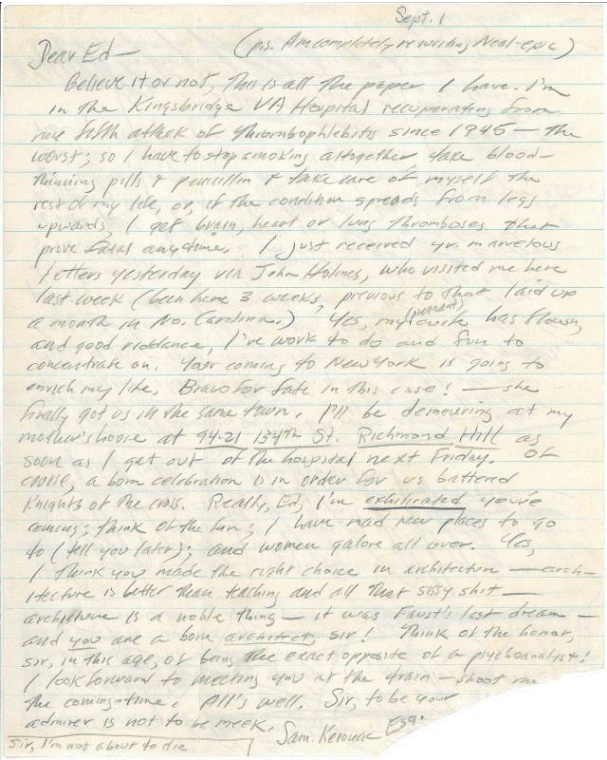


Basic Detail Report



Jack Kerouac letter, regarding the rewriting of "On the Road"

Date

1951

Primary Maker

Jack Kerouac

Medium

Paper

Description

A handwritten letter from Jack Kerouac, signed ("Sam. Kerouac Esq."), to Ed White, September 1, 1951. Together with manuscript fragment from <i>On the Road</i> on verso. Quarto, single leaf with writing on both sides. The verso is filled entirely with Kerouac's handwritten text, in

French and English, blocked off and crossed out in pencil. Together with a handwritten envelope, containing handwritten postscript to verso, postmarked New York, New York. A legendary letter, announcing Kerouac's plans to revise *On the Road*, written from Jack in his sick-bed while he underwent treatment for phlebitis in the Kingsbridge VA Hospital. Instead of revising the novel, however, Kerouac had gone to work on rough "inserts" intended to flesh out the manuscript. The sketches were alternately referred to as *On the Road* and "the book about Cassady" and they ultimately became an entirely different work – the new novel was *Visions of Cody* and wouldn't be published until 1959. Kerouac was told to stop smoking and adhere to a program of medication for life, and never forgot that if the clots reached his brain or his heart, it would kill him. He used his time in the hospital to re-read Proust and start a hospital diary in which he attempted a Proustian recollection of his own past. In the diary he also outlined a series of books that would comprise the legend of Jack Kerouac. He was convinced that remembering his personal odyssey through life would lead to a new burst of creativity. He closes the letter with an assurance to White: "Sir, I'm not about to die."