

Walter Secada Memory

I remember Allen Ginsberg's poetry reading at the Marine Stadium during a beautifully overcast night, with wispy cirrus clouds playing above him. He performed on a floating barge in front of the Stadium-and it was a performance, not a reading. He was disheveled, very animated and really into it. I think I remember him reading "America" and "Howl".

Ginsberg's father, an accomplished poet in his own right, joined him onstage. Allen Ginsberg seemed surprised to see him exclaiming "Dad!" as the elder Ginsberg walked onstage to join his son. I was quite impressed to see Ginsberg's father show up. The crowd was attentive-thought the listening experience might have been enhanced by the things that people used to do in those days....

My second experience seeing Allen Ginsburg in Miami was during the Republican National Convention in 1972. I had camped with Viet Nam Veterans Against The War in Flamingo Park in Miami Beach. As we marched towards the convention center we were tear gassed; many of us got arrested, processed and sent to the County's detention center.

Someone by the name of Peter who claimed to be a farmer in upstate New York saw the same judge as I did and was treated much more as an "outside agitator" than was I. You can imagine my surprise when at the Center, I see Allen Ginsberg enter and scream "Peter!", his partner's name who in turn screamed "Allen!". They embraced and I saw the most passionate man-on-man kiss I have ever seen. During our week of detention, Ginsberg practiced Yoga and held forth on almost everything including defending pornography as releasing our sexual desires.

The "Yin" and "Yang" of those two events involving Allen Ginsberg will always be linked in my mind: the emotional days of the protest with him finding his life partner-and watching him perform on a floating stage at the Miami Marine Stadium on a gorgeous moonlit night.