

EDITED AND WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
DOUGLAS BRINKLEY

JACK KEROUAC
WINDBLOWN WORLD

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Nicholas Grimald* is not a bad poet either. "A Venus imp ..." he says. Nor is [Robert] Herrick to be denied, not so at all, no sir, not Herrick.**

Wrote 700-useless words that will all be crossed out. My first impasse in Road.

FRI. 6 — Estimated that the moving bill to Colorado would come to about \$300.00. I'm itching to do this. So's everybody but Paul, who is worried about going so far away from his old folks in Carolina. I'd like to get a sportswriting job in Denver to begin with — later wheatfarm.

WED. May 11

After the weekend in Poughkeepsie at Jack Fitzgerald's, I decided, now, to go out to Denver immediately and find a house. Will go alone, hitch-hiking, in the red, red night. Harrisburg, Pittsburg, Columbus, Indianapolis, Hannibal Mo., St. Joe, Last Chance, & Denver.†

SUNDAY MAY 22 — Took a walk up to Morrison Rd. to buy this notebook and had a beer in a big Sunday afternoon roadhouse up there on the ridge. How less sad Sunday afternoon is in the West. I sat near the back door and listened to the mid-American music and looked out on the fields of golden green and the great mountains. Walking around the fields with my notebooks I might have been Rubens and all this my Netherlands. Came home, ate, and made preparatory notes at night. Starting "On the Road" back in Ozone, and here, is difficult. I wrote one full year before starting T & C, (1946) — but this mustn't happen

*Nicholas Grimald (1519-1562), Renaissance poet, wrote "A True Love."

**Robert Herrick (1591-1634), Episcopal minister and poet; his *Hesperides* (1633) included twelve hundred poems, including the oft-quoted "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time."

†Kerouac ended up traveling by bus. Portions of that trip are detailed in the "Rain and Rivers" journal. Most of the following entries — in Westwood, Colorado — were pulled from Kerouac's "Private Philologies" journal, which is otherwise not included in this volume.

— PRIVATE PHILOGIES — (page 15)
— RIDDLES — [much of which is just nonsense & words.]
AND A
TEN-DAY WRITING LOG Westwood, Colo.

LOG SUNDAY MAY 22 — Took a walk up to Morrison Rd. to buy this notebook and had a beer in a big Sunday afternoon roadhouse up there on the ridge. How less sad Sunday afternoon is in the West. I sat near the back door and listened to the mid-American music and looked out on the fields of golden green and the great mountains. Walking around the fields with my notebooks I might have been Rubens and all this my Netherlands. Came home, ate, and made preparatory notes at night. Starting "On the Road" back in Ozone, and here, is difficult. I wrote one full year before starting T & C, (1946) — but this mustn't happen again. Writing is my work now both in the world and the "room of myself" — so I've got to move. Planned an earlier beginning before the 8,000 words already written in N.Y. first 2 weeks of May. Went to bed after midnight reading a Western dime novel.

MONDAY MAY 23 — Got up refreshed at nine, walked to the grocery store, came back and ate breakfast. It's a sin how happy I can be living alone like a hermit. Mailed some letters I had written yesterday. Drank coffee on the back steps, where the Western wind in bright afternoon air hums across the grass. (Why do I read Western dime novels? — for the beautiful and authentic descriptions of ranchlands, desert heat, horses, night stars, and so forth; the characterizations are of course non-authentic.) — Worked in the afternoon, and all eleven at night, knocking off 1500-words, or so. I sometimes wonder if *On the Road* will be any good, although very likely it will be popular. It's not at all like T & C. I suppose that's allowable — (but sad) — now.

J. Kerouac
6100 W. Center
Westwood, Colo.
May-1949
"On the Road"

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J Kerouac ———

6100 W. Center

Westwood, Colo.

