



# Alexia Koudigkeli

American Poetry through a Painter's Eye

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ΑΛΕΞΙΑ ΚΟΥΔΙΓΚΕΛΗ

## American Poetry through a Painter's Eye

As Leonardo da Vinci has said, “painting is poetry that is seen rather than felt, and poetry is painting that is felt rather than seen.”

They say you should read a poem three times in order to fully understand it. Based on this notion, I have chosen twelve of my favourite poems and have visualised the essence of each, the way I experienced it the three times I read them. Focusing on the mood of the poem and the feeling it provokes, I have created a series of visuals for the poems. Some paintings are more literal and some others more abstract. Either way, they are representative of the poem and the message I feel is trying to communicate. My work is about exploring ideas and expressing emotions. Provoking and stimulating an emotional reaction from the audience is my ultimate goal, as I welcome them into my own version of reality.

An artist

BY ALEXIA KOUDIGKELI

How heavy the burden of having a status as such  
An artist blessed with your talent to youthfully touch  
To allow sentiments to hurt you with hugs  
Tormented with sorrows but you turn them to Art

The depths of your loneliness are making you wonder  
Whether you are missing a part  
Whether anyone else could possibly conquer  
All the shields and defences you have

You wonder if ever  
You'll become something that's whole  
But, darling, I promise  
Never were you being un-whole

The Lord has made you as such  
In the image and likeness of Him  
Your being is adequate  
To create whole worlds vivid or dim  
Doubt is your enemy  
Lucifer's friend  
Your flaws make you perfect  
And Art makes him upset

Trust no one but you  
Your gut tells you what's good  
It knows rather how far better it gets  
Taste evolves quicker than skills and I know that it hurts  
Don't feel attacked  
Your gut only knows what you got  
So wait until you become  
The artist your gut knows that you are

Don't be afraid to declare what you fear  
To lose yourself and then reappear  
To understand that the world owes you nothing at all  
One day you'll be glad you are not young anymore

So if you still wonder  
Whether you are truly an artist or not  
I kindly ask you to ponder  
Do you need to dive in your heart just to get ready to start?  
Do you need to cry it out loud all the troubling you are on about?  
Do you need to be seeing every small and sacred piece of your being?  
All scattered pieces need to gather to one  
So if you need to be an artist - only then you are one



I was born in 1996 in Athens. Having graduated from Athens College in 2014 and the University of the Arts London (UAL) in 2018, in recent years I have been active as a visual artist in Athens. My work has been exhibited in group exhibitions and projects around Europe and the USA. My main inspiration comes from literature and poetry.

Alexia Koudigkeli



**Dream Dust**  
BY LANGSTON HUGHES

Gather out of star-dust  
Earth-dust,  
Cloud-dust,  
And splinters of hail,  
One handful of dream-dust  
Not for sale.

*Dream Dust*  
Acrylic on canvas, 100x70 cm, unframed



*Dreamer*  
Paper collage, 20x30 cm, framed



*Splinters of Hail*  
Paper collage, 20x30 cm, framed

## **The Road Not Taken**

BY ROBERT FROST

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.



*Traveller*

Paper collage, 20x30 cm, framed



***In a Yellow Wood***  
Acrylic on canvas  
100x70 cm  
unframed



***Decisions***  
Acrylic on canvas  
100x70 cm  
unframed



***Heartbroken Man***

Mixed media on canvas, 80x60 cm,  
unframed



***Heartbroken Woman***

Mixed media on canvas, 70x50 cm,  
unframed

**If I can stop one heart from breaking**

BY EMILY DICKINSON

If I can stop one heart from breaking,  
I shall not live in vain;  
If I can ease one life the aching,  
Or cool one pain,  
Or help one fainting robin  
Unto his nest again,  
I shall not live in vain.



***To Release***

Acrylic on canvas, 150x100 cm, unframed

## The Raven

BY EDGAR ALLAN POE

(abstract)

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,  
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore—  
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,  
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.  
"Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door—  
Only this and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December;  
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.  
Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to borrow  
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore—  
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—  
Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain  
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;  
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating  
"Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door—  
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door;—  
This it is and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,  
"Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;  
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,  
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,  
That I scarce was sure I heard you"—here I opened wide the door;—  
Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,  
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;  
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,  
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore?"  
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, "Lenore!"—  
Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,  
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.  
"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window lattice;  
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore—  
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore;—  
'Tis the wind and nothing more!"

