

Cornelia P. Dulmage. A Bibliography of the Monographs of Gregory Corso, with Collection Analysis of the Holdings Thereof in the Rare Book Collection of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S. degree. April, 2004. 27 pages. Advisor: Charles B. McNamara.

A project assessing the Rare Book Collection's holdings of the English-language monographs of Beat Generation poet and author Gregory Corso. Includes an overview of the Beat Generation and Corso's role in it, a brief history of the Rare Book Collection's Beat Generation collection, and a discussion of the role and purpose of collection analysis. Includes also an original bibliography of Corso's monographs, compiled for the purpose of the study.

Headings:

Corso, Gregory

Corso, Gregory – Bibliography

Beat Generation

Beat Generation -- Bibliography

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE MONOGRAPHS OF GREGORY CORSO,
WITH COLLECTION ANALYSIS OF THE HOLDINGS THEREOF IN
THE RARE BOOK COLLECTION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH
CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL.

by
Cornelia P. Dulmage

A Master's paper submitted to the faculty
of the School of Information and Library Science
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Approved by

Charles B. McNamara

INTRODUCTION

The Beat Generation in America

The Beat Generation was in the end as much a cultural movement as a literary one, but it began with writers. The core members of the fabled generation, Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and William S. Burroughs, met in New York City in the mid-nineteen-forties, when Kerouac and Ginsberg were students at Columbia University. At the time, none of the three was a published writer, or even thought to one day be one. Nonetheless, out of their friendship and subsequent experiences, connections and, of course, writings would grow one of the most recognizable and influential American literary movements of the twentieth century.

The Beats, as they came to be known, emerged into the national consciousness in the late 1950s, with the publication and subsequent fame (and notoriety) of Kerouac's *On the Road*, Ginsberg's *Howl*, and Burroughs's *The Naked Lunch*. Although the principal generation members were well into adulthood when their works emerged (Ginsberg, the youngest, was thirty when *Howl* was published), the movement they inspired was one that appealed to the young people of the era. With their spirit of freedom and disregard for traditional cultural norms of behavior, especially in regards to sexuality and drug use, they provided a catalyst for the feelings of alienation and doubt experienced by many young people in the late 1950s and early 1960s to coalesce into a cultural phenomenon that went far beyond the writings of a few poets and novelists. The literary aspect of the movement continued to be important, however, and the designation "Beat generation writers" came eventually to apply to a diverse

group of authors and poets from New York to San Francisco who shared some aspect of the Beat philosophy and were in one way or another associated with Ginsberg, Kerouac or Burroughs.

The Beat Generation eventually faded from the national scene, but its influence in American culture cannot be underestimated. The hippies of the 1960s and 70s were direct inheritors of the Beat spirit, and much of the relatively open nature of our society today can be traced, directly or indirectly, to the ideas and attitudes of the Beat movement. Their literary influence is less profound but still is felt every time a young poet reads a stream-of-consciousness poem aloud from a coffee house stage.

Gregory Corso and the Beat Generation

When Gregory Corso first met Allen Ginsberg in a bar in 1950, Corso was twenty years old and had only recently been released from prison after serving three years for robbery. The story of his childhood and youth is one of neglect and a slow slide into criminal behavior. Abandoned when he was an infant by his teenaged mother and subsequently given up to the state's care by his father, he lived for much of his childhood in a succession of orphanages and foster homes which gave way as he grew older and wilder to reform schools and one three-month stint in the children's ward at Bellevue Hospital. When he was eleven years old, his father remarried and reclaimed his son from institutional care, but Corso was not taken with family life. He ran away repeatedly and by the time he was thirteen was living for the most part on the streets and by his own wits. Those wits eventually failed him, and he was incarcerated at age seventeen for stealing, with the help of several other boys, more than \$20,000 from a Household Finance Office.

During his time in prison, Corso found the time and the means to augment what had been a spotty and largely inadequate education. He read extensively in the prison's library, discovering among other things a passion for the work of Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley. As Corso told an interviewer in 1980, his time in prison was, "when I...ate up all the books. That's when I got into Stendhal, into Hugo, into Shelley...[and] I ate up the 1905 Standard Dictionary, every word."¹ He also began writing poetry while in prison, and continued the practice after he was released. When, during that first meeting with Ginsberg in 1950, their conversation turned to writing and poetry, Corso shared some of his writing with the older poet, beginning a friendship that would center on literary pursuits.

