

## THE TRAIN STATION

it was a fine German city  
very clean  
and there was a large square  
where the fruit and vegetable  
vendors  
set up their stands.

we knew they were there.  
we had been told that they were  
there  
from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
but because of drinking and  
dinners with friends  
and later drinking alone  
in our hotel room  
we could never get there  
in the afternoon until a  
little bit past 3 p.m.  
when the vendors were taking  
down their stands  
and sweeping up the  
debris.

"damn it," Linda would say,  
"we missed the vendors  
again!"

"perhaps tonight," I would  
say, "we won't drink so much  
and then we'll be able to  
buy something  
from the vendors."

to make it worse  
all the cafes that served  
lunches  
closed at 3 p.m.  
to open at 5:00 or 5:30  
p.m.

there was nothing to eat,  
nothing to do but sit at  
an outdoor table  
for wine and beer and  
thick, hot pretzels  
and that got us going  
into the drinking again.

we could never get the timing  
right  
so that we could see the  
vendors.

we re-visited that same city  
again  
during another trip to  
Europe  
staying a week  
as before  
but we were never able to  
purchase fruit or vegetables  
from the vendors  
nor did we ever eat lunch  
in a cafe  
during the day  
except for one terrible  
cafe  
an Italian place  
which didn't close and  
which served a  
tiny plate of spaghetti  
with a mild and lukewarm  
sauce.

it was still our favorite  
city  
but one learns —  
the 2nd time around  
I found out that  
one could buy  
little wrapped sandwiches  
at the train station  
which were much better  
than the spaghetti

so

when we'd missed our fruit and  
vegetable vendors we'd  
go down there  
and we'd eat our sandwiches  
and drink beer  
at the little stand-up  
round tables.

I know because there are  
photos of me  
standing at my round table  
red-faced and bloated  
with the Germans standing  
at their round tables  
all of us at  
our beer.

somehow I feel proud of these  
photos  
I was born in that land

and I returned there  
looking just like them  
looking more than just like  
them  
and when people ask me about  
Europe  
which I'm glad they don't do  
too often  
I start telling them about  
the train station at  
Mannheim  
which they have no way of  
understanding.  
they are more pleased  
when I get drunker  
and start talking about  
playing the horses  
which they also have no way  
of understanding.  
they are the types who would  
always be on time for the  
fruit and vegetable vendors  
and think train stations  
are only places you go  
to get on a  
train.

GINSBERG?

I am sitting in the clubhouse  
grandstand  
\$311 ahead going into the  
7th  
when this very young man  
walks up  
stands there  
as I am going over the  
Form.

"pardon me," he says.

"yes?"

"listen," he says, "I think  
I know you ...."

"no," I say, "you don't."

"don't you know Allen  
Ginsberg?"

"I don't know any  
Ginsberg ...."