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,  
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore;  
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;  
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door—  
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door—  
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,  
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,  
"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven,  
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore—  
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!"  
Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."



*Mourning*

Acrylic on canvas, 70x50 cm, unframed



*The Raven*

Acrylic on canvas, 70x50 cm, unframed



*Her*

Acrylic on canvas, 70x50 cm, unframed

## **The Mountain**

BY ELIZABETH BISHOP

At evening, something behind me.  
I start for a second, I blench,  
or staggeringly halt and burn.  
I do not know my age.

In the morning it is different.  
An open book confronts me,  
too close to read in comfort.  
Tell me how old I am.

And then the valleys stuff  
impenetrable mists  
like cotton in my ears  
I do not know my age.

I do not mean to complain.  
They say it is my fault.  
Nobody tells me anything.  
Tell me how old I am.

The deepest demarcation  
can slowly spread and sink  
like any blurred tattoo.  
I do not know my age.

Shadows fall down; lights climb.  
Clambering lights, oh children!  
you never stay long enough.  
Tell me how old I am.

Stone wings have sifted here  
with feathers hardening feathers.  
The claws are lost somewhere.  
I do not know my age.

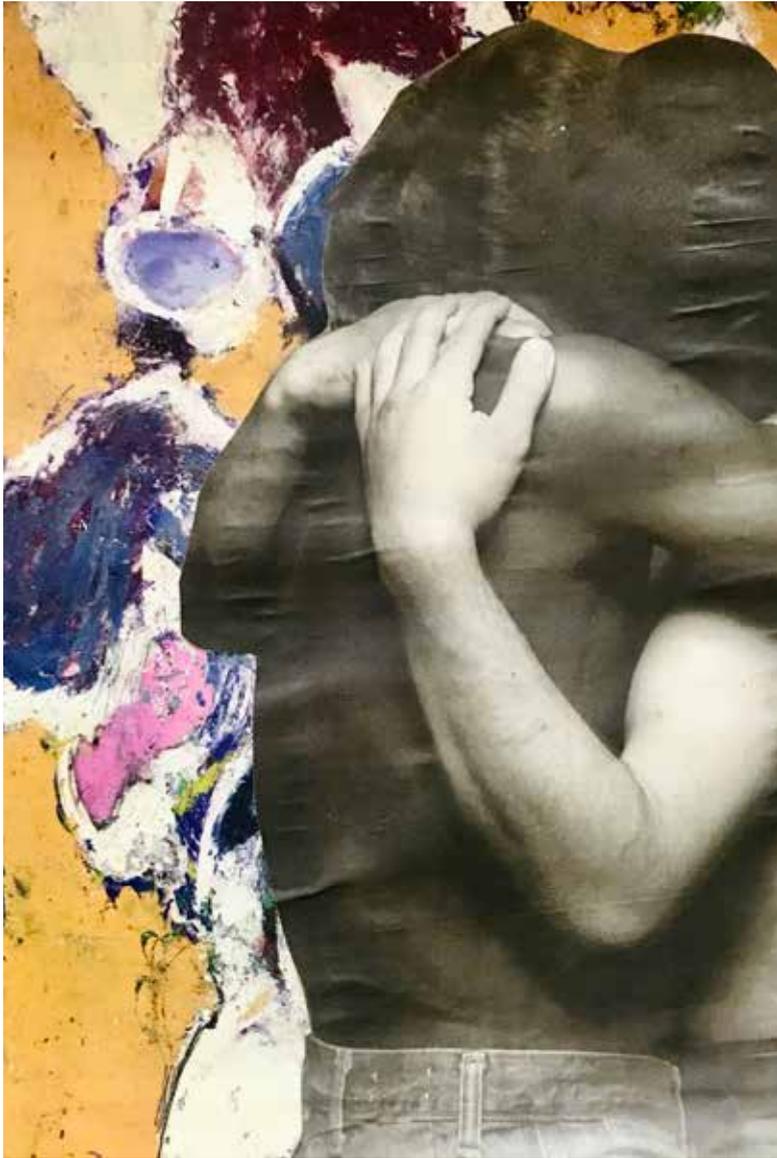
I am growing deaf. Bird-calls  
dribble and the waterfalls  
go unwired. What is my age?  
Tell me how old I am.

