

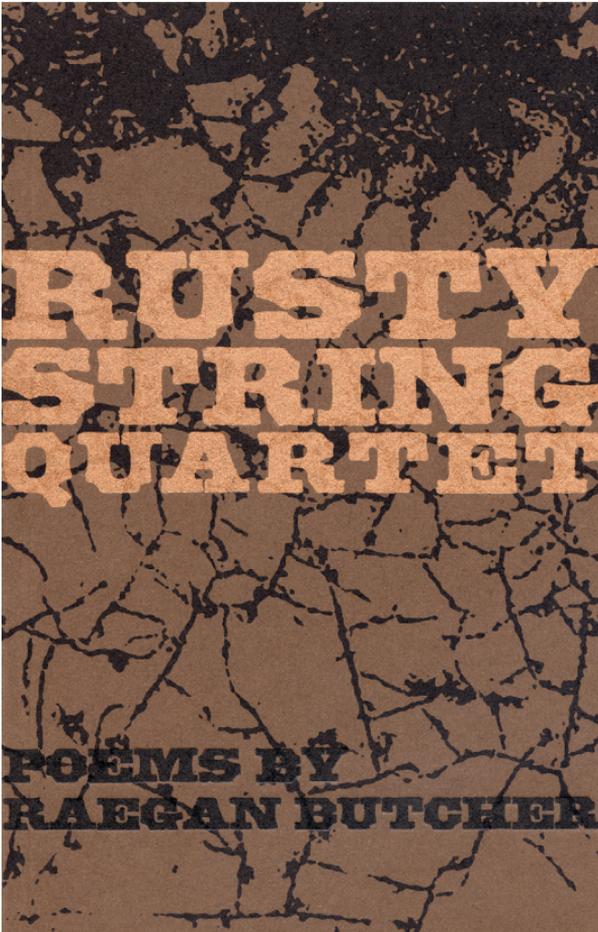
In August of 2006, the last copies from the first limited and numbered printing of *Stone Hotel* were sold. While we might still do a reprinting in the future, we decided to make this PDF of the book freely available in the meantime to keep the text in circulation and help promote Raegan's writing and new book, *Rusty String Quartet*. We'd like to remind everyone that we think a book of poetry like this one is the *best* example of why reading books on a computer screen is the *worst* format possible—it truly cannot be compared with the experience of reading such a finely tailored book in the real world. But alas, *Stone Hotel* is no longer in print, and this PDF will have to do; we can only hope that after enjoying these poems you will consider getting your hands on Raegan's finely printed second book, filled with 264 poems in 340 pages, still in its first printing of 2,000 copies.

More information can be found here:

<http://www.crimethinc.com/a/rusty>

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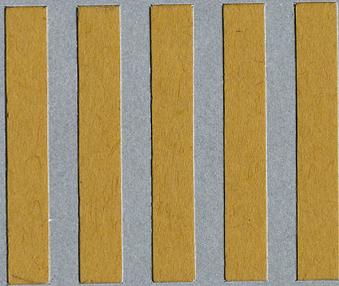
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Stone Hotel

poems from prison

by
Raegan Butcher





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published by the CrimethInc. Ex-Workers' Collective

Additional copies of this book (\$10 postage-paid)—and a wide variety of other anarchist literature, propaganda, and popular explosives—can be obtained for a song, and sometimes with cold hard cash, at www.crimethinc.com, or by writing to:

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this book is a fund raiser . . .

for the ongoing anarchist outreach publishing project *Fighting For Our Lives* (www.crimethinc.com/fighting). All revenue received, minus production and shipping costs, and payment to the author (*see below*) goes directly toward the printing and distribution of *FFOL*.

this is the inaugural book in the CrimethInc. Letters series . . .

These are our letters—to the universe. To each other. This is where we re-write our histories and create our own cultures without the mediation of corporations. When we are too far away from one another for campfire storytelling, we use our own voices here, and we use them to call out across the distance.

Authors in the Letters series receive 10–20% (a sliding scale based on their financial situation) of the gross revenue for the book as payment: this is our effort to actually build sustainability into our pricing structure rather than nurture yet another generation of victimized, starving artists.

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first printing of two-thousand copies

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A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

The author would like to thank Hib Chickena and P. F. Maul for their work on this book, and Paul Wright, Greg Guedel and Jim Laukkonen for their friendship and support.

“Prison’s just like the free world: Bullshit, violence, and death; only in prison it’s on a tighter schedule.”

