



Desolate Angel: Jack Kerouac, The Beat Generation, And America

Dennis McNally

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Jack Kerouac-"King of the Beats," unwitting catalyst for the '60s counterculture, groundbreaking author-was a complex and compelling man: a star athlete with a literary bent; a spontaneous writer vilified by the New Critics but adored by a large, youthful readership; a devout Catholic but aspiring Buddhist; a lover of freedom plagued by crippling alcoholism. *Desolate Angel* follows Kerouac from his childhood in the mill town of Lowell, Massachusetts, to his early years at Columbia where he met Allen Ginsberg, William S. Burroughs, and Neal Cassady, beginning a four-way friendship that became a lifelong obsession. Kerouac's frenetic cross-country journeys, experiments with drugs and sexuality, travels to Mexico and Tangier, and years of failure, frustration, and depression are recounted with detail and sensitivity. *Desolate Angel* is a harrowing, compassionate portrait of a man and artist set against an extraordinary social backdrop.



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