May — 1949

“On the Road”

TUESDAY MAY 24 — Woke up at 9:30 with the first “worried mind” in a week, since I’ve been here. Just a kind of haggard sorrow — and later some worries about money until my next stipend from the publishers. This is a better kind of money-worry than before T & C was bought, for then I had nothing, absolutely nothing. What they call the ‘proverbial shoestring’ was for me then a mad mysticism. Hal and Ed White must feel today what I used to feel then — a loveless existence in a greedy money-world. I still feel that way even though I know I’ll have *some* money all my life from writing, and will never starve or have to hole up in a canyon, eating vegetables like Huescher, or wash dishes in the great-city slops. Someday perhaps I myself will look back on those days (before selling book) with the same kind of wonder that we

now look back upon the pioneers living in the wilderness on their wits and grit — someday when some form of social insurance will be in effect for all mortal beings. Because most of the jobs nowadays by which you can earn just enough to live are insupportable to imaginative men ... like Hal, Ed, Allen, Bill B. and numerous others. It is just as difficult for that kind of man to punch a clock and do the same stupid thing all day as it is for an unimaginative man to go hungry — for that too is “going hungry.” I am continually amazed nowadays that an actual Progress is underway in spite of everything. This Progress should aim at meaningful work and social security and greater facilities for minimal comfort for all — so that energies may be liberated for the great things that will come in the Atomic Energy Age. In that day then will be opportunity to arrive at the final questions of life ... whatever they really are. I feel that I’m working on the periphery of these final things, as all poets have always done ... and even Einstein in his deepest investigations. “Solving problems,” as Dan Burmeister insists, is essential now (and may or may not be a tendency in late-civilization anxiety) — but after that there is the question of the knowable that is now called ‘unknowable.’ I feel that the most important facts in human life are of a moral nature: — communication between souls (or minds), recognition of what the Lamb means, the putting-aside of vanity as impractical and destructive (psychoanalysis points there), and the consolation of the mortal enigma by means of a recognition of the State of Gratitude which was once called the Fear of God. And many other things as yet unplumbed.

But these are all sunny Colorado reflections and may not apply in the Dark Corridor where something far stranger is burgeoning (I mean Allen.) It may be that Allen is deliberately insane to justify his mother, or that he has really seen the Last Truth of the Giggling Lings. Even if that were so, I, as Ling, could not use it. (All this refers to the fable “Ling’s Woe.”) Then again, since all of us are really the same man, he may, or I may only be fooling now.

Finally I recognize this at least as an *absorption* of the life-mind ... which may be the only thing we have, like flowers that have nothing

but petals that grow. *All is likely*. "This was life," as I wrote yesterday in Road. Ripeness is all.

There is a dynamic philosophy behind the Progress of the 20th Century, but we need to reach the depths of a Static Metaphysical Admission — a Manifesto of Confessions — as well, or the dynamics will just explode out of control like Kafka's penal machine. Perhaps something like this should happen: after the age of five, every human being should become a shmoo and feed the little ones; shmoos with wings like guardian angels.

There should be no great shmoos to kick Good Old Gus across the valley. This is not the Lamb, not peace. Even Good Old Gus, at his depths, is standing alone weeping on the plain looking around for confirmation of his tears; and his vanity is his evil. Dostoevsky knew that even about Father Karamazov.

Worked all day, wrote 2000-words. Not too satisfied, but enough. Retired at night with papers & the Western dime novel. Anxious for the folks to get here, especially Ma: — what a joy it will be for her! Heh heh heh — (a cackle of satisfaction on my part, you see.)

WEDNESDAY MAY 25 — Went to Denver University and to the home of the Whites. The Denver campus is beautiful and interesting. I walked into the rambling structure of the Students Union just as a jukebox was booming Charley Ventura ... first bop in weeks. My hair stood on end. I floated in. I realized that the music of a generation whether it is swing, jazz, or bop — (at least this law applies to 20th century America) — is a keypoint of mood, an identification, and a seeking-out. Anyway, I looked for Dan, drank milkshakes, sat in the grass, looked at the gals, visited the buildings, etc., and finally hitch-hiked in the hot afternoon countryside to the Whites' house. This is the house they built themselves, that Ed and [Frank] Jeffries and Burt worked on all winter. Frank White was there. I was somewhat amazed by him. He is more like Ed than people think ... the same quick understanding of all statements; in fact, the same fore-knowledge of the trend of what one is about to say. Also he has the same cool, modest ability of much variety. His only drawback is

