and mouthing the sounds in the hollow of his mouth and biting the consonants so people can hear them.

So, we had gotten up to the point of taking a friendly attitude toward our thoughts and realizing that the mind must be loose. "Must" is maybe the wrong word, the mind *is* loose. In a sense that you never know what you're going to think the next second. Or very rarely does anybody know what their next thought will be. You can't plan your mind, just like you can't plan dreams, really. I had a series of really amazing dreams last night, kept waking and writing them up, and I couldn't imagine where they came from, but certainly they were nothing I could have planned. Actually, I was in the student buffet and there was not enough to eat and we were all fighting to get at a table. And I was stealing food from somebody else's plate. (*laughs*) I would never have imagined that in this situation.

So, "One perception must immediately and directly lead to a further perception" is the next . . . And you'll find that specifically demonstrated in the poem "Zone" by Guillaume Apollinaire, the French poet, the first modern

poet. And I will recommend looking at Robert Creeley and Garry Snyder's "Bubbs Creek Haircut", which are in these little workbooks, I think, for samples of one perception leading directly to another, that's a quote from a poet Charles Olson. Meaning that in open form poetry the poet registers the change of his mind while he is writing, rather than he may have a general theme planned, but if ideas, pictures rise in his mind during the time of writing, he should include those in the sentence. And so, one perception will lead directly to another perception, rather than being stuck and trying to repeat a rhyme scheme or develop an idea logically as a syllogism, as in earlier English metaphysical poetry like John Donne, where you take a single idea and stick with it and find all the extensions of it. It may be that you'll have, as with surrealism or as with movies, a jump cut. Jump cut, does anybody know that technical term with movies or cinema? When you jump from one scene to another? Montage, as in Eisenstein's *Potemkin*, where you jump from a baby carriage rolling down the stairs to the soldiers firing.

Philip Whalen, the poet, says, "My writing is a picture of the mind moving." The mind is moving, one perception leads to another. We don't know what we're going to think next, so I have that phrase here, "surprise mind." My mind is always a surprise to me, I never know what I'll think next. And from that, there's a famous haiku, Japanese one line poem, by Basho. You may know it, it's the most famous haiku or single line poem in the West: "An old frog . . ." No, "an old pond, or a quiet, still, old pond, the sound of a frog jumping into the water. Splash!" Is anybody familiar with that? Or:

An old pond,
A frog jumped in,
Kerplunk!

"Kerplunk" is the English word for the sound of a stone dropped to the water, into a still water, plunk. An old pond, covered with leaves—still—plunk. Is that a familiar reference point here? Has anybody ever heard of that? Basho? How many have heard of Basho? Ok. Basho was considered the greatest of Japanese haiku writers. How many know what a haiku is? Several, most people. Usually it's a seventeen-syllable verbal photograph:

The dogs
Kindly get out of the way,
In the snowy road.

A rat approaches
The freezing oil
Of the lamp.

The mountain blast!
The hail is driven
Into the horse's ear.

In the abandoned boat,
The hail
Bounces about.

The old pond;
A straw sandal sunk to the bottom,
Sleet falling.

The straight hole
Made by pissing
In the snow outside the door.

Crunch, crunch,—
The horse munching straw;
An evening of snow.

So those were all different haikus by Issa, Buson, Shiki, among others, who are among the great haiku writers in Japan and Bashō is considered the greatest. One of his haikus is:

The snow we saw come down,—
Has it fallen,
This year too?

So the implication there is he's talking to an old friend and one time other year they saw it snow together and he's either writing or asking, "The snow we saw come down,— / has it fallen, / this year too?" Of course, the snow has fallen every year. So it is a kind of nostalgia and sadness in it. So the haiku or seventeen-syllable poem is like a little photograph of a moment of perception, a direct perception, usually a visual activity, like the hail bouncing about the abandoned boat. Generally it has the sensation of emptiness—abandoned boat with hail bouncing around it. Of emptiness, of solitude, of nobody there. That sense of emptiness in Sanskrit is called

“shunyata”—open space, nobody there. And in Japanese “ku”—open space, emptiness.

“The old pond; / A straw sandal sunk to the bottom, / Sleet falling.” There is a viewer, there’s somebody aware, but in the old pond there is no one there, except a straw sandal sunk to the bottom with sleet falling onto the pond. The sense of emptiness is also given by a very great a 12th century Zen teacher Ikkyū, who says, “Oh yes, things exist, like the echo of your voice when you yell at the foot of a huge mountain.” (*repeats*) So there’s the sense of nobody there, inside the echo. Or emptiness or open space or absence, you might say. And this is equated in Japanese Buddhist aesthetics with the sense of no self, no ego, “egolessness” or vast big mind, rather than ego-centered self-preoccupation. This is more awareness of a larger space, a larger mind, a larger sense of infinite, vast . . . The infinite vast. Understand? Is that clear?

So the characteristic of haiku is that sense of emptiness or openness, “shunyata”—Sanskrit, “ku”—Japanese. And it is generally a single picture. The Bashō haiku, “An old pond, / A frog jumped in, / Kerplunk,” is like a thought appearing in the old pond of the mind. And that’s what this haiku is about. It’s sort of a register of mental activity. The still old pond that nobody is viewing and then, all of a sudden, plunk!—a thought arises. Perhaps the whole universe arises. Or maybe just a frog jumps in. But it operates on a very literal level, it exists on very *literal* level – there’s a pond and a sound of a frog jumping in. In the Japanese they don’t mention the word frog. They just have the sound and you have to create the frog in your brain. The two parts, the old pond and the “kerplunk”, put a frog in your brain without mentioning the frog, in Japanese. So that relates to the previous slogan, surprise mind—a thought arises, “kerplunk!”

Then you might say, “But I want to control my poem. I want more control, I don’t want to be under the control of my own mind. I want to control my mind, I don’t want my mind to control me.” So there is a brilliant advice from the Tibetan culture, as they said before, take a friendly attitude toward your thoughts, which was part of the meditation instruction at the very end of the last class. As you may remember I said, “If thoughts arise

while you're sitting following your breath, take a friendly attitude toward your thoughts."

So corollary to that or parallel to that is the slogan, "Magic"—'cause everybody wants magic in their poetry—"magic is the total appreciation of chance" or "magic is the total delight in chance." This may be familiar to you from what is called aleatoric art or music—John Cage, Jackson Mac Low, William Burroughs' cut-ups, or as I've been suggesting all along, music video. There is a sort of roulette of images, a round of chance images that are put together perhaps by accident, somewhat designed but also falling in place and surprisingly one image jumping to another. So, magic is the total delight in chance. It's the difference between somebody who realizes he's dying and appreciates it and actually gets into it and approaches and observes it, and somebody who gets angry that he's dying and says "I refuse!" and goes into more and more pain. Or the difference between living with AIDS and dying of AIDS, so to speak. Some people are . . . Everybody's in pain of course, but some people resent the pain and get angry and feel that it shouldn't happen to them, and other people realize it is happening to them and they should relate to it and live with it and work with it, rather than getting mad, angry, feeling that God has been unfair to them.

So, the question of appreciating chance, or appreciating the phenomenal word that it is, which is the whole point of this discourse—poetics as a means of appreciating the phenomenal world. Poetry as a method of enjoying the pleasure of your own mind, appreciating the chaos and discontinuity of your own mind, appreciating the chance of your own thoughts or the sequence of chances, appreciating your own mind moving and seeing the humor, the pleasure, the continuous inventiveness and endless variety displayed by the mind in its operations, rather than a method of trying to restrict the mind to a few themes, as the Catholic church would do, or restricted to a few regular rhythms or limited tones in pronunciation, or limited gamut of words, limited diction that refuses colloquial, sexual and vulgar speech. Poetry would include your own speech, which may be colloquial, sexual and vulgar.

So, magic is the total appreciation of chance. Is that general idea clear? Is there anybody that has any question on that, if I haven't been lucid on this subject?

Ok, so we have from Walt Whitman a corollary or a back-up slogan or permission to appreciate the chance operation of our own mind in the verse of "Song of Myself":

Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself,
(I am large, I contain multitudes.)

We have the theory that John Keats proposed, also, of negative capability, which gives you some of the same attitude. How many are familiar with this phrase of John Keats, the English poet, "negative capability"? Anybody ever heard that? Well, it's a useful thing to know if you're studying English and American literature quote "negative capability" unquote, because it's something that most English professors come to sooner or later in explaining poetry. It's from a letter that John Keats wrote to his brother, in which he said... I have the quote here, actually. He had been listening to some professor's talk about literature and he was bored and began thinking, "What is it that makes a man of genius, like Shakespeare?" And his brother, he said... He began thinking, "What quality went to former man of achievement, especially in literature?" And his answer was, "Negative capability." That is, "when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts", or "contradictions", as Whitman says, "without any irritable reaching after fact and reason". When you're able to entertain in your mind opposite thoughts without an aggressive, irritable insistence that one or another must be true. Its either black or white. Your either gay or you're straight. You're either Serbian or you're Bosnian. You're either Croatian or you're a Serbian. You're either a Serbian or you're Muslim. You're either Croatian or you're Muslim. You're either American or a communist. Or you're either Slovakian or Czech. Or whatever. Without an irritable reaching after fact and reason. And you see the irritable reaching after fact and reason being played out in massive mass-murderous scale now in Bosnia and

Herzegovina and other places in the Balkan countries. Follow? Verstehst? What is “verstehst”, is that German? Or Yiddish? Verstehst? (*laugh*)

So, the key word is “irritable”. You may want to have an answer, you may want to know whether you’re Jewish or goyishe or whether you’re gay or straight. But on the other hand, if you insist irritably, you’re going to force an issue that may not have a single answer. You may be both! Or, as Gregory Corso says, “If you have a choice between two things, take both.”

So, what quality went to former men of achievement, especially in literature? Negative capability. That is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries . . . When a man is *capable*. You *can* do it, it’s not . . . You know, some people are capable and some people insist, they have to be right. When a man or a woman is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.

So, that’s a very interesting mental situation, which all of us experience, some of us reject and some of us appreciate and take delight in that aspect of our own minds. Walt Whitman took delight in it and in “Song of Myself”, there’s a very famous passage that illustrates both the notion of contradiction and negative capability. It’s a Part 4 of “Song of Myself”. “Trippers and askers surround me . . .” Trippers—people trying to trip you up and bug you with questions.

Trippers and askers surround me,
People I meet, the effect upon me of my early life or the ward and city I
live in, or the nation,
The latest dates, discoveries, inventions, societies, authors old and new,
My dinner, dress, associates, looks, compliments, dues,
The real or fancied indifference of some man or woman I love,
The sickness of one of my folks or of myself, or ill-doing or loss or lack
of money, or depressions or exaltations,
Battles, the horrors of fratricidal war, the fever of doubtful news, the
fitful events;
These come to me days and nights and go from me again,
But they are not the Me myself.
Apart from the pulling and hauling stands what I am,
Stands amused, complacent, compassionating, idle, unitary,
Looks down, is erect, or bends an arm on an curious impalpable rest,
Looking with side-curved head curious what will come next,
Both in and out of the game and watching and wondering at it.
Backward I see in my own days where I sweated through fog with

linguists and contenders,
I have no mockings or arguments, I witness and wait.

So it's a question of witnessing our own mind and witnessing our mind to other people in poetry or writing your mind, including doubts, mysteries, the latest dates, discoveries, inventions, emotions, exaltations, the loss of money etc. So these coincide Whitman's notion of contradiction—"Do I contradict myself?" Yes. "Very well, then I contradict myself, I am large, I contain multitudes." The mind is large and contains multitudes, just like a nation. There's no single ego, there's no single "Self". There are myriad selves.

So, next we have: If that's so and if your poetry is going to be a picture of mind moving, then what form will it have? Since we take for granted the mutability of the mind, its fragmented nature, its contradictory nature, its moment by moment movements, therefore we could adopt a form of poetry which fits that. And so we have a letter from Robert Creeley to Charles Olson in the late 1940s with a statement, "Form is never more than extension of content." Or, as Frank Lloyd Wright, the architect, said, "Form follows function." For those of you who are studying architecture, "Form follows function." The function is discontinuity, contradiction and movement in the mind, so the form of poetry might be discontinuous, imagistic, jumping from one thought to another, many jump-cuts, composite tapestry or collage or montage . . . Collage, montage - those words are familiar?

JJ: International.

AG: Yeah. A great example of that . . . What I asked William Carlos Williams, "What form a long poem should take? What would be the meter or measure or verse line?" He said, "Many different kinds of forms." It had never occurred to me, I thought you'd have one form or one iambic pentameter rhyme, but he said, "No, any kind, we have many different forms to make a long poem." And so most of the great long poems in English in the 20th century are composed of many different forms, like T. S. Elliot's "Wasteland", which is sometimes montage and sometimes rhyme, different sections, Ezra

Pound's monumental long poem "The Cantos", which has many different forms and is a broken page with the lines scattered on the page, jump-cut from one image to another, W. C. Williams's "Paterson", which has prose, poetry, rhymes, a geological list of the different strata of the town of Paterson, newspaper clippings, letters from his friends . . . A composite or collage. Or Bob Dylan's movie, which you may or may not have seen, *Renaldo and Clara*, a four-hour movie made in 1975, which is a weaving together of different themes, without a linear plot.

But then there may be the objection that you don't want chance, because you really want to hit peak experiences, you want epiphanies, you want ultimate, romantic visions of God or the universe or some visionary, ultimate, absolute, climactic ecstasy. And you demand that of your poetry and in fact, if you can't get it, you won't write poetry. You'll go out of the business. (*laughs*) And many people do follow that course out of some sort of absolutism and idealism, and demanding too much of themselves and demanding instantaneous orgasm from poetry at all times, and if they can't find complete, absolute ecstasy/romance in a poetry, they refuse to continue and turn their backs to the world of their own feelings and the chaos of their own minds and go run for president (*all laugh*) or something.

So the next is a sort of answer to that problem, which is that "Ordinary Mind includes eternal perceptions." "Ordinary Mind" is a phrase used in Zen Buddhism, in which they say that everyday, average, normal, moment by moment, boring consciousness is the *ultimate* consciousness. The only reason we don't see the sacred character of it is that we don't appreciate it, and the reason we don't appreciate it is that we don't notice it. We don't look at it carefully enough, we avoid it, because we're looking for some other kind of emotional ecstasy or intellectual ecstasy in abstraction, and fail to notice what is in front of our noses. So the question here is of examining the moment by moment changes of thought and picture in our minds, and as we examine them we find that they are quite interesting. Like, the most uninteresting corner of the room, perhaps, is up there, where nothing is happening, where the wall meets the wood and the buttress or ceiling.

Nothing is happening. Except if you look at it for a while, it might become very interesting, because that's where the pale curtain hangs at its end with a slight ruffle because it can't fit quite over the wood and there's a little piece of wood that has to hold up the curtain rod and that's where the building comes together with the very flat ceiling and a very flat wall and then the sudden old wood, very well polished and painted and glossy . . . And so, if you put your attention there, as a painter might do or as a Bauhaus architect or painter might do or as Paul Klee might do or as a Cubist painter might do or as Robbe-Grillet might do or as anybody intelligent might do in applying their attention to something that would be otherwise boring, it suddenly becomes a place of interest and curiosity, especially for the aspect of "shunyata", "ku" or emptiness. The silence of that area of the room. The restfulness of that area of the room. An emptiness in that corner as empty as our own heads actually, in the long run. So you might take that corner of the room as symbolic of the ultimate nature of the universe, in fact. And get quite interested in it and wanna go live there even. (*laughs*)

So are you following what I'm saying? It's the quality of the attention that makes any moment sacred or illuminated. It's not that in itself it is illuminated, the wall, it's our attention that gives the illumination. That's why many mystics in describing their mystical experience attributed to an incidental detail, like the sound of a woodpecker knocking against a tree or hail bouncing about an empty boat or the echo of your voice against a huge mountain. Or with Wordsworth maybe a moment of sense of a sudden full moon on top of the mountain with the sea far away, laughing in the distance. When he was alone. And many mystics if you read through their work and many poets describe a single, ordinary incident as the incident which touched off in their minds some higher understanding. So my conclusion is: "Ordinary mind includes eternal perceptions." So the place to look for some high poetic value is in your moment to moment, ordinary mind. And this is the course of American poetry. It's not just my opinion. We're talking about what is the flavor, nature, method and philosophical grounding underneath the development of poetry from Whitman through Pound through Williams

through Gregory Corso or myself. It's the willingness to localize, to find a universal in the particular. To find a universal interest or universal representation by local, particular detail. And what I would suggest is W. C. Williams as a basic practitioner of poetry in this form, Wordsworth's poem composed upon Westminster Bridge, if you have that in your anthologies. I won't read all these, but I'll suggest things for you. Charles Reznikoff's poems or haiku or maybe read just one poem by Charles Reznikoff, whom I mentioned before, I think. Where is it? On page 36. Something that you may have seen many many times and dismissed as too ordinary for your notice, but when noticed and written down accurately with accurate perception, becomes sacred or interesting or memorable, vivid. It's on the second column of page 71²⁰⁵, second poem.

