

# How do I get to Beatville?

by **Peter Forrest**

("That's not writing, that's typing!")

## **Plot Synopsis**

1959, NYC a fictitious Cafe called Firefly Cafe (based on the Gaslight Cafe of MacDougal Street). Mrs. Popov is a Russian immigrant who runs a Cafe that is frequented by beatniks. She is almost broke and the Cafe may be forced to shut down. She dislikes the gang of beatniks that loiter in her place. Things get worse when she receives threatening letters for being a suspected communist. The FBI have her number! However, she is merely searching for a better life for her and her daughter Natasha. Things get worse when Natasha quits school and returns to her mother's Cafe dressed as a beatnik! Finally, an unrelenting FBI agent (Agent X) with not enough proof against Mrs. Popov as a communist spy decides to pay a beatnik infiltrator money to plant a stolen classified document in Popov's Firefly Cafe. However, the night of the poetry reading, the tables get turned, and that gang of no-goodnik beatniks save Mrs. Popov from Agent X. She finally accepts them the way they are and reconciles with her daughter.

## Cast

MRS. POPOV - Aging Russian immigrant and owner of the Firefly Cafe where the beatniks hang out. She is very suspicious of the beatniks, dislikes their lazy ways, and talks highly of her well-educated daughter, Natasha. She is a very strong-minded woman and has survived many ordeals throughout her life. She even sings about her own harshness in the song, "*Siberian Tiger*." Mrs. Popov never mentions what ever happened to her husband since and he is not in the story. She epitomizes the Russian attitude of "You never know how much I suffer, and I've worked so hard all my life."

NICKY-9-DOORS - An art school drop-out, beatnik *extraordinaire* and Renaissance man. Nicky-9-doors is a nickname for this comic relief character, Nicholas Nindor. He is a somewhat obsessed and paranoid poet who thinks the atomic bomb is going to blow up the world and he has bought an old junk typewriter to write down his life's story before the blast. He laments his lot in life in the song "*King-O' Bohemi-O' Blues*."

RITA - An angry motorcycle momma who has been in jail not too far in the recent past. She barely puts up with Nicky-9-door's antics and constantly confronts Mrs. Popov. She is looking to find her place in life and wants to find Beatville to have a good time. She counters Nicky-9-door's *King-O' Bohemi-O' Blues* with a refrain of *Queen-O' Bohemi-O' Blues*.

NATASHA - Mrs. Popov's daughter who drops out of college to become the coolest and hippest beatnik chick. She spouts the "On The Road" philosophy and have a good time. However, Mrs. Popov literally disowns Natasha when she returns as a beatnik to charm the Beat gang at the Firefly Cafe. She mesmerizes the gang when she sings the strong number "*Beatnik Chick*."

JACKIE - A beatnik-in training who recently dropped out of college and is trying to gain some self-confidence by listening to Rita and attempting to become hip.

J.P. TROUBADOUR - A wandering minstrel from Louisiana who shows up with a guitar on his back and one who's been on the road and knows the scene. He is the hippest and coolest cat this side of the Bayou and eventually answers the question in song, "*How do I get to Beatville?*"

AGENT X (FBI) - A paranoid and mistrusting agent who has forsaken his own bureau in order to expel communist sympathizers throughout the States. He will take any means necessary to see that Mrs. Popov is deported. He equally detests the beatniks who frequent the Firefly Cafe. He sings a response to the beatniks' taunts in "*Oh Daddio, Where Ya Gonna Go?*"

Titles of scenes and corresponding songs:  
Setting: Firefly Cafe (New York City 1959)

<b>Act I</b>	<b>Scene Name</b>	<b>Song Title</b>
Scene 1	Three Beats Meet at the Firefly Cafe	We Three Beats
Scene 2	Popov and the Old Country	For a Few Rubles More
Scene 3	Agent X Comes to Town	Oh Daddio, Where Ya Gonna Go?
Scene 4	Nicky's Typewriter	King-O' Bohemi-O' Blues
Scene 5	Popov Jazzes it Up	3/4 Cuppa Jazz
Scene 6	Natasha Comes Home	Beatnik Chick
<b>Act II</b>	<b>Scene Name</b>	<b>Song Title</b>
Scene 1	Cafe-O-Late!	
Scene 2	J.P. Makes the Scene	How do I get to Beatville?
Scene 3	Popov Meets the Beats 1/2 way	Siberian Tiger
Scene 4	Poets of the Beat Generation	MacBeat Act I, Scene 3 Row that Volga Boat, man!
Scene 5	FBI Poetic Justice	Kerouac Goes Beatnik

ACT I

Scene 1

Three Beats Meet at the Firefly Cafe

*New York City, October 1959. A fictitious beatnik hang-out called the Firefly Cafe. The stage is dark. Low music resounds from the piano and a cymbal starts to shimmer. Suddenly, a spotlight focuses in on three beatniks (Rita, Nicky-9-doors, Jackie) sitting around a small Cafe table. There is a book and a candle on the table. A MacBeth-like atmosphere is in the air as the beatniks start to chant a poem in "iambic" pentameter! (based on MacBeth Act 1 Scene 1 )*

We Three Beats

BEATNIKS (sung)

When shall we three Beats meet again?  
Come to the Firefly, so don't be lame  
Let loose a howl when the poetry's done ah ooh  
That'll be the last word sung  
(wandering wolf call) ah ooh ooh ah ooh ah  
(wandering wolf call) ah ooh ooh ah ooh ah  
That'll mean the Beats have won.

AT WHAT HIP PLACE?  
TO MACDOUGAL STREET  
THERE TO MEET WITH THE BEATS  
WHERE IS KEROUAC WHEN GINSBERG COMES TO CALL?  
WHERE IS KEROUAC WHEN BURROUGHS TAKES A FALL?  
WHERE IS KEROUAC WHEN POPOV STARTS TO CALL?

When is hip hep and hep is hip?  
Let's split to Beatville can't beat the trip  
Don your beret at the Firefly Caf' ah ooh  
Hang out with the riffraff cats  
That'll be the Beats' last laugh

CHORUS : Repeat

When Popov starts, when Popov starts, when Popov starts to call!

ACT I

Scene 2

Popov and the Old Country

*The lights go on to reveal a Cafe with a few round tables and chairs. The place is very drab. There is a small counter to the right where some coffee cups are stacked. Mrs. Popov enters from a side door into the Firefly Cafe carrying a cardboard box. The three beatniks are sitting at a table watching her.*

MRS. POPOV

*(boisterously with a Russian accent)* You no-goodniks! Scram, I say, scram! Can't you leave a poor old Russian woman be?

NICKY-9-DOORS

Poor? Who needs money anyway, Mrs. Popov? I'm an artist!

MRS. POPOV

You, an artist Nicky-9-doors!? I wouldn't bet my last ruble on it!

*Popov takes cups from the box and places them on the counter.*

RITA

Popov, can't you tell that Nicky-9-doors is a genius, a painter, a poet, a literary man...

MRS. POPOV

He's just a bum and no-goodnik!

NICKY-9-DOORS

Hey, I ain't no daddio! I've got a job.... as a painter....

MRS. POPOV

You mean painting fences!

JACKIE

*(to Rita)* Rita, why does she dislike us so much?

RITA

Jackie, try to be more hip, would ya? Popov hates us Beats! All the Squares do.

NICKY-9-DOORS

See, Jackie, we're anti-establishment rebels who despise the status quo. We live, we breath, we enjoy life. We'll never conform to their daddio system.

MRS. POPOV

Ha! You no-goodniks can talk all you want about your idiotic rebellious ways, but you can't even afford to buy a coffee... now go away before I kick you all out!

RITA

(angrily at Popov) Stop calling us *no-goodniks*, damn it, it's beatniks to you!