a garrulousness that one can't follow due to his tumbling speech and inward-preoccupation with details. Then the rest of the family arrived for supper. Mrs. White made me feel most at home (like Frank.) Of course I was unexpected and shouldn't have crashed in so casually. Jeanne seemed thoughtful about something else. After supper Frank and I drove back to the D.U. campus, where he spoke on cosmic ray research of some kind, to a physics class. They applauded his talk admiringly; I was unable myself to follow the scientific language. Another speaker, on geophysics, was Wally Mureray, friend of Frank's, whom I liked. He was born & raised in Leadville [, Colorado,] and like his father & grandfather has mining in his blood. Also he's a genuine mining type while being a scientist: — a remarkable combination. We met Dan Burmeister at his social science seminar and there ensued an endless argument between the physical scientists and the social scientist, with much reference to relativity, Oppenheim, atomic research, etc. I finally announced (in flood-tides) that it was all a "continuum of ambiguity." Okay? — for relativity is just the idea that one point of reference is as good as another. We got mellow on beer; went home. Frank drove me home.

THURSDAY MAY 26 — Then today (while I continued my hermit domesticity in the empty house ... as a matter of fact tried to fix the wellpump just as it seemed to fix itself) the kid on the street here, Jerry, asked me to accompany him to the amusement park, Lakeside, in the evening. His mother, Johnny they call her, drove us to the park. (Her husband has disappeared somewhere.) It was the Sad Fair again. I took a few rides with Jerry (who seems to be looking for a father of some sort.) However a waitress didn't believe I was 21 and wanted proof before she gave me a beer. Jerry (14) drank rootbeer. We rode around a sad little lake in a toy railroad; in the high ferris wheel, etc., and ate hotdogs and ice cream. Still and all, it was a "sinister" night ... sinister-seeming ... and I became depressed — for two days. A park cop threatened to arrest Jerry because he was fooling around with the tame fish at the motorboat dock. Then, when we rode home in an old truck after a Roy Rogers movie, a car almost rammed us in the back. It was strange. In the first place I

couldn't understand anything. I doubt if the driver of the old truck knew we were in the back. Between us sat his little son, mysteriously wrapp'd in a blanket. *No one noticed the fact we almost got rammed by the car ...* or that is, they didn't care at all. Then, in the dark sinister country night, as Jerry and I walked home, a car of drunks almost plowed us off the road. Everything was sinister ... like for Joe Christmas.

FRIDAY MAY 27 — Depressed all day. Full of my own private hurt and haunt. Jerry brought over a little kitty for me ... it has sick eyes. It needs meat. It hangs around me mewing for affection. It is somewhat like that lost kid, incomprehensibly lonely. I feed the cat and do my best to achieve a talk with Jerry — and with his incomprehensible mother, who asked me to go riding in a rodeo tomorrow. That is, Sunday. My depression cannot see the light of these things. What did I do all day? — I can't remember any more. Part of my sadness stems from the fact my family's wasting time getting out here. Why? I hated myself all day, too ... hurt and haunted by hurt.

SATURDAY MAY 28 — After a mopey day, I perked up and went to the beerjoints on the ridge. Gad, some beautiful waitresses up there. I really enjoyed the cowboy music ... ate french fries at the bar, etc. There are some good people out this way, just as I had guessed. Came home and slept, to be ready for the Ghostly Rodeo.

SUNDAY MAY 29 — So I rode in a rodeo ... of sorts. Johnny picked me up and we drove to a farm-ranch, and slicked down four horses. A remarkable woman called Doodie runs the place and dominates immense horses, including a 17-hand Palomino, with fiery contemptuous love ... in other words, a real horsewoman. Her son Art is a mild, happy kid growing up among horses. We mounted the four horses and started off for Golden, 15 miles west. I have not ridden extensively since 1934, so I was saddle-sore pretty soon ... but enjoyed it nevertheless. My horse Toppy, a strawberry roan colt, had a tender mouth so I could not rein him up too hard. We joined two other women, one a haughty bitch on