The wind blows the rain into our faces
as we go down the hillside
upon rusted cans and old newspapers,
past the tree on whose bare branches
the boys have hung iron hoops,
until we reach at last the crushed earthworms
stretched and stretching on the wet sidewalk.

How many times have we . . . I'd imagine you have that here, don't you, in Czechoslovakia? Or Czech Republic?

JJ: Both.

AG: Both in Slovakia and Czech Republic, as in the United States, the crushed earthworms stretched and stretching on the wet sidewalk, that are brought out by the rain. Every child has seen those and everybody knows how memorable it is. And maybe the first time you see it gave you the picture, a sensation of crawling horror, realizing the fate of the earthworm that, when the rain dries, they're be left out there on the sidewalk to dry out. But then as you grew older, you forgot the first sensation, the primordial thought that came with the first glimpse, and no longer paid attention. But on the other hand, there is a buried recollection, and for fresh onlooker or for someone

who looks and describes it precisely, there's all the implication of life and death to the dumb creature, which as ourselves. From these crushed earthworms stretched and stretching on the wet sidewalk. So this is an illustration of ordinary mind includes internal perceptions. Or another from him, "After Rain":

The motor-cars on the shining street move in semicircles of
spray, semicircles of spray.

Simple as that. It's like a little haiku. In a wet street it's flooded and the cars go through, have you ever seen that? The water rising in front of the wheel of the car? Is that a familiar . . . Has anybody seen that? (*all laugh*) But it's just that . . . He saw it! He actually saw it and described it accurately, and it becomes a totem. You could actually have any moment of your life, look around, stop the world, stop time for a moment and notice some detail, like the corner of the room, and create a brief image in your mind, which you could describe accurately and transmit that through the centuries. Ideally. You'd have to have a little way with words, you'd have to be very precise in your observation, very precise in your expression—"crushed earthworm stretched and stretching on the wet sidewalk, semicircles of spray." Or another example from Reznikoff, who was a great poet for this specific kind of perception. He has a poem on page 32 of my anthology, called "Sunday Walks in the Suburbs". He walked a great deal around New York City and the suburbs. "Scared dogs looking backwards with patient eyes; / at windows stooping old women, wrapped in shawls; / old men, wrinkled as knuckles, on the stoops . . ." Wrinkled as knuckles—it's interesting, but it's a little poetic. It's a little bit *much*. "A bitch,"—a female dog—"backbone and rib showing in the sinuous back, / sniffed for food, her swollen udder nearly rubbing along the pavement." Has anybody seen that, ever? A dog with a swollen udder, so used and worn that it's nearly rubbing along the pavement as she walks? "Once a toothless woman opened her door, / chewing a slice of bacon that hung from her mouth like a tongue." Bacon, do you have bacon here? What would be the equivalent?

JJ: (*inaudible*)

AG: What would be the equivalent, the word, the equivalent for the word “bacon”? A slice, a thin slice.

JJ: Slanina.

AG: Slanina. Chewing a slice of slanina that hung from her mouth like a tongue. It’s a very ugly image. It’s a very ordinary image, but once you’ve seen it, you’ll never forget it. And it gives you some sense of the woman and of himself as the perceiver. So he says: “This is where I walked night after night, / this is where I walked away many years.”

JJ: I was hesitating, because there’s another word for bacon that I would use if I translated it, and that’s “špek”. And it sounds better.

AG: But does it give the sense of that long piece hanging from the mouth? See, it’s a question. The bacon is a strip that’s about an inch and a half wide, like the size of a tongue, and about three four inches long . . . If it’s hanging from her mouth like a tongue, it means she didn’t cook it enough. It is kind of raw to begin with. (*laughs*) That’s awful. It’s a terrible vision. But totally ordinary. So, there is a couplet by another Imagist, Louis Zukofsky, who was a good teacher for Robert Creeley and as a model for Robert Creeley. I seem to be referring a lot to the older poets, older generation, but it’s the ground from which the younger people come. “Nothing is better for being eternal nor so white as the white that dies of a day.” (*repeats*) So a little flavor of Yiddish in there. It’s something you have to think about. Why would it be eternal—living forever—be better than living for a moment? Better? Worse? Better? (*chuckle*) Anyway. So in terms of poetry and choosing your images or noticing what you notice, nothing is better for being there forever than the traditional red rose that dies of the day. And a rose is the symbol, after all, of beauty and transitoriness, but also absolute beauty, so that even Dante chose

the rose, the great yellow rose of heaven, as his ultimate symbol of paradise. And yet a rose is transitory, ephemeral object. We could say no rose would be better for being eternal nor so red as red that dies of a day. And would a rose be better if . . . In fact it would be worse. A rose would be terrible if it were made of . . . I mean, the whole point of a rose is that it's soft and organic and mortal. And delicate velvet. You could have a rose made out of wood, painted, or crystal or some adamantine substance that lasts forever, but it wouldn't be the beauty and what we like in a rose that you give to your girlfriend or your boyfriend. (*laughs*) Hit them over the head with a big brass rose? Or a crystal rose? So, "nothing is better for being eternal nor so white as the white that dies of a day". But that also applies to your perceptions, your thoughts or the basic material you choose for your poetry.

So now we get to the question of mind itself. How do we proceed in selecting those images from ordinary mind that we can use for poetry? So first of all, notice what you notice. I noticed a dream and I noticed to you that I noticed it. So you notice what you notice. We go around all day noticing things, but we forget about it. Or dismiss it. Or say, "This is not so romantic, this is not important, why should I write this one down?"

The way you notice what you notice is to catch yourself thinking. That's an American idiomatic phrase, where you stop in the middle and notice you just thought something. I don't think there's a German equivalent, 'cause we were trying to translate this into German, and I don't know if there's a Czech language equivalent for the idiom in Americanese "catch yourself thinking." And you might remember I used that when I was talking about observing your mind while meditating, in the meditation instructions, "If you catch yourself thinking, acknowledge your thought, take a friendly attitude to it and then return your attention back to the next outbreath." When we were talking about meditation exercise? "Catch yourself thinking." Can anybody suggest a local idiom here that has the same flavor of noticing your mind and noticing that a thought just winged past? Is there some similar . . . 'Couse I'm sure it's an experience that all cultures have. All individuals of all cultures suddenly wake up in the middle of their thought and notice what their

thought was. So is there some idiom, some vernacular that's similar? What would you suggest, in Czech?

S: Přistihnout se při myšlení?

JJ: That's a literal thing to say that. It makes sense, thought I don't know . . .

AG: But is there something local, something that's used, like young kids might say to yourself? Or that your mother might say, "I caught myself thinking yesterday about your grandmother." Or "I caught myself thinking about my dead mother." Or "I caught myself thinking about the days when the Germans were here." Or ". . . the Russians were here." "I caught myself thinking about the day when the tanks came here." "I caught myself thinking about the first night with my husband." Something like that. So how do you say that? There must be some vernacular.

S: Přistihnout se při myšlení.

AG: Louder?

S: The same.

AG: The same as he said? Can you say it one more time?

S: Přistihnout se při myšlení.

AG: I can't hear you! I'm seventy feet away.

S: Přistihnout se při myšlence . . . (*audience laughter*)

AG: What was the second?

JJ: Přistihnout se při myšlence.

AG: Meaning, literary?

JJ: Catch yourself having a thought, rather than thinking.

AG: Catch yourself having a thought. Is that used?

JJ: Well, yes, it can be used, but it's still in, I think, a literal sort of, you know . . . I think that a good question is, what would children say? And I would have to think about that . . . with you probably.

AG: Ask a child.

JJ: And verbs, Allen, you know, we have verbs. Slavic languages are sort of better and more on verbs. So it is like "uvědomit si". And that is what children would not say. Uvědomil jsem si, that means, I became aware—I caught myself thinking. But the process is not there and that's...

AG: Ok. So the process is basic to human consciousness. But fortunately in English we have a vernacular, idiomatic way that people don't think of as being profound, but it is quite profound. Seen properly, there could be a very profound perception of indicating how you are not trapped by your mind, but how you are actually outside of your mind, observing your mind. Who is the one that catches yourself thinking? Who catches you thinking? Are there two minds? Is there one that thinks? It's a little bit like in a cartoon, where we have a character talking, and you have a balloon. So the balloon is the thought, but then there's the space around the balloon, in the box of the cartoon. And the big mind is like the space around that can look at the inside of balloon and see the thought. So this is in Zen Buddhism, according to Zen master Suzuki Roshi, there is a regular mind and "big mind", and "big mind"

is the ordinary mind actually, they say. Ordinary mind is big mind that notices everyday thoughts. In a balloon of a cartoon inside the skull.

So if you catch yourself thinking, how do you choose subjects for poetry? So the slogan here is, "Observe what's vivid". Whatever is vivid? Naturally, whatever has a picture that's clear enough for you to see and to reproduce may be fit subject for a poem. But then the question is . . . Like the lady with the bacon hanging from her mouth like a tongue is quite vivid. The earthworm stretched and stretching on the wet sidewalk are vivid. Vivid in Czech? I don't know quite the . . . Sticks out of the mind pictorially. Shines out pictorially. And the key to that choice of what is vivid, so there's a question that the lady asked yesterday, "How do we know what is a real thought and what is not a real thought or second thought?" How do we know what is vivid? Vivid is vivid, if it's not vivid, it's not vivid. You won't remember it. You won't see it. So the slogan is, "Vividness is self-selecting." You don't have to make . . . *(End of tape. Part of the lecture missing)*

. . . constantly sensitive and alert to what you are seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and thinking. Sight, sound, smell, taste, touch and mind. Constantly aware of your six senses. Constantly surveying your six senses. Maybe almost like you survey what's on the program on television. Just checking out mechanically one sense after another. What are you smelling, what are you seeing, what are you hearing, what are you tasting, what are you touching, what are you thinking. Catch yourself thinking. Catch yourself perceiving.

I could give illustrations, so maybe I'll do one by Robert Creeley. Somewhat subtle. Somewhat more subtle than . . . Yes, I used it before, from Emily Dickinson, actually. "I Heard a Fly Buzz – When I Died". Do people know that poem? It's one of the most famous poems by Emily Dickinson. I heard a fly buzz when I died. *(laughs)* That's about it. That was the most vivid thing that happened to her when she thought of dying.

I heard a Fly buzz - when I died
The Stillness round my form
Was like the Stillness in the Air
Between the Heaves of Storm

I don't think it's in that book. I have two books here. I have this and then I have a big loose leaf book, which has a slogan and then many illustrations for each slogan on the page. But it's too big to reproduce. Though I could leave a copy behind, if you got the machinery to reproduce this. Or by Creeley, a poem called "Late for Summer Weather". No, that's Williams. It's something by Creeley. If there's some more modern poet. I don't know if I've got it... (*leafs through papers*) Creeley's father died in 1930, when he was four years old. But he still has a vivid recollection of the moment, a realization. And this is a short poem called "Memory, 1930", from a recent book, in the eighties.

There are continuities in memory, but
useless, dissimilar. My sister's

recollection of what happened won't
serve me. I sit, intent, fat,

the youngest of the suddenly
disjunct family, whose father is

being then driven in an ambulance
across the lawn, in the snow, to die.

So he is remembering himself sitting in his, I guess, in his high chair, as a four-year-old. "I sit, intent, fat, / the youngest of the suddenly / disjunct"—broken apart—"family, whose father is / being driven in an ambulance / across the lawn, in the snow, to die." And another poem by him, "First Rain".

These retroactive small
instances of feeling

reach out for a common
ground in the wet

first rain of a faded
winter. Along the grey

iced sidewalk revealed
piles of dogshit, papers,

bits of old clothing, are
the human pledges,

call them, "We are here and
have been all the time." I

walk quickly. The wind
drives the rain, drenching

my coat, pants, blurs
my glasses, as I pass.

Well, that's a common experience of an older man coming through all the garbage on a side street in the city to his house. In the rain, making his coat and pants wet, but blurring his glasses, so he can't see much anymore. That's just a moment of vivid recollection of a condition being in the rain outside your house, with the garbage of the city around and yourself getting, in a sense, blinded by the moment of rain. There's an odd little poem called "Echo", which has three lines.

Back in time
for supper
when the lights

That's all there is. (*repeats the poem*) That must be . . . I guess he's eight years old there or something like that. He's out of the house and coming back in time for supper, when the lights—I assume, when the lights in the house are shining and it's dark and he's been out too long. "Back in time / for supper / when the lights" It might be a little bit obscure, but on the other hand, if you know his method, it's kind of interesting to see how minimal he can be, with how few words he can sketch a sensation, a vivid sensation. I'm looking . . . Let's see . . . It'll be enough, I just want one little example there.

William Wordsworth had more extensive view of those moments of epiphany. They were ordinary mind, but he was intent on trying to isolate them and so he called them "spots of time". Has anybody ever heard that phrase? Or has anybody here ever studied some of William Wordsworth? No? Well, a major romantic poet in English, precursor, in certain ways, to modern poetics, in that he said that poetry should consist of the words of ordinary men of affairs speaking to each other, rather than special philosophical terminology. But he had the idea of a spot of time. A moment in time, isolated, vivid, remaining in memory. He gave some many samples in his autobiographical history of his own spiritual life, called *The Prelude*. And

maybe I'll read that, because this is so basic to all English poetry, there's notion of a spot of time. You know, a romantic moment, so to speak.

It was a close, warm, breezeless summer night,
Wan, dull, and glaring, with a dripping fog
Low-hung and thick that covered all the sky;
But, undiscouraged, we began to climb
The mountain-side. The mist soon girt us round,
And, after ordinary travellers' talk
With our conductor, pensively we sank
Each into commerce with his private thoughts:
Thus did we breast the ascent, and by myself
Was nothing either seen or heard that checked
Those musings or diverted, save that once
The shepherd's lurcher, who, among the crags,
Had to his joy unearthed a hedgehog, teased
His coiled-up prey with barkings turbulent.
This small adventure, for even such it seemed
In that wild place and at the dead of night,
Being over and forgotten, on we wound
In silence as before. With forehead bent
Earthward, as if in opposition set
Against an enemy, I panted up
With eager pace, and no less eager thoughts.
Thus might we wear a midnight hour away,
Ascending at loose distance each from each,
And I, as chanced, the foremost of the band;
When at my feet the ground appeared to brighten,
And with a step or two seemed brighter still;
Nor was time given to ask or learn the cause,
For instantly a light upon the turf
Fell like a flash, and low! as I looked up,
The Moon hung naked in a firmament
Of azure without cloud, and at my feet
Rested a silent sea of hoary mist.
A hundred hills their dusky backs upheaved
All over this still ocean; and beyond,
Far, far beyond, the solid vapours stretched,
In headlands, tongues, and promontory shapes,
Into the main Atlantic, that appeared
To dwindle, and give up his majesty,
Usurped upon far as the sight could reach.

Well, so there's that long description of a moment when walking up at midnight through fog he suddenly steps out of the fog and rather than fog it turns out to be totally clear sky, totally full moon that lit up the sea of clouds for hundreds of miles of the distance till you see the ocean. So he calls this a

spot of time. And he explains what he means by a spot of time in this poem,
The Prelude.

There are in our existence spots of time,
That with distinct pre-eminence retain
A renovating virtue, whence—depressed
By false opinion and contentious thought,
Or aught of heavier or more deadly weight,
In trivial occupations, and the round
Of ordinary intercourse--our minds
Are nourished and invisibly repaired [. . .]
Such moments
Are scattered everywhere, taking their date
From our first childhood.

Does that sound familiar as an idea? That we all have such spots of time that return to us in revelry, in going to the bathroom, singing at a cash register with nothing on your mind, as Kerouac said last time, that are memorable moments, epiphanies, spots of time. They may be completely ordinary moments that for some reason or the other remain vivid in our heads. So the homework for this class, now, for tonight, is to write down a list of ten of your own spots of time. Make a list from childhood on of ten separate occasions that you still remember vividly. As you do a retrospect on your own mind, on your own consciousness. As I said, the purpose of this course in poetry is to enable you to write poetry, as well as to appreciate the particular flavor of the poetry that we're studying by showing how it is done, so that you yourself can do it yourself, rather than feel that it is a mystery beyond your grasp. You all have brains that are billions and billions of years old in terms of development. You all have infinite consciousness and infinite space in your minds. You all have twenty thirty years or more of experience and spots of time. You have all that you need to be poets except one thing, which is remembering and appreciating your own lives. And seeing your own lives as important as Walt Whitman's. But if you see your own life as important as Walt Whitman's, then you have received Walt Whitman's message, 'cause that's what he was saying.

