

# Glyphs by Edward Sanders

## **Olson & Kerouac**

**In late October '68 there was a surprise visit  
from Jack Kerouac  
who showed up  
at 28 Fort Square in Gloucester  
in a black limousine from Lowell  
driven by his brothers-in-law**

**Tom Clark describes it concisely:**

**“The erstwhile King of the Beats hailed Olson  
with diplomatic camaraderie, but passed out drunk  
before the poet could even crank up a decent  
monologue— the encroachment of cold weather  
and early darkness narrowed life at the Fort  
down to an anchoritic condition  
of solitude all too familiar to Olson  
from the past few winters.”**

**It was a Sunday evening.**

**Then a year later almost exactly, October 21, 1969  
Jack was watching the “Gallopig Gourmet”  
TV show in the morning, making notes in a pad**

**& eating some tuna from a can  
when the blood from a burst  
vein bubbled from his throat  
& he passed from earth**

**It was the second anniversary of the  
Exorcism of the Pentagon.**

**That same day in October of '69  
Allen Ginsberg was just about to leave for a  
poetry tour beginning with Yale  
& then a teach-in about Vietnam  
at Columbia U**

**He was at his farm in Cherry Valley—  
Gregory Corso  
had come for a visit**

**That evening the phone rang  
Gregory answered,  
it was the writer Al Aronowitz**

**He turned to Ginsberg—**

**& eating some tuna from a can  
when the blood from a burst  
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it was the writer Al Aronowitz**

**He turned to Ginsberg—**

**“Al! Jack died.”**

**Early the next morning  
Ginsberg and Corso  
walked through the early snow  
to the woods up the hill  
& carved Jack’s name  
in a tree**

**in his book “Charles Olson in Connecticut”  
Charles Boer writes about the time  
that Olson learned of the passing of Jack:**

**Boer notes that Olson  
was “startled that he had died so young.”**

**Olson thought about going to the funeral  
but couldn’t determine whether he’d be buried  
in Massachusetts or Florida**

**He told Boer about Kerouac’s  
showing up at 28 Fort Square in Gloucester  
on a Sunday, it was either Oct 20 or 27, in 1968**

Jack had come to the back steps of 28  
shouting up to the second floor apt,  
"Olson, the red carpet please!  
Get out the red carpet!"

Not having any carpet, Olson  
placed pages of the Sunday paper  
on each step leading down the stairs

Boer commented that "Kerouac was pleased at the  
gesture, especially when he found, going up the  
stairs, that one of the pages he was walking on  
contained an article on him, with his picture."

—Edward Sanders  
June 21, 2019 first day of summer





Door + Porch  
of the bard  
1957-1969