an Arabian thoroughbred, and the other a most marvelous woman with flaming red hair and no teeth. She said, "I hate women who don't say *shit* when they've got a mouthful of it." We cantered and walked and trotted to Golden. I had a beer in a bar; then we mounted again and the first thing you know we were joined by a whole posse of riders, and first thing you know, on a dirt road, something happened psychologically, I yelled "Woohee!" and off some of us went lickity-cut down the road in a race. My roan loved to run, and "he run." Up in a glorious mountain meadow we raced around while, by arrangement, a photographer took pictures with a motion picture technicolor camera ... I still don't know under what auspices. We did Indian-circle runs, and Figure-Eights, and galloped *en masse* down a draw, and had a good time. We drank beer in the saddle. Going back to Golden we raced furiously across lots and down into a creek-bed and up out of it flying and hell-for-leather over fields gopher-holes or no gopher-holes. I've never been afraid of a horse falling somehow anyway. After another beer we started back ... and the kid and I really had a race. He was in the road and I in the field parallel, and it was even. Then he beat me on the road ... but he's a lighter rider, and used his reins on both flanks, something I didn't bother to do. — Finally we got back exhausted, a 30-mile day. I went to bed immediately ... With some muscles and one bad blister.

MONDAY MAY 30 — And today I was scheduled to ride in the rodeo at Table-Top (ride a bronc for all I incomprehensibly know) but of course I was too sore. I'm sorry I missed this. Meanwhile some neighbors around here are gossiping about Johnny (Jerry's mother) and me ... an old hen across the street. This sort of thing goes on even here. Best thing to do, is nothing. What does it matter anyway? — No harm in it that's *real* harm (like jail, etc.) Rested all day. Wrote at night. Still and all, consider how horrible it is to have an old woman like that peeking from out her shades all day, trying to figure out what you're doing behind yours, and starting "scandalous" stories about you. Gad! It's *funny* only in a horrible way. (Francis Martin.)

But how I love horses!

Next year: *mountain ranch*.

And tonight re-examined my literary life and I'm worried somewhat about losing touch with it in these natural-life atmospheres. After all, great art only flourishes in a *school* ... even if that school is only friendship with poets like Allen, Lucien, Bill, Hunkey & Neal and Holmes ... and Van Doren & [Elbert] Lenrow too, of course.

: — J U N E — :

IN COLORADO, 1949

TUESDAY JUNE 1 — I'm thinking of making *On the Road* a vast story of those I know as well as a study of rain and rivers. Allen expresses weariness with my "rain-&-rivers" preoccupation now, but I think it's only because I have not explained manifestly what they mean: as I did in the notebook "Record" on pages covering 'New Orleans to Tucson.' That's clear in my mind.

There is never a real goldstrike, or a real "scientific advance," only a revelation in the heart on one day or the next, subject to horrible change and further revelation. "Revelation is Revolution," as Holmes says, insofar of course, as it is a *change*, miserably from mere day to day.

There is no heaven and no reward, and no judgment either (Allen says his lawyers "will be judged"): — no: — there is only a continuum of living across preordained spaces, followed by the continuum of the Mystery of Death. That death is a Mystery makes Death acceptable therefore; because Mystery never ends but continues.

— Still waiting for the family.

WEDNESDAY JUNE 1 — Fixed the well-pump at nine o'clock this morning. Got dirt out of the valve and tightened a loose cylinder around the pipe, and raised the pressure to 50. For awhile there I was *enraged* because I thought my one-year-lease was on a house with a dry well. It is Okay, I think — 122 feet deep. On top of that it rained today.