I celebrate myself, and sing myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.

And that's the whole point of Whitman—to transmit that particular permission, encouragement, . . . independence. You are your own lords, so to speak. Rather than being dependent on the authority of others. Your own mind is for yourself and for anyone the ultimate authority. For poetry or politics. Fortunately we often share minds, so it's not all chaos.

However, there may still be some problems, like there are certain things you may not wanna show people. Your mother might read it. Like I didn't want my father to read "Howl". When I first wrote it I thought, if he sees this business about me sucking off cock or sucking sailors or being screwed by motorcyclists, it might be a bit embarrassing to the family. However, the next slogan is, "If we don't show anyone, we're free to write down anything." So you might write for the drawer, as the Russians used to do under Stalin. You can write your most intimate thoughts without fear, if you resolve in advance not to show it to anyone, so it's safe that way. Or, as I said last time, you could write things as Kerouac did and burn everything you write immediately, as long as you get the exercise of knowing yourself and recording yourself, one way or another, or as the slogan that I used yesterday is quote "my mind is open to itself" unquote. So the purpose of this sort of exercise is to open your mind to itself. But there needn't be any kind of schizophrenia within your own mind. That's the next slogan, "My mind is open to itself." And there is a very interesting poem by Reznikoff, which is an example of that or a situation of that. "Suddenly we noticed that we were in darkness." It's on page 31, bottom of the page, number 22. Reznikoff, born 1894, died 1976. As I mentioned a friend of Williams, Pound, Louis Zukofsky, member of the Objectivist school.

Suddenly we noticed that we were in darkness;
so we went into the house and lit the lamp.

The talk fell apart and bit by bit slid into a lake.
At last we rose and bidding each other good night went to our
rooms.

In and about the house darkness lay, a black fog;
and each on his bed spoke to himself alone, making no sound.

Now, that's familiar, isn't it? You all have had that experience. Going alone to your bed and thinking to yourself, before you fall asleep. And the thoughts that you might have there are the most intimate that you might have of the day. They're truly quote "my mind is open to itself" unquote. So the question is, can you be conscious of those moments and make use of the conversation you have with yourself in the same language, in the same words, in the same images, with the same flavor? Could you make an object out of that intimate personal experience and reproduce the conversation? If you could, you'd be Shakespeare. (*chuckle*) I mean, everybody wants to know what people really think. Not what they say they think, not what they want other people to think they think, but what do they really think. That would be a miracle. So "each on his bed spoke to himself alone, making no sound." So I would suggest for those of you who are interested in writing or those who are interested in knowing why American poetry of this kind has such an odd flavor, it's because this is the payload or the mother load, as they say. The gold mine of the mind. This area of privacy is where we really are ourselves. And if poetry is to represent us, then we really have to write as we really are, rather than as we would want other people to think we are. The latter is the practice of the politician or the advertising salesman. But for the poet it is a question of writing the mind, actually, as a title of this course is "Writing your mind". Or writing as writing the mind. So as a pointer for the area—"each on his beds spoke to himself alone, making no sound."

And I think that more or less covers the ground that we began with and we've tied up the whole class hour. We have a couple minutes left. Does anyone have any questions or want to pursue any point further at the moment? We have a few minutes. Am I boring you with this kind of continuous, expository talk?

JJ: We are an audient nation, Allen. We agree and disagree with silence.

AG: Yeah. Would somebody like to disagree, please? So I know what I'm facing? So I know what I have to relate to or learn from? Well then, we have

three minutes. As you may remember we had meditation exercise at the end of last class, and maybe we could do that at the end of this class again. How many were here for that last time? How many were not here at the end of the last class? So why don't I just do the instruction one more time.

Sitting forward, this being a footnote to poetry... Spine straight, sitting forward on the seat, feet on the ground, giving some support, hands on the thighs, restful mind, "mudra", as this is called, a mudra or hand gesture or hand position mudra, restful mind, mudra, top of the head supporting heaven, so to speak, nose in line with belly button, ears in line with shoulders. Eyes resting on the horizon, but in the middle distance, eyeballs relaxed or, if you want, 45 degree angle down, if the light is too bright or disturbing, but resting in space rather than focusing on a singular point. Eyeballs relaxed with the slight awareness of the periphery of the optical field, so that you're not focused in the center trying to bring an image into the brain. Mouth closed, breathing through the nose or mouth open if you have difficulty breathing through your nose, shoulders relaxed, back relaxed, so that your body is supported by your straight spine. Not too tight, military, not too loose. Erect in a posture of being awake. Paying attention to the breath leaving the nostrils and dissolving in the air in front of your face. If you smoke you know it's about like that. Letting go of your awareness of the breath when the breath ceases, taking a vacation from any particular attention on the in-breath, just following whatever out-breath rises, weather long breath or short breath . . .

If you're in the class, you should be paying attention to the footnote I'm giving to the poetry, rather than reading the class anthology, sir, in the first row at the end. The point of this, by the way, for those of you who might be interested, is to be aware of what is going on around you in the space. And the gentleman reading the book is not is not aware, not even hearing what I'm saying, his senses are withdrawn into his mind and so he's not here with us in the same space, even. That's a good illustration that this is not the withdrawal from the actual space, but awareness of the space.

So, paying attention to the outbreath, long breath or short breath ok. On the in-breath, no particular attention, except maybe check out your posture, you're still up, still erect. And when you find yourself daydreaming, thinking, subconscious gossip, remembering, planning, talking to yourself, wondering why you're doing this, take a friendly attitude toward your thought, acknowledge it, and return your attention back to your next outbreath. So let's do that for about five breaths.

(30 seconds later) If you have trouble remembering your outbreath, you can count up to ten, like: One . . . Two . . . An then if you start thinking again and get lost in the numbers, you can always go back to one, till you get up to ten. That's a sort of mechanical way of doing it. All this with eyes open. Ok, I think the class is finished now, thank you. *(applause)*

JJ: Once again let me repeat then that the next class is Tuesday afternoon, three o'clock, thank you. And then the following, last class is Thursday, three o'clock. Also let me remind you of the fact that Allen Ginsberg is now going through this door into my/his office and if you . . . Also . . . Možná že bych to mohl říct česky. Ti, kteří jsou z Olomoce a jsou tady, Allen Ginsberg je, jak víte, tady celý víkend a docela rád by třeba, já nevím, i po Olomouci a tak dále, když bude chodit, kdybyste chtěli s ním strávit odpoledne nebo nějaký čas, třeba zajít i do hospody a tak dále, nebo na kafe . . . Takže je tady a je prostě k mání, takže si myslím, že i toho byste mohli využít. Taky bych se rád obrátil na studenty, případně asistenty, Allen by potřeboval někoho, čemu bychom říkali asistent, po tu dobu, co tu je. Bohužel je umístěn tam, kde není telefon, a trochu mu to komplikuje třeba komunikaci s námi se všemi. Takže toto všechno je možné i třeba teď si domluvit, když půjde teď do kanceláře, do mé pracovny. Děkuju.

30. 11. 1993

JJ: Good afternoon, welcome to the third lecture in the series on open poetics by Professor Allen Ginsberg. Those coming, would you please take seats and let me remind you then of the fact, of the invitation, as a matter of fact, from Allen Ginsberg, that he is ready to discuss matters of this lecture or related or whatever, in his office—this floor, end of the corridor—after the class. Ok? So 5:30.

AG: Thank you, Dr. Jařab. How many here . . . Hang on, we'll probably have to readjust the sound . . . Yea. How many were here for the previous lectures? Is there anybody that was not here? Ok, some, yes. There are some.

I would like to begin with slightly different format. Usually we ended with sitting meditation. And I would like to begin this class with a few minutes, five minutes of sitting. Is that ok? There's a purpose to this, but basically just sitting, nothing special. And since there are a number of people here that were not here before, I'll go through the brief explanation of the technique again. And also, if you're interested in any texts or reading related, I'll give you a brief bibliography *now*. First, for those of you who are interested in the technique there is a book, I believe translated into Czech, called *Meditation in Action*. If you have your notebooks . . . Seems nobody's writing it down or very few . . . Some wondering whether this is worth doing. There's one person writing it down, so: *Meditation in Action* by Chögyam Trungpa. That's the Tibetan approach to sitting and examining the mind. And for Japanese Zen handbook, a book called *Beginners Mind, Zen Mind* by Shunryu Suzuki. The Trungpa book, *Meditation in Action*, is published in English. I don't know who the English publisher is, the American publisher is Shambhala Press, Boston. And for the Suzuki book the publisher is Weatherhill Press. So those are two separate cultural approaches to the basic practice of examining your mind.

So for those who were not here these are the basic instructions again. Thank you. This has relation to our course, as a footnote. So this is very old

basic, classic, Buddhist sitting practice of meditation, in Sanskrit called “Samatha”—quietening the mind. Sitting forward in the chair, so that the spine is straight. Now, if you’re in the class and are here seriously, please relate to this, because it relates to the poetry. Sitting forward in your chair, so you’re not leaning back, but forward with the spine straight. I mean sitting forward on the chair with the spine straight. Belly relaxed, so that you can breathe easily. Eyes open, tending toward middle distance, toward a horizon or at a forty-five degree angle toward the floor, if the light is too bright and disturbing. Mouth closed, eyes open, top of the head supporting heaven. So it’s not quite military posture, but not too tight, not too loose, with the spine straight. Eyes open please, though, not closed. We’re not retreating from the world, we’re being in the middle of the world. Or in the middle of space. Eyeballs relaxed, resting in space, not focusing on a single point, but just relaxed in the middle distance, so the eyes may go in or out of focus, it’s ok. Nose in line with belly button, ears in line with shoulders. That should give you an indication of how your head is. Maybe chin down slightly, mouth closed. And the basic practice is paying attention to the breath leaving your nostrils. Hands on thighs.

The basic practice is paying attention to the breath leaving your nostrils until the breath dissolves in air in front of you, or following the breath with your mind or becoming aware of the breath or paying attention to the breath or flowing out with the breath or identifying with the breath or becoming one with the breath, but in any case being mindful of the breath as it leaves your nostrils until it dissolves when you let go of your attention to the breath. Any breath is ok, long or short. So don’t attempt to control the breath either, it’s just being aware of what’s going on . . . Well, what’s going on, because the breath is an ongoing process anyway, so you’re not adding anything in except your awareness. On the in-breath, no need to pay any particular attention to the breath. Let that go, take a vacation. Maybe check your posture so that you’re not slumped. If you’re slumped over you’ll find you’re daydreaming. If you’re sitting erect you’re more in a posture of awake, aware of the space of the room around you, the space behind you and

above your head. The accommodating space of the room, which accommodates your breath. Are there any questions as to the technique at all? It's basically just simple.

Ok, so let's now do a heroic five minutes. If you can be patient enough to sit with yourself for five minutes. If you find yourself daydreaming, thinking, ruminating, subconscious gossip, planning, take a friendly attitude toward your thoughts. And when you're aware of thinking, when you catch yourself thinking, return your attention back to your next outbreath. So there's no need to reject your thoughts, just acknowledge them, take a friendly attitude, notice them, and as you wake from daydreaming, return your attention back to the next outbreath. If you have trouble remembering your breathing, you could count your breaths from one to ten, like: One . . . Two . . . Up to ten. Or, if you forget, if you lose track and begin daydreaming, just go back to one and continue. So now it's sixteen minutes after three and let's sit for four minutes.

(3 minutes 36 seconds later) That's about four minutes, thank you. So do you have pencils and paper? We'll now have an experiment in composition. If you can write down in chronological order the main thoughts that occurred to you during those four minutes. It's a poetic exercise in remembering your mind. I'll do that too. Nobody is going to examine you on this, so you can write down anything that really happened. You don't have to be afraid of spies observing your consciousness. Except yourself, so in this sense you're spying on your own consciousness. So if you'll write down whatever thoughts rise in the order that they seem to have risen while you were sitting there in four minutes. *(scribbling, 35 seconds later)* Write them down maybe one line at the time, like a sort of poem. One thought at a time. Don't get too discursive, just the main, salient essentials of the thought. *(scribbling, 3 minutes later)* Got it, more or less? Doesn't have to be too elaborate. I'll read my own, just in case you're curious.

Will they get paranoid I'm a dictator of silence?
That girl at the back keeps looking at others sitting beside her.
Well, at least they don't have to know what I'm teaching, I can just shut
up for four minutes.

Should I just sit, or practice some complicated visualization of a Tibetan
wrathful deity?
Tonight I'll have a good meal, I mailed my book to a publisher.
Tomorrow, free day. Will take me sightseeing all the churches of
Olomouc.
Here's my breath again, and there's my watch to look at.

So that was what went through my mind. Pretty simple. So you could use this method, this practice, any time, day or night, to inspect your mind and write a little poem. A little core sample of your mind. The activity of your mind doing a specific four five minutes or hour or all day, for that matter, if you want to play with yourself a little more. Basically, in the attempt to stay with the breath, the mind keeps producing thoughts anyway. In the attempt to become conscious of the activity of the mind, you get a closer look at your mind than if you were just walking down the street thinking one thought after another and forgetting them. This way you have a chance to actually survey this sequence of thought forms that rise in your consciousness, acknowledge it and then pass on to the breath. So you have perhaps more notice and awareness of the activity of your mind, as well as more notice of the activity, sounds, smell around you and the space around you. So this is not cutting off from reality, this is perhaps sharpening your perception of it. 'Cause you're not sitting silent all day long, it's just like a little period of one minute, one breath, five minutes a breath or an hour. I usually, when I'm in good shape, practice an hour every day, in the evening or morning. But you have a chance, at any rate, to stop time, to stop the universe in its tracks and just look at it, observing it. Then you can go into action, if action is what is your pleasure. You always can go into action as simply preparing your composure and your awareness.

So it's useful for poetry, and that's the relation. As in the poem that I read of William Carlos Williams called "Thursday", when he suddenly realizes he's standing in his shoes, feeling the weight of his body in his shoes, or the poem "Good Night", where he observes his mind as he comes down for a glass of water. What's really remarkable is that Williams had this intuitive, Yankee, pragmatic sense of noticing the action of his mind, which was his home-made authentic, autochthonic—self-born from the earth, which was

equal to a thousand or two thousand years of Buddhist practice. Because autochthonic, the Buddhist notion is, after all, only in awareness of what people do anyway. Like babies in their crib occasionally will simply rest there, conscious of their breathing and look at the ceiling and notice thoughts passing through their mind. So this is a natural activity. It's also a poetic activity.

I suggested several exercises, homework, if you all remember, for those of you who are regulars in the class. One was the word list—Nazi milk, hydrogen jukebox or whatever you came up with—the other was to write down your top ten lifetime epiphanies, your top ten most vivid moments of your life. Here we were doing what the top seven or eight thoughts in four-minute period, surveying the mind. The other last suggestion from the last class was to write down the . . . Top ten or fifteen, I forgot. Do you remember? Top ten—Like a hit list for rock'n'roll. Top ten thoughts of your life, top ten most vivid moments that can be made into a poem, like Wordsworth's spots of time, one of which I read. Your top ten spots of time, so to speak. And then you can take any one of them and expand it into a slightly longer narrative poem. So those are poetic tricks. If you ever want to write poetry and you need a subject, you can either stop and examine your mind and let the mind suggest a sequence of thoughts as a subject. Or you can play a word game, as in the first class, or write down your top ten recollections of life from childhood on and then either make that into a poem or take one of them and make that into a poem. There's a poet named Joe Brainard in the New York School of poets, a disciple of Frank O'Hara and John Ashbery, who has a whole book of sentences and paragraphs, each one beginning, "I remember . . ." Like, I remember in high school finding a chewing gum stuck to the bottom of my desk. I remember . . . Olomouc last time, stepping in . . . I'm really trying to make it up, it doesn't work. (*laugh*) Has to be something real. So, I remember this time in Olomouc running out of toilet paper. (*laugh*) So those are techniques for examining the mind, useful in poetry.

So now we have, continuing with our list, and I'll try and do this rapidly, or speed up. The second part of the list of eighty-four slogans was the path or method of recognition. The first part dealt with the confusion, chaos, discontinuity of mind and how to relate to it. How to accept it, how to work with it, how to turn waste into treasure. Second part now, techniques or path or how to isolate and deal with your thoughts when you write them down. And for that the main slogan is from W. C. Williams, a very famous slogan in American poetry, which almost all poets now understand or have got some idea of, whether they want to practice it or not, they understand what it means, which is "No ideas but in things." That may sound a little strange in American syntax, means: "No ideas but in the facts." Almost like a newspaper report, you know—When? Where? How? Another way of saying it is, "Only that which is palpable or visually describable, but not generalized, abstracted ideas, except as they can be exemplified by presenting a situation or a visualization or an objective detail." So from that we have a series of slogans that all mean the same thing, basically. They point is the same . . .

