



## Peter Orlovsky: A Life in Words: Intimate Chronicles of a Beat Writer

**Peter Orlovsky**

**Bill Morgan, Editor**

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Once past the in-your-face, nude cover picture of Peter Orlovsky and the poet Allen Ginsberg embracing, taken by none other than Richard Avedon, a reader is provided with an inside view of the gentler and more serious aspects of the Beat Generation that challenged the puritanical constricts of literature in America.

Not that there isn't lots of sex, drugs, and weirdness along the way. No book dealing with such Beat literati as the aforementioned Ginsberg of *Howl* fame, Jack Kerouac of *On the Road*, and the likes of Gary Snyder, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and Leroi Jones would be honest without some raffish spice.

Orlovsky was twenty-one when he met Ginsberg in San Francisco in 1954 and became his companion and lover. He kept a diary, which is quoted extensively. For some forty years, he and Ginsberg traveled the world together before ending up on a farm Ginsberg bought in Cherry Valley, NY.

Orlovsky was poorly educated, woefully introspective, and mentally unstable, but also loyal and forgiving. The word "sweet" was often used to describe him. And he was a poet, whose poems can be found in *The Beatitude Anthology*.

He died in 2010. The first stanza of his last poem speaks perhaps to the lilt and inevitable end of the Beat life:

*Feet dance for money  
Feet dance for life  
Feet dance for blues  
Dear Peter kiss these feet goodbye.*

THOMAS BEVIER (Fall 2014)

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