Rain is not only poetic in the West, but necessary. So I say "Rain you bastard!" — and it rains. I've been goofing off these two days just listening to the radio, playing with the cat, playing solitary stud-poker, and thinking up *On the Road* more. *I need my typewriter*. No furniture, no family, nothing. I can't understand all this delay. It took me 60 hours to get out here, and another 48 hours to get a house. It's taken them close to three weeks ... and all I do is wait, wait, wait. I don't think Paul wants to leave the East actually ... he is wasting time in North Carolina. His mother has a husband to support her, and a grandchild, and 2 other children in the East; therefore, there's no tragedy in Paul moving out West, inasmuch as he can visit her occasionally also. So I don't understand all this delay. They arrived in N.C. last Tuesday, and here it is nine days later — and the 1650-mile trip is a 3½ day drive. So they're staying there at least a whole week, and here I am in an empty house paying rent. This I don't like ... A waste of time and money, and a waste of a good thing, and silly. Got a letter from Beverly Burford *Pierceall* today ... now married, living in Colorado Springs, whose Pikes Peak I can see from the kitchen window. Wrote back at night.

THURSDAY JUNE 2 — And tonight the family is finally arriving; got a telegram in the morning. I'm now down to my last actual penny (1 cent), excluding the \$20 bill I'm hiding for the lawn (part of the deal on this lease is to plant a lawn.) So now things will start vibrating and we'll get our home going. Only thing is: — where is the furniture truck? Hal Chase ought to be home by now. And soon I'll hear from Giroux and decide about June 15, and a job, and my writing-schedule (months) for *Road*. — Last night I went to bed reading the New Testament. My own interpretation of Christ I will write soon: essentially the same, that he was the *first*, perhaps the *last*, to recognize the facing-up of a man to life's final enigma as the only important activity on earth. Although times have changed since then, and "Christianity" is actually Christian in method by now (socialism), still, the time has yet to come for a true "accounting," a true Christlike world. The King who comes on an Ass, meek. "True progress shall lie in men's hearts." Do you hear me, Hun-

key of the Fires? — Also, I planned to write a “Literary Autobiography of a Young Writer” within a few years, preferably while in Paris. I’m full of ideas, yet not of real work. I keep saying I need my typewriter — I do, and my desk, books, papers too. I wish I had the will and energy of ten writers (as I did in 1947.) The 1948 work on T & C was a Gift from God, for I had long ago gone on my knees like Handel prior to his Messiah-work, and Received that.

But thank God for *everything*. The other night I saw that.

MONDAY JUNE 13 (Colorado)

Trying to get settled in Colorado, jobs and so forth. Will start a new journal soon.

Typing up some 10,000 words of “On the Road” and organizing them — the true beginning now.

Editor [Bob] Giroux is flying out on July 15.

Seeing a lot of Justin Brierly.

Leased small house on outskirts of W. Denver, where plains wash down from mountains. Beautiful summer is mine. Family arrived. Money troubles. And rainy mud; and dry well.

JUNE 28 — You’re not really writing a book till you begin to *take liberties* with it. I’ve begun to do this with On the Road now.

Also, consider that I, in writing about fire, am that close to it that I may be burned. Now that I need “Levinsky and the Angels on Times Square”* I realize that Vicki has it; and she being indicted, the police probably have the manuscript now. But I want it back.

Everybody in America sitting in the movie, avidly watching the crazy-serious gray screen — for what it has to show. It is so much better to explore things like that than silly imaginary questions like “Should teenage girls marry?” — better and more intelligent, the ‘social scientists’ to the contrary.

*An allusion to *The Town and the City* and Leon Levinsky, the character based on Allen Ginsberg.

*The
Skeleton's
Rejection*

Roll your own bones,
go moan alone —
Go, go, roll your own bones,
alone.
Bother me no more.

JULY

COLORADO

JULY 4th

My mother went back to her job in N.Y. today. She will get an apartment in Long Island. Next year I’ll buy her a house there. She left at one on the Rock Island. Poor vagabonding widow-woman! In a month, after Giroux, I’m going to Mexico and then N.Y. — perhaps Detroit en route. The big American night keeps closing in, redder and darker all the time. There is no home.

Began writing “The Rose of the Rainy Night” yesterday for amusement.

A heavy melancholy, almost like pleasure, oppresses me now.

“On the Road” proceeding strangely.

Poor Red Moultrie.

All we do is moan alone.

But more and more as I grow older I see the beautiful dream of life expanding till it is much more important than gray life itself — a dark, red dream the color of the cockatoo. Night, like a balm, soothes dumb wounds of prickly day-dark & rainy night!

I am grown more mystic than ever now.