

CATCH THE WIND

In a beatnik graveyard Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti and Kerouac
stand among the teenage tombstones,
Volkswagon buses rot on dying hobby farms,
Discarded record albums collect dust in broken-down chicken
coops: Neal Young, Bob Dylan, The Greatful Dead;
An elderly female hippie howls from a drug psychosis thinking
that she sees Jesus peeping through her grubby window;
This is the road that the "flower children" travelled with
their raunchy bare feet, their indiscriminate sexuality
and their lice-infested long hair;
Further down this decaying road tens of thousands of Cambodians
lie massacred in open fields;
In Saigon the boys smoked reefer the size of cigars,
Helicopter pilots high on hashish hunted for soldiers running
in terror from the Viet Cong, while the ubiquitous radio
blared The Rolling Stones.

Like fools the Beats tried to copy black hipsters,
They snorted deadly horse behind modern jazz bandstands—
little white brothers lacking big white brothers—
"Awm hip", they said, struggling to narrow their complex
white brains down to funky three-chord blues,
"Awm hip", they declared trying to write poetry like impromptu
jazz,
They seemed unaware that Northern European folk fiddlers, and
Beethoven of course, could have improvised Charlie Parker
right out of the room.

Wearing Jack London's hat and carrying Thomas Wolfe's bottle
only lonesome Kerouac could have been a good writer,
But the fags hung around the boys' locker room looking for the
French-Canadian football player who could write like Proust;
Liberal professors who threw the ball like girls controlled
the fine arts,

(cont.)