Williams has the phrase "close to the nose". Close to your own life, close to the nose. Actually that poem about standing, feeling the air passing in and out of his nose is really quite close to his nose.

Williams also has another phrase, "clamp the mind down on objects". These slogans are all written out in the slogan list that I handed out and perhaps those of you who are really curious, who are not in the class might ask the Rector's office for a copy later on.

Another is by Ezra Pound, another slogan: "Direct treatment of the thing or object." Like, instead of saying, "I went outside," you could say, "I went out into the slush or snow of . . ." What's the name of the street that I'm in?

S: Václavské náměstí?

AG: No, that little street that leads to the tram.

JJ: Dómská.

AG: Dómská. “I went out into the slush of Dómská.” Instead of, “I went outside.” Outside, yes, it’s true, but it’s very vague. But clamping the mind down on objects or focusing on a place to make it more vivid visually, you fill in the detail. That’s called by Pound “presentation rather than reference.” Reference is something outside the page, presentation—you actually present the picture. Or in English we say, “Give me a for-instance.” Like “food is good to eat”. Or give me a for instance. “When you’ve not eaten all day and you come out of the snow and there’s a hot meal of dumpling and soup, it is good.” So you give a for instance. You know the phrase in English, “for instance”. An instance, you give a specific instance or example. “Give me an example.” In English we also have the common phrase “show not tell,” that is not talk about something but actually show it, like presentation, not reference. And Ezra Pound says, “The natural object”—Dómská, slush, tram tracks—“is always the adequate symbol.” Instead of saying, “I went to this small town in Czech Republic.” “I went to Olomouc, where the trams ran down the snowy streets making a rumble every five minutes.” Some kind of location of your thought.

And the Tibetan say—as the natural object is always the adequate symbol, Ezra Pound—“Things are symbols of themselves.” (*repeats*) In terms of Tibetan Zen Buddhism this is the highest state of consciousness. When things are no longer symbols of God or existence or whatever, they’re actually symbols of themselves. So that you see them very clearly in their own “thingness.”

William Blake says, “Labour well the Minute Particulars,” i. e. work with “Minute Particulars. “Generalization and abstraction are the plea of a hypocrite, knave and scoundrel.” That’s from Blake’s “Jerusalem”. “Labour well the Minute Particulars” – take care of the little ones, little details. That’s rather sweet. “Generalization and abstraction are the plea of a hypocrite, knave and scoundrel, for art cannot be organized except by minutely organized particulars.” And you’ll notice that police-state bureaucratic

language, as George Orwell points out, generally goes into vague abstraction with very little concrete, particular detail. It's slogans that have no referent. And William Butler Yeats has a phrase in his poetry, "And being old, she put a skin on everything she said."

What shall I do for pretty girls
Now my old Bawd is dead?
And being old she put a skin
On everything she said.

It's like presenting or direct reference or "close to the nose" or "no ideas but in things". Now as Yeats didn't say, "Being old and wise she was concrete in her expression of ideas," which is a very general way of saying it, he changed it to skin. She put a skin on everything she said. So we get some kind of a more down-to-earth, close-to-the-nose phrase. I think up to this point I should read maybe some examples of poetry of this process, so let's see what we've got. For slogans twenty-three on. Almost any poem by W. C. Williams will do. I have a poem here by somebody I've mentioned, particularly in talking to the English teachers, a much neglected but very interesting Objectivist poet named Carl Rakosi, actually born in Hungary but grew up in America. This is not in our anthology, I don't think. For an example of "close to the nose". It's not in your anthology. "To a Collie Pup"—little dog.

Nobody had to show you
where the sun is
or that my back
could serve the same purpose
as a tree.

Why, you are hardly old enough
to know the difference
between your tail and a shadow,
yet the warm radiator
and your bowl of water
are already old friends.

The way you look up at me
with a saint in each eye
one would never suspect
that you chase birds and chickens
and steal stale bread
from the neighbor's trashcan.

Lay off, you beggar
I just fed you
and took you walking.

Go spring
into the autumn leaves.
Nuzzle and roll
as if there were nothing
in the whole wide world
but fun.

How is it that you play
with my shoelace
and understand so well
how to love me?
For this you shall have
the key to my bedroom
and the degree
of master of arts.

Well, that little bit about, “and yet the warm radiator / and your bowl of water / are already old friends” and “How is it that you play / with my shoelace” are very close to the nose. (*laugh*) Actually they’re very clear, direct, experiential. But even more close to the nose by W. C. Williams is “Smell”, which I read the other day, I think, and this is one that’s even worse by Williams, after all he was a doctor, “My god, Bill what have you done?” W. C. Williams—Bill. It’s called “Fragment”. No, it’s not in the anthology. If it is, I’d say so.

My God, Bill, what have you done?
What do you think I’ve done? I’ve
opened up the world
Where did you get them? Marvelous
beautiful!
Where does all snot come from? Under
the nose,
Yea-uh?
- the gutter, where everything comes
from, the manure heap.

So Shakespeare gives example of “no ideas but in things” also, in the song about spring and winter. Instead of saying it’s winter he says,

When icicles hang by the wall,
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,

And Tom bears logs into the hall,
And milk comes frozen home in pail,
When blood is nipp'd and ways be foul [. . .]

When all aloud the wind doth blow,
And coughing drowns the parson's sermon,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
And Marian's nose looks red and raw [. . .]

You know, it's a really famous little song by Shakespeare, in which he gives all the particular details of winter, particular the beginning—"when icicles hand by the wall". So he conjures up the whole sensation of winter by this presentation of things that give you the idea of winter. (Is) that clear?

For Pound's notion of "presentation not reference", a favorite image in Pound is disruption of the sunlight glinting of Mediterranean water. And he presented (it) as "the tin flash of sun dazzle". (*repeats*) Quick way of doing it.

Oh, the Blake, actually, I misquoted it slightly, it says, "Labour well the Minute Particulars, attend to the Little-ones. He who would do good for another must do it in Minute Particulars. General good is the plea of the scoundrel, hypocrite and flatterer, for art and science cannot exist but in minutely organized particulars."

So now we have another question: How do you choose these particulars? How do you come to select them? What's the process of selecting them? And Jack Kerouac has a really good slogan for that. He says, "Don't stop to think of the words but to see the picture better." If you're writing about your spot of time or memory or sketching an object or writing about a person, if you visualize the scene you're describing or the person you're describing or the old teacup, like a still-life, if you visualize it clearly, see the picture better, then words come of their own, because you have something to write from, because you have the picture from which you derived the words. Whereas if you're trying to just do it by abstract idea, you wind up no focus for your description. I'm talking specifically of this kind of poetry, which is based on some relation with palpable observation. There are other kinds of poetry: sound poetry, purely abstract poetry, philosophical poetry dealing with philosophical ideas, but I am now trying to present the basis of modern American poetic practice, particularly related to Beat generation, in E. Pound

and W. C. Williams and that historical continuum. So for that Kerouac's notion "Don't stop to think of the words but to see the picture better." Does that make sense? As a way of focusing or zeroing in or coordinating your effort, to be precise, with an actual visualization.

In this question of top ten spots of time, for instance, top ten epiphanies, most of these will come in a visual form, I think. They'll be pictures of moments. Pictures of specific moments in your life, in your household or on the street or different places. In this case, if you're trying to verbalize it, describe it or sketch these incidents, the Kerouac's suggestion—don't stop to think of words but to see the picture better—serves as a very practical suggestion for how to derive the information in words to put on paper. Does that make sense? Now, am I being clear here? Because I think I'm being clear, but there's language problem and there's philosophical differences and there are vast cultural gulfs, so maybe I'm talking about something that seems alien or strange or unusual. So if anybody here has any questions, it might be good to bring them up. Or a critique of this whole method.

JJ: I'm sure some people in America will have difficulties with that, particular slogan. Is that so?

AG: Oh, yeah. Almost everybody has difficulties. I have difficulties in the sense that, you know, my mind tends to add abstraction and generalization and bullshit, as I've been doing here. (*laugh*) I really should be reading you examples of American poetry instead of all this generalization. I'm trying to do both, but my own tendency is more toward abstraction and that's why I pay so much attention to the teaching that I got from W. C. Williams to clamp the mind down on objects and come back down to earth and stay close to the nose. And probably because I make that effort my poetry is understandable in almost any language, because this primarily palpable material, visual material, so that it can be translated into Chinese, Hungarian, Polish, Czechoslovakian and has an impact, because it depends mostly on the

pictorial element, some on rhythm and melody, some on word play, but mostly on the pictorial element, which is translatable from one language to another. And that's probably why I am *maybe* almost the best known poet on the planet, because I'm following this particular method of writing, which is like a universal language, because in English I'm not using a strict rhymed form but more the Whitman form, prose-like, so they can be more easily translated. I didn't intend it for this purpose, but as I've gone around the world over thirty years, I do realize the usefulness and practicality of the Whitman-Williams method of writing for communicating across languages. So Kerouac also continues, for his own details are the life of prose.

JJ: If I may, from the other side, you explained just that people with tendency to generalization they have a tendency to that... Let me ask, does this not somehow disqualify Jack Kerouac's belief in spontaneity, because when you are focusing, you actually bring in energy that somehow interferes with spontaneity, does it not?

AG: Oh, I don't think it does, no. First of all, Kerouac would type something like a 120 words per minute, he was a speed typist, an athlete. And he could describe what passed through his mind visually almost as fast as it passed through his mind. I think he had by this very training several elements. He had a good melodic sense, so actually in his poetry and mine also, a lot of the "tram track" that you run on, rhythmically and vocally, is his sense of musicality, as a base. But the direction that he's going, he has planned in advance, in the sense that he knows he's going to describe a trip on the road across America, or several trips, and he is going back and typing what he sees. Actually what he sees as he thinks about it, it's a visual thing. The notion of "first thought, best thought" means what actually rises in your mind once you get past the barrier of self-consciousness. Or what does actually rise in your mind can be transcribed as a secretary transcribes or as someone might describe quickly scenes in a movie that they are looking at.

Actually, Kerouac had the idea of writing a novel which was the movie of the mind, moving picture of the mind—the cinema of the mind. And I think you will notice, if you introspect, if you meditate, that very much of your thinking process is in pictures. William Burroughs says he thinks almost exclusively in pictures. When he was writing *Naked Lunch* in Tangier and I was staying with him, I remember he sat at the typewriter like this, hesitating a moment. And I said, “What are you thinking about, Bill?” when I was in the room and he said, “Hands pulling in nets in the dark from the ocean.” I said, “Wow, what a cosmic image!” Sounds like God, the fishermen and so on. It’s the fishermen just at dawn at the beach at Tangier pulling in their fishing nets. So when I said, “What do you think about?” he said, “Hands pulling in nets in the dark from the ocean.” So he thinks in pictures. Actually around that time I had a conversation with him how does he think. And many of us think in words and many of us think in pictures, but there’s always an admixture of pictures, I think, in our thinking. Particularly on the exercise of the top ten spots of time, epiphanies, they’re most likely to come in the form of a scene, where something happened. Right? That make sense? So that Kerouac’s suggestion, “don’t stop to think of words but to see the picture better,” well, yes, you can hesitate to look at the picture, but then you can even write faster because you’re right there. And you know what you’re writing about, ‘cause you can see it.

Now in terms of technique in poetry. I think for this next few slogans, we’re now into the texture of the text, rather than a mental process. First of all, “intense fragments of spoken idiom are best”. And I’d like to give you some examples of that, by W. C. Williams. Here’s a poem called “For Eleanor and Bill Monahan”, which is an old man congratulating some young people on getting married. And toward the end of the poem he says the Moon that was laterally the poet’s planet . . . I don’t think this is in these books. These I’m drawing from a different book. If I do drew from the anthology, I’ll mention it. In this poem, it’s a late poem by W. C. Williams, and he says the Moon, which was laterally the poet’s planet they have invaded with their Sputniks and spaceships, he says, “The fools . . .”

What
 do they think they will attain
 by their ships
 that death has not
 already given
 them? Their ships
 should be directed
 inward upon . But I
 am an old man. I
 have had enough.

The female principle of the world
 is my appeal
 in the extremity
 to with which I have come.

There's a very interesting trick here: "Their ships / should be directed / inward upon . But I / am an old man. I / have had enough." That's very amazing, he didn't finish his sentence, he interrupted it, as his mind interrupted and he said, "eh, I've had it." So he's got a little dot in the middle of the verse, and that's spoken idiom. That's exactly how someone might speak. Or in another little poem called "To Greet a Letter Carrier".

Why'n't you bring me
 a good letter? One with
 lots of money in it.
 I could make use of that.
 Atta boy! Atta boy!

To greet the mailman who brings him a letter. (*laughs, repeats the excerpt*) At Nairopa Institute we had a little nag about that because of this "Atta boy! Atta boy!"—I've never seen that in a poem before – we had a magazine we called "Atta boy! Atta boy!"—that's the boy, that's the good boy. It's the vernacular. You might say that even to a little doggie. Attaboy. Here's a bone or here's a ball, catch it. Attaboy. So that's intense fragments of spoken idiom.

Next principle would be what Gregory Corso calls "tailoring", or "cutting the poem like a pair of pants to make it fit". Or what Basil Bunting calls "condensation" or "economy of words." Basil Bunting, a very interesting English poet, friend of Ezra Pound and Williams and Yeats, talking about a cart going through a country road.

hear the horse stale,
[. . .]
harness mutter to shaft,
felloe to axle squeak,
rut thud the rim,
crushed grit.

That one single line—"rut thud the rim"—the rut on the road thudding the rim of the wheel—you have an instant impression of a kind of wooden horse cart, and an impression of the entire landscape, in a sense. A rutted road, with grit in the road, but "rut thud the rim" was a really good example, I thought, of condensation. And Pound mentions "condensare equals dichtung"—condensation equals poetry. And he got that from Basil Bunting, that phrase.

I'll get to Gregory Corso in a while, for his "tailoring". So this could all be stated as "maximum information, minimum number of syllables". (*repeats*) This works musically, because when you condense your syntax, your sound is solid. So "syntax condensed, sound is solid." And then, just as you are aware of breathing, you can also be aware of the sound of the vowels, (*speaks very distinctly*) as I am aware and pronouncing my vowels right now and also you can enunciate your consonants, as I am doing now, aware of mouthing the consonants clearly. So their part of the poetic process is awareness of your mouth—awareness of the sounds of the words and perhaps even a slight extra emphasis on your consciousness of the musicality of the vowel . . . Do you have vowels in Czech? Do you have consonants in Czech?

JJ: Yes, a few vowels and consonants. (*audience laughter*)

AG: Well, someone, I have forgotten what language, someone was telling me that my notion of American consonants was not applicable to another language, certain other language. Was that Czech? I don't know.

JJ: We have words with consonants only, yes.

AG: You know, I mean, a mixture of vowels and consonants, but my consonant—you have a vowel and a consonant together—do you have that in Czech, too? Yea. Pound suggests following the tone leading of the vowels. That is, going up and down. Pound suggests, like musicality. Because this is what spoken idiom is. In actual speech, especially, for instance, talking to babies, you get into this very high little voicing. (*speaking in high voice*) So even in poetry you can do that. “How can she live with *that*, I thought?”—I have a line in my poetry, which talks about meeting my mother in a dream with bad teeth, “How can she live with *that*, I thought?” Ta-da-ta ta-da ta da-da? It’s the way you actually speak to yourself. So if you’re conscious of the sound of the poem, that adds into your general intelligence of writing. Or reading.

Well, I think that basically covers a lot of this question of technique, location of your perception and expression of it. I think I have some more examples in this area. Well, for maximum information, minimum number of syllables—haiku. The Japanese form of haiku is useful. For “savor vowels, appreciate consonants” there’s a verse or a line in William Burroughs’ prose that Jack Kerouac pointed out to me, saying that Burroughs is a great verbal musician. And it was, from *naked lunch*, “Motel motel motel loneliness moans across the still oily tidal waters of East Texas bayou.” (*repeats*) Or from Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick*, the very last, “Now small fowls flew screaming over the yet yawning gulf; a sullen white surf beat against its steep sides; then all collapsed, and the great shroud of the sea rolled on as it rolled five thousand years ago.” Savor vowels. It’s certainly savoring vowels. Savor . . . (*End of tape. Part of the lecture missing*)

I think I had mentioned Pound’s division into sight—phanopoeia, sound—melopoeia, intellect—logopoeia. These latinate, high-class sounding phrases for picture cast on the mind’s eye, melodiousness of the language—motel motel motel, loneliness moans—logopoeia, the dance of intellect among words—put a skin on everything she said, the witty use of the language. And Louis Zukofsky, a friend of Pound, translates these three divisions, three aspects of poetry as sight, sound and intellect.