MRS. POPOV

No-goodniks, beatniks, it's all the same to my ears! We had none of this nonsense in the old country.

RITA

You're in America now Popov, this is not the old country anymore, ya dig?

MRS. POPOV

(reminiscing) Ah, the old country, it was so beautiful before the Communists. But that was long ago, I can hardly believe it's been 40 something years! And where am I now? Just stuck in this old broken-down Firefly Cafe.

NICKY-9-DOORS

In NYC, no better place to be.

RITA

(sarcastically) The brilliant poet speaketh....

JACKIE

One day I'm gonna be a hip poet like you, Nicky.

NICKY-9-DOORS

Jackie, the secret to poetry is something ol' Shakespeari-O thought up a few years back. It's something called iambeat pentameter.

JACKIE

What?

NICKY-9-DOORS

That's *iambeat* pentameter, get it? *I am beat* pentameter!

RITA

(*raising her fist*) I am gonna *beat* yer head!

NICKY-9-DOORS

Cool it Riti-O, I taught *Kerouac* everything he knows!

*The 7-note Kerouac motif sounds from the piano.*

RITA

Gimme a break!

MRS. POPOV

(*to Jackie*) You poor girl, don't you listen to these beatniks. Stay away from them as far as possible! Otherwise, you're bound to get into big trouble.

RITA

Lighten up, would ya Popov? She's just trying to learn to be hip.

MRS. POPOV

Poor Rita, why are you always so angry? Why can't you be like my daughter?

RITA

You mean *Natasha*, the goody two-shoes in San Francisco?

JACKIE

Mrs. Popov has a daughter?

NICKY-9-DOORS

Stop talking so square Jackie! I told you, if you want to be one of us, talk hip.

JACKIE

Huh? Sorry.

MRS. POPOV

Nicholas, you leave that poor girl alone. She's a good girl like my Natasha who is working on her Ph.D. (*looking at him sternly*) She'd have nothing to do with you beatnik bums.

NICKY-9-DOORS

I must protest that remark, as a beatnik esquire and Renaissance man, student of modern artistic expression...

MRS. POPOV

(*dreamily to herself*) Ah, the old country.... no beatniks, no dirty coffee cups, and the memory of my own dear grandmother drinking the finest teas in the palace of the czars. It was so beautiful. *Da...* it was like yesterday... I remember my thirteenth birthday... the flowers, the music... the piano being thrown out the window... oioioi!

For a Few Rubles More

MRS. POPOV (sung)

When I was still young, I had much more fun  
There were no beatniks, only Bolsheviks  
Now I'm all alone, in my adopted home  
Running this small Cafe, for beatniks who never pay.

In 1917 I'd just turned thirteen  
I had a birthday bash, that the Cossacks crashed  
I was sent away to the U.S.A.  
Running this small Cafe, for beatniks who never pay

(*spoken*) Who never pay!

I'm a poor Russian woman all alone  
With a daughter far away only reach her on the phone  
I'm a poor Russian woman, running this Cafe  
Trying to get you beatniks all to pay!

FOR A FEW RUBLES MORE, I WOULDN'T BE SO POOR  
FOR A FEW RUBLES MORE, I WOULDN'T BE SO POOR  
FOR A FEW RUBLES MORE, I WOULD THROW YOU OUT THE DOOR!

I'm a poor Russian woman, forced to flee  
Who's been badgered by the Bolsheviks, beatniks, KGB  
I'm an old Russian woman, in a new country  
Minding beatniks who think her coffee's free!

CHORUS: repeat

I'm a poor Russian woman why can't you leave me be?  
Beatniks, Bolsheviks, you're all the same to me  
I'm a poor Russian woman so underpaid  
With a Cafe full of beatniks only turns my hair to gray!

CHORUS: repeat

*During the song **For a Few Rubles More**, Mrs. Popov confronts the beatniks and finally chases them out of the Cafe to end the scene.*

ACT I

Scene 3

Agent X Comes to Town

*Mrs. Popov is left alone in the Cafe. She starts to clean up the mess left by the beatniks. She takes several coffee cups to the side counter while talking to herself.*

MRS. POPOV

*(to herself)* Finally, that gang of terrible no-goodniks is gone. No wonder I never have any customers with them hanging around all the time. If this continues, I'll be broke by the end of the summer

*Suddenly the main Cafe door opens (upstage center) and a man dressed in a hat and trench coat enters. Agent X moves towards Mrs. Popov very menacingly. He is alone with her in the Firefly.*

MRS. POPOV

*(to herself)* Ah! Finally! A real customer... *(pleasantly)* Can I help you? Would you like some tea or coffee. We have some of the finest teas in New York City. If only...

AGENT X

*(interrupting in a rude manner)* Are you Mrs. Marina Popov?

MRS. POPOV

Yes?

AGENT X

I would advise you to start packing and leave the country!

MRS. POPOV

What!? Who are you?

AGENT X

Special Agent X from the FBI but that does not matter. The only fact that matters is you are a suspected communist collaborator!

MRS. POPOV

That's a lie! *(to herself)* Well there was my second cousin Vladimir with the *red* overalls. *(to him)* I'm no communist. What proof do you have?

AGENT X

Soon we will have enough information on you to put you away for life.... hahaha!

MRS. POPOV

But I left Russia a long time ago... the Communists took everything my family ever owned... our house, our money... *(pause)* our vodka!

AGENT X

Not long enough ago. Your name has appeared prominently on our anti-American Activities List. Now let me see...

*Agent X pulls a long list out of his trench coat and runs down the names as the list drops to the floor.*

AGENT X

*(slowly)* Humph.... Lenin, McCarthy, Molotov, Stalin, Popov! There's the proof!

*Agent X points to her name on the list.*

MRS. POPOV

*(shocked)* I don't believe it!

AGENT X

*(menacingly)* You're a threat to national security and it's my job to see to it that you're stopped for good. You make one slip up and you're history, Popov! Back to Siberia!

*Nicky-9-doors barges in through the front door and approaches the table where he left his book.*

NICKY-9-DOORS

Hi Mrs. Pop, I forgot my poetry book on the table. Hey, who's the square? *(points to Agent X)*

AGENT X

*(in a poetic manner)* This *square* would like to know your name, dear Mr. Beatnik?

MRS. POPOV

Don't tell him!

NICKY-9-DOORS

You are obviously a man who can judge poetic character indeed. I am, Nicky-9-doors.

*Agent X quickly pulls out his list again and starts to scan the names.*

AGENT X

Nicky-9-doors...how is that spelt? Is that a first or last name?

NICKY-9-DOORS

Relax pops, that's my nickname. I am really Nicholas Nindor, beatnik extraordinaire, esquire and Renaissance man.

AGENT X

*(frustrated)* Humph, no "Nindor" on the list, I guess I'll just have to *add* your name.

NICKY-9-DOORS

That'd be far out. I hope Santa appreciates you helping him with his list so early, daddio.

AGENT X

*(angrily)* Who are you calling *daddio*?

NICKY-9-DOORS

You, daddio!

AGENT X

Don't call me daddio!

*Rita and Jackie come in through the front door.*

RITA

9-doors, are you gonna take all day!? Let's split!

## NICKY-9-DOORS

Hang on, this daddio's giving me a hard time.

JACKIE

Oh, my first real live daddio!!

AGENT X

(*very angrily*) Don't call me daddio!!

Oh Daddio, Where Ya Gonna Go?

BEATNIKS (sung)

OH DADDIO, WHERE YA GONNA GO? WHERE YA GONNA GO? OH DADDIO  
OH DADDIO, WHERE YA GONNA GO? WHERE YA GONNA GO? OH DADDIO  
OH DADDY, DADDY, DADDY, DADDY, DADDIO  
WHERE YA GONNA GO?