Ginsberg introduced Corso shortly thereafter to his friends Jack Kerouac and William S. Burroughs, and Corso quickly became part of the community of aspiring writers who would soon be recognized as the Beat Generation. Kerouac, impressed with Corso's rough-and-tumble background and his passion for poetry, described him as, "a tough young kid from the Lower East side who rose like an angel over the rooftops."² In 1956, Corso joined Ginsberg and Kerouac in San Francisco, where he met many writers and also got to know the poet and publisher Lawrence Ferlinghetti. Ferlinghetti had published Ginsberg's *Howl* and would, two years later, publish Corso's second book of poetry. (His first, *The Vestal Lady on Brattle and Other Poems*, Corso had self-published in 1955 with little commercial success). The same year, Ferlinghetti would publish Corso's broadside poem "Bomb", which would become one of his better-known works.

Corso never wrote a "blockbuster" like Kerouac's *On the Road*, Ginsberg's *Howl*, or even Burroughs's *The Naked Lunch* or *Junky*. Nonetheless, he was for a time a well-known

¹ Selerie, Gavin, ed. *The Riverside Interviews 3: Gregory Corso*. (London: Binnacle Press, 1982) p.23.

² Quoted in Schwartz, Marilyn. "Gregory Corso" *The Beats: Literary Bohemians in Postwar America* (Detroit, Mich.: Gale Research, 1983) p.117-140.

literary figure, and remains reasonably so today. He is certainly the best-known of the second tier of Beat authors, after Kerouac, Ginsberg and Burroughs, in part as a result of his lifelong friendship with and involvement in the lives of those writers. Although Corso's poems "Marriage" and the aforementioned "Bomb", among several others, were popular, he never received the critical acclaim that came to his friends. Ironically, however, on a personal level he continued to embody the spirit of the Beats long after the movement had faded. Well into the years after Kerouac's death, when Burroughs had more or less ceased to write in favor of visual art and Ginsberg was a respectable professor of poetry, Corso continued to question authority and to behave irascibly (and quite possibly drunkenly) at public poetry readings.

CONTEXT

The Rare Book Collection of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is in the process of becoming one of the best repositories in the country for Beat Generation-related materials. The Rare Book Collection has been collecting the Beats for about a decade, and within the last three years has made some significant acquisitions, most notably large collections of materials by and relating to Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Allen Ginsberg. The Beat Generation has since become an important focus of collection development, with efforts being made to acquire further items to complement and enlarge the Ferlinghetti and Ginsberg holdings. In addition to augmenting the holdings of these two authors, the Collection's curator has made the decision to begin purchasing items by and about other Beat authors, including Jack Kerouac, William S. Burroughs, Diane di Prima, Michael McClure, and Gregory Corso.

Traditionally, rare book collections, both academic and private, often focused on what is referred to as "high point" collecting. That is, they endeavored to purchase the rarest and most exotic items available, often developing collections which were beautiful and impressive, but which contained little beyond first editions of authors' first books. Lately, the trend has been going in the opposite direction. The current notion of collecting, to which the Rare Book Collection at UNC Chapel Hill subscribes, is that a rare book collection serves scholars best when it brings together a wide array of items by and about a single author, rather than only an author's rarest monographs. Thus it is common now to find not only first editions but later printings and later editions of books, as well as anthologies and magazines in which an author's work appeared plus biographies and critical studies of an author. The idea is that an author and his or her work may be best understood through the examination of a wide range of materials. By the same token, an author,

particularly one from a group such as the Beat Generation, whose members often wrote to, for and about each other, can often be better understood through the works of fellow writers as well.

A collection analysis such as this one serves several purposes. Initially, it serves the collection development purposes of the repository for which it is prepared by giving an idea both of what is held in the collection and of what exists, what is available. It can serve as a collecting roadmap of sorts, pointing out what is yet to be acquired in the quest for a comprehensive collection. Additionally, a list such as this one can serve the purposes of researchers by setting down in one place a repository's holdings in a particular author or field, thereby saving researchers a great deal of work. In a case such as this one, where an up-to-date bibliography does not exist, a project such as this one serves also to create one.