The conclusion is that emotion can endure in poetry only when it is put into an objective form or fixed in a concrete image or sound or wordplay. So I want to read two poems, which contain a great deal of emotion, but it is emotion which is expressed by “no ideas but in things,” as a conclusion to this part of the discourse. First by the wife of Charles Reznikoff, well, first by Charles Reznikoff, a poet neglected in Europe, but just beginning to be read, friend of Williams and Pound in the same group . . . from 1918.

She sat by the window opening into the airshaft,
and looked across the parapet
at the new moon.

She would have taken the hairpins out of her carefully coiled
hair,
and thrown herself on the bed in tears;
but he was coming and her mouth had to be pinned into a smile.
If he would have her, she would marry whatever he was.

Classic situation.

A knock. She lit the gas and opened her door.
Her aunt and the man—skin loose under his eyes, the face
slashed with wrinkles.
“Come in,” she said as gently as she could and smiled.

So here you have like a . . . It’s really a whole lifetime condensed into ten lines, ten verses. A whole, epiphanous situation, full of feeling. Both the grief and the understanding here are quite exquisite, I think. You follow this? Should I read it again? Was it clear? Let me read it one more time. “She sat by the window opening”—this is 1918, so it’s the slums of New York City, gas lamps—“into the airshaft”—the airshaft is like a window opening onto a small closed area between . . . the inside of the building—“and looked across the parapet at the new moon.” (*reads the rest of the poem without additional comments*) So she accepted the situation. How would you like to confront skin-loose-under-his-eyes-the-face-slashed-with-wrinkles and sleep with him and get married?

Charles Reznikoff’s wife was a very intelligent woman and wrote a little book of poems. Her name was Marie Syrkin and this is a poem by her called “Finality”, again to illustrate the notion “only emotion objectified endures.”

Death, the great kidnapper,
Snatched you suddenly
Asking no ransom.

We were at the dinner chatting,
He broke in with two gentle, black attendants
And a noisy ambulance.

When I came back before dawn,
The cups were still on the table
And I was alone.

So this is a description of the worst moment of Charles Reznikoff by his wife. It's very objective, in a sense: "We were at dinner chatting, Death"—the generalization, yes, there is generalization—"Death, the great kidnaper / Snatched you suddenly / Asking no ransom." She has that generalization, but then she focuses on details, clamps the mind down on objects:

We were at the dinner chatting,
He broke in with two gentle, black attendants
And a noisy ambulance.

When I came back before dawn,
The cups were still on the table
And I was alone.

That's a very good rendering of that sense of absence. Instead of saying, "When I came back, you were absent, you were gone forever," instead she said, "The cups were still on the table." So that gives you that sense of . . . By presenting the thing you get the sense of the impalpable emotion. (Is) that clear?

Now, last aspect . . . Well, I can go into the final thing, last aspect, or we can have some conversation and save this last part for the next . . . Or, I can try and finish this now, very briefly and then have the next class just presenting different samples of modern beat poetry. Maybe that might be interesting. But does anybody have anything they want to ask right now? I'll meditate one minute while people make up their minds whether they wanna talk or not. I'll follow my breath for exactly one minute.

(49 seconds later) Nobody has anything on their mind? Well, empty mind is considered the highest state of consciousness. (audience laughter)

Have you ever been in a situation when you were talking and you forgot what you were saying? You know, like in between sentences? Has anybody ever experienced that? That embarrassing moment when you're talking . . . According to Buddhists that's the best moment, because that way—empty mind, totally open space—you actually experience space around you, rather than just experience the chatter of your own mind. So in Buddhist practice that's considered a moment of precious opportunity, rather than an embarrassing moment.

JJ: Well, a practice.

AG: Well, yes, but . . . It ain't practical, but on the other hand useful . . . Ok, fruition, result. We've had ground, the nature of the mind; path, how to vocalize it or how to specify, how to work with it. Now, what's it all for? Why?

One thing that must be remembered: since everybody wants poetic inspiration and exaltation and all that, remember that the inspiration comes from the word "spiritus", which means breathing, which means unobstructed breathing, unobstructed breath. And it's very interesting to find many many references in the most romantic poetry, the central reference is the breath itself. At least in English. For Shelley, who's the most romantic of Romantic poets. Shelley is studied here? Is he translated? The "Ode to the West Wind" is that well translated in, is that a famous poem even in Czech, among people who read poetry? And *Adonais*, his lament for John Keats, ends:

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
That Beauty in which all things work and move,
That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
Which through the web of being blindly wove
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
The fire for which all thirst; now beams on me,
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

The breath whose might I have invoked in song
Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven,

Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
Whose sails were never to the tempest given;
The massy earth and spherèd skies are riven!
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;
Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.

Well, what's interesting is that the very last stanza of this great ode ends "The breath" that he has been invoking, the inspiration he has been invoking, is given in terms of his literal breath or the wind driving the sailboat, the "spirit's bark" is driven far from the shore. And in the end of the "Ode to the West Wind" you have the same . . . The whole poem is about breath, about the breath of the Earth, the wind itself, until finally he says, "Make me thy lyre, as the forest is." Make him, the poet, be the lyre or making sounds, as the wind makes sounds through the forest. So the ultimate image is unobstructed breath or deep breath or the breath of life. And we have the old saying, where there's life there's breath. So actually, in a sense the highest "vehicle" for poetry, I mean literally the vehicle for poetry, is breath, it comes out on the breath. You speak it. I'm breathing and talking and it comes out on the breath. And in a sense it's . . . The impalpable thoughts of the mind are joined with the physical breath of the body in speech. The world of speech integrates or synchronizes immaterial mind and material body, because the breath is an exhalation from the body—an inspiration and exhalation. And the thoughts come out on the breath. So there is the old saying, "The emperor joins heaven and Earth." Heaven the mind and Earth the body. And so there is a view of poetry as imperial proclamation, a synchronization of body and mind together, where the body and mind are working together and poetry is not merely the sensitive murmurings of disordered individuals and their neuroses, but actually proclamation from the seat of the flesh of the inspiration of the mind or the conceptions of the mind, put into physical form by breath.

And so Charles Olson speaks of the verse-line as an extension of physiology, where the verse-line is measured on the page by the breath stop. You could say that the verse-line is an extension of physiology.

Blake emphasizes this question of breath and spirit as life (*sings*):

Little Fly
Thy summer's play,
My thoughtless hand
Has brush'd away.

Am not I
A fly like thee?
Or art not thou
A man like me?

For I dance
And drink & sing;
Till some blind hand
Shall brush my wing.

If thought is life
And strength & breath;
And the want
Of thought is death;

Then am I
A happy fly,
If I live,
Or if I die.

(*claps his hands, audience laughter*) There's an anonymous interesting lyric of 1604 by Thomas Greaves that says:

What is beauty but a breath?
Fancies twin at birth & death,
The colour of a damask rose,
That fadeth when the northwind blowes:
'tis such that though all sorts do crave it,
they know not what it is to have it:
a thing that some time stoops not to a king
and yet most open to the commonst thing:
For she that is most fair,
Is open to the aire.

But I like the line, "What is beauty but a breath?" Shelley's *Breath at the end of the "Ode to the West Wind"* is:

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,

Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like wither'd leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguish'd hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawaken'd earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

So the end of this very famous poem is that Shelley wants to become the west wind. Or wants his breath to be the same as the west wind. Or his inspiration is that his breath is the west wind and, for us, anybody that reads this poem aloud becomes Shelly's breath, becomes that west wind, has that inspiration. And quite literally, if you try reading it aloud, following the punctuation marks, it's possible to get high. It's possible to have that spiritual exaltation or a body buzz, probably hyperventilation. But it is something that we might try as an exercise sometime, if they ever get the texts scattered around.

So there are various other slogans that relate to this process of inspiration and what's it all for, but the real question is, "What is all this about?" and "Why go through all this trouble?" and "Why make such a big deal out of poetry?" and "What's the aim of poetry?" or "What good can it do?"

First of all, I think it can transmit your emotion, of course. It also may give some glimpse of the vastness and emptiness of things, some glimpse of the open space that we inhabit when we forget what we're talking about. The vast space around us. As in say that poem by Marie Syrkin, "When I came home / the cups were still on the table, / and I was alone." And suddenly you have the sense of open space that . . . When someone dies, we very often get that shock of realizing we're alone in the vast, alone in the vastness. Or as Plotinus says that phrase "Alone with the Alone". Plotinus, the western philosopher? Has a chapter "Alone with the Alone". That sense of alone with the alone or alone in vastness, which is characteristic of Jack Kerouac's

novels, panoramic awareness of that kind, is also known in Buddhist terms as “shunyata”—emptiness or openness, open space. Different from the European notion of “void”. The existential notion of void was that it was a big, dark, horrifying area without any God. The American Beat and Eastern thought on that matter is that this is open, unobstructed space, where you can have unobstructed breath. There’s no lid on the Universe. It’s infinitely expandable, and the imagination is infinitely expansive. There’s no God the Father to tell you to shut up. (*chuckles*) There’s no roof on this space. There’s no limit, it’s limitless space. Which is what the shock of death is the realization of. When somebody dies, you suddenly have this sense of limitless, vast space.

So that sense of alone, which is a very valuable sense—some people don’t like it, but on the other hand, on the death bed, there we are and walking alone we are there, and even in the midst of love making we are there—is indicated by the Zen riddle, “What is the sound of one hand clapping?” or “What is the face you had before you were born?” Those are basic Zen “koans”, beginner’s riddles to open up the mind to that vast space, which is also what poetry does in Chinese and Tibetan practice. The use of poetry as to indicate that space, like, “Oh, yes, things exist, like the echo of your voice when you yell at the foot of a huge mountain.” Gives you that sense of aloneness and vastness.

It’s now 4:30 in the vast space of the universe, and so I should stop. I’ll try to conclude very briefly, ‘cause I don’t have far to go, with: What good is this loneliness and emptiness and vastness? What do we do with it? How do we behave within it? How do we articulate it in poetry and what good is it for other people beside ourselves? At the next meeting. Thank you. (*applause*)

But remember, there are three pieces of homework: the word list of unlikely combinations, the top-ten lifetime spots of time epiphanies and sequence of thought forms during four minutes of sitting here. You should actually do that on paper. We’ll figure out what to do with it later. Thank you. And I’ll be in my office, if anyone wants to talk to me, I’ll be in Professor Jařab’s office for the next hour or so. I’m hospitable and have nothing to do.

JJ: As Mr. Ginsberg says he will be in his office. Let me also tell you, if I may, that tomorrow is the first day when Allen is not going to work from “see to see”, as he has done, and beyond “seeing” all these days here. So he’s going to do a little bit of work at 11:30 meeting here, but from lunch on we would like to treat him as a sightseer of Olomouc, so those of you who are free, it would be very nice if you could show him around and accompany him. Let’s agree that people who would like to show Allen Ginsberg around Olomouc in the afternoon and for the rest of the day, meet in the circular square in front of my office at noon, high noon. All right?

AG: Anybody that’s free.

JJ: Jo. Thank you.

2. 12. 1993

AG: It's three o'clock and we might begin. Thank you for coming and being so patient and I think, as we did last time, let's begin with a few minutes of just sitting, doing nothing. Everybody has been here before and you've all heard some description of the technique of sitting? Is there anybody that was not here before? A few. Well, there's quite a few who were not here before. So I'll just describe it briefly again. Is that all right? There's no harm to repeat.

For those who have not been here before; some of the subject we dealt with was awareness practice as it relates to poetry, particularly classic Buddhist sitting practice of meditation, as it relates to increasing awareness of the process of mind and as that relates to being conscious of your own perceptions and applying that to poetry. So what we might do, if there's room to move in so people coming in later will have a place to sit without disturbing others. If there's any room . . . I guess not, not much. We might put those clothes there or here and leave a free seat. So if that somebody . . . Put the clothes there and leave a free seat. Right. And maybe move over both. If you both move over there'll be six seats for others. And you may want to leave the seat for other people coming in. So, the relation between poetics and meditation was the subtle subject and for those who weren't here, which is about twenty people, so I should go over it again. There's a seat over there. I'll go over the instructions for sitting practice of meditation one more time, last time.

So sitting forward on the chair if you can, hands on the knees, restful mind, mudra hand gesture, spine straight, belly relaxed so that you can breathe easily. Whereas here you'd be harder to breathe. Sitting forward on the chair to the extent that you can. Eyes open, gaze resting toward the horizon or on the middle distance or at a 45 degree angle, if the light is too bright down. Mouth closed, paying attention to the outbreath, from the nostrils to where the breath dissolves. Nose in line with belly button, ears in line with shoulder blades. Back not too tight, not too loose. Eyes open, however, and focus of attention or focal point of attention is the breath

leaving the nostril and dissolving in space in front of your face. For those of you who smoke it might be familiar, it goes about like that. So it's paying attention to your breath or being mindful of your breath or flowing out with your breath or becoming one with your breath and letting go of your attention when the breath . . . Sitting forward on your chair, forward on your chair, forward on your chair, forward. That's right, forward means forward. Hands on knees or on thighs, spine straight, paying attention to the breath leaving the nostril. Then the question arises: What happens when you forget your breath and you begin daydreaming, thinking, planning, subconscious gossip, remembering . . . So the traditional instructions are to take a friendly attitude toward your thoughts, acknowledge them, notice them and then on the next outbreath bring your attention back to the breath leaving your nostril and dissolving in front of you. There's seats up here in front and at the back, also, if you'd like to come in. So why don't we sit for a few minutes. If you have trouble remembering your breath, you can count your breaths from one to ten, like: One . . . Two . . . And if you forget at three or four or five, you can go back to one. If you need a focal point to remember your breathing. The point of this is just to increase awareness of what's already happening, not control the breath – long breath or short breath is equally ok, just any breath will do. Just to be mindful what's already happening, while it's happening.

So I'll be quiet now for four minutes or so. So when you find yourself daydreaming or thinking, just bring your attention, take a friendly attitude toward your thoughts and bring your attention back to your outbreath. On the in-breath you don't have to do anything, maybe just check your posture that you're sitting up straight, in a position of being awake. And it's ten after now.

(4 minutes 2 seconds later) That's about four minutes. I'd like to read a poem which is a by-product of that kind of sitting practice. A poem of my own from 1973. I went to a seminary, where many people sat together eight hours a day, not four minutes, but an hour of sitting and then some tea and another two hours sitting then lunch another couple of hours sitting and

then tea and then a break and then another hour of sitting and then supper . . . So eight to ten hours a day. And we got quite familiar with our own minds that way. And it was in the mountains, like the Tatras, called the Tetons, at a ski village. And so for the summer months we had taken over the cafeteria, a room as big as this, with sitting pillows on the floor, Zen style, and the teacher had a throne or chair, silver microphone to lecture in the evening. I was in the front row and it was a cafeteria, so there was a plate glass window overlooking the snowy side of the mountain, the Teton mountains in Wyoming, and there were trees and birds outside and snow and on the other side of the mountain was the state of Idaho, in the West of the United States. And so in between one breath and another I had the following thought. This is called "Mind Breaths" and it was a title of a book, but the title poem.

