



Girls Who Wore Black: Women Writing the Beat Generation

Ronna C. Johnson, Nancy M. Grace

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"Girls Who Wore Black recovers neglected women writers who deserve more attention for their writing and for their historical role in the mid-century arts scene. This collection of essays reopens and revises the Beat canon, Beat history, and Beat poetics; it is an important contribution to literary criticism and history."-Jennie Skerl, author of *A Tawdry Place of Salvation: The Art of Jane Bowles*

"Ronna Johnson and Nancy Grace have done an invaluable service for students of American literature: their collection begins with an essential essay about the three generations of Beat women and then provides fine contributions by critics Anthony Libby, Linda Russo, Maria Damon, Tim Hunt, and others. The value of this book is so clear one must wonder why it wasn't available much earlier."-Linda Wagner-Martin, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

What do we know about the women who played an important role in creating the literature of the Beat Generation? Until recently, very little. Studies of the movement have effaced or excluded women writers, such as Elise Cowen, Joyce Johnson, Joanne Kyger, Hettie Jones, and Diane Di Prima, each one a significant figure of the postwar Beat communities. Equally free-thinking and innovative as the founding generation of men, women writers, fluent in Beat, hippie, and women's movement idioms, partook of and bridged two important countercultures of the American mid-century. Persistently foregrounding female experiences in the cold war 1950s and in the counterculture 1960s and in every decade up to the millennium, women writing Beat have brought nonconformity, skepticism, and gender dissent to postmodern culture and literary production in the United States and beyond.

Ronna C. Johnson is a lecturer in the departments of English and American Studies at Tufts University. Nancy M. Grace is an associate professor in the department of English and director of the Program in Writing at The College of Wooster in Ohio. She is the author of *The Feminized Male Character in Twentieth-Century Literature*.

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