If you want to learn where to go daddio  
You've got to learn to go with the flow  
If you want to learn to be cool, to be hip  
You've got to live the life of a beatnik

Oh daddio if you don't know where to go  
It's better to follow the flow  
Cause if you want to learn to be cool, to be hip  
You've got to live the life of a beatnik

CHORUS : repeat

If you want to go on the road daddio  
You've got to know, which way to go  
If you want to get a beat car and go far  
You've got to learn to live on the road

Oh daddio if you don't know where to go  
It's better to follow the flow  
Cause if you want to go on the road daddio  
You've got to head to ol' Mexico

AGENT X (sung)

Don't call me daddio! I'm not your daddy, you can't make me go!  
You can call me Mister-O, I don't like beatniks or their lingo

BEATNIK LINGO CHOIR (sung)

Lingo, lingo, oh oh oh  
Lingo, lingo, lingo, lingo  
Daddio, on the road  
To Mexico we...

Go daddy, daddy, daddy, daddy, daddio  
Where ya gonna go?

*The beatniks run out of the Cafe after Agent X at the end of the song.*

ACT I

Scene 4

Nicky's Typewriter

*Mrs. Popov is once again now left alone in the Cafe; the beatniks have ran after Agent X into the street.*

MRS. POPOV

*(to herself)* It is all so terrible. Why must I suffer so much wherever I go? I am no communist, just a poor old Russian woman trying to make two ends and meat.

*Mrs. Popov goes to the beatnik table and picks up the empty coffee cups and brings them over to the long counter at stage left. She goes under the counter and brings up a bottle of vodka. She opens the bottle, pours some into a coffee cup and takes a drink. She puts the bottle back under the counter.*

MRS. POPOV

How sweet vodka tastes compared to this bitter life, I'm only thankful that my daughter, Natasha is spared all this trouble. She will make her poor old mother very proud when she gets her Doctorate. My daughter, Ph.D!

*Mrs. Popov accidentally drops a coffee cup on the floor.*

MRS. POPOV

Aie, aie, aie!

*As she picks up the cup from the floor, Jackie comes rushing in out-of-breath.*

MRS. POPOV

What's wrong?

JACKIE

*(out-of-breath)* Mrs..... Mrs..... Popov.

MRS. POPOV

Take your time, tell me what happened.

JACKIE

Nicky-9-doors chased that daddio out into the back alley and Rita got on her motorcycle and tried to run him down.

MRS. POPOV

Are they crazy? They could get arrested for that! That Rita's got to learn to control her temper or she'll get into trouble again.

JACKIE

Trouble? What kind of trouble?

MRS. POPOV

Sorry, I don't remember your name?

JACKIE

It's Jackie.

MRS. POPOV

Well listen Jackie, I may seem like an old Russian peasant to you , but take this good advice: stop hanging around those no-goodnik types and go back to school.

JACKIE

How do you know I dropped out of school?

MRS. POPOV

Popov knows and hears all. Take some simple advice from one who knows; (*quietly*) Rita's done some time and I don't mean in a clock shop. And Nicky, well he said he went to art school but he can't even paint fences properly; aie, aie, aie the job he did on one of my neighbors. It was as crooked as a broken vodka bottle. He smokes tea, no wonder. Keep him away from building tops, he's likely to jump off thinking he can fly.

JACKIE

(*surprised*) These are my friends?

MRS. POPOV

Jackie, old Russian proverb says "Save me from my friends." Listen, if only you could meet my Natasha. She would convince you to go back to school and make something of yourself. Don't end up like me with nothing.

*The Cafe door opens and Rita walks in. She has a big smile on her face.*

RITA

Well Popov, what lies have you been telling our beatnik-to-be, Jackie-O here?

MRS. POPOV

Nothing you don't already know, Rita.

RITA

Don't be a drag. How ungrateful of you. We just saved that thick skin of yours and all you can do is stab us in the back. We made sure that square won't be back here for a long time.

MRS. POPOV

You mean by running him down on your motorcycle?

RITA

The guy split before I could catch him. 9-doors went after him like he was flipping out or something and disappeared down some side street.

JACKIE

Who was that guy?

RITA

He ain't no cop, that's for sure. Otherwise, he wouldn't have cut out so fast. He's some kind of Creep and Cornball getting his kicks out of scaring people. That's a bad scene.

MRS. POPOV

Whoever he was, Rita, you can't go running someone down just cause you don't like their looks.

RITA

You bet I can.

MRS. POPOV

And you'll know where that will wind you up again?

RITA

*(angrily)* That was a long time ago, ok? I'm in a different scene now. Now leave be!

JACKIE

*(changing the subject)* But what about Nicky-9-doors, are we gonna go look for him? Maybe that daddio arrested him?

RITA

Jackie, learn to talk hip-like. Only Squares get "arrested." Hip cats get "busted."

JACKIE

Sorry.

RITA

No one can bust 9-doors. He'll just sound off some of his frantic poetry and they'll shut their ears fast enough in time to drop him off at the nearest gutter.

MRS. POPOV

Or the closest insane asylum.

RITA

Why do you love to hate us so much?

*Mrs. Popov goes back behind her counter and starts to clean and organize coffee cups. Rita and Jackie sit down and Rita pulls out a cigarette. Nicky-9-doors then appears at the front door with a big old typewriter in his hands.*

RITA

Nicky, you're back.

JACKIE

Where ya been, cool cat?

NICKY-9-DOORS

Yours truly, Nicholas Nindor, otherwise known as hip and hep cat King-O, Cool-O, and Baron of Bohemia has once again turned bad into good luck.

JACKIE

What's that big old typewriter for?

NICKY-9-DOORS

After chasing that daddio to what seemed like the ends of the earth, I found myself lost in some old quarter of the city. Henceforth, I stopped in front of a seedy old pawn shop of somewhat dubious nature. I just happened to look in its dirty old window and lo and behold, there was this magical thing of beauty before my sorry eyes, a big old typewriter. I then proceeded to trade in my grandfather's ring for it!

*Nicky raises the typewriter in the air to show it off to the rest of the beatniks. He then shows his finger missing the ring he always wears.*

RITA

What a piece of junk!

NICKY-9-DOORS

*(surprised)* Riti-o, what are you saying?! Do you dig it or not? I almost flipped out when I saw this typewriter. Such a thing of beauty.

RITA

Well, what are you going to do with it?

NICKY-9-DOORS

Write my life's story. Nicky-9-doors, artist, poet, art school drop-out, and part-time fence painter. I've gotta do it soon before the bomb hits.

JACKIE

*(scared)* The bomb?

NICKY-9-DOORS

Haven't you heard, they're building those crazy bomb shelters all over the place. I've got an idea for my own, stocked with plenty of Gallo wine, tea, this big old typewriter and me.

RITA

Well, you'd better get your life down on paper soon. The whole world's a damn mess. It could blow any minute. Me, as long as I have my bike, I can hit the road.

*Nicky-9-doors sits himself down at another table with his typewriter and starts to type maniacally. However, there is no paper in the typewriter! Mrs. Popov starts to pay attention to him from behind her counter.*

NICKY-9-DOORS

Chamomile tea! Chamomile tea! The inspiration is brewing in a hot pot!

RITA

But 9-doors, you forgot to get paper for the typewriter. How can you write anything?

MRS. POPOV

That's not writing.... that's just typing!

NICKY-9-DOORS

Hey, I'm no square. I'll have you know that I am well known in the San Francisco literary and artistic circle as the "King-O' Bohemi-O' Blues."

*Nicky-9-doors then jumps up from his seat and shouts aloud.*

KING-O' BOHEMI-O' BLUES

NICKY-9-DOORS (spoken in a beat manner)

I'm hip cat Nicky-9-doors,  
Beatnik extraordinaire, esquire and Renaissance man  
Spent a year in art school, to paint like Picasso  
Cramped my style, man, felt more like a sculpted fossil  
Currently have no other useful skills  
Got a job painting fences... And I do it for thrills!