Thus crosslegged on round pillow sat on the floor in space in Tenton
Village—
I breathed upon the aluminum microphone-stand a body's length away
I breathed upon the teacher's chair, the wooden chair with yellow
pillow
I breathed further, past the sake liqueur cup emptied by the breathing
guru
Breathed upon the green sprigged thick-leaved plant in a flowerpot
Breathed upon the vast plateglass shining back th' assembled sitting
company in the meditation cafeteria
my breath thru nostril floated out to the moth of evening beating into
window'd illumination
breathed outward over aspen twigs trembling September's top yellow
leaves twilit at mountain foot
breathed over the mountain, over snowpowdered crags ringed under
slow-breathed cloud-mass white spumes
windy across Tetons mountains into Idaho, gray mountain ranges under
blue space swept
with delicate snow flurries, breathes Westward
mountain grass trembling in tiny winds toward the town of Wasatch
Breezes south late autumn in Salt Lake's wooden temple streets,
white dust lifted swirling by the thick leaden lake, dust carried up over
Kennecott's copper pit onto the massive Unit Rig machine that carries
earth,
out towards Reno's neon, dollar bills skittering downstreet along the
curb,
up into the Sierras mountains of California oak leaves blown down by
fall cold chills
over peaktops snowy gales beginning,

a breath of prayer down on Kitkitdizze's horngreen leaves close to
 ground,
 over Gary Snyder's tile roof, over his zen meditation temple pillars,
 tents and manzanita bush arbores in Sierra mountains pine foothills—
 a breath falls over Sacramento Valley, roar of wind down the sixlane
 freeway across the Bay Bridge into San Francisco
 uproar of papers floating over Montgomery Street, pigeons flutter down
 before sunset from Washington Park's white churchsteeple—
 Golden Gate bridge waters whitecapped scudding out to Pacific spreads
 over Hawaii a balmy wind thru Hotel palmtrees, a moist warmth swept
 over the airbase, a dank breeze in Guam's rotten Customs shed,
 clear winds breath on Fiji's palm & coral shores, by wooden hotels in
 Suva town flags flutter, taxis whoosh by Friday night's black
 promenaders under the rock & roll discotheque window upstairs
 beating with English neon—
 on a breeze into Sydney, and across hillside grass where mushrooms lie
 low on Cow-Flops in Queensland, down Adelaide's alleys a flutter of
 music from my friend Brian Moore's Dobro carried in the wind—
 up thru Darwin Land, out Grove Peninsula green ocean breeze, clack of
 Yerkalla village song sticks by the trembling wave
 Yea and a wind over mercurial waters of Japan North East, a hollow
 wooden gong echoes in Koyto's temple hall below the graveyard's wavy
 grass
 A foghorn blowing thru the China Sea, torrential rains over Saigon,
 bombers float over Cambodia, visioned tiny from stone Avelokitesvera's
 many-faced towers at Angkor Wat in windy night,
 a puff of opium out of a mouth yellowed in Bangkok, a puff of
 hashishflowing thick out of a bearded holy man's nostrils & eyes in
 Nimtallah Burning Ghat in Kolkata,
 wood smoke flowing in wind across the Hooghly Bridge over the
 Ganges, incense wafted under the Bo Tree in Bodh Gaya, in Benares
 woodpiles burn at Manikarnika returning incensed souls to Shiva,
 wind dallies in the amorous leaves of Brindaban, still air on the vast
 mosque floor above Old Delhi's alleyways,
 wind blowing over Kausani town's stone wall, Himalayan peaktops
 ranged hundreds of miles along snowy horizon, prayer flags flutter over
 Almora's wood brown housetops,
 trade winds carry dhows thru Indian Ocean to Mombasa or down to
 Dar 'Salaam's riverside sail port, palms sway & sailors wrapped in
 cotton sleep on log decks—
 Soft breezes up thru Red Sea to Eliat's dry hotels, paper leaflets scatter
 by the Wailing Wall, drifting into the Sepulchre
 Mediterranean zephyrs leaving Tel Aviv, over Crete, Lassithi Plains'
 windmills still turn the centuries near Zeus' birth cave
 Piraeus wave-lashed, Venice lagoon's waters blow up over the floor of
 San Marco, Piazza flooded and mud on the marble porch, gondolas
 bobbing up & down choppy waters at the Zattere,
 chill September fluttering thru Milan's Arcade, cold bones & overcoats
 flapping in St. Peter's Square,
 down Appian Way silence by gravesites, stelae stolid on a lonely grass

path, the breath of an old man laboring up the road—
 Across the Tatras, a snowy dust's falling in a September breath, in Stary
 Mesto hundreds of children sing songs thru their noses,
 Across Scylla & Charybdis, Sicilian tobacco smoke wafted across the
 boat deck,
 into Marseilles coalstacks back fumes float into clouds, steamer's white
 drifspume down wind in the ocean all the way to Tangier,
 a breath of red-tinged Autumn in Provence, boats slow on the Seine, the
 lady wraps her cloak tight round her bodice on toppa Eiffel Tower's iron
 head—
 across the Channel rough black-green waves, in London's Piccadilly
 beercans roll on concrete underneath Eros' silver breast, the Sunday
 Times lifts and settles on wet fountain steps—
 over Iona Isle blue day and balmy Inner Hebrides breeze, fog drifts
 across Atlantic,
 Labrador white frozen blowing cold, down New York's canyons manila
 paper bags scurry toward Wall from Lower East side—
 a breath over my father's head in his apartment on Park Avenue
 Peterson,
 a cold September breeze down from East Hill, Cherry Valley farm's
 maples tremble red,
 out thru Chicago Windy City the vast breath of Consciousness dissolves,
 smokestacks and autos drift expensive fumes ribboned across railroad
 tracks,
 Westward, a single breath blows across the plains, Nebraska's fields
 harvested & stubble bending delicate in every airs
 up the Rocky Mountains, from Denver's Cherry Creekbed another
 zephyr risen,
 across Pike's Peak an icy blast at sunset, Wind River mountain peaktops
 flowing toward the Teton mountains,
 a breath returns vast gliding grass flats cow-dotted into Jackson Hole,
 into a corner of the plains,
 up the asphalt road and muddy parking lot, a breeze of restless
 September, up wood stairways in the wind
 into the cafeteria at Teton Village under the red tram lift
 a calm breath, a silent breath, a slow breath breaths outward from the
 nostrils.

Were you able to follow that a bit? It begins sitting, and my thoughts went all
 around the world and came back. So it could be said in between one breath
 and another or between five breaths. It's a trick poem.

Now, what I would like to do in this particular session, or the last
 session, is get to something that I didn't. Most of what I've been saying has
 been theory—I've "no ideas but in things," "first thought, best thought,"
 "mind is discontinuous," so forth. "Don't stop to think of words but to see the

picture better. . . .” Now, what I'd like to do is read from texts from some of the American Beat-Generation poets. I'll get to Kerouac in a while. The next oldest is Philip Whalen, who, with Gary Snyder, studied at Reed College in the North-West in Portland, Oregon and met W. C. Williams in 1952 and also adapted, as I did in 1950, to Williams's focus, clamping the mind down on objects. “Further Notice”. This is a poem from 1956, “Further Notice.”

I can't live in this world
And I refuse to kill myself
Or let you kill me

The dill plant lives, the airplane
My alarm clock, this ink
I won't go away

I shall be myself—
Free, a genius, an embarrassment
Like the Indian, the buffalo

Like Yellowstone National Park.

He wrote a lot of very short poems, I made an excerpt from them. Little bit like haikus, just fast, photographic flashes. “Dewey Swanson”.

ran lunatic in the midst of our
canoeing trip had to tie him
up & sit on him in the bottom
of the canoe in the daytime, tie
him to a tree at night and he kept
talking and laughing and cussing
the whole time we put a gag on him
one night so we could get some rest
from his noise but pretty soon he had
eaten and swallowed it all some way
or other we were afraid to try that
again because he might get all fouled
up with that cloth inside of him then
he had to get loose a couple times and
we nearly lost him completely hunting
for him through the brush and timber
we never would have found him except
for his talking and we never did catch
him asleep from the time he first
started acting funny

(*laughs*) It's just a little description of somebody going nuts in the woods. He spent many years in Japan and is now a Zen master, teaches meditation, a Rōshi, as it is said, so he's our first Beatnik or Beat Generation Zen master. And he spent a long time in Japan, so this is a poem of his from 1967 called "A Couple Blocks South of the Heian Shrine", a very famous old shrine. This is on page 61, for those of you who have these anthologies, in the second column.

She builds a fire of small clean square sticks
balanced on top of a small white clay *hibachi*
which stands on a sewing-machine set between her
house wall and the street where my taxi honks past

So he just seen that out of the corner of his eyes. Very vivid little picture, this very vivid little incident of a woman in an alley, making a living with her sewing machine, building a fire, very neatly, on the sewing machine in the alleyway. So it's just a glimpse and he remembered it, so it was vivid enough. The next is a kind of stream of consciousness poem with a giddy title, called "Allegorical Painting: Capitalistic Society Destroyed by the Contradictions within Itself. (Second Five-Year Plan.)".

feeble claw blanket grab disappear foot hog
crackling Oklahoma dustbowl (Virgil Thomson)
whisker tickles shoulder. eye sinus bulge
with ½ & ½ cock numb and warm, all body skin slack
and thrown into soft folds except stony heels
death's crumby elbow no breath asthma drag all
joints arthritic ankylose threat night sound
terror as of ages 1 through now I cannot accept
the ending of a day no more light I cannot wait
for night when bed fucking blowing jacking-off is
possible at last naked safe and pleasure

This is the stream of consciousness ending up with a sort of sexual orgasm at the end. "The Madness of Saul".

Everybody takes me too seriously.
Nobody believes anything I say.

(*audience laughter*) "For Kai Snyder." There's a little poem for the son of Gary Snyder.

7:V:60 (an interesting *lapsus calami*)
A few minutes ago I tried a somersault; couldn't do it
I was afraid and I couldn't remember how.
I fell over on one shoulder,
Rolled about and nearly went over backwards
And finally hurt my chest.
What kind of psychomotor *malebolge* had I got into . . .
"This is old age, &c. "

After thinking it all over
Imagining how it might be done
I performed three forward somersaults, 7:V:70
Age 46 years 6 month 37 days.

"Alleyway." Next poem is a . . . I don't know where, maybe Japan.
"Alleyway"—It's a little bit like the glimpse of the lady with the sewing
machine and the hibachi, cooking her lunch.

That darling baby!
All wrapped up asleep
In his fuzzy blue bunting
An extra blanket carefully pinned
Around him asleep on the ground
Between two boxes of rubbish
Beside the overflowing garbage cans
All alone. Thrown away.

(*laughter*) That's the whole poem, something he saw. "Epigram, upon
Himself"

People can forgive all my faults;
They despise me for being fat.

He is fat, he's terribly fat. And about that—being fat, "Old Age Echoes".

Lately I've seen myself
As fat naked waddling baby
All alone in the yard
Bright flowers
Silver lawnmower blades
Big dog approaching (friendly?)
Berries
What are fears or dangers?

Then a thing called "The Turn", a little poem:

Walking along Elm Road
Handful of nasturtiums, butter, some kind of bread
75¢ the loaf no advertising included

Bread and air and a price tag wrapped in plastic
The dogs came out as usual to roar at me
I find myself screeching wildly in reply
Fed up with suppressing my rage and fear
I bellow and roar
The dogs are scared and their people scandalized
“What are you trying to do? HAY! What are you trying to do?”
I had nothing to tell them; I was talking to their dogs.

“Powell and Market Street, San Francisco”, another very brief, almost photographic poem.

Fat man waves tiny Bible
Shouting threats about Jesus.
Nearby, a younger, thinner man (high on something else?)
Starts undressing.

The madness of San Francisco. “The Laundry Area”.

Each time I hang up a washboard
The slenderest thread of cold water
Runs down my wrist and into my armpit
Without wetting my clothes.

It is a very precise thing that he is describing. Well, ok, so that's a little taste of Philip Whalen. There's one that I think I read here already, “Cynical Song”.

You do what you do
Fucky-ducky
You do it anyhow
People don't like it
Fucky-ducky
People like it
Fucky-ducky
You do what you do
Fucky-ducky

So next . . . It was a very interesting poet that visited here, Olomouc, with me, three years ago. Nanao Sakaki, who was a friend of mine, Philip Whalen and Gary Snyder. A Japanese, named Nanao, who taught here. His poetry is both English and Japanese, but has a Japanese basis. So I thought maybe read one of his poems. “Future Knows”.

Thus I heard
(Buddhist sutras begin “Thus I have heard”)
Oakland California –
To teacher's question an eleven-year-old girl answered, “The ocean is

A huge swimming-pool with cement walls."
On a starry summer night
At a camping ground in Japan
a nine-year-old boy from Tokyo complained
"Ugly, too many stars!"
At a department store in Kyoto
One of my friends bought a beetle
For his son, seven-years-old. A few hours later
The boy brought his dead bug
To a hardware store, asking "Change battery, please?"

(*audience laughter*) This is his commentary on how removed from nature modern Japanese consciousness is in the urban cities. But rather than making a big philosophical discourse, he clamped his mind down on objects, followed the notion of "no ideas but in things" and told a little story, which gives you the same conclusion, but you see it in action, as a process, rather than as a generalization. So in this sense concreteness gives you more information than the generalization might.

Next I'd like to pick up on little poems by Robert Creeley. Creeley was born in 1926—it's page 68—and was, with C. Olson, a person in touch with E. Pound and W. C. Williams. He had a correspondence with Pound because he was editing a little magazine called *Black Mountain Review*, in the late forties and he wanted advice from the older generation, how to edit a really interesting literary magazine and Pound sent him some very good advice, which was: "Every issue should contain works of some person of genius, from issue to issue continuing their work in progress." In Pound's case it was James Joyce, T. S. Elliot, himself, Gertrude Stein, Hemingway. Then, in the rest of the magazine can be put whatever comes in, interesting poems, minor poems. But every issue of your magazine should have continuity of what is Joyce doing this year, this month, what is Pound doing, what is Elliot doing, what is Marianne Moore doing. Robert Creeley took that advice, so he featured the work of himself, Charles Olson and later myself and Kerouac, as a continuity. So when he was young he wrote some . . . He drank a lot and had kind of a nasty, ironic temperament. He mellowed when he got older. So I'll read some poems from when he was young and when he got older. "The Dishonest Mailmen".

They're taking all my letters, and they
put them in the fire.

I see the flames, etc.
But do not care, etc.

The poem supreme, addressed to
emptiness – this is the courage

necessary. This is something
quite different.

It was like a little declaration of independence of mind in those 1940s. Then there's a funny little poem where he imitates himself in a car, drunk, talking to his friend, "I Know a Man".

As I sd to my
friend, because I am
always talking, - John, I

sd, which was not his
name, the darkness sur-
rounds us, what

can we do against
it, or else, shall we &
why not, buy a goddamn big car,

drive, he sd, for
christ's sake, look
out where yr going.

(laughter) I'll do that again. You know, he's raving drunkenly to his friend, driving the car, and suddenly his friend gets scared and thinks he's gonna crash the car and says, "drive, he said, / for christ's sake, look / out where you're going." *(reads the poem again)* It was just the sudden interruption of the raving and the panicked reply from the friend. "The End."

When I know what people think of me
I am plunged into my loneliness. The grey

hat bought earlier sickens.
I have no purpose no longer distinguishable.

A feeling like being choked
enters my throat.

Now, here he's in a moment of depression, but he gives you some instances or concrete examples of how the depression affects him. "The grey / hat bought earlier sickens. / A feeling like being choked / enters my throat." So it's not just I am depressed, the world is terrible, everything is dark bla bla bla. There's some personal direct information. There was an odd little one called "Like They Say".

Underneath the tree on some
soft grass I sat, I

watched two happy
woodpeckers be dis-

turbed by my presence. And
why not, I thought to

myself, why
not.

Instead of being guilty about disturbing the woodpeckers and entering into nature underneath some soft grass, he realizes he's a part of nature and that his sitting down is just as natural as two woodpeckers. (*reads the poem again*)

Later from 1982, these poems were from 1948. Later he has a poem that I read, I think, earlier on the first lecture, "Memory, 1930" of his father dying when he was three or four years old and the little flash of detail, of the memory of the incident, that moment. His father was a doctor. "Memory, 1930", so he would have been four years old.

There are continuities in memory, but
useless, dissimilar. My sister's

recollection of what happened won't
serve me. I sit, intent, fat,

the youngest of the suddenly
disjunct family, whose father is

being driven in an ambulance
across the lawn, in the snow, to die.

It's a very odd moment, very odd recollection. At four years old to remember your father having a sudden heart attack, being taken out of the house in the snow. The ambulance came up to the house in the snow. And that's what he remembered from the age of four. This is called "Fort Collins Remembered". Apparently, in Colorado he was driving his car and it broke down and he had to pay for it. This is how he notated the whole incident: "To be backed / down the road / by long view . . ." Longview is a town there. It's also a very flat plain with the mountains in the background so there is a long view, as well as the town called Longview.

To be backed
down the road
by long view

of life's imponderable
echo of time spent
car's blown motor

town on edge of
wherever fifty
bucks you're lucky.

If it only cost you fifty bucks... And you'd have to fill this out grammatically... I remember being backed down, being towed backward down the road by a town called Longview and the planes where you can see very far, thinking of the accidents of life, the imponderability, remembering the time spent there, hours lost with the motor of the car blown out at the edge of town and having to call and get a mechanic to come. And it cost me fifty bucks. If that's all that costs, you're lucky. But it's done in shorthand, almost like the flashes, fragmentary flashes, as if almost thinking: to be backed down the road by Longview, of life's imponderable, echo of time spend, car's blown motor, town on edge of wherever, fifty bucks you're lucky. It's almost like the shorthand of his mind recollection.

One of the things that Creeley does, he writes in very short lines so that each verse as it appears alters the meaning of the verses that went before by adding on a new meaning because he doesn't revise at all, he writes in short lines on a typewriter, like William Carlos Williams, and as a new thought

arises, he fills in and rearranges the thoughts that he's already set down. And example of that is a poem called "Still Too Young". To me it's a really interesting example of spontaneous thinking inch by inch, incrementally or putting down as thoughts rise in the mind. You can see the mind operating, like in the W. C. Williams's poem "Good Night", when he comes downstairs. Slightly subtler, different version of the same—watching the mind's operation. It's done in short verses, couplets, two lines at the time. And I'll sort of pause at the end of each line and then stop at the end of each couplet before going on.

I was talking to older
man on the phone

Who's saying something
and something are five

when I think it's four,
and all I'd hoped for

is going up in abstract smoke,
and this call is from California

and selling a house,
in fact, two houses,

is losing me money more
than I can afford to,

and I thought I was winning
but I'm losing again

but I'm too old to do it again
and still too young to die.

I'll read that again so you get all the permutations of the thought. Am I making sense when I say that each line seems to modify and add on and retroactively reflect on the phrases before, till it completes the whole thought, so you see his mind moving? (*reads the poem again*) I guess the trick . . . What I like is, "I was talking to older / man on the phone / who's saying something". So it sounds like Creeley is just saying, "this guy is just saying something", but then he continues saying "something and something

are five.” So the grammatical trick is funny, he makes a little grammatical trick. I don’t know if it’s possible to... if it’s too delicate, subtle, Americanese way of talking for the curiosity of the phrasing to be charming to your ears used to Czech. Is this making any sense? Do you see how quirky or goofy this is as a thinking process? I don’t know. “Memories”

Hello, duck,
in yellow

cloth stuffed from
inside out,

little
pillow.

It’s on page 71. That’s all there is. It’s a little fragment from childhood. (*reads the poem again*) He, like Škvorecký and others, he’s always going around the world to poetry conferences. And so this is called “Hotel”.

It isn’t in the world of
fragile relationships

or memories, nothing
you could have brought with you.

It’s snowing in Toronto.
It’s four-thirty, a winter evening,

and the tv looks like a faded
hailstorm. The people

you know are down the hall,
maybe, but you’re tired,

you’re alone, and that’s happy.
Give up and lie down.

He’s sang go out and get drunk with everybody like he used to do when he was a younger kid. (*reads the poem again*) So this one last, very very little poem, “Echo”.

Back in time
for supper
when the lights

Back in time when he was a child, coming home for supper with the family. He got back in time to eat supper but also way back in time. "Back in time / for supper / when the lights." The lights were at the kitchen window and supper was ready when he got home from playing. But this little fragment of his mind "Back in time / for supper / when the lights," was the notation here.

Gregory Corso I'd like to bring up now. Born in 1930 was one of the basic poets of what was called the Beat Generation. He spent many years as a child in jail, I think between the age of fourteen and fifteen and nineteen, was an orphan more or less. Came from a family that neglected him and sent him off to live with other families in the East Coast of America, ran away, got taken back, ran away again when he was fifteen, was in a little gang of juvenile delinquent criminals, was arrested and sent to jail. "Italian Extravaganza". I think some of these may be translated by Jan Zábbrana in his anthology of American poetry. "Italian Extravaganza".

Mrs. Lombardi's month-old son is dead.
I saw it in Rizzo's funeral parlor,
A small purplish wrinkled head.

They've just finished having high mass for it;
They're coming out now
. . . wow, such a small coffin!
And ten black cadillacs to haul it in.

It's a very brief picture. Gregory is Italian and this is a description of an Italian funeral which he calls "extravaganza," because there's only one little tiny "small purplish wrinkled head." It's a very interesting description of a baby corpse.

"The Last Gangster". It's a sort of parody or takeoff, a surrealist takeoff on the movie themes on the gangsters and the mafia. "The Last Gangster".

Waiting by the window
my feet enwrapped with the dead bootleggers of Chicago
I am the last gangster, safe, at last
waiting by a bullet-proof window.

I look down the street and know
The two torpedoes from St. Louis.
I've watched them grow old
. . . guns rustling in their arthritic hands.

“Torpedoes” means assassins. People hired torpedoes, lesser gangster was hired to do assassination. Hired to kill people. So it’s a little imagination of an Italian mafia gangster safe at last, really safe. The “godfather” who’s grown so old he’s watched the killers come to get him, he’s “watched them grow old” with “guns rustling in their arthritic hands.” It’s like a speed up movie so to speak.

And there’s a very similar poem like that, “Birthplace Revisited”, which is a very accurate description of a Greenwich Village tenement, an apartment house in Greenwich Village, using again some of the language of gangsters. The word “gat” is a gun, “Dirty Ears” is . . . Maybe you might call a gangster Dirty Ears, or maybe a childhood friend, “Dirty Ears”, like “Big Nose” or . . . “Birthplace Revisited”—so he’s going back to visit where he was born in Greenwich Village.

I stand in the dark light in the dark street
and look up at my window, I was born there.
The lights are on; other people are moving about.
I am with raincoat; cigarette in mouth,
hat over eye, hand on gat.

Like the old movie star Humphrey Bogart or Frank Sinatra in a gangster movie.

I cross the street and enter the building.
The garbage cans haven't stopped smelling.
I walk up the first flight; Dirty Ears
aims a knife at me . . .
I pump him full of lost watches.

Pump him full of bullets, I shoot him full of bullets, but instead of bullets he says “lost watches”, which is a surrealist phrase in a way. It’s like as he was a kid he probably had watches which he lost, because he was stealing watches and losing them, but also I pump him full of time, time that is past. Dirty Ears being some childhood rival who bothered him or beat him up or annoyed him or was a friend that fought with him. So he pumps him not with bullets but with lost watches. In a way the poet is the gangster of time that kills people with his insight. (*chuckle*) When I was young I always thought that

line—"I pump him full of lost watches"—was really a moment of genius, to get that.

Last night I drove a car
not knowing how to drive
not owning a car
I drove and knocked down
people I loved
. . . went 120 through one town.

I stopped at Hedgeville
and slept in the back seat
. . . excited about my new life.

This is a dream obviously, not knowing how to drive, not owning a car, he had this fantasy of driving a car, killing people, but really empowered having this vehicle, and stopped at Hedgeville, a little town, stopped at Olomouc and slept in the back seat, "excited about my new life."

There are longer poems. The "BOMB" is a very interesting poem written in a shape of a bomb. There is a late poem I'd like to read by Corso, from 1980. Those were early poems from 1950. I was talking about "no ideas but in things" and avoidance of abstraction, but here is a poem that is all abstraction, in which he's handling generalized ideas. But he handles it in a way that's really interesting because he does it in vernacular, idiomatic, down-to-the-ground, street language. Little bit mixture of hip language, little bit mixture of gangster language, little bit mixture of bohemian language. So the way it's handled is a kind of concreteness in the language rather than in the idea, though there's a certain experience in the ideas that shows through. It's called "The Whole Mess . . . Almost". Meaning the whole mess of life, what's the answer to it all.

I ran up six flights of stairs
to my small furnished room
opened the window
and began throwing out
those things most important in life

That's a great opening for a poem, (*chuckle*) 'cause that means why would he wanna throw out everything important and also what does he think that's important that he's gonna throw out. So now you have a catalogue of

everything he thinks is important, all the major topics. Actually the major topics of all poetry—Truth, God, Love, Faith, Hope, Charity, Beauty, Money, Death, Humor. These are the topics he’s going to deal with now.

I ran up six flights of stairs
to my small furnished room
opened the window
and began throwing out
those things most important in life

First to go, Truth, squealing like a fink:

Fink in English is like an informer. What’s the Czech word for an informer?
(*End of tape.*)

AG: You’re not speaking loud enough!

S: Práskač.

AG: That’s someone who betrays you to the police, right? When you’re betrayed it’s called “squealing” in English. You know you tell the police, you’re squealing to the police, squealing like a fink. So already he’s using idiomatic street language—“squealing like a fink”—about the high, elegant subject of truth.

First to go, Truth, squealing like a fink:
“Don’t! I’ll tell awful things about you!”
“Oh yeah? Well, I’ve nothing to hide ... OUT!”
Then went God, glowering & whimpering in amazement:
“It’s not my fault! I’m not the cause of it all!” “OUT!”
Then Love, cooing bribes: “You’ll never know impotency!
All the girls on *Vogue* covers, all yours!”
I pushed her fat ass out and screamed:
“You always end up a bummer!”

“Bummer” means a depressing incident, trouble. So what he’s doing is he’s taking these abstractions, but handling them with vernacular idiomatic language, also with a certain amount of concreteness like a fat ass, (*laughter*) impotency, the girls on *Vogue* covers, a fink, squealing. He’s using a *concrete*

language and situations to deal with very high, generalized abstractions. And that's one of his great powers as a poet.

I picked up Faith Hope Charity
all three clinging together:
"Without us you'll surely die!"
"With you I'm going nuts! Goodbye!"

Then Beauty . . . ah, Beauty –
As I led her to the window
I told her: "You I loved best in life
. . . but you're a killer; Beauty kills!"
Not really meaning to drop her
I immediately ran downstairs
getting there just in time to catch her

It's almost like a Buster Keaton or Charlie Chaplin or Woody Woodpecker or Mickey Mouse trick. He throws her out of the window, then runs all the way downstairs and catches her.

"You saved me!" she cried
I put her down and told her: "Move on."

Went back up those six flights
went to the money
there was no money to throw out.

Typical for a poet. (*audience laughter*)

The only thing left in the room was Death
hiding beneath the kitchen sink:
"I'm not real!" It cried
"I'm just a rumor spread by life . . ."
Laughing I threw it out, kitchen sink and all
and suddenly realized Humor
was all that was left –
All I could do with Humor was to say:
"Out the window with the window!"

That's a pretty interesting trick, series of mental tricks. Very good. He's the best poet, I think. In America he's the supreme poet and he's the one poet I learnt from, partly because of his condensation, his agility with thoughts and abstract lines, his great learning in classical Greek and Latin imagery and mythology and names. He lived in Europe many years so he has a good continental education. And he had a bit part in *Godfather III*. Did that ever

play here, *Godfather*? Well, whenever it comes out, you'll see him. He plays for one minute in that picture. His role is that of the "Unruly Stockholder". His hair is not combed, he has a little white beard, he drinks too much. And there's a stockholders meeting in the movie, the mafia, organized crime, is taking over the Vatican Bank. And everybody is going along with it. The Catholic Church bank is being bought by the organized crime from Sicily. So he gets up and breaks the silence in the meeting and says: "How can we sit here and let that guy to take over the Vatican Bank. Look at him, he's got the map of Sicily on his face. He looks like mafia or catholic or both." And he made that up himself. It's like a little poem. Would you like to get one little more poem in the same vein? It's called "I Gave Away".

I gave away the sky.
along with all the stars planets moons
and as well the clouds and winds of weather
the formations of planes, the migration of birds . . .
"No way!" screamed the trees,
"Birds are ours when not in transit; you can't give it!"
So I gave away the trees
and the ground they inhabit
and all such things as grow & crawl upon it
"Hold on there!" tided the seas,
"Shores are ours, trees for ships for ship yards,
ours! you can't give it!"
So I gave away the seas
and all things that swim them sail them . . .
"No way!" thundered the gods,
"All you gave is ours! We made it all, even the likes of you!"
And so I gave the gods away.

He's pretty sharp, pretty smart.

Well, I'll move on to Gary Snyder, born in 1930, also. Gary Snyder is very much involved with ecological understanding and he lives in the woods in a house he built himself that has no electric wires from the outside. He gets some electricity from sunlight chargers and he pumps the water from a well by hand. So there's a certain kind of practical matter there. He studied Zen Buddhism and lived in Japan for ten years and became quite adept at meditation. Probably if he wished, he too could have been a Zen master, but he wanted to be poet, be free to be poet, rather than tied down to teaching

students. So this is a poem called "Soy Sauce". Does everybody know what soy sauce is? I don't know, in America it's much more common in Japanese and Chinese restaurants. Soya sauce. It's a salty sauce you put on.

Standing on a stepladder
up under hot ceiling
tacking on wire net for plaster,
a day's work helping Bruce and Holly on their house,
I catch a sour salt smell and come back
down the ladder.

"Deer lick it nights" she says,
and shows me the frame of the window she's planing,
clear redwood, but dark, with a smell.

"Scored a broken-up, two-thousand-gallon redwood
soy sauce tank from a company went out of business
down near San Jose."

. . . she explains. You follow that? She got second hand lumber yard and she found this big, two thousand gallon redwood tank. She was using that as lumber. A redwood soy sauce tank.

Out in the yard the staves are stacked:
I lean over, sniff them, ah! it's like Shinshu miso,
the darker saltier miso paste of the Nagano
uplands, central main island, Japan –
it's like Shinshu pickles!

He's been there and he's able to locate what that smell is like.

I see in mind my friend Shimizu Yasushi and me,
one October years ago, trudging through days of snow
crossing the Japan Alps and descending
the last night, to a farmhouse,
taking a late hot bath in the dark--and eating
a bowl of chill miso radish pickles,
nothing ever so good!

Back here, hot summer sunshine dusty yard,
hammer in hand.

But I know how it tastes
to lick those window frames
in the dark,
the deer.

So it's a little bit like W. C. Williams's poem "Good Night", coming down and seeing the crisped green parsley. Here he's up on the stepladder, fixing his ceiling, taking out wire net from plaster, smells something, has a conversation, his mind wanders back to Japan, familiar with that soy sauce smell and soy miso smell, fermented soy paste, than comes back here, hot summer sunshine, dusty yard, hammer in hand. And here's something called "Fishing Catching Nothing off the Breakwater near the Airport, Naha Harbor, Okinawa".

Self-defense-force jets in pairs
scream out over the bay
lay a track of smoke and whine
on the Kumé islands

Clouds sailing right on the sea
clouds and waters
prairie of wavelets

Jet plane outriders – scouts –
Displaying with Soviet pilots
who's weak? who's strong?

Burning millions of gallons of kerosene

Screaming along.

There's a little photographic picture of himself at ease and then the waste of all the kerosene and the macho display of might, as to who is weaker and who is stronger.

At one point he served as chair of the California Arts Council. He had no phone in his house and it was twelve miles from the payphone next to a noodle and bait shop next to his house called Toki's SnackBar. So this is "Under the Sign of Toki's".

Is this Palo Alto?
"No, Wisconsin."
so gentle – distant older woman's voice –
faint accent – Swede?
"Where are you?" "This is Wisconsin."
Area code was wrong.
what stream sipped from
together in another life, to touch base
ten seconds here in this?

Toki's
snack bar
juice bar
ice
worms

And the operators
Keep asking me what do I want?
Sacramento, San Diego, Indiana, Ohio
as I stand here with lists and letters,
outside, cold feet in the slush,
at the pay phone
(this is my office)

phone truck comes and takes coins while we talk
about art in LA
under the ice sign
next to the high way
talking, ice worms

And snow
falls of the limbs
down my notebook
down into my neck
drip drip
red brick iron doors stone walls
old town run down
at Toki's
ice
worms

So it's the contrast between himself as a sort of government bureaucrat trying to live in the countryside without electricity and also trying to do business in a little country store in the snow and slush. Just a little notation of an actual situation. "Dillingham, Alaska, The Willow Tree Bar." I think they were building the Alaska pipeline that he was noting.

Drills chatter full of mud and compressed air
all across the globe,
low-ceilinged bars, we hear the same new songs

All the new songs.
In the working bars of the world.
After you done drive Cat. After the truck
went home.
Caribou slip,
front legs folded first

under the warm oil pipeline
set four feet off the ground –

The pipeline is hot and melts the snow and ice and caribou, the natural animals, slip on it when they're walking under their line.

On the wood floor, glass in hand,
laugh and cuss with
somebody else's wife
Texans, Hawaiians, Eskimos,
Filipinos, Workers, always
on the edge of a brawl –
In the bars of the world.
Hearing those same new songs
in Abadan,
Naples, Galveston, Darwin, Fairbanks,
White or brown,
Drinking it down,

the pain
of the work
of wrecking the world.

It's an interesting vision there, "the pain / of the work / of wrecking the world" with hi-tech.

So next is Michael McClure, 1932. Right now he has been touring with a musician Ray Manzarek, who was the pianist for The Doors. What's the name of the singer for The Doors? Jim Morrison. So he was a friend of Jim Morrison and McClure was Jim Morrison's poetry guru. I remember going to Los Angeles back in the late sixties and McClure brought me over to hear Morrison rehearsing with his band. By then Jim Morrison had changed. He was a beautiful young guy with an androgynous face in his early photographs, but by then he looked middle aged, he'd been drinking a lot, his body was very heavy, he needed a shave and his face was sort of jowly and grey. I was really shocked. So anyway, McClure is an interesting poet interested in biology and ecology. He's now talking here . . . called "American Air". So it's a description of a meal he had on an airplane crossing a country. "American Air".

