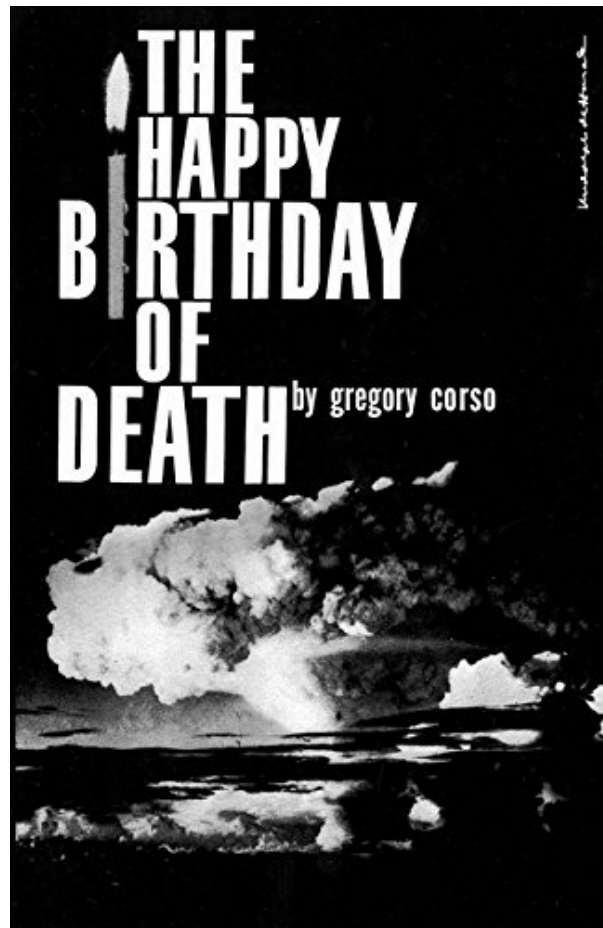
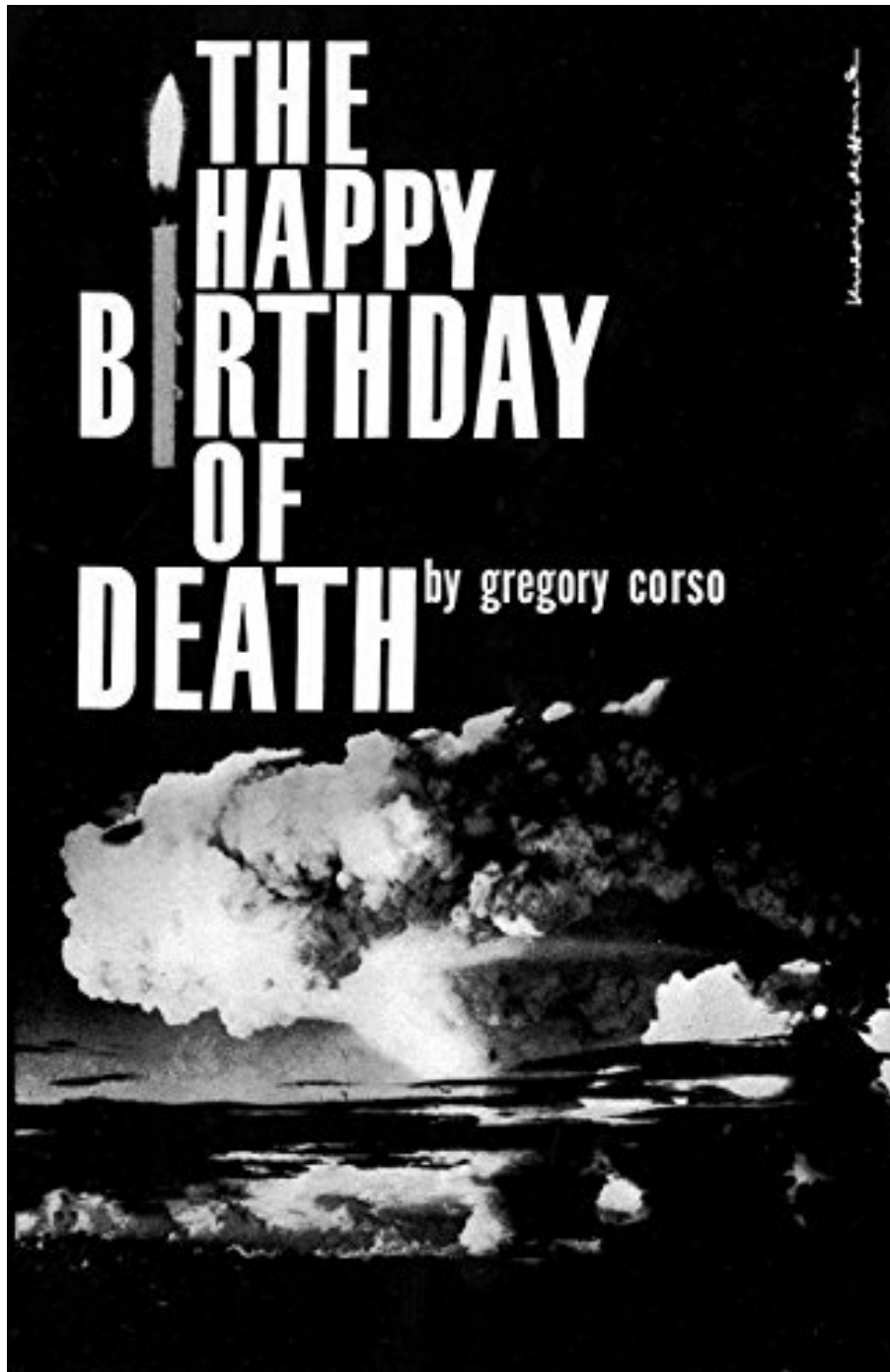