BEAT GIRLS (sung)

He's the King-O' Bohemi-O' blues  
He's the King-O' Bohemi-O' blues  
He's got no future, spent a year in art school

NICKY-9-DOORS (sung)

I'm the cool cat King-O' Bohemi-O' blues

NICKY-9-DOORS (spoken in a beat manner)

Had my first attack of Kerouac in 59 made my way to the state-line  
Gotta get to Frisco to meet the Beats  
But got caught in a rainstorm on the Interstate  
Turned back by fate, went home to bed  
Oh, my aching head!

CHORUS: repeat

RITA (spoken in a beat manner)

Lookie here, I'm Rita, biker chick delinquent who won't take no crap from royal beatnik sap  
Had a fascination with incarceration  
Plan to drive my bike coast to coast, see Alcatraz and dig jazz,  
You may be the King-O' Bohemi-O' Blues but the Queen-O' Bohemi-O' rules!

BEAT GIRLS (sung)

She's the Queen-O' Bohemi-O' blues  
She's the Queen-O' Bohemi-O' blues  
Don't cha mess with her or you're bound to get bruised

RITA (sung)

I'm the cool mean Queen-O' Bohemi-O' blues

NICKY-9-DOORS (sung)

I'm the King-O' Bohemi-O' blues

RITA (sung)

I'm the Queen-O' Bohemi-O' blues

BEAT GIRLS (sung)

In Bohemia there's a Cafe for two  
For the King and Queen

ALL (sung)

O' Bohemi-O' blues

*Nicky-9-doors races around and sings with Rita. The scene ends.*

ACT I

Scene 5

Popov Jazzes it Up

NICKY-9-DOORS

You see Mrs. Popov, if you put one of your wondrous teas on my tab, I will put this place on the map one day. The Firefly Cafe, former hang-out of Nicky-9-doors, the King-O' Bohemi-O' Blues!

MRS. POPOV

Yes, when the Volga freezes over!

NICKY-9-DOORS

You mean you don't believe me? Sheesh, so cruel you are. But I'll be able to pay back every red cent when they publish my novel about my travels across the country in that ol' beat-up Chevy.

RITA

Gimme a break, 9-doors, you've haven't been out of New York since the day you were born. That novel sounds a bit too much like science fiction to me.

JACKIE

*(naively)* But I thought Nicky-9-doors taught *Kerouac* everything he knows?

*The 7-note Kerouac motif sounds from the piano.*

NICKY-9-DOORS

Fear not Jackie, I am the hippest cat in town, the beatest beat, I'll take us all on the road to Beatville.

JACKIE

Beatville? Where's that?

NICKY-9-DOORS

*(sigh)* Alas, if I only knew. It is the ultimate place and state of mind. No one knows for sure.

JACKIE

But *someone* must know!

RITA

If I knew, Jackie, I'd be there in a second on my bike.

MRS. POPOV

I wish all you no-goodniks would go to this *Beatville* and get out of my Cafe.

RITA

(*angrily*) You're pushing it, Popov..... cut it with the no-goodnik stuff!

NICKY-9-DOORS

Cool it Rita, Popov's permanently stuck in Squaresville. Anyway, we've got other things to worry about. Let's go on the road and find Beatville.

RITA

I've got wheels, anytime you're ready.

JACKIE

Can I tag along?

NICKY-9-DOORS

Far out, the whole Beat gang on the road to Beatville. First, we'd better go get some bread from **the old man**, he's always good for a few bucks.

MRS. POPOV

You shouldn't call your father "the old man." No respect.

RITA

Get with it, Popov? He's not talking about his dad, he means *his uncle* who works in the garage changing tires.

## NICKY-9-DOORS

Yeah, my uncle Neal! We'll get some dough from him, get a beat car, buy some paper for that typewriter and hit the road to Beatville. Let's split! Watch my typewriter Mrs. P. cause I'll be back for it.

*The beatnik gang rushes out on their merrily way to Nicky's Uncle Neal. Mrs. Popov looks at the typewriter and picks up the poetry book left behind.*

### MRS. POPOV

(*aloud*) Finally, some peace and quiet around here. I haven't had any other customers all day except those no-goodniks and that awful man. Why must I suffer so much? Beatniks, Daddios, Cats, Jazz, it's all gibberish to my ears. What happened to the good old days? The old country ways?

### 3/4 Cuppa Jazz

MRS. POPOV (sung)

Once upon a time music was sublime  
There was classical, not jazzical  
I've had a lot to lose, but you will never hear me  
Sing the blues, sing the blues

In the Old Country they only play Tchaikovsky  
and can't syncopate or swing it with the swans in Swan Lake  
This is a Cafe not a place to stay and hang about  
Just give me a shout, order a tea, cuppa coffee or you'll get out!  
It does not take much order half a cup let me ring it up!

MRS. POPOV AND THE VOICES OF THE OFF STAGE BEATNIKS (sung)

THREE QUARTERS CUPPA JAZZ  
THREE QUARTERS CUPPA JAZZ  
IT'S THE SAD, SAD, NOT SO TERRIBLY BAD

THREE QUARTERS CUPPA JAZZ  
THREE QUARTERS CUPPA JAZZ  
IT'S THE SAD, SAD, NOT SO TERRIBLY BAD,

MRS. POPOV (sung)

### STORY OF MY LIFE

Losing all you have it can drive you mad  
When there's nothing left except these pests  
I know they think I'm square just by the clothes I wear  
But do they know, Figaro?

© 1998-2005 How do I get to Beatville?  
(*an off-beatnik musical comedy - rev1*)

by Peter Forrest / 26  
[www.houseofusher.net](http://www.houseofusher.net)

In the New Country they only play this jazz-ski  
And bongos all night, have tea without a teapot in sight

I once danced ballet, I will swing some day to jazz music  
I'll take it in stride and I'll find with the right time, now I get it  
If I had to choose between jazz and you better make it jazz!

CHORUS: repeat

ACT I

Scene 6

Natasha Comes Home

MRS. POPOV

Why do those beatniks always leave their junk around here... their books, now this typewriter? They are nothing but a bunch of mess-niks.

*Mrs. Popov carries the typewriter to the side counter and then goes through the side door. The front door starts to open slowly and a man's head wearing a fur hat peeks in. Agent X is dressed in a fur coat and hat and cautiously comes into the Cafe carrying an envelope. He places it on a table and then hears footsteps. He quickly hides behind the counter as Mrs. Popov reenters the Cafe.*

MRS. POPOV

*(humming to herself)* Beatniks, sputniks, all no-goodniks.

*Mrs. Popov moves towards the table and spots the envelope beside the poetry book. She picks it up and opens it.*

MRS. POPOV

I don't remember this here before; that Nicky, he's entirely hopeless. *(reading)* Aie aie aie! Who wrote this!? "Better dead than red!" and "Commie go home!" This is sick! Nicky-9-doors better explain this one or he's history!

*Agent X puts his hand to his head in despair as he hears that Mrs. Popov thinks it's a joke. Popov then proceeds to fold up the paper and puts it in the letter holder on the counter. She then goes to pick up the poetry book when the front door bursts open and Nicky-9-doors appears.*

NICKY-9-DOORS

Don't touch that book, it's my poetic soul in transit!

MRS. POPOV

Nicky, what are you doing back here so soon? I thought you'd left for this Beatville?

NICKY-9-DOORS

Beatville will have to wait, Uncle Neal spent his last few bucks at the local bar and has nothing left for us. No bread, no wheels...

MRS. POPOV

Oh, this is my unlucky day.

NICKY-9-DOORS

Not that unlucky; Rita and Jackie are on their way here now.

MRS. POPOV

I don't care, just get this piece of junk typewriter off my counter and out of my sight.