I have chosen to address in this project only Corso's monographs, and of those only the English-language editions. An author's monographs are the logical starting place for collection development, of course, as they generally contain his or her primary work. In addition, the degree of research and time that is necessary to compile a bibliography of an author's contributions to anthologies and periodicals, to say nothing of items written about an author, is beyond my abilities at this time. I hope that, with this first step, I have provided a solid beginning from which the Rare Book Collection can proceed to collect in earnest the works of Gregory Corso.

SOURCES AND STRUCTURE OF THE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Sources

The only published bibliography of Gregory Corso's work is *A Bibliography of Works by Gregory Corso 1954 – 1965*, by Robert Wilson. Corso, however, continued to publish monographs well into the 1990s, so it was necessary before beginning the task of collection analysis to complete the work of compiling a more up-to-date bibliography. This was accomplished with the help of a variety of sources, including of course Wilson's bibliography for the earlier items. The sources used in the compilation of each record within the bibliography are indicated in the "Source(s)" section of that record. In the case of items held in the Rare Book Collection at the University, I have also visually inspected the items and can confirm at least some of the information contained in those records; in the case of items not in the collection, however, I rely on the information obtained from the various sources to be accurate.

The sources consulted, with a general description of each, follow. The entry for each is headed by the designation for it which appears in the bibliography:

- **Wilson.** This is the aforementioned published bibliography, *A Bibliography of Works by Gregory Corso 1954-1965* by Robert Wilson (New York: The Phoenix Book Shop, 1966). It is a descriptive bibliography of those of Corso's monographs, contributions to anthologies, contributions to periodicals, drawings and recordings, as well as translations of his work, which appeared prior to 1966.
- **Cook.** This is the work *City Lights Books: a Descriptive Bibliography* by Ralph T. Cook. (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1992). It is a bibliography of books published by

City Lights Books prior to and including 1990. Several of Corso's earlier works, including *Gasoline* and the broadside *Bomb* were published by City Lights.

- **WorldCat.** This is an electronic union catalogue administered by OCLC and containing more than 39 million records from several thousand libraries, mostly in the United States. It includes records from the libraries of many major universities and colleges, as well as public and institutional libraries. On the whole, the information found in WorldCat is reliable, but it is not an infallible resource.
- **ABE.** This is the Advanced Book Exchange website, an online outlet for book dealers of all stripes, including many used and antiquarian booksellers. Again, the information here is not absolutely reliable, but can generally be depended upon to be accurate, especially in such particulars as the physical appearance of a book or information contained within a book and dealing with, for example, number of issues printed.
- **Skau.** This is a work of criticism, "*A Clown in a Grave: Complexities and Tensions in the Works of Gregory Corso*" by Michael Skau. (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999). It includes a fairly comprehensive alphabetical bibliography Corso's works, which was helpful on occasion with clearing up details and confusions about certain editions.
- **ABAA.** This, like ABE, is an online booksellers' website. It is, however, dedicated to the inventories of the member bookshops of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America. Like ABE, it can be unreliable, but is on the whole to be trusted.

Structure

The bibliography is arranged chronologically, with a heading for each year in which Corso published a monograph, followed by the records for the items published in that year. Each record is structured identically as follows:

Below the title of each work, the various editions of it (in the cases in which there are more than one) are arranged chronologically and labeled alphabetically, beginning with “a.” Below the letter of each edition, the first line of each entry contains the general bibliographic information for the work: place, publisher and date of publication.

The next line contains descriptive and other information about the item, including identifying numbers such as the ISBN as well as publication information beyond the core bibliographic information, such as number of items printed in a first printing and methods of distinguishing among various printings of a given edition. This information was obtained from outside sources and may or may not, as mentioned above, have been confirmed by me through visual inspection of the item.

The third line is labeled “Source(s)” and, as explained earlier, contains the designations for the resources upon which I relied for the information in the first and second lines.

The fourth line, labeled “RBC holdings,” gives the Library of Congress call numbers for those items which are held in the Rare Book Collection at UNC Chapel Hill. The numbers for those items which are part of a special collection within Rare Books are prefaced with a one-word designation indicating to which collection they belong. In the case of Corso’s works, the only special collection in which they appear is a collection of works by and about members of the Beat generation, which bears the designation “Beats.” In instances in which the Rare Book Collection does not hold an item, the “RBC holdings” line reads “none.”

The final line of each entry, headed "Notes," contains special information about the particular item or items held in the Rare Book Collection. This includes such information as whether an item is signed or inscribed; if it is one of a special numbered or lettered series, what number or letter it is; or visual information which was not included in outside sources. Any information included in this line is based on my own observations. If no additional information was acquired from visual inspection, or if the Rare Book Collection does not hold an item, the "Notes" line has been omitted.

A chronological bibliography of monographs by Gregory Corso

1955

The Vestal Lady on Brattle and Other Poems

a.

Cambridge, Mass.: Richard Brukenfeld, 1955.

Thought to have been 500 copies printed, only 250 distributed. Single printing.

Source: Wilson

RBC holdings: PS3505 .O76 V4

Notes: The RBC's copy is water-stained, as described in Wilson.

b.

San Francisco: City Lights, 1969.

Facsimile of first edition. Edition of 3,000 copies.

Source: Cook; WorldCat; ABE

RBC holdings: Beats Z9999 .C78 V38 1969

Notes: White paper wraps, printed in black and blue. RBC's copy is signed.

1958

Gasoline

a.

San Francisco: City Lights, 1958.

Pocket Poets #8. 1,500 copies in first printing. Later printings indicated at bottom of rear cover.

Source: Wilson

RBC Holdings: PS3505 .O76 G3

Notes: RBC copy is first printing.

b.

San Francisco: City Lights, 1976.

First edition to combine *Gasoline* with *The Vestal Lady on Brattle*. ISBN 0872860884. First printing has white wraps with black printing; later printings are white with red.

Sources: Cook; WorldCat

RBC holdings: Beats Z9999 .C78 G2 1976

Notes: RBC copy is first printing.

Bomb

a.

San Francisco: City Lights, 1958.

Broadside, 7.5 x 24 inches. 2,000 copies in first printing. First printing carries ads on back for *The Vestal Lady on Brattle* and *Gasoline*; second printing only advertises *Gasoline*.

Sources: Cook; Wilson

RBC holdings: PS 3505 .O76 B6

Notes: RBC holds two copies, one of first printing and one of second. The copy of the first printing was transferred from Davis Library and is in poor condition; as of this writing, a second copy of the first printing has been ordered and received by the RBC, but has yet to be catalogued.

1959

Satyr's Chant & Spring's Melodious Herald

a.

Northampton, Mass.: Greccourt Review, 1959.

Offprint published for the author's use. Very few copies printed, thought to be six to ten.

Sources: Wilson; WorldCat

RBC Holdings: none

A Pulp Magazine for the Dead Generation: Poems

a.

Paris: Dead Language, 1959.

Collaboration between Corso and Henk Marsman. Contains four poems from *The Vestal Lady on Brattle*.

Source: WorldCat

RBC holdings: none

195?

Patrick Shelley's Paintings: a Poem in Prose and Verse

a.

S.l.: s.n., 195?

Broadside.

Source: WorldCat

RBC holdings: PS3505 .O76 P3 1950z

Notes: the poem is printed on one side of a sheet of paper, which is folded in half. The title is printed on the other side of the paper, as a book title. There is no publication information.

1960

The Happy Birthday of Death

a.

New York: J. Laughlin/New Directions, 1960.

Paperback (New Directions Paperbook 86). 10,000 copies in first printing. Second printing indicated on upper portion of back cover.

Source: Wilson; ABE

RBC holdings: PS3505 .O76 H3

Notes: RBC copy is first printing.

1961

American Express

a.

Paris: Olympia Press, 1961.

Traveller's Companion series no. 85. First issue/state has price of 15 N.F.; later issue/state has an increased price stamped over the original price.

Source: Wilson

RBC Holdings: PS3505 .O76 A53 1961

Notes: RBC holds two copies; one of first state and one of second. Second state is inscribed.

The Minicab War

a.

London: Matrix Press, 1961.

Edition of 250 copies. Two states exist, issued simultaneously and with no known priority: white wrappers and light blue wrappers. Although it bears the names of several authors, the bulk of this item was written by Corso.

Source: Wilson; WorldCat

RBC holdings: PS3505 .O76 M5

Notes: RBC copy is in light blue wrappers.

[Statement for the Paterson Society], also known as Find it so Hard to Write the How Why & What

a.

Cambridge, Mass.: The [Paterson] Society, 1961.

Broadside. Titles supplied by cataloguers; second title is first line of poem.

Source: WorldCat

RBC holdings: none

1962

Four Reasons Why You Should Not Renew Your Subscription to Evergreen Review

a.

S.l.: s.n., 1962.

Sources: Wilson; WorldCat

RBC holdings: none

Selected Poems

a.

London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1962.

Edition of 1,000 copies.

Source: Wilson

RBC holdings: PS3505 .O76 A6 1962

Long Live Man

a.

New York: New Directions, 1962.

5,000 copies in first printing. Second printing noted on upper portion of rear cover.

Source: Wilson

RBC holdings: PS3505 .O76 L6 1962

Notes: RBC holds two copies, both first printing. One copy has a card from New Directions, announcing a review copy, laid in front.

1964

Some of My Beginning – and What I Feel Right Now

a.

S.l.: s.n., 1964.

Mimeographed text of a Voice of America broadcast by Corso.

Source: Wilson

RBC holdings: none

Notes: not in OCLC; text published in *Magazine* no.2, which the RBC holds.

b.

Portree, Isle of Skye, Scotland: Aquila, 1982.

Titled *Some of My Beginnings and What I Feel Right Now*. Aquila essays no. 7. ISBN 0727502212.

Source: WorldCat

RBC holdings: none

The Mutation of the Spirit: A Shuffle Poem

a.

New York: Death Press, 1964.

Edition of 120 copies, all signed. One blank leaf and 14 printed leaves, loose in paper wrapper.

Source: Wilson

RBC holdings: folio PS3505 .O76 M8

1965

International Poetry Incarnation

a.

London: D. Osler and Frank, 1965.

Broadside. Catalogue entry includes quoted note: "Royal Albert Hall, London, June 11, 1965."

Source: WorldCat

RBC holdings: none

1966

The Geometric Poem: a Long Experimental Poem, Composite of Many Lines and Angles Selective

a.

Milan: Lithografia Cosmopresse, 1966.

Edition of 309 copies. In English.

Source: WorldCat

RBC holdings: none

1967

10 Times a Poem: Collected at Random from 2 Suitcases Filled with Poems, the Gathering of 5 Years

a.

New York: Poets Press, 1967.

Reproductions of holograph poems, with drawings.

Source: WorldCat; Skau

RBC holdings: PS3505 .O76 T4

Notes: RBC holds copy #39, which is signed: "150 copies have been printed exclusively" (holograph note in Corso's hand). Stiff white wrappers, no publisher indicated.

1970

Elegiac Feelings American

a.

New York: New Directions, 1970.

Source: WorldCat

RBC holdings: PS3503. O76 E44

Notes: RBC's catalogue record contains a comma in title, but book itself does not.

1971

[Ankh], also known as ***[Egyptian Cross]*** – the title is the Ankh symbol: †

a.

New York: Phoenix Book Shop, 1971.

Edition of 126 copies, 26 lettered and 100 numbered, all signed.

Source: WorldCat; ABE

RBC holdings: PS3505 .O76 A5

Notes: RBC holds copy no. 51.

1972

Holiday Greetings from the Phoenix Book Shop and ***Holiday Greetings from Gregory Corso***, also known as ***The Night Last Night was at its Nightest***

a.

New York: Phoenix Book Shop, 1972.

Two greeting cards, identical save for the sender's name on front. The alternate title is derived from the first line of the poem.

Source: WorldCat

RBC holdings: PS3505 .O76 N5 1972

Notes: "Phoenix Book Shop" version.

1974

Earth Egg

a.

Kingston, Ont.: Release Press, 1974.

Edition of 100 numbered and signed copies, issued with manuscript poem.

Source: ABAA

RBC holdings: none

b.

New York: Unmuzzled Ox, 1974.

Issued as Unmuzzled Ox v. 2, no. 4 / v. 3, no. 1. Consists of a box which holds a booklet of poems, titled *Earth Egg*, and five strips of paper intended to be glued together to form a long drawing, apparently titled *The Japanese Notebook*.

Sources: WorldCat; ABE; ABAA

RBC holdings: PS3505 .O76 E15; folio-2 PS580 .U54 v.2, no.4/v.3, no.1 (two copies)

Notes: one RBC copy is true second edition, in box marked "2nd edition" and titled "The Japanese Notebook Ox." Other two copies are second edition contents in first edition box, titled "Earth Egg."

Way Out: a Poem in Discord

a.