Let the moon go hang,  
the stars go fly their kites.  
I want to know my age.  
Tell me how old I am.

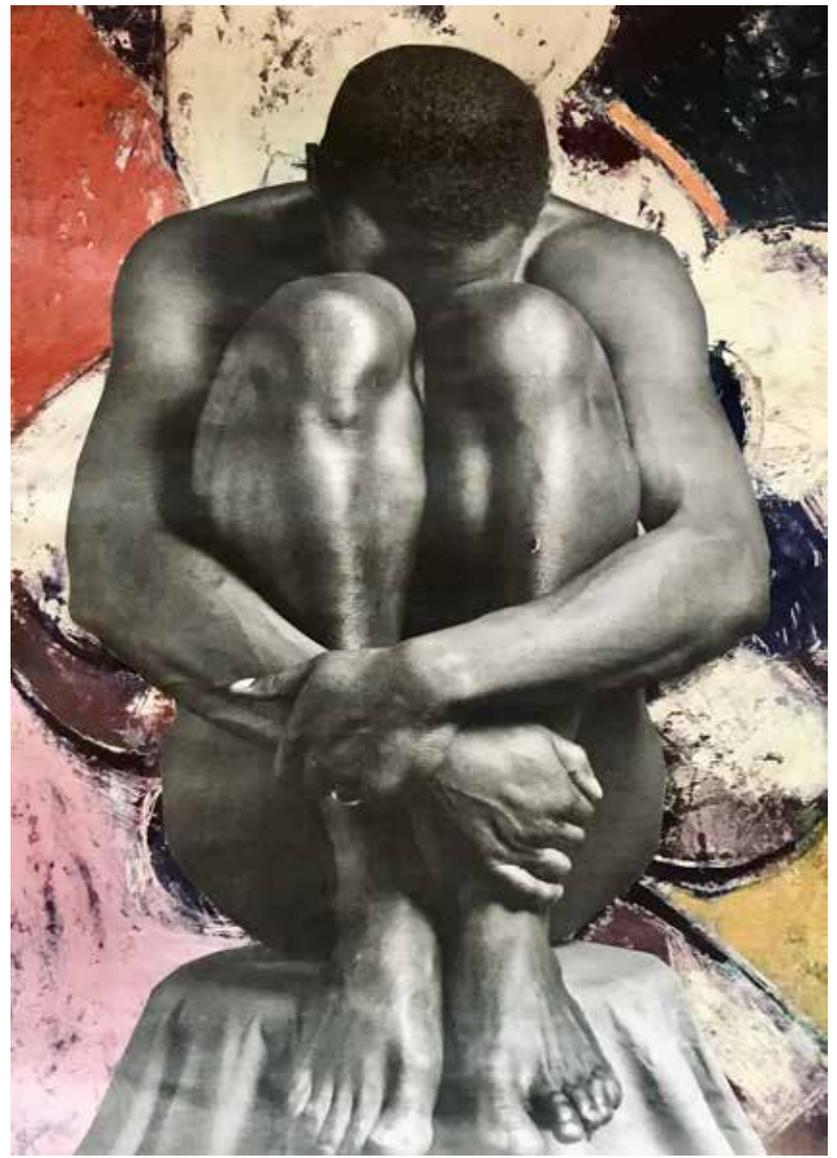


***The Mountain***

Acrylic on canvas, 100x100 cm, unframed



*You never stay long enough*  
Paper collage, 35x20 cm, framed



*Unwired*  
Paper collage, 35x20 cm, framed

**Earth my Likeness!**  
BY WALT WHITMAN

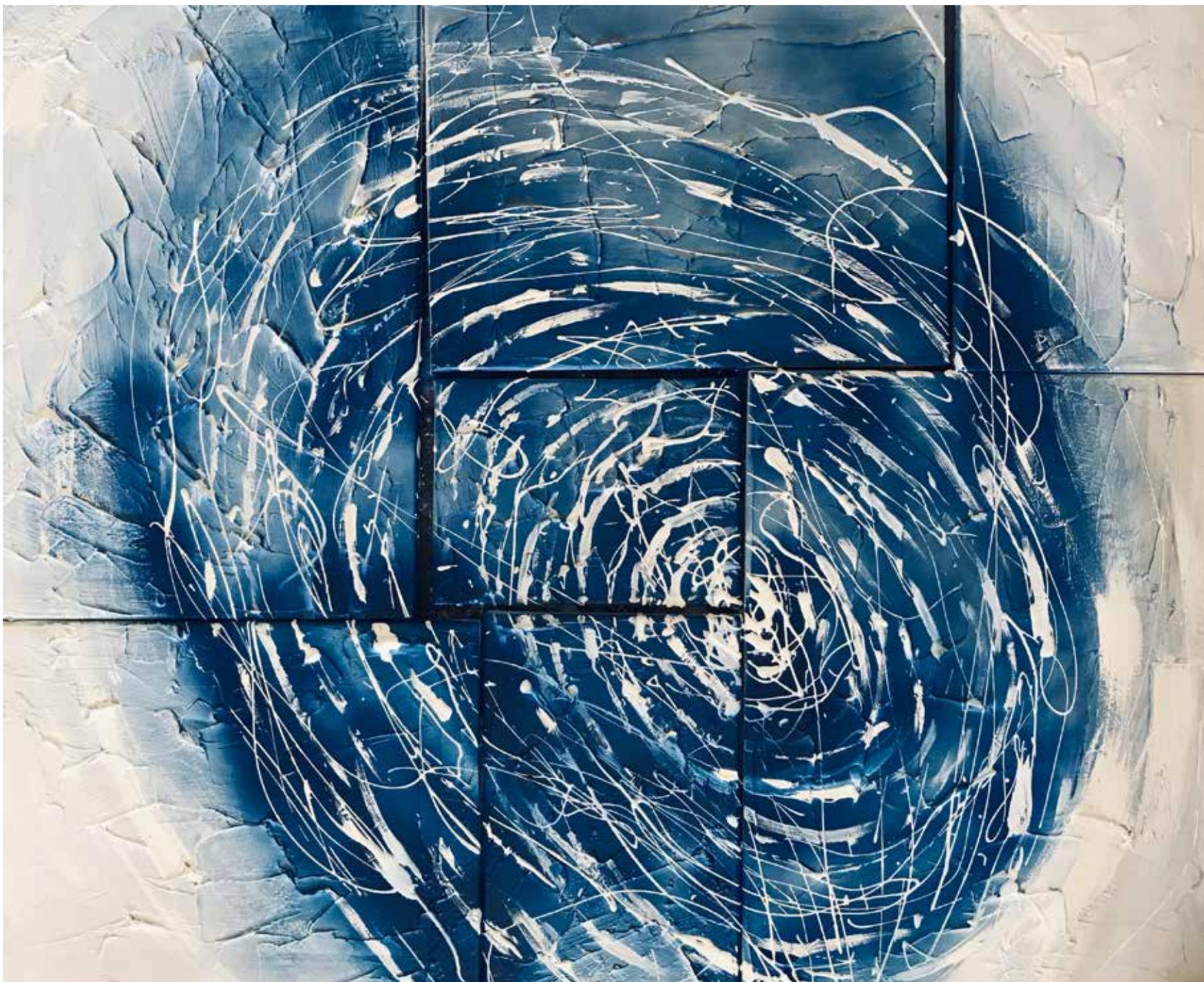
Though you look so impassive, ample and spheric there,  
I now suspect that is not all;  
I now suspect there is something fierce in you, eligible to burst  
forth;  
For an athlete is enamour'd of me--and I of him;  
But toward him there is something fierce and terrible in me,  
eligible  
to burst forth,  
I dare not tell it in words--not even in these songs.