–Andrew Vachss

“Great Art is horseshit, buy tacos.”

– Charles Bukowski

Stone Hotel

wild-eyed pistol waver

showing the
gun

to the korean
man

behind the counter

my voice smooth as syrup
saying

the money

his blank
face

screwed into puzzlement

his voice a question

the money?

i got pissed

yeah, the money, motherfucker
or i'll kill you

but that was a lie

there was
only one person

in that room i wanted
to kill

and he
is sitting right here

telling you
this

arrest

puking up a belly full of beer
a block from the crime
the sound of sirens
sobered me up FAST
in blazing daylight
with no getaway car
reality crashed down
like a rain of frogshit
i sprinted into a park
blundered thru some bushes
tumbled into a ravine
shit
a dead end
then dogs barking behind me
K-9 units with their
nostrils full of my fear
i jacked a round into the chamber
but i only had 7 bullets
not enough for a shoot-out
it was never like this in the movies
they always had plenty of ammo
and the proper soundtrack
i clawed my way out of the weeds
saw a black & white blocking the street
whirled around
no luck
another cruiser and a blue wall of badges
pointing guns and screaming
i put my pistol to my head
i didn't want to go to prison
then
i thought of my 5 year old daughter
and did what i swore i would never do
i threw my piece down
got on the ground
and waited for whatever
came next

little pot-belled cop in booking looks
like the pillsbury doughboy with a Hitler
mustache asks me the standard questions
and when i answer yes to Have You Ever Been
or Are You Now Suicidal his little round
gimlet eyes narrow in bored contempt and
his dead voice commands me to follow him
down a hallway a door opens to a room no
bigger than a broom closet painted green with
absolutely nothing in it except a square
hole in the floor full of piss and shit
and gobs of spit and hair he makes me strip
lift my dick my balls run my hands thru my
hair open my mouth stick out my tongue
turn around and spread my ass cheeks so he
can take a peek and then he grabs my pile
of clothes and snarls Someone Will Be By
To See You and slams the door i touch the
walls and feel spongy padding and cold
air blowing from somewhere so i walk
in circles thinking of my much missed
daughter 5 hours later the door
cracks light a fat face appears and asks if
i am still suicidal and i am so damn cold
and bored i lie and say Not Anymore
so they give me a blue jumpsuit and send me
upstairs to the 5th floor of the snohomish
county jail june 2nd 1996

was where they kept the mental cases
like every other cell-block it was way
over capacity so i was given a mattress and
assigned a spot on the floor it was freezing
in there air conditioners cranked to
full power i guess they thought it was good for the Loonies
only 3 people in there were truly CRAZY as far
as i could tell one was a frizzy-haired arab
who looked like Salman Rushdie on crack
slapped and argued with himself and flew
into foaming-at-the-mouth rages
another was a beady-eyed bearded religious
maniac who had killed
a bunch of people in a church fire deliberately
set and screamed the same apocalyptic passage
from the book of Revelations all night
and the other was a gooned-out gold-toothed
drooling simpleton who had fried his brain-egg
on PCP and the rest were cranky malcontents
faking symptoms to a dozen different maladies
in order to stay there God knows why it was the
coldest floor in the whole building
and sleep was impossible due to the
firebug's nocturnal ravings but
they did give us extra portions
of food so maybe that was it

hell in a very small place

6 months
in the snohomish county
jail
playing cards with killers
thieves and wife-beaters
day after day after day

every night
eyes open wide
on my bunk staring
at the ceiling

disgusted with life
i swallowed 2 months
of anti-depressant medication
on a cold night in november

swam out of 3 days darkness
and no one even noticed i was gone

96 months

my lawyer
bored and preoccupied
not even working for his money

the prosecutor
thundering doom
and calling for the max

me
thin and handcuffed
needing a shave

pants around my ankles
waiting for it

the judge
pinch-eyed and displeased
working on getting re-elected

no vaseline
he slid it in

hard

prisonbound

they stripped us
and looked
in all our holes

then dressed us
in orange jumpsuits

ran a chain around
our bellies
and cuffed our hands to it

another set went around our ankles
and we shuffled onto a bus

it was december
and we had no shoes or socks
just plastic sandals

we rode that bus 10 hours

we reached our destination
and went thru the whole
process again

strip, look up the ass, lift the
balls, stick out the tongue

all that
plus

we were weighed
photographed and fingerprinted

then they gave us blue jumpsuits
and marched us off
to the R-Units
to start doing our time

i had 2, 555 days to go

love is a clenched fist

i am surrounded
by men who live
in cages

and blink in the sun
like psychotic moles

connoisseurs of
hatred

disguised as racial pride

the tattooed husbands
of battered wives

who think
love is a clenched fist

8 feet of space

days and days
of instant
coffee

and a tv set

the same
chain-link
and razor-wire

outside my window

no comfort in routine

my life
is defined

by 8 feet of space

yesterday was endless and it's already over

i am being
strangled

by the hands
of a clock

choked by the curled
fingers
of a calendar

endless passive waiting
in a numbered box

even fear
has gone stale
with time

i struggle with the
typewriter
and bad memories

and i only touch
women

in my dreams

piss test

keys rattle
the door clicks
the lock pops
it's the cops
shining lights
in your eyes
at 4 in the morning
without warning
they drag you
downstairs to a room
no bigger than a broom closet
you leave your clothes in a pile
lift your balls
your cock
stick out your tongue
run fingers thru your hair
privacy is a thing of the past
like ice cream and automobiles
dollar bills and the smiles of females
one cop
at each elbow
eyes riveted
on your shriveled up dick
shy like a baby turtle's head
you strain and puff
to squeeze out enough
to fill up
the plastic cup
so you can get back to bed
with the unspoken message
loud and clear
in your head

we OWN your ASS
and everything else in here
convict

chowhall

stand in line
wait for your tray
all those eyes
upon you
connected to warped
and suspicious minds
searching for the least
sign of weakness
wondering
if you are a punk or
a rapist
and therefore deserving
of a beating
or a knife between
the ribs
grab your tray
search for a table
containing a friendly face
(or at least a neutral one)
sit down
consume the food
as fast as possible
(might as well, it has no taste)
then up and dump
the scraps in the trash
slide your tray thru the slot
and walk out
you've done it
another meal
successfully ingested

fight

the little vietnamese
walked up to the
big black guy
sitting at the
chowhall table
and tossed
a cup of
boiling water
in his face.
the black guy
bellowed like
a wounded moose
and jumped to his feet.
the vietnamese
threw several
punches at the black
guy's head.
the black guy grabbed
the vietnamese guy
by the front
of his shirt and slammed
a huge
meaty fist
into his face.
i saw the vietnamese
guy's teeth crunch
in a wash of blood,
and then the cops
intervened.
they separated
the combatants
and hauled them
away.

then
told the
rest of us
to clear
out and go
back to
our cells.
it looked like
lunch was
over.

predator

watching a b-ball game
in the gym
when
a short muscular black man
sat down next to me
and said

i ain't gonna lie; i think you fine.

he had been down a long time
and had developed a taste for pretty
white boys

even tho i don't like to fight
i like getting
fucked in the ass even less

and i told him this

he went
into his velvet pimp routine

offered me drugs
money
love
emotional commitment
all of it

it was an impressive performance
i must admit

but the answer was the same

he finally got the message
and moved off

to my intense relief

like i said
i don't like to fight

but will
if i have to

prey

on the phone
a young kid sitting
next to me
sobbing to his family

i heard him say
"they're turning me into a prostitute!"

the cops came
and took him
away
to protective custody
the next
day

snitch

the cops found
him

hanging from
the light fixture

a bedsheet
around his neck

face purple

eyes filled with blood
like bright red eggs

piss & shit
dripping down his legs

and no one
could figure
out
how he managed
to tie

both of his
hands

together
behind his
back

used to know you

on
a sidewalk
in Seattle

i listened
to the sound
of your heart
turning to
stone

and became just
a friend

now
i sit in a prison cell

and wait
for my life to begin
again

celibate by circumstance

masturbate
3 times

in 20 minutes

the last
orgasm

just a dry
spasm

in a cramped hand

painful squeeze
of a prostate gland

light a candle
for me

i'm dead

heart check

the new guy was like me
average height
but skinny as hell
so when the representative
from the tough guy crew
walked up to him in the dayroom
and caught him on the jaw
with a solid right cross
the new guy went down
and stayed
there

the puncher told his crew
"the guy has no heart."

two weeks later
someone (guess who)
stabbed
the tough guy
in the neck
and he bled to death
in a matter of minutes

so i guess the new guy
had heart
after all
and patience
too
which as
we all know
is quite
a virtue

scut

i don't know
how many hours
of my life
i've spent
cleaning up after
other people.
when you don't
have any skills
and you need \$\$\$
you either work
in fast food
or become a janitor.
i've cleaned office
buildings, restaurants,
hardