



# The Awakener: A Memoir of Kerouac and the Fifties

*Helen Weaver*

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". . . [Weaver] paints a romantic picture of Greenwich Village in the 1950s and '60s, when she worked in publishing and hung out with Allen Ginsberg and the poet Richard Howard and was wild and loose, getting high and falling into bed almost immediately with her crushes, including Lenny Bruce. . . . Her descriptions of the Village are evocative, recalling a time when she wore long skirts, Capezio ballet shoes and black stockings,' and used to sit in the Bagatelle and have sweet vermouth on the rocks with a twist of lemon.' Early on, she quotes Pasternak: 'You in others: this is your soul.' Kerouac's soul lives on through many people -- Joyce Johnson, for one -- but few have been as adept as Weaver at capturing both him and the New York bohemia of the time. He was lucky to have met her." --Tara McKelvey, *The New York Times Book Review*

"There is a tendency for memoirs written by women about The Great Man to be self-abnegating exercises in a kind of inverted narcissism—the author seeking to prove her worth as muse, as consort, as chosen one. Not so with Helen Weaver's beautiful, plainspoken elegy for her time spent with Jack Kerouac, who suddenly appeared at her door in the West Village one white, frosty morning with Allen Ginsberg, who knew Weaver's roommate, in tow."—*New York Post*

"Helen Weaver's book was a revelation to me! . . . This is the most graphic, honest, shameless, and moving documentary of what the newly liberated women in cities got up to—how they lived, loved, and created. Who knew? It is time they did! And here's how."—Carolyn Cassady

"The book recounts her affair with Kerouac in 1956 during the period when he signed his literary contract for *On the Road*, but

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