WHY NOT
study the food
as we eat it?

AN INTELLECTIVE
EXPERIENCE.

Scrimshaw of cow
tastes
etched on block of filet.
Black pop-eyes
of shrimp
gone away.
Only the pink body
remains,
made of sunlight
and plankton.
Served with scent of ozone

at 30,000 feet
Loony tunes dancing overhead.

So it's a description of the experience in the plane cabin when you have the music coming from the loudspeaker, kind of chilled, plastic food. "Scrimshaw," I believe, is when you take a whale or elephant tusk or a walrus tusk and you make drawings on it, scratch drawings in it. So when you have certain kinds of meat that are served in airplanes, it's like synthetic meat that's been ground and packaged and put together by glue and then fried and served. So "Scrimshaw of cow / tastes / etched on block of filet." "Beyond Thought"

THE GOPHER SNAKE IN THE CREVICE
IS A GOD

He raises his head and peers.
He is hungry and mindless.
He is not afraid
only cautious. His muzzle
is smooth and rounded.
The spots and gleams hide him
in darkness where light
breaks against rocks.
There is no reason why a god
must be intelligent.
A god, or a spirit, is free
of proportion—
forgetful and experimental,
does not remember
that I am here,
and slithers to move
into the bright desert sun
by the lakeside, in search of

the mouse
(spirit-god)
who dreams in a burrow, cuddled.
arms drawn tight to his side,
whiskers sleek against his cheeks
waiting for moonlight,
sleep-listening, occasionally trembling.

It's a really interesting description of a field mouse "who dreams in a burrow, cuddled./ arms drawn tight to his side,/whiskers sleek against his cheeks/ waiting for moonlight,/ sleep-listening, occasionally trembling." Now he could have said the mouse is an interesting, sentient creature that has a consciousness, but instead he picked out all these tiny details of what the mouse looks like and it gives you the impression of the consciousness and animate being of the mouse.

"Mouthless as a mayfly . . ." It's called "A Thought at Point Reyes". Point Reyes is a little promontory in the Pacific Ocean near San Francisco with a lot of varieties of butterflies, birds and fish.

MOUTHLESS AS A MAYFLY
with moons on my wings
of red, brown, yellow,
gold,
I
play
for a day
and then fly away
like raspberries in December.

The ephemera of a mayfly. He's very good at observing little natural incidents like that. What else . . . Well, I guess you got some idea of . . . He's very much influenced by . . . Well, here's an interesting thing about yuppies. "Nineteen Seventy-two" this is called.

SO, AT LAST YOUR PERSONALITY
HAS BECOME A COPROLITE!
(Fossilized shit!)

HOW
painful it was
to grow up in the fifties!

WE LEARNED:
materialism,
macho-competition,
greed.

This is a good poem for Czechoslovakia now.

BUT STILLI CAN HARDLY BELIEVE
that you sit there telling me:
about the girls you fuck,
how much money you make,
and of your fame.
As if
the last twenty years
never happened.
You
seem pathetically
foolish.
But there is viciousness
in
our generation.
YOU
ARE
REALLY
SET
(like a robot)
ON OVERKILL.

And you believe
in social appearances.

You want to be like
The Big Boys.
Whoever *they* are!

That clear? That need to be done again? There's a very interesting, last poem.

LET ME BE ELASTIC, OPEN ALWAYS
to new change,
a flange,
that turns either way
upon
a shaft of light
of clearest meat
and purest poetry.
Let me be oxen sleeping in the snow,
or a giraffe held at bay
by wombats
on an ice-cream island,
or a soft gray
pussy willow
scented with the morning
dripping rain,
or a panda

pondering on the thoughts
of newts adrift
in copulation
floating past rusty cans
in sunny streams.

The visual element, like a little movie. It's like a little interesting surrealist movie. So that's him.

Peter Orlovsky. I'm afraid we're running out of time and I don't know what to say here, but Peter Orlovsky is a really interesting poet. So I'll read one poem of his, "Snail Poem". Orlovsky is like Douanier (Henri) Rousseau, the painter. Like a primitive, doesn't spell right either, his syntax is funny, but his pictures are always clear. "A Dream of St Francis". It's more like the painting by Rousseau. You know Rousseau, the painter?

St Francias came to me alive last night & told me
some strange things - he said everybody is green & trees
are blue & hills are wheelbarrows turned inside out - that
a tree is a cane & the eyes grow old because of tears spilt
because of the Tokay Sun - & that life is much more
than a charming bracelet - he said life is more like a
Chinese tea pot - a big one for lots of mouths - then
he came closer to me & almost through his eyes into mine
& he said All the Saints of old were all right but they were
not good enough because they didnt feel enough faith & love
in man to carry out his own individual life -

St. Francias is at different times all over my body -
some times - like above me he is in my mind & heart -
other times he is in my stocking & I walk on him &
how it hurts us both - other times he is in my left pocket
& I take him out to show to little children
who laugh when I talk or look or make faces - one time
he was under my arm, & I scratched him away - he
got in my hair too & my finger nails are all broken
because he cralled in there - & when I was sleeping last night
he ran all over my hand with his chizel & hammer,
carving lines -

That's almost like a child-like poem about a dream of St Francis. This is a little poem, "Snail Poem".

Make my grave shape of heart so like a flower be free aired
& handsome felt.
Grave root pillow, tung up from grave & wigle at
blown up clowd.

Ear turnes close to underlayer of green felt moss & sound
 of rain dribble thru this layer
 down to the roots that will tickle my ear.
 Hay grave, my toes need cutting so file away
 in sound curve or
 Garbage grave, way above my head, blood will soon
 trickle in my ear -
 no choise but the grave, so cat & sheep are daisey
 turned.
 Train will tug my grave, my breath hueing gentil vapor
 between weel & track.
 So kitten string & ball, jumpe over this mound so
 gently & cutely
 So my toe can curl & become a snail & go curiously
 on its way.

I'm reading these fast. I don't have really time to explain, but it's obviously
 the end. "So my toe can curl & become a snail & go curiously / on its way."
 That is clear, isn't it? Well I'm afraid we're out of time. To continue . . .
 Should we quit now or do you wanna continue a little bit? Does anybody got
 time or do you have things you gotta do? Do people have to go? Anybody got
 any dates? I have just a few more poems I'd like to read. Yeah, so I'll
 continue. There's a poem by Orlovsky called "Someone Liked Me When I Was
 Twelve". If you have to go, just get up, it's alright, and I'll continue with a few
 more poems and quit very soon. This is called "Someone Liked Me When I
 Was Twelve".

When I was a kid in summer camp,
 around 13teen & one night I lay asleep
 in bungalow bed with 13teen other boys,
 when in comes one of the camp councilors
 who is nice fellow that likes ya, comeing to
 my bed, sits down & and starts to say: now you
 will be leaving soon back to Flushing & I may never see you
 again — but if theres ever aneything I

can do to help ya let me know, my father is
 a lawyer & I live at such & such a place
 & this is my adress — I like you very much—
 & if yr ever alone in the world come to me.
 So I looked at him getting sad & touched &
 then years latter like now, 28, laying on
 bed, my hunney-due mellon Allen sleeping next to me
 — I realize he was quear & wanted my
 flesh meat & my sweetness of that age —

that we just might of given each other.

Very sweet little poem. Next . . . Diane di Prima is interesting. I'll read a poem about her grandfather, who was an anarchist, an Italian immigrant to America. So this is "April Fool Birthday Poem for Grandpa". Diane di Prima was born in 1934 and was like an early hippie beatnik chick. So it's for her grandfather from Italy.

Today is your
birthday and I have tried
writing these things before,
but now
in the gathering madness, I want to
thank you
for telling me what to expect
for pulling
no punches, back there in that scrubbed Bronx parlor
thank you
for honestly weeping in time to
innumerable heartbreaking
italian operas for
pulling my hair when I
pulled the leaves off the trees so I'd
know how it feels, we are
involved in it now, revolution, up to our
knees and the tide is rising, I embrace
strangers on the street, filled with their love and
mine, the love you told us had to come or we
die, told them all in that Bronx park, me listening in
spring Bronx dusk, breathing stars, so glorious
to me your white hair, your height your fierce
blue eyes, rare among italians, I stood
a ways off looking up at you, my grandpa
people listened to, I stand
a ways off listening as I pour out soup
young men with light in their faces
at my table, talking love, talking revolution
which is love, spelled backwards, how
you would love us all, would thunder your anarchist wisdom
at us, would thunder Dante and Giordano Bruno, orderly men
bent to your ends, well I want you to know
we do it for you, and your ilk, for Carlo Tresca,
for Sacco and Vanzetti, without knowing
it, or thinking about it, as we do it for Aubrey Beardsley
Oscar Wilde (all street lights
shall be purple), do it
for Trotsky and Shelley and big/dumb

Kropotkin
Eisenstein's Strike people, Jean Cocteau's ennui, we do it for
the stars over the Bronx
that they may look on earth
and not be ashamed.

For those of you who have this little anthology they're pretty good selection of her. She's one of the better, one of the interesting women poets, among the beat poets.

So I'll go on to . . . Well, John Wieners is a pretty interesting tragic poet, half mad half the time, in and out of mental hospitals and he was born in 1934. And this is a poem he wrote in a mental hospital called "Children of the Working Class". Some problem with this poem is that he was a little crazy; that is a very great poem coming from a mental hospital, from a crazy house. On the other hand, some of the syntax is broken. It's understandable if you consider it a long time, but I don't have time to explain it, but I think it's strong enough that you get to the main images and the main tragedy of the poem.

to Somes

from incarceration, Taunton State Hospital, 1972

gaunt, ugly deformed

broken from the womb, and horribly shriven
at the labor of their forefathers, if you check back

scout around grey before actual time
their sordid brains don't work right,
pinched men emaciated, piling up railroad ties and highway
ditches
blanched women, swollen and crudely numb
ered before the dark of dawn

scuttling by candlelight, one not to touch, that is, a signal panic
thick peasants after *the* attitude

at that time of their century, bleak and centrifugal
they carry about them, tough disciplines of copper Indianheads.

there are worse, whom you may never see, non-crucial around
the
spoke, these you do, seldom

locked in Taunton State Hospital and other peon work farms
drudge from morning until night, abandoned within destitute
crevices odd clothes
intent on performing some particular task long has been far
removed
there is no hope, they locked-in key's; housed of course

and there fed, poorly
off sooted, plastic dishes, soiled grimy silver knives and forks,
stamped Department of Mental Health spoons
but the unshrinkable duties of any society
produces its ill-kempt, ignorant and sore idiosyncrasies.

There has never been a man yet, whom no matter how wise
can explain how a god, so beautiful he can create
the graces of formal gardens, the exquisite twilight sunsets
in splendor of elegant toolsmiths, still can yield the horror of

dwarfs, who cannot stand up straight with crushed skulls,
diseases on their legs and feet unshaven faces of men and women,
worn humped backs, deformed necks, hare lips, obese arms
distended rumps, there is not a flame shoots out could ex-
tinguish the torch of any liberty's state infection.

1907, My Mother was born, I am witness t-
o the exasperation of gallant human beings at g-
od, priestly fathers and Her Highness, Holy Mother the Church
persons who felt they were never given a chance, had n-
o luck and were flayed at suffering.

They produced children with phobias, manias and depression,
they cared little for their own metier, and kept watch upon
others, some chance to get ahead

Yes life was hard for them, much more hard than for any blo
ated millionaire, who still lives on
their hard-earned monies. I feel I shall
have to be punished for writing this,
that the omniscient god is the rich one,
cared little for looks, less for Art,
still kept weekly films close for the
free dishes and scandal hot. Some how
though got cheated in health and upon
hearth. I am one of them. I am witness
not to Whitman's vision, but instead the
poorhouses, the mad city asylums and re-
lief worklines. Yes, I am witness not to
God's goodness, but his better or less scorn.

The First of May, The Commonwealth of State of Massachusetts,
1972

So that's some very interesting poem, it's like a little howl, like my poem "Howl", but twenty years later.

Well I think we've gone on and on. I recommend you looking at Anne Waldman, 'cause she's one of the most interesting . . . Actually I'd like to read one poem of hers. It's about menstruation. It's the only great poem about menstruation that I know of. Most people are afraid of touching the subject of sexuality directly, much less homosexuality, but this is called "Crack in the World". It's a poem from Oratory and it's a heroic poem appreciating menstruation rather than being ashamed of it. So it's like a great feminist poem, I think.

I see the crack in the world
My body thinks it, sees the gaping crack in the world
My body does it for me to see
Blood flowing through the body crack
Body, send your rivers to the moon
Body twists me to the source of the moon
It turns me under a wave
It sets up the structure to make a baby, then tears
it down again
Architecture of womb-body haunting me
Someone is always watching the ancient flow
It doubles up my mind
Ovum not fertilized
I see the crack in the world
Thoughts intersect in the body
He must not keep me down
Let me go my way alone tonight
No man to touch me
A slash in me, I see the slash in the world tonight
It keeps me whole, but divides me now
Out on land, to bleed
Out on street, to bleed
In the snow, blood
This is a South American song
Scent of oleander
Or this is a cactus song
Sing of a blood flower a rose in the crotch
O collapsible legs!
My body enchanted me to this
My body demented to this
It is endometrium shedding

I am compressed in the pressure of my heart
It is life pursuing the crack in the world
Between worlds
Between thoughts
A vacant breath
Words won't do it
Ovum not fertilized
The man hasn't done it
I cover every contingency
the catty one
or puritan walking in a fecund world
Words sing to me of endometrium collapse
Words go down to my belly
Back swelling, to put my body next to the earth
This is periodic
It comes at the full moon
Let me go howling in the night
No man to touch me
Don't fathom my heart tonight, man
No one wants to be around this factory,
this beautiful machine
but I shun your company anyway
My flexible body imagines the crack
Body with winds
See the crack in the universe
The curse, glorious curse is upon me
Don't come to my house
Don't expect me at your door
I'm in my celibacy rags
My anthropocentric heart says there's
a crack in the world tonight
It's a long woman's body
It's a break in the cycle of birth & death
It's the rapid proliferation of cells
building up to die
I make up the world & kill it again & again
I offer my entrails to the moon
Ovum not fertilized
Architecture haunting me
Collapsing legs you must carry the world
You get away from me
You keep your distance
I will overpower you with my scent
of life & death
You who came through the crack in my world
You men who came out of me, back off
Words come out of the belly
Groaning as the world is pulled apart
Body enchanted to this
Body elaborated on this

Body took the measure of the woman
to explain the fierceness of this time
walking on the periphery of the world.

Pretty interesting poem. Good spirit. Really good spirit, not ashamed at all!
Power! Women power. So ok. I think that finishes it.

I didn't get to conclude the third part but to bring it to a conclusion in one or two sentences: The purpose of poetry and of any human action might be seen to be to relieve the mass of suffering of existence on Earth. Anything you can do to diminish the weight of sufferings that we experience living in bodies which die, which are caught in the crack of the world. Anything we can do to diminish the mass of sufferings is obviously a good thing to do. Poetry can do that by making people more aware of themselves and of their condition. Medicine can do that, sociology can do that, biology can do it, technology can do it if you got that compass point. So what I said in my elegy on Kerouac is:

Well, while I'm here I'll
do the work –
and what's the Work?
To ease the pain of living.
Everything else, drunken
dumbshow.

Thank you. (*applause*) I'll be hanging around my office for the next hour or hour and a half if anybody wants to talk about anything.

Anotace

Název práce:	Allen Ginsberg v Olomouci (Komentovaná přednáška Allena Ginsberga o spontánním psaní)
Autor práce	Jiří Zochr
Vedoucí práce	prof. PhDr. Josef Jařab, CSc.
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Charakteristika	Cílem práce je nashromáždit a zpracovat materiály spojené s přednáškami Allen Ginsberga o spontánním psaní uskutečněnými v Olomouci v roce 1993. Přepisy a audio nahrávky těchto přednášek tvoří přílohu práce. Text práce zahrnuje komentář k těmto přednáškám.
Klíčová slova	Allen Ginsberg, spontánní psaní, poezie
Title	Allen Ginsberg in Olomouc (Allen Ginsberg's Lecture on Spontaneous Writing with Commentary)
Author	Jiří Zochr
Supervisor	prof. PhDr. Josef Jařab, CSc.
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Characteristics	The aim of this thesis is to collect and process materials related to Allen Ginsberg's lectures on spontaneous writing, which took place in Olomouc in 1993. The transcripts of and audio recordings from these lectures are attached. The body of the thesis contains a commentary on these lectures.
Key words	Allen Ginsberg, spontaneous writing, poetry