VERSÃO ORIGINAL

I first met met Neal not long after my father died...I had just gotten over a serious illness that I won't bother to talk about except that it really had something to do with my father's death and my awful feeling that everything was dead. With the coming of Neal there really began for me that part of my life that you could call my life on the road. Prior to that I'd always dreamed of going west, seeing the country, always vaguely planning and never specifically taking off and so on. Neal is the perfect guy for the road because he actually was born on the road, when his parents were passing through Salt Lake City in 1926, in a jaloppy, on their way to Los Angeles. First reports of Neal came to me through Hal Chase, who'd shown me a few letters from him written in a Colorado reform school. I was tremendously interested in these letters because they so naively and sweetly asked for Hal to teach him all about Nietzsche and all the wonderful intellectual things that Hal was so justly famous for. At one point Allen Ginsberg and I talked about these letters and wondered if we would ever meet the strange Neal Cassady. This is all far back, when Neal was not the way he is today, when he was a young jailkid shrouded in mystery. Then news came that Neal was out of reform school and was coming to New York for the first time; also there was talk that he had just married a 16 year old girl called Louanne. One day I was hanging around the Columbia campus and Hal and Ed White told me Neal had just arrived and was living in a guy called Bob Malkin's cold-water pad in East Harlem, the Spanish Harlem. Neal had arrived the night before, the first time in NY, with his beautiful little sharp chick Louanne; they got off the Greyhound bus at 50 St. and cut around the corner looking for a place to eat and went right in Hector's, and since then Hector's cafeteria has always been a big symbol of NY for Neal. They spent money on beautiful big glazed cakes and creampuffs. All this time Neal was telling Louanne things like this, "Now darling here we are in Ny and although I haven't quite told you everything that I was thinking about when we crossed Missouri and especially at the point when we passed the Bonneville reformatory which reminded me of my jail problem it is absolutely necessary now to postpone all

VERSÃO EDITADA

Parte Um

1

Encontrei Dean pela primeira vez não muito depois que minha mulher e eu nos separamos. Eu tinha acabado de me livrar de uma doença séria da qual nem vale a pena falar, a não ser que teve algo a ver com a separação terrivelmente desgastante e com a minha sensação de que tudo estava morto. Com a vinda de Dean Moriarty começa a parte da minha vida que se pode chamar de vida na estrada. Antes disso eu tinha sonhado muitas vezes em ir para o Oeste conhecer o país, mas não passavam de planos vagos e eu nunca dava a partida. Dean é o cara perfeito para a estrada simplesmente porque nasceu na estrada quando seus pais estavam passando por Salt Lake City em 1926, a caminho de Los Angeles, num calhambeque caindo aos pedaços. As primeiras notícias sobre ele chegaram através de Chad King, que havia me mostrado algumas cartas que ele escrevera num reformatório do Novo México. Fiquei ligadíssimo nas cartas por causa do jeito ingênuo e singelo com que elas pediam a Chad para lhe ensinar tudo sobre Nietzsche e todas aquelas maravilhas intelectuais que Chad conhecia. Certa vez Carlo e eu falamos a respeito das cartas e nos perguntamos se algum dia iríamos conhecer o estranho Dean Moriarty. Tudo isso foi há muito tempo, quando Dean não era do jeito que ele é hoje, quando era um delinqüente juvenil envolto em mistério. Então chegaram as notícias de que Dean havia se mandado do reformatório e estava vindo para Nova York pela primeira vez; falava-se também que ele tinha acabado de casar com uma garota chamada Marylou.

Um dia eu vagabundeava pelo *campus* quando Chad e Tim Gray me disseram que Dean estava hospedado numa