***Impassive***  
Mixed media on canvas board, 30x40 cm, framed



***Ample***  
Acrylic on canvas  
2 piece painting 80x120 cm  
unframed



*Earth's Fingerprint* Acrylic on canvas, 7 piece painting, 95x80 cm, unframed

**[i carry your heart with me(i carry it in)  
BY E. E. CUMMINGS**

i carry your heart with me(i carry it in  
my heart)i am never without it(anywhere  
i go you go,my dear;and whatever is done  
by only me is your doing,my darling)

i fear

no fate(for you are my fate,my sweet)i want  
no world(for beautiful you are my world,my  
true)

and it's you are whatever a moon has always  
meant

and whatever a sun will always sing is you

here is the deepest secret nobody knows  
(here is the root of the root and the bud of the  
bud

and the sky of the sky of a tree called  
life;which grows

higher than soul can hope or mind can hide)

and this is the wonder that's keeping the stars  
apart

i carry your heart(i carry it in my heart)



*Madam*

Mixed media on paper, 50x70 cm, framed



*Cityscape*

Acrylic on canvas board, 70x50 cm, framed



*Modern Day Thinker*

Paper collage, 35x27 cm, framed

**The Genius Of The Crowd**  
BY CHARLES BUKOWSKI

there is enough treachery, hatred violence absurdity in the  
average  
human being to supply any given army on any given day

and the best at murder are those who preach against it  
and the best at hate are those who preach love  
and the best at war finally are those who preach peace

those who preach god, need god  
those who preach peace do not have peace  
those who preach peace do not have love

beware the preachers  
beware the knowers  
beware those who are always reading books  
beware those who either detest poverty  
or are proud of it  
beware those quick to praise  
for they need praise in return  
beware those who are quick to censor  
they are afraid of what they do not know  
beware those who seek constant crowds for  
they are nothing alone  
beware the average man the average woman  
beware their love, their love is average  
seeks average

but there is genius in their hatred  
there is enough genius in their hatred to kill you  
to kill anybody  
not wanting solitude  
not understanding solitude  
they will attempt to destroy anything  
that differs from their own  
not being able to create art  
they will not understand art  
they will consider their failure as creators  
only as a failure of the world  
not being able to love fully  
they will believe your love incomplete  
and then they will hate you  
and their hatred will be perfect

like a shining diamond  
like a knife  
like a mountain  
like a tiger  
like hemlock

their finest art

*Of the Crowd*  
Acrylic on canvas, 60x90 cm, framed



*Beware*  
Acrylic on canvas, 60x90 cm, framed



*Strangers*  
Acrylic on canvas, 2 piece painting, 90x60 cm  
unframed



**Baseball on Flag**  
Pastels on cork, 55x65 cm, framed

**Analysis of baseball**  
BY MAY SWEDEN

It-s about  
the ball,  
the bat,  
and the mitt.  
Ball hits  
bat, or it  
hits mitt.  
Bat doesn-t  
hit ball, bat  
meets it.  
Ball bounces  
off bat, flies  
air, or thuds  
ground (dud)  
or it  
fits mitt.

Bat waits  
for ball  
to mate.  
Ball hates  
to take bat-s  
bait. Ball  
flirts, bat-s  
late, don-t  
keep the date.  
Ball goes in  
(thwack) to mitt,  
and goes out  
(thwack) back  
to mitt.

Ball fits  
mitt, but  
not all  
the time.  
Sometimes  
ball gets hit  
(pow) when bat  
meets it,  
and sails  
to a place  
where mitt  
has to quit  
in disgrace.  
That-s about  
the bases  
loaded,  
about 40,000  
fans exploded.

It-s about  
the ball,  
the bat,  
the mitt,  
the bases  
and the fans.  
It-s done  
on a diamond,  
and for fun.  
It-s about  
home, and it-s  
about run.



**American Abstract**  
Acrylic on canvas, 100x100 cm, unframed



*Baseball Player*

Acrylic on canvas, 70x100 cm, unframed

**Lady Lazarus**  
BY SILVIA PLATH

(abstract)  
I have done it again.  
One year in every ten  
I manage it——

A sort of walking miracle, my skin  
Bright as a Nazi lampshade,  
My right foot

A paperweight,  
My face a featureless, fine  
Jew linen.