Khatmandu, Nepal: Bardo Matrix, 1974.

A play. Starstreams Poetry Series no. 1. Edition of 500 copies.

Sources: WorldCat; ABE

RBC holdings: none

1979

The Doubt of Truth

a.

California, Penn.: The Unspeakable Visions of the Individual, 1979.

Broadside.

Source: WorldCat

RBC holdings: PS3505 .O76 D58

Notes: Postcard poem on green stock.

Alchemical Poem

a.

California, Penn.: A. & K. Knight, 1979.

Broadside. The Unspeakable Visions of the Individual, no. 9. Edition of 500 numbered copies.

Sources: WorldCat; ABE

RBC holdings: folio-2 PS1 .U5 v.9 1979. A second copy, uncatalogued, is held in the recently acquired Edie Parker Kerouac collection. It is no. 293.

Notes: RBC holds no. 227.

1981

Four Poems

a.
New York: Paradox Bookshop, 1981.
Edition of 300 copies.
Source: WorldCat
RBC holdings: none

The Saturn Family: a Portfolio of Six Drawings

a.
Charleston, WV: Parchment Gallery, 1981.
Limited edition of 80 copies, each plate in each copy signed by author.
Source: WorldCat
RBC holdings: folio-2 PS3505 .O76 S38 1981
Notes: RBC holds no. 44.

Herald of the Autochthonic Spirit

a.
New York: New Directions, 1981.
Cloth and paperback. ISBN: 0811208192 (cloth); 0811208087 (paper).
Source: WorldCat
RBC holdings: none

1982

Poem and All Survived

a.
Englewood, Colo.: Howling Dog Press, 1982.
Two broadsides, issued together in a portfolio. "Poem" in red and black on cream card; "All Survived" in white on black card.
Source: WorldCat; Skau
RBC holdings: none

Daydream

a.

West Branch, Iowa: The Toothpaste Press for Bookslinger Editions, 1982.
 Broadside. Edition of 90 signed and numbered.

Source: WorldCat

RBC holdings: none

Wings, Wands, Windows

a.

Englewood, Colo.: Howling Dog Press, 1982.

Ashes Chapbook no. 2.

Source: WorldCat

RBC holdings: none

1983

Hitting the Big 5-0

a.

New York: Catchword Papers, 1983.

Edition of 126, 26 lettered and 100 numbered, all signed.

Source: WorldCat

RBC holdings: PS3505 .O763 H5 1983b

Notes: RBC holds no. 53.

1989

Mind Field

a.

Madras, India/New York: Hanuman Books, 1989.

Hanuman Books no. 27, also issued as part of Hanuman's Series V. ISBN: 0937815268.

Source: WorldCat

RBC holdings: Beats PS3505 .O763 M56 1989

Notes: although it appears in the catalogue and is most certainly held by the RBC, I was unable to locate this item on the shelf, and have therefore not visually examined it.

Mindfield

a.

New York/St. Paul: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1989.

ISBN 0938410857 (cloth); 0938410865 (paperback); 0938410903 (limited edition alphabetic); 0938410962 (limited edition numeric).

Source: WorldCat

RBC holdings: Beats PS3505 .O763 A6 1989

Notes: RBC holds three copies: one limited edition, no. 85 of 250; one clothbound; one paperback.

b.

London: Paladin, 1992.

ISBN 0586091556 (paperback).

Source: WorldCat

RBC holdings: none

c.

New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1998.

Limited editions. ISBN 1560252014.

Source: WorldCat

RBC holdings: none

1993

Gregorian Rant

a.

Louisville, KY: White Fields Press for the Literary Renaissance, 1993.

Heaven Chapbook series no. 18. Limited edition of 100 copies.

Source: WorldCat

RBC holdings: none

1994

Poems, Interview, Photographs

a.

Louisville, KY: White Fields Press in Support of the Literary Renaissance, 1994.

Published in Heaven chapbook no. 30.

Source: WorldCat

RBC holdings: PS3505 .O76 P6 1994

Notes: Published in a limited edition of 250. Consists of several Corso poems and a long interview with Corso, as well as a number of photographs of the author.

1995

Gregorian Rant

a.

Louisville, KY: White Fields Press, 1995.

Broadside, Heaven Poster Series no. 27. On glossy white card.

