

The Gospel of Jack Kerouac

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The howling hounds of
death are barely a breath upon
my back.

Lead these feet over
rain-slick streets and
uproot each fresh step
before stillness becomes me.

These un-trenched soles, wholly
unwary,
carry me through these bastions and
gunnels
and barroom jungles that are sticky
with topcoats of sweat
and spilled drinks drying slowly
beneath the soles of my boots.

Lead me through to the
prophets of pride
and their unmarried brides:
the motherless mystics
with wild, dizzy eyes.
Let our ears ride
conversations like radio dials
on seas of white noise,
heaving endlessly as,
restless, we pray these
intrepid feet stray
from the patchwork of
blackened gum and half-lit
cinder sticks still smoldering
in the oxygen.

Lead these gravel-callused feet
beyond the comfort of known streets,

beyond the graves marking the
birthplace
of each person bold or
boring enough to believe that the three
most
powerful words are: "I am staying."

Tonight I am Jack Kerouac.
Moaning for man,
bones groaning as unknown roads
unroll before me like

canvassed spider-web spools of
teletype paper.
It's safer to stay in place than
try and trace the cut-and-paste
cadence of those deacons of doom,
those Beatniks of the Boom,
too soon.

Lead us to angel-headed
hipsters with tar-stained lips,
junkies strung out on culture
and pubic beards with
measured grins,
and as the lowest of our
limbs begin to sink into
these streets,
let our bodies be uprooted.
Let our shadows be relieved,
lead our hungry eyes to find
their feast—
let our beatnik hearts stay restless,
and let the faintest scent of sweat
be the only clue that death is left with.