*Nicky-9-doors moves towards the counter to where the typewriter is resting and he then spies a fur hat sticking up from the far end of the counter. He lunges at the hat with his arm and Agent X springs up and runs out the main Cafe door.*

NICKY-9-DOORS

Whoa, daddio!

MRS. POPOV

It's that man again!

NICKY-9-DOORS

At least you've got a new regular customer. What was he doing back there anyway?

MRS. POPOV

How should I know, maybe I should call the police?

*The sound of a motorcycle is heard and Rita and Jackie appear at the door and enter the Cafe.*

RITA

Hey 9-doors, we just saw a big hairy bear come bolting out of the Firefly. What's going down?

NICKY-9-DOORS

It seems like that daddio-cat came back for more fun.

MRS. POPOV

I don't like this one little bit. Big fur coats, Russian circus bears on the loose! He must have stolen something.

*Mrs. Popov goes over to the counter area and checks out the place while the beatniks parlay.  
Rita and Jackie (who is dressed cooler now) enter.*

JACKIE

*(looking at the poetry book lying on the table)* What's this book, Nicky? "**The Amazingly Frightening Far Out Poems of Edgar Allan Poe?**"

NICKY-9-DOORS

The best book to read if you've got the weed.

RITA

C'mon 9-doors, it's time we initiated Jackie as a true beatnik. Let her sound off one of the poems in that book.

JACKIE

Yes, yes, yes..... I mean, far out, cats.

NICKY-9-DOORS

*(grabbing the book and opening it blindly)* Ok, Jackie-cat, by sheer random fate, my finger has chanced upon..... "The Raven." Ah, one of my favs. Here, start sounding off!

*Nicky-9-doors hands the book to Jackie and she starts to read very slowly and without emotion.*

JACKIE

*(in a monotone)* Once upon a midnight dreary... While I pondered weak and weary... Over many a quaint and curious volume...

*As Jackie is stuttering, the Firefly's front door opens slowly and (Natasha) a beatnik chick in full gear (beret, sunglasses, cigarette in month, and a beat-up suitcase in her hand) comes into the Cafe. Just as Jackie is about to continue, Natasha speaks up.*

NATASHA

No! No! No! That's not how you recite poetry, listen to how a real Beat does it!

*Natasha grabs the book from Jackie's hands, and starts to sing.*

Beatnik Chick

NATASHA (sung)

Once upon a midnight dreary  
While I pondered weak and weary  
Over many a quaint and curious volume...  
Of forgotten lore, but there ain't no more

That forgotten lore, now it's all just a bore!

*(Natasha throws the book on the floor)*

I'm the beatnik chick, so decidedly hip  
I've got a degree in Philosophy  
And now I'm workin' on a Ph.D.  
Cause I'm the beatnik chick, so decidedly hip  
And I've got a degree in Philosophy

I'm the beatnik chick, who they think's really flipped  
Told everyone off, and now I have split  
I've changed my life and now I've turned to hip  
Cause I'm the beatnik chick, who they think's really flipped  
Who's told everyone off, and now gone and split

I don't need no friends, I don't need no men

BEAT GIRLS (sung)

She don't need no friends, she don't need no men  
She don't need no daddio

NATASHA (sung)

I don't need no daddio

BEAT GIRLS (sung)

She don't need no daddio

NATASHA (sung)

I don't need no daddio

I'm the beatnik chick, who they think's really flipped  
Who's told everyone off, and now gone and split  
I'm the beatnik chick, who has dropped out of school  
I'm so sick and tired of society's rules  
I've packed my case and gonna travel the world

Cause I'm the beatnik chick who has dropped out of school  
Cause I'm so sick and tired of society's rules

I don't need no friends, I don't need no men  
I don't need no friends, I don't need no men!

BEAT GIRLS (sung)

She don't need no daddio

NATASHA (sung)

I don't need no daddio

BEAT GIRLS (sung)

She don't need no daddio

NATASHA (sung)

I don't need no daddio

I've packed my case and gonna travel the world  
Cause I'm so sick and tired of being a good girl  
Cause I'm so sick and tired of being a good girl!

MRS. POPOV

Natasha!

Mrs. Popov then faints to the floor as she sees Natasha dressed as a beatnik.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

Scene 1

Cafe-O-Late!

*Firefly Cafe, one week later. Mrs. Popov enters the Cafe carrying a box of stuff in her arms. As she enters, a telephone rings on the wall and she goes to answer it.*

MRS. POPOV

Hello? Yes, this is Mrs. Marina Popov. *(pause)* Yes, I know I am late with the rent. *(pause)* No, I haven't forgotten. *(pause)* Yes, you're right, three months late rent is very serious. *(makes a funny face)* First thing, tomorrow morning, yes, I'll be there with the check. *(pause)* Yes, I understand, I'll be there.

*She hangs up the phone and starts to arrange the coffee cups nervously.*

MRS. POPOV

Idiot! How am I going to pay? The Cafe's broke, my daughter is now a beatnik bum.... this is so terrible, I have nothing left to be proud of. I was better off with the Bolsheviks on my back.

*Mrs. Popov reaches under the counter and pulls out a bottle of vodka. She opens it up and pours a lot into a large coffee cup. She walks around the room taking a sip of vodka from the coffee cup while daydreaming of better times.*

MRS. POPOV

Vodka, life's last pleasure. *(sighs)* Oh, how I suffer. It's terrible. I worked so hard my whole life...

*Suddenly, the entire Beat gang enters through the front door. Mrs. Popov puts down the coffee cup on one of the tables and she quickly goes to the counter to hide the vodka bottle in the box she was carrying.*

NICKY-9-DOORS

Hey, Mrs. P, what's new with you? When are you going to start speaking to Natasha again?

*Mrs. Popov ignores them all and continues rummaging in the box on the counter.*

RITA

Ah, she's still mad as hell

NICKY-9-DOORS

(changing the subject to Mrs. Popov again) Hey Mrs. P, did you ever find out about the daddio who was sending you all those love letters?

MRS. POPOV

(looks up very angrily) Ach! Some love letters? Like Commie Go Home, Better Red than Dead!  
(pauses) I'd get better treatment in front of a firing squad in Siberia!

NICKY-9-DOORS

And you had the nerve to think it was I, Nicholas Nindor, esquire and Renaissance man!

JACKIE

Yeah, how could you?

RITA

After all, if it was Nicky's, it would have been full of awful spelling mistakes.

NICKY-9-DOORS

Whoa, that's low *daddiette*. Nicholas Nindor is a man of letters. Although I never completed art school, I'll have you know that I am a graduate of the K.G.B.

NATASHA

K.G.B.?

NICKY-9-DOORS

Yes indeed, the K.G.B. School of Beat Poetry.....

RITA

Get a life!

NICKY-9-DOORS

Relax, K.G.B. stands for Kerouac, Ginsberg, Burroughs...

*The 7-note Kerouac motif sounds from the piano.*

NATASHA

There's no such school!

NICKY-9-DOORS

It's the only one in Beatville. The school's enduring motto is, "*the cooleth breaketh all the ruleth!*"

JACKIE

You don't even know how get to Beatville, Nicky!

MRS. POPOV

You're all crazy.

NICKY-9-DOORS

Being crazy is the least of my worries. Take for example this coffee cup (*picks up the cup filled with vodka that Popov left on one of the tables*). Does it worry about the bomb dropping? The world being blown to bits? Huh? (*getting angrier*) Does it care whether it's half full or half empty!!? (*goes to gulp it down and stops*)

JACKIE

9-doors is getting spaced out again.

RITA

Nah, he's just miffed cause we've been treating him like a square since Natasha's made the scene.

*Nicky holds the cup once again to his lips and gets ready to drink from it.... hesitates.*

NICKY-9-DOORS

(*angrily*) That's right. I used to be the hippest cat here at the Firefly and now I'm a second-class Organization Man. El Boring-O. You know, there's cooler Beats than Natasha out there!