Source: WorldCat

RBC holdings: none

2003

An Accidental Autobiography: the Selected Letters of Gregory Corso

a.

New York: New Directions, 2003.

ISBN 0811215350. Paperback, edited by Bill Morgan.

Source: WorldCat

RBC holdings: PS3505 .O763 Z48 2003. There is an uncatalogued set of unbound page proofs in a collection of materials recently donated to the RBC by Bill Morgan. This collection also holds two proof copies of the book's wrappers.

CONCLUSIONS, HIGH POINTS, DESIDERATA AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

While by no means comprehensive, the Rare Book Collection's holdings of Corso's monographs are strong. Evidence from the WorldCat database indicates that only a few other libraries have comparable collections of his work; of these, only two or three have notably superior holdings. In collecting Corso's work, the author's relative obscurity works in the favor of the Rare Book Collection. While the works of his more famous contemporaries Kerouac, Ginsberg and Burroughs have become collector's items and are therefore often scarce and very expensive, Corso's works frequently remain available, and reasonably priced. A few items, particularly those of which only a very limited number were produced, may be difficult to come by, but the Collection's holdings could be augmented quickly and easily were the task to be undertaken now.

High points

A few items held by the Rare Book Collection are quite rare and deserve to be noted here. Most of them are minor publications, but of course it is these which serve to lend breadth and depth to the Collection's holdings.

Patrick Shelley's Paintings: a Poem in Prose and Verse

This small broadside, about which very little is known, is held exclusively by the Rare Book Collection, according to WorldCat. It does not appear in Wilson or in Skau.

The Minicab War

This small pamphlet is held by about fifteen other libraries, mainly in their special collections. The only other copy in the Southeast is at the University of Virginia.

The Doubt of Truth

This small postcard poem is held by twelve other libraries; again, the only other copy in the Southeast is at the University of Virginia.

The Saturn Family: a Portfolio of Six Drawings

This collection of Corso's drawings was issued in an edition of eighty, of which only two appear in WorldCat. The other copy is at the University of California at Berkeley, in one of the major collections of Corso's works. Relatively few examples of Corso's drawings exist outside the originals themselves.

The Vestal Lady on Brattle and Other Poems

Although a fair number of other libraries hold this item, the majority of the ones I investigated hold it in their general collections, where presumably it has been rebound and not treated delicately. Only a few repositories hold it in a rare books or other special collection. The Rare Book Collection's copy is in excellent condition.

Desiderata

There are a few items which I believe will be quite difficult to acquire, but which would be quite desirable in the quest to make the Rare Book Collection's holdings truly comprehensive.

Satyr's Chant and Spring's Melodious Herald

This item may be nearly impossible to come by. Only six to ten copies are known to have been printed; the only copy in WorldCat is at Brown University, another major Corso collection. No copies appear to be for sale at the moment.

[Statement for the Paterson Society] or Find it so Hard to Write the How Why & What

This is held in three libraries nationwide, all in the Northeast. There is no indication anywhere of how many copies were originally printed; no copies are available for sale.

International Poetry Incarnation

This is only held in one library, according to WorldCat. It is related to the Royal Albert Hall reading (which was called the International Poetry Incarnation) commemorated in the film and book *Wholly Communion*. There is no indication of how many copies were printed; it is not available for sale.

Poem and All Survived

These broadsides, issued together, are held in three libraries, none of them in the Southeast. The poems also appear in the chapbook *Wings, Wands, Windows*, which the Rare Book Collection does not hold (but which is available for sale).

Recommendations

The majority of the other items not held by the Rare Book Collection should be relatively easy to acquire. Many of them are listed on the ABE website. Most are priced below \$200; some very special copies or very rare items cost more, but even these are priced below \$1000. The Rare Book Collection has established strong business relationships with several rare booksellers that specialize in Beat Generation-related materials; it would be useful, perhaps, to notify them that the Collection is interested in acquiring certain Corso items.

Monographs, of course, do not make a whole collection these days. While important, they are complemented by anthology and periodical holdings, which allow the researcher to, for example, compare different published versions of a given poem. The Rare Book Collection's next step should be to assess its holdings of Corso's contributions to collections of poems and to magazines and journals, and begin to acquire these.

SOURCES CONSULTED

Books

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Websites

Advanced Book Exchange, Inc./Abebooks. <www.abebooks.com>

Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America. <www.aba.com>