

**1. From *Howl* (1955) “Moloch” by Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997)**

**II**

What sphinx of cement and aluminum bashed open their skulls and ate up their brains and imagination?  
 Moloch! Solitude! Filth! Ugliness! Ashcans and unobtainable dollars! Children screaming under the stairways! Boys sobbing in armies! Old men weeping in the parks!  
 Moloch! Moloch! Nightmare of Moloch! Moloch the loveless! Mental Moloch! Moloch the heavy judger of men!  
 Moloch the incomprehensible prison! Moloch the crossbone soulless jailhouse and Congress of sorrows! Moloch whose buildings are judgment!  
 Moloch the vast stone of war! Moloch the stunned governments!  
 Moloch whose mind is pure machinery! Moloch whose blood is running money! Moloch whose fingers are ten armies! Moloch whose breast is a cannibal dynamo! Moloch whose ear is a smoking tomb!  
 Moloch whose eyes are a thousand blind windows! Moloch whose skyscrapers stand in the long streets like endless Jehovahs! Moloch whose factories dream and croak in the fog! Moloch whose smokestacks and antennae crown the cities!  
 Moloch whose love is endless oil and stone! Moloch whose soul is electricity and banks! Moloch whose poverty is the specter of genius! Moloch whose fate is a cloud of sexless hydrogen! Moloch whose name is the Mind!  
 Moloch in whom I sit lonely! Moloch in whom I dream Angels! Crazy in Moloch! Cocksucker in Moloch! Lacklove and manless in Moloch!  
 Moloch who entered my soul early! Moloch in whom I am a consciousness without a body! Moloch who frightened me out of my natural ecstasy! Moloch whom I abandon! Wake up in Moloch! Light streaming out of the sky!  
 Moloch! Moloch! Robot apartments! invisible suburbs! skeleton treasures! blind capitals! demonic industries! spectral nations! invincible mad houses granite cocks! monstrous bombs!  
 They broke their backs lifting Moloch to Heaven! Pavements, trees, radios, tons! lifting the city to Heaven which exists and is everywhere about us!

**INSTRUCTIONS: DO TASK 1 or 2 or 3.**

Visions! omens! hallucinations! miracles! ecstasies! gone down the American river!  
 Dreams! adorations! illuminations! religions! the whole boatload of sensitive bullshit!  
 Breakthroughs! over the river! flips and crucifixions! gone down the flood! Highs! Epiphanies! Despairs! Ten years' animal screams and suicides! Minds! New loves! Mad generation! down on the rocks of Time!  
 Real holy laughter in the river! They saw it all! the wild eyes! the holy yells! They bade farewell! They jumped off the roof to solitude! waving! carrying flowers! Down to the river! into the street!

**TASK 1:** Watch a clip from the movie *Howl* (dir. Rob Epstein & Jeffery Friedman, 2010).

James Franco as Allen Ginsberg reads from *Howl*, Part II “Moloch”) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nonab6djMAA>>

Make notes and prepare to answer the questions, What is “Moloch”? What is Ginsberg criticizing about America? Give examples from the text to support your view.

**TASK 2:** Read poem 2 or poem 3 and make notes OR make notes *and* write a paragraph on structure and meaning.

**2. Humanity** by Gregory Corso (1930-2001)

What simple profundities  
 What profound simplicities  
 To sit down among the trees  
 and breathe with them  
 in murmur brood and breeze — 5

And how can I trust them  
 who pollute the sky  
 with heavens  
 the below with hells

Well, humankind, 10  
 I'm part of you  
 and so my son

but neither of us  
 will believe  
 your big sad lie 15

**3. Tenorman** by Jack Kerouac (1922-1969)

Sweet sad young tenor  
 Horn slumped around neck  
 Bearded full of junk  
 Slouches waiting  
 For Apocalypse,  
 Listens to the new 5  
 Negro raw trumpet kid  
 Tell him the wooden news;  
 And the beat of the bass  
 The bass—drives in  
 Drummer drops a bomb 10  
 Piano tinkle tackles  
 Sweet tenor lifting  
 All American sorrows  
 Raises mouthpiece to mouth  
 And blows to finger 15  
 The iron sounds

#### 4. Only a Pawn in their Game (1964)

by Bob Dylan

A bullet from the back of a bush took Medgar Evers' blood  
A finger fired the trigger to his name  
A handle hid out in the dark  
A hand set the spark  
Two eyes took the aim  
Behind a man's brain  
But he can't be blamed  
He's only a pawn in their game

A South politician preaches to the poor white man  
"You got more than the blacks, don't complain.  
You're better than them, you been born with white skin,"  
they explain.  
And the Negro's name  
Is used it is plain  
For the politician's gain  
As he rises to fame  
And the poor white remains  
On the caboose of the train  
But it ain't him to blame  
He's only a pawn in their game

The deputy sheriffs, the soldiers, the governors get paid  
And the marshals and cops get the same  
But the poor white man's used in the hands of them all like  
a tool  
He's taught in his school  
From the start by the rule  
That the laws are with him  
To protect his white skin  
To keep up his hate  
So he never thinks straight  
'Bout the shape that he's in  
But it ain't him to blame  
He's only a pawn in their game

From the poverty shacks, he looks from the cracks to the  
tracks  
And the hoofbeats pound in his brain  
And he's taught how to walk in a pack  
Shoot in the back  
With his fist in a clinch  
To hang and to lynch  
To hide 'neath the hood

To kill with no pain  
Like a dog on a chain

He ain't got no name  
But it ain't him to blame  
He's only a pawn in their game.

Today, Medgar Evers was buried from the bullet he caught  
They lowered him down as a king  
But when the shadowy sun sets on the one  
That fired the gun  
He'll see by his grave  
On the stone that remains  
Carved next to his name  
His epitaph plain:  
Only a pawn in their game

Soundfile with lyrics:

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bXWM84rUV-Q>>

#### 5. Woodstock (1970) by Joni Mitchell

I came upon a child of God  
He was walking along the road  
And I asked him where are you going  
And this he told me  
I'm going on down to Yasgur's farm  
I'm going to join in a rock 'n' roll band  
I'm going to camp out on the land  
I'm going to try an' get my soul free

We are stardust  
We are golden  
And we've got to get ourselves  
Back to the garden

Then can I walk beside you  
I have come here to lose the smog  
And I feel to be a cog in something turning  
Well maybe it is just the time of year  
Or maybe it's the time of man  
I don't know who I am  
But you know life is for learning

We are stardust  
We are golden  
And we've got to get ourselves  
Back to the garden

By the time we got to Woodstock  
We were half a million strong  
And everywhere there was song and celebration  
And I dreamed I saw the bombers  
Riding shotgun in the sky  
And they were turning into butterflies  
Above our nation

We are stardust  
Billion year old carbon  
We are golden  
Caught in the devil's bargain  
And we've got to get ourselves  
back to the garden

Video of live performance:

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cRjQCvfcXn0>>

**TASK 3:** Read the lyrics and listen to song 4 or 5 on YouTube.

Make notes in your notebook and prepare to discuss the message of one of the songs. Give examples from the text to support your view.