



Beatdom #15: the WAR issue

David S Wills

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They call the Beat Generation “post-war” and apolitical but is that really true? William S. Burroughs lived through both World Wars, and was conscripted during the second. Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Herbert Huncke, Carl Solomon, Gary Snyder, and Bob Kaufman all served in the Merchant Marine, while Peter Orlovsky served in the Korean War. Ginsberg is credited with inventing the phrase “flower power,” and Kerouac is often viewed as an advocate of America’s invasion of Vietnam. War was a part of their lives and a part of their art, yet it is seldom given consideration.

In the WAR issue of Beatdom, we aim to rectify that oversight. We have an essay by David S. Wills exploring Kerouac, Burroughs, and Ginsberg’s experiences with war during their lifetimes, and their literary responses. Katie Stewart tackles the influence of war through postmemory, and its influence upon second generation Beats. Philip Willey looks at how countercultures evolved in the UK given the devastation visited upon the country during WWII. Pat Thomas explores the Black Power movement and the 1968 Chicago Democratic Convention.

We also have poetry, fiction, and memoirs from the likes of Marc Olmsted, A.D. Hitchen, and G.K. Stritch.

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