# THE HAPPY BIRTHDAY OF DEATH BY GREGORY CORSO



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## Review

“In terms of language Corso always seems to me the most interesting of the Beats . . . extracting all the power from standard syntax and rhetoric, maintaining the Beat anti-academicism. . . Put this together with the experimentalism and relevance of the Beat outlook, and you have poetry that not only shares our experience but creates it.” (Hayden Carruth)

## From the Back Cover

Gregory Corso has been much publicized as one of the leading literary spokesmen for the 'Beat Generation,' together with Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and William Burroughs. It is true that he has been one of the inner circle of the 'Beats' from the first, but many admirers of his poetry feel that it belongs quite as much to other and older traditions in world literature.

## About the Author

Gregory Corso (1930-2001) was abandoned by his mother a month after his birth at St. Vincent's Hospital in New York. Growing up in foster care and on the streets of Little Italy, Corso was a juvenile delinquent who spent time in Clinton Correctional Facility, in the cell recently vacated by gangster "Lucky" Luciano. An aspiring poet, Corso was taken under the wing of Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, and became the youngest member of the Beat Generation's inner circle, with whom he lived and work in the Beat Hotel, a lodging house in Paris, during the late fifties. There he created one of his signature works, "Bomb", a poem composed of typewritten strips of paper arranged in the shape of a mushroom cloud. Late in life, Corso became reunited with his mother and maintained a close relationship with her until his death.

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It is true that he has been one of the inner circle of the 'Beats' from the first, but many admirers of his poetry feel that it belongs quite as much to other and older traditions in world literature. One of these is the revival of pure poetry whenever an "original"—be it Rimbaud or Whitman—has broken with current verse conventions to give free rein to the magic of language. Another is that ancient pre-occupation of poets—the sense of the immediacy of death. Like Villon or Dylan Thomas, Corso lives close to the mystery of death. It is, perhaps, his central theme, on which variations ranging from the terrible to the comic are sounded. But Corso is seldom macabre. A bursting vitality always carries him back to the sensations of the living, though always it is the reality behind the obvious which has caught his eye. "How I love to probe life," Corso has written, "That's what poetry is to me, a wondrous prober... It's not the metre or measure of a line, a breath; not 'law' music; but the assembly of great eye sounds placed into an inspired measured idea."

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The most underated writings of the 20th century

By Pj Belgardt

Perhaps the man who along with Allan Ginsberg altered the way poetry was written and percieved. This is by far his most eclectic collection, featuring the masterful BOMB (perhaps the ultimate epithath for the 20th century) and the brilliant and moving MARRIAGE, POWER, CLOWN and POLICE more of the contents that show what a clever witty deep commentator Corso is. Poems you can mull ove? Definatly! Poems you can analyse? Undoubtable! But here is a collection you can read again and again and enjoy again and again.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Fish Minstrelry on a Wildbright Morning

By sojourner

Love this book! Gregory Corso was a remarkable man and clearly the most talented of all the beats. He pairs unlikely words with surprising effectiveness and sparkling originality, like a world-class Sommelier pairs wines with food. He owns the English language in a way no one has since Shakespeare. He bathes in the pure joy of playing with words.

Despite his categorization as a beat, Corso's poetry shows a brilliant use of rhyme. There's no poet quite like Gregory Corso, and The Happy Birthday of Death is my favorite of his books. I read it again and again!

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

From a rainy afternoon...

By Dragon Lilly

I fell upon this book in my university library on a cold, miserable, lonely afternoon. I sat under a maple tree and reading it suddenly I am uplifted, inspired renewed and in love with the verse of Corso, so much so that I had to not only own it but write essays about it, I am, like so many others saddened and grieving that he is so understated. "Marriage" is particularly delectable, though my favourites would have to be "Hair" and "Park". Corso gives what so many poets do not; a joyous and truly wonderous love of words, such that my own writer spirit is awakened. I recommend this book highly to any with a youthful, playful spirit. This is for the artist's heart. Corso has moved me, for you I hope he will do the same.

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