



## Ecstasy of the Beats: On the Road to Understanding

*David Creighton*

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Who were the beats? Not the sandle-clad "beatniks" of popular lore but dedicated writers, experimenters, skit improvisers, theorizers, hedonists, close friends, bisexual free lovers, shapers of the future. The beats hung out at Columbia university and cheap Times Square cafeterias, devouring ideas. David Creighton shows how the world has taken up their message. In *Ecstasy of the Beats* he gives a fresh portrait of Carolyn Cassady, "Queen of the Beats," and of the four major Beat writers.

Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* gave a pattern of adventure to restless youth, Allen Ginsberg donned a prophet's robe by writing *Howl*, William Burroughs warned against control mechanisms in *Naked Lunch*, and Neal Cassady's high-energy life made him an icon of freedom. Travelling widely to see where they lived, Creighton enriches the meaning of *On the Road* and other Beat classics. He invites the reader on the Beats' journey toward ever-deeper levels of understanding and provides interesting insight into Kerouac's French-Canadian roots.



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