NATASHA

Don't flip yer wig, 9-doors. There's plenty of space in Beatville for many hipsters. You're still the coolest cat on this side of MacDougal Street.

NICKY-9-DOORS

Really? You mean that?

NATASHA

I dig you.

NICKY-9-DOORS

Far out! A toast to supreme hipness!

*Nicky grabs the cup and gulps down the vodka unknowingly and he suddenly looks very ill, and has to rush out of the Cafe!*

JACKIE

Where did Nicky split to?

RITA

I think he went to barf his bongos out or something.

ACT II

Scene 2

J.P. Makes the Scene

*Natasha, Rita, and Jackie are now sitting down at one of the tables. Mrs. Popov has left to go in the backroom.*

RITA

*(lights a cigarette)* Ya know, this place could use some livening up. Some better decor. Maybe a few canvasses on the walls, some black paint, and it would look all right.

NATASHA

My mother would never go for it, Rita.

RITA

Popov is a real square. She's still not accepted the fact you dropped out.

NATASHA

No. She'll brood for weeks, maybe months, or years!

RITA

She'll eventually come around..... or not!

*Suddenly the Cafe door opens and Nicky-9-doors appears with a stranger (J.P. Troubadour) J.P. Troubadour has an acoustic guitar strapped to his back and a small woven hand bag. He is dressed in a beret, shades, a Mexican serape and is the hippest cat in town.*

JACKIE

*(excitedly)* Nicky, who is that?

NICKY-9-DOORS

While you were **I-G-N-O-R-I-N-G** me for the past week, I decided to go myself to a few jazz bars and meet some real beatniks.

RITA

We haven't ignored you, 9-doors. It's just Natasha's been teaching us her Beat ways about traveling across the country.

JACKIE

And you've never even left your own neighborhood!

NICKY-9-DOORS

You're cruel Jackie, so cruel. When did you decide to become so hip?

JACKIE

Natasha has made me into a full-fledged beatnik after only a week!

*During this conversation, Natasha and J.P. have been staring at each other very intensely ignoring the rest of the Beats.*

NICKY-9-DOORS

Only one week! You've flipped yer wig. Lookie here fledging one, it took me years to get to where I am; in fact I was just telling J.P. that on our way over here. Right, J.P.?

*They all look at J.P. and Natasha.*

J.P. TROUBADOUR

Enchanté, everyone. (*puts down guitar*) Hey cats, let me introduce myself, *Je suis Jean-Pierre Troubadour*, the wandering poet and minstrel from Louisiana, that's *La Louisiane* in French.

JACKIE

Far out!

NICKY-9-DOORS

If you want hip, now here's the coolest cat on this side of the Bayou. The Cajun Cat!

RITA

That's it! We've gotta have a bash now. Let's go get a few bottles of Gallo wine and some good reefer.

J.P. TROUBADOUR

Please, just call me J.P. for short. I've been on the road for the past 6 months going across the country, meeting all these hip cats in Frisco, Seattle, Denver, and New York.

*Natasha is quite entranced with J.P. (likewise) and Nicky-9-doors is oblivious to it all. He just believes he has brought back the coolest cat in town.*

NATASHA

J.P, glad you've made the scene.

J.P. TROUBADOUR

*Merci beaucoup, my disciples of dig. Hey cats, in life, you've got to go with the flow. You've got to live by your emotions and experience the world. Don't let the system beat you down, fight back and create your own world. Be a rebel, a beatnik, forget the ways of the Squares. Get your own pad in Beatville, invite some friends in and have a party!*

RITA

All right, man!

J.P. TROUBADOUR

If you ain't with it man, you ain't nowhere no how.

JACKIE

Hey J.P, "*How do I get to Beatville?*"

J.P. TROUBADOUR

Beatville's not as far away as you might think.

JACKIE

You talk about Beatville as a place, but where exactly can you find it, and how do you know when you're there?

J.P. TROUBADOUR

Beatville isn't a place that you can find on a map, it's a state of mind. Beatville can be anywhere, anytime, as long as you keep it alive in your heart.

*J.P. pulls out his guitar and starts the ballad.*

## How do I get to Beatville?

J.P. TROUBADOUR (sung)

Hey cats, you should know, where to go, man, go, go, go  
Take Highway 99, and cross over that center-line  
And Beatville you will find, in the reaches of your mind

ALL (sung)

HOW DO I GET, TO BEATVILLE?  
HOW DO I GET, TO BEATVILLE?  
HOW DO I GET, TO BEATVILLE?

J.P. TROUBADOUR (sung)

CROSS OVER THAT CENTER-LINE

You won't need a car, so just stay right where you are  
And if you want to find, Highway 99  
Just open up your mind, cross over that center-line

ALL (sung)

HOW DO I GET, TO BEATVILLE?  
HOW DO I GET, TO BEATVILLE?  
HOW DO I GET, TO BEATVILLE?

J.P. TROUBADOUR (sung)

CROSS OVER THAT CENTER-LINE

harmonica solo

CHORUS: repeat

ACT II

Scene 3

Popov Meets the Beats 1/2 way

*The Beats are all amazed at J.P.'s talents and they sit down at the tables. Just as they are about to talk, Mrs. Popov enters the room boisterously with more courage.*

MRS. POPOV

*(looking at J.P.)* Not another no-goodnik! *(to herself)* How I suffer! How I suffer!!

J.P. TROUBADOUR

What's with the old lady?

NICKY-9-DOORS

*(to J.P.)* Hey J.P, that's her mother. *(pointing at Natasha)*

J.P. TROUBADOUR

She's rather grim. What's hanging?

RITA

She's mad at Natasha for dropping out of school. *(in a Russian-like accent)* Her good little girl has done her the most terrible family dishonor, **she became a beatnik!**

*Mrs. Popov is now sweeping up in the corner looking very angry.*

J.P. TROUBADOUR

*(to Nicky-9-doors)* What's her name?

*Nicky-9-doors whispers the name and J.P. gets up to go to talk to Mrs. Popov. J.P. follows her and she scoots away behind the counter. He goes after her and she goes back around to the other side like a funny game of musical chairs.*

J.P. TROUBADOUR

Hey, Mrs. Popov. I wanna speak with you.

MRS. POPOV

I refuse to speak to anything resembling a no-good beatnik. Now where is my cat, Troika?  
Troika?

J.P. TROUBADOUR

Look, you can't judge us all like that, we're only trying to make our way in this screwed up world.

MRS. POPOV

You're the only screwy ones in this world. Don't you understand, you're a bunch of lazy bums. You don't want to work, you just sit around all day and smoke, and you never take a bath!

J.P. TROUBADOUR

OK, I'll admit we all have our faults, but we just want to be treated fairly. Is that too much to ask?

MRS. POPOV

*(lifts up broom)* Fairly? This broom will treat you fairly squarely if you so please!

J.P. TROUBADOUR

*(exhausted)* Ah, man I give up. She's impossible. I've got places to go and dreams to dream. No more time for this scene.

MRS. POPOV

You're just a bunch of hopeless dreamers!

J.P. TROUBADOUR

*(intensely)* Wait a second, look at yourself. You own this Cafe, you have a really cool and educated daughter. You have it all. You have a lot to be proud of. Most of us don't have a home. Go ahead, beat us down. Take your broom, hit me now. Any end you like. We hurt, ya know. We bruise, we bleed, but we feel too! Yeah, we're dreamers, but that's all we can afford.

MRS. POPOV

*(pensively)* Dreams, who has time for dreams?

J.P. TROUBADOUR

Haven't you ever dreamt before of something better? Just once?

MRS. POPOV

*(stopping to sweep)* Yes *(pause)*, I have.

