

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 treasuries! 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 on structure and meaning. Prepare to discuss the message of one of the songs. Give examples from the text to support your view.

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.