

CALL FOR ENTRIES: POETRY AND SHORT FICTION THE SPIRIT OF THE FEMALE BEATS



Pictured: Denise Levertov, Diane DiPrima, Jane Bowles, Anne Waldman.

Jack Kerouac defined the original “beat generation” in 1957 as “a generation of furtives...a weariness of all the forms, all the conventions of the world.” Allen Ginsberg’s poem “Howl” ignited a controversy over freedom of speech and expression; the publisher was arrested but in 1957 the courts ruled the poem was not obscene.

Ginsberg and Kerouac, along with Charles Olson, William Burroughs and others are the usual Beat-writing mentionables; but what of the women of the group? The writings of Denise Levertov, Hettie Jones, Joyce Johnson, Anne Waldman, Joan Vollmer, Diane DiPrima, Jane Bowles and others during that time exhibit enlightening spirit and inventiveness in a way only the female spirit could.

“It’s true that the Beat movement was libratory—but not really for women. As one of the many young women who had fled to Greenwich Village in 1953 at the age of twenty seeking adventure, significance, and escape from a set of materialistic, conformist values, I knew first-hand that the popular view was mistaken. In fact, however stimulating and exciting it was to be in the midst of the new jazz, art, and poetry, it was every bit as oppressive to women and as dominated by the feminine mystique and outright misogyny as square culture—and in some ways worse, since you weren’t allowed to complain. “ – “Women Writers in the Beat Generation” (KIAMANA, Alix Kates Shulman, 1993)

Lit Undressed invites you to submit your poetry, short-short fiction or essays (up to 200 words) inspired by the spirit of the women of the Beat movement. Selected works will be read during the next Lit Undressed performance at RNG Gallery in March (a portion of the proceeds going to VIDA: Women in the Literary Arts) live by nude figure models, by authors, or with excerpts painted by an artist on models’ bodies. Authors info will be listed on event program.

Submit works to LitUndressed@yahoo.com by January 15. See www.facebook.com/LitUndressed for more information.

The first Lit Undressed event was held in September in conjunction with (downtown) omaha lit fest to a sold-out crowd. See omahalitfest.com.

"I know that I shall be the sea

And the mother

And never me.

Wait

I am here

Under the sea

Recognize me"

~Sally Stern, Wait I've Been This Way Before, from *The Beat Scene*, 1960