J.P. TROUBADOUR

*(quieter)* Well, sound off Mrs. Popov, let loose. Tell us about it.

MRS. POPOV

*(more gently)* To tell you the truth, the only thing I ever wanted was for my Natasha and I to live in nice house in the countryside. A place with lots of space, a beautiful garden, just like the one I had as a child in old Russia.

*Mrs. Popov looks at Natasha and vice versa. Natasha gets up and goes to her mother.*

NATASHA

Mama, is that true?

MRS. POPOV

Yes, I only ever wanted the best for you... I'm so sorry I failed.

RITA

How corny.

NICKY-9-DOORS

Ssshhh Rita.... it's beautiful. A mother and daughter, pure poetry.

*Mrs. Popov and Natasha embrace and suddenly Mrs. Popov breaks away very abruptly.*

NATASHA

Mama, what's wrong?

MRS. POPOV

*(hesitating)* Natasha I have to tell you. The Firefly...

NATASHA

What, Mama, what?

MRS. POPOV

I'm going to have to shut down the Firefly. I'm almost broke. I owe three months back rent and I have no money to pay the bills.

NATASHA

Why didn't you tell me this sooner?

*Mrs. Popov remains very silent in shame while the mood is very dark.*

MRS. POPOV

Natasha, it is too late. There is nothing more to do.

NATASHA

Not if I can help it. (*thinking*) When I was in San Francisco, the Cafes there used to have the coolest poetry readings. They brought in so many people and always went over big. We'll have one here and save the Firefly.

MRS. POPOV

You mean, more beatniks, here?!

*Natasha rushes across the room to describe the situation to the other beatniks.*

NICKY-9-DOORS

That's the hippest idea I've ever heard.... I'll make up posters for it right away put them up all over town and attract more cool cats. Get me my brushes, Picasso 9-doors is about to create a masterpiece!! (he reads aloud):

POETS OF THE BEAT GENERATION!

COME TO THE FIREFLY CAFE THIS FRIDAY NIGHT AT 8:00!

DON'T MISS THE FAR OUT POETRY READING!

BE THERE OR BE SQUARE!

RITA

That's wild. Let's do it.

JACKIE

Will you play and sing for us there, J.P.?

J.P. TROUBADOUR

It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing, count me in!

MRS. POPOV

My future in the hands of these no-goodniks? Oioioi, how I suffer.

Siberian Tiger

MRS. POPOV (sung)

Under this thick skin, lies a tiger from within  
And if you unleash this tiger, stay out of sight  
Siberian tiger, just run for your life

Tyger, tyger, burning bright, in the Cafe of the night  
And if you unleash this tiger, it's pure poetry  
Rip you to shreds of course metaphorically

(spoken) I'll get you all!

Please don't run away  
I'll lose my Cafe, makes no difference anyway  
I just want you to know  
I once drank tea in the palace of the czars  
I once was served the best champagne and caviar

But I'll end up no good, as these cheap coffee grounds  
At the bottom of a dirty cup  
Not even a drop of luck  
Not even a drop of luck

Under this thick skin, lies a woman from within  
And if you unleash this hidden personality  
Siberian tigress, no more a mystery

You can't lock me in a cage, you won't hold me wrapped in chains  
I've had to scratch, claw and fight hard just to stay alive  
No place to call home, except the Firefly

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(*an off-beatnik musical comedy - rev1*)

by Peter Forrest / 45  
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Please don't be afraid  
I'm losing my place and no more can I face  
The shame and the disgrace  
I once had hopes and dreams and now they seem so far  
Please don't lose yours, and just stay exactly how you are

Or you'll end up no good, as I said that you would  
At the bottom of a dirty cup  
Not even a drop of luck  
Not even a drop, not even a spot, not even a drop of luck!

ACT II

Scene 4

"Poets of the Beat Generation" Reading

*The night of the poetry reading one week later at the Firefly. The room is dark, and candles are lit on the tables. Enter the three women beatniks in berets, black clothes, and dark shades (Natasha, Rita and Jackie). The Firefly's walls are now covered with tacky modern art paintings in the background. There is thunder and rain outside. The following dialogue is spoken to a wandering bass beat. More iambeat pentameter (based on MacBeth Act I Scene 3).*

NATASHA

Where did you split to, Beat one?

RITA

Doing time.

JACKIE

Beat one, whatta 'bout you?

NATASHA

A square's wife I'll never be  
And slave, slave, slave  
"To hell," quoth I  
"Marry me, chick!" the daddio cries  
Then splits to Squareville, Master Creep  
But on the road I travel alone  
And, like a cat I'll scratch you too.

RITA

I'll give you a fix.

NATASHA

Hit me quick.

JACKIE

And another?

NATASHA

I myself have done it all  
And crashed in many pads  
A lot of money I have lost  
Sometimes playing cards so bad  
Stayed out every night I can  
Hung round drinking Gallo wine  
Had many lovers nine times nine  
Most cats only dwindle, peak, and pine  
Have loved, but never lost  
I always leave first,  
They're the ones who all get tossed.

RITA

Show me, show me.

NATASHA

Here I have my reefer stash  
Party it up and homeward crash.

*(The sound of bongo drums)*

JACKIE

A drum, a drum!  
9-doors doth come.

ALL 3 BEATNIKS

The beatnik sisters, beret clad  
Hipsters of Zen and jazz  
Go about their hip hep ways  
Three Beat sisters, and sisters are we  
Queens of Beatville, room only there for three, two, one, zero, negativity  
Far out! The charm's turned on.

*Nicky-9-doors playing a pair of bongos enters with J.P. Troubadour.*

J.P. TROUBADOUR

So square and hip a scene I have not made.

NICKY-9-DOORS

How far is it to Beatville?  
Who are these three Beat ones so hip in attire?  
That look not like citizens of Squareville?

And yet, are you one of us, or not?  
That a cat may ask? Dig, you dig, you dig?  
Don your berets, and salute those you meet,  
You are a curious clan of clearly hip sisters  
Yet your lack of goatees makes me wonder  
Are you really Beats?

J.P. TROUBADOUR

Sound, if you can: who are you?

NATASHA

All hail, J.P, Beatster of the Bayou!

RITA

All hail, J.P, Hipster of the Hip Cats!

JACKIE

All hail, J.P, Baron von Beatville!

NICKY-9-DOORS

Sisters of Beat, why do you stare, do not fear supreme hipness,  
To be born square is unfair, that is the truth,  
Are ye far out, or are ye too cool?  
For us two fools? My hipster friend  
You salute him as the King of the Beats  
Being born so hip, is no small feat  
Not all are so lucky, so what of me?  
Can you tell me how cool I will ever be?  
Shall Beatness and Hipness come to me one day?  
Sound off, sound off, cause it don't mean a thing,  
If a Beat ain't got that swing.

NATASHA

Swing!

RITA

That!

JACKIE

Thing!

NATASHA

Squarer than J.P, yet hipper.

RITA

Not so cool, yet cooler.

JACKIE

King of Beatville you may never be, but make the scene with Natasha, Rita, and me!

*The bongo drums start to roll and it breaks into a swinging version of Row that Volga boat, man!*

Row that Volga boat, man!

BEATNIKS (sung)

Swing it, man!

Row row row  
row man row row row  
row row row  
row man row row row

ROW ROW ROW THAT VOLGA BOAT, MAN  
ROW THAT VOLGA BOAT TONIGHT  
UP AND DOWN THE RIVER ALL NIGHT

If you want to keep that Volga beat all night  
feel the rhythm of the river under your feet  
and hold on tight

Be hip it's a trip  
grab an oar leave the shore

CHORUS : repeat

Row, row, row!  
Row, man, row, row, row!  
Row, row, row!  
Row, man, row, row, row!