Peel off the napkin  
O my enemy.  
Do I terrify?——

The nose, the eye pits, the full set of teeth?  
The sour breath  
Will vanish in a day.

Soon, soon the flesh  
The grave cave ate will be  
At home on me

Dying  
Is an art, like everything else.  
I do it exceptionally well.

I do it so it feels like hell.  
I do it so it feels real.  
I guess you could say I've a call.

It's easy enough to do it in a cell.  
It's easy enough to do it and stay put.  
It's the theatrical

Comeback in broad day  
To the same place, the same face, the same  
brute  
Amused shout:

'A miracle!'  
That knocks me out.  
There is a charge

For the eyeing of my scars, there is a charge  
For the hearing of my heart——  
It really goes.



**Lady Lazarus**  
Acrylic on canvas, 70x100 cm, unframed



**An Army of Angels Holding their Breaths**  
Acrylic on canvas, 70x100 cm, unframed



**Hope**  
Acrylic on canvas, 100x150 cm, unframed

**In a Station of the Metro**

BY EZRA POUND

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;  
petals on a wet, black bough.



*Faceless*

Acrylic on canvas, 80x60 cm, unframed



*Metro*

Acrylic on canvas, 70x120 cm, unframed



*City Lines*

Acrylic on canvas, 140x100 cm, framed



***Destroyed by Madness***

Acrylic on canvas, 90x60 cm, framed



***Negro Streets***

Acrylic on canvas, 50x35 cm, unframed



***New Era***

Acrylic on canvas, 100x100 cm, unframed

## **Howl**

BY ALLEN GINSBERG

For Carl Solomon (abstract)

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked,  
dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking for an angry fix,  
angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly connection to the starry dynamo in the machinery of night,  
who poverty and tatters and hollow-eyed and high sat up smoking in the supernatural darkness of cold-water flats floating across the tops of cities contemplating jazz,  
who bared their brains to Heaven under the El and saw Mohammedan angels staggering on tenement roofs illuminated,  
who passed through universities with radiant cool eyes hallucinating Arkansas and Blake-light tragedy among the scholars of war,  
who were expelled from the academies for crazy & publishing obscene odes on the windows of the skull,  
who cowered in unshaven rooms in underwear, burning their money in wastebaskets and listening to the Terror through the wall,  
who got busted in their pubic beards returning through Laredo with a belt of marijuana for New York,  
who ate fire in paint hotels or drank turpentine in Paradise Alley, death, or purgatoried their torsos night after night  
with dreams, with drugs, with waking nightmares, alcohol and cock and endless balls,  
incomparable blind streets of shuddering cloud and lightning in the mind leaping toward poles of Canada & Paterson, illuminating all the motionless world of Time between,  
Peyote solidities of halls, backyard green tree cemetery dawns, wine drunkenness over the rooftops, storefront boroughs of teahead joyride neon blinking traffic light, sun and moon and tree vibrations in the roaring winter dusks of Brooklyn, ashcan rantings and kind king light of mind,  
who chained themselves to subways for the endless ride from Battery to holy Bronx on benzedrine until the noise of wheels and children brought them down shuddering mouth-wracked and battered bleak of brain all drained of brilliance in the drear light of Zoo,  
who sank all night in submarine light of Bickford's floated out and sat through the stale beer afternoon in desolate Fugazzi's, listening to the crack of doom on the hydrogen jukebox,  
who talked continuously seventy hours from park to pad to bar to Bellevue to museum to the Brooklyn Bridge,  
a lost battalion of platonic conversationalists jumping down the stoops off fire escapes off windowsills off Empire State out of the moon,  
yacketayakking screaming vomiting whispering facts and memories and anecdotes and eyeball kicks and shocks of hospitals and jails and wars,  
whole intellects disgorged in total recall for seven days and nights with brilliant eyes, meat for the Synagogue cast on the pavement,  
who vanished into nowhere Zen New Jersey leaving a trail of ambiguous picture postcards of Atlantic City Hall

San Francisco, 1955—1956



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