CHORUS : repeat

If you start to feel that Volga swing and sway  
Underneath you is the river  
Keeping the beat and Squares away

Be hip do not flip  
Grab an oar row for shore

CHORUS : repeat

ACT II

Scene 5

FBI Poetic Justice

*The swinging Volga boat song ends and the Cafe lighting turns red. The impending doom of some foreseen event is in the air.*

NATASHA

Far out! Hipper than hip. Thanks to all the cats for coming out to the Firefly's first poetry reading called "Poets of the Beat Generation." Tonight, we are featuring our very own Nicky-9-doors who will read from one of his latest poems called *Among the Ruins*.

*Nicky-9-doors goes to a center table. He brings a stack of messy papers, a pencil, and an ashtray.*

NICKY-9-DOORS

Good evening, cool cats.

*He lights up a smoke and concentrates on his paper with the poem on it.*

NICKY-9-DOORS

I'd like to sound off my poem, *Among the Ruins*. You all know that the atomic bomb could wipe us all off the face of the earth within minutes... well I've written about this terrible reality.

Among the Ruins

The coldest winter night, I walked a lonely path  
I viewed the sky alive with fire from the aftermath  
There was a woman, who stood in front of me  
She wore a wedding gown of silk that was all bloody  
I put the ring on her finger and gave her a kiss  
There was no one left to see us wed, only Fate could now witness  
What could not be seen, what could be seen?

A woman walking among the ruins, no place for the night...

*Then the front door bursts open and an FBI Agent X enters waving a gun and a badge around. He is dressed in a trench coat and hat.*

AGENT X

Freeze everybody! I am Special Agent X from the FBI and I've got a warrant to search the premises.

MRS. POPOV

*(surprised)* What's going on here?

AGENT X

Ah, Popov, we meet again. I told you not to slip up.

NICKY-9-DOORS

Party crasher! Let her alone, daddio!

AGENT X

*(pointing his gun at 9-doors head)* Shut up, you beatnik trash! The next person to call me daddio puts a bullet-O in this dimwit's head! Now listen here, the FBI has been tipped off that Popov is in possession of a stolen United States Government Military Secret # 1917. I have orders to search the premises. The first person to move gets shot!

*Agent X pushes the scared Nicky-9-doors to the ground and starts to search the place.*

MRS. POPOV

I have nothing to hide.

AGENT X

All you communist sympathizers say that!

NATASHA

Back off, that's my mother you're insulting!

AGENT X

Watch your mouth, you! You beatniks are all a bunch of no-goodnik Commies.

RITA

Hey, I resent the *no-goodnik* connotation!

AGENT X

You! The motorcycle momma tread-face. You should be locked away in an institution with some real *penpals*?

RITA

Whatta ya mean by that?!

AGENT X

Hahaha!

MRS. POPOV

Who would ever believe this could happen? In America? I thought we could live in freedom here?

AGENT X

Freedom? Cut the sob story. The last thing this country needs is Commie immigrants like you spying, stealing, and undermining the American way of life.

*Agent X continues to look around but finds nothing. He is getting very frustrated.*

AGENT X

But where is it? It's supposed to be here somewhere. I'll comb every inch of this place with a microscope until I find it.

*In the background, J.P. Troubadour is still holding his guitar strung around his neck pretending to be innocent. However, he seems more agitated that the dumb agent hasn't found the document.*

AGENT X

Damn! It's not here. She's probably already sold it to the KGB. *(to himself)* I need proof!

J.P. TROUBADOUR

*(suddenly speaking up)* Why don't you try looking in the letter holder beside the cash, stupid!

*All the beatniks including Mrs. Popov turn to look at J.P. in shock.*

AGENT X

Right! In the letter holder beside the cash.

*Agent X springs to the letter holder and takes out a letter and starts reading.*

AGENT X

Aha! The game's up! **Better Dead Than Red!** Hey, wait a minute, that's the note I wrote! There's no secret document in here.

J.P. TROUBADOUR

*(shocked and a slip-up)* But I put **it** in there **myself!**

NATASHA

*(super shocked)* J.P, how could you?!

*J.P. takes off his beret.*

J.P. TROUBADOUR

Sorry, Natasha, but getting to Beatville is a lot easier with some bread in your pocket. Some stranger wearing a big fur coat approached me in the back alley and asked me to plant this phony document somewhere in the Cafe and promised me a lot of dough! I thought it was all a big joke, ya know?

NATASHA

You're sick!

AGENT X

*(pretending to be serious even though he was the one who offered J.P. the money)* Possession of a stolen military document is a very serious crime, and not to mention about planting it on someone. So where it is?!

NICKY-9-DOORS

Yeah, check him out. He probably stashed it in his guitar to sell it for more money later!

*Agent X grabs J.P, takes the guitar from around his shoulders and shakes it. He hears something and pulls out the secret document.*

AGENT X

Double-crosser! So you *were* going to sell it for more money! I'm going to lock you up for 99 years.

J.P. TROUBADOUR

No, I didn't do it!

AGENT X

Yeah, right! You're history... and as for the rest of you... I'll be watching and waiting for you all to slip up one day. And that's when I'll be back to finish the job. Hahaha!

*He drags out J.P. while J.P. is screaming that he is innocent.*

JACKIE

Can you believe the nerve of that guy?

RITA

What a jerkster.

NATASHA

Oh, Mama, thank God it's over.

*Natasha and Madame Popov embrace.*

MRS. POPOV

I wouldn't have managed without you beatniks. I thank you all. You saved me from FBI and this poetry reading stuff is going to be a real success. I probably won't lose the Firefly after all. I'll never again call you no-goodniks as long as I live.

NICKY-9-DOORS

How old are you Popov? That might be an easy promise to keep!

RITA

Ah, being a no-goodnik ain't so bad.

NICKY-9-DOORS

But what about me? You all should be thanking the King-O' Bohemi-O' Blues for saving our skins!

MRS. POPOV

You?!

NICKY-9-DOORS

Yeah, who do you think put that secret document into J.P.'s guitar?

NATASHA

Far out!

NICKY-9-DOORS

Just before the poetry reading started, I saw our friend J.P. stashing something in that letter holder. I went up to see what it was, and saw this weird government document. Man, that got my mind spinning and I realized he might be a spy like I read about in one of my comic books. I didn't want Mrs. Popov to get into trouble so I put it in his guitar. Voila!

RITA

That was truly cool, 9-doors.

NICKY-9-DOORS

Ah, Riti-O', finally you are learning to appreciate my true genius. You may one day lose that no-goodnik harsh exterior and become a refined poet as myself.

RITA

How would you like some motorcycle tread marks on that poetic assery?

NICKY-9-DOORS

(to himself) I'd better not push my luck too much. (to everyone) Thank you, thank you. Now that J.P. has been laid to rest, I hope my credentials are sound as a graduate of the K.G.B. School of Beat Poetry.

NATASHA

Nicky, when will you ever learn? You don't have to be a Kerouac, Ginsberg, or Burroughs to be beat! If Kerouac can go beatnik, then you can to.

NICKY-9-DOORS

Even Popov?

MRS. POPOV

Oioioi!

Kerouac Goes Beatnik

Kerouac Goes Beatnik  
Kerouac Goes Beatnik  
Kerouac Goes Beatnik  
And you can too!

CHORUS: repeat

The K.G.B. are always after me  
The K.G.B. school of Beat poetry  
(Kerouac, Ginsberg, Burroughs, class of 57' in beatnicker)

Show me how to be cool  
Then you've got to break all the rules  
And show me how to be cool  
Then carry my books to beatnik school

If Kerouac Goes Beatnik  
If Kerouac Goes Beatnik  
If Kerouac Goes Beatnik  
Then you can too!  
In beatnik school!

If Kerouac Goes Beatnik  
If Ginsberg Goes Beatnik  
If Burroughs Goes Beatnik  
Then you can too!  
In beatnik school!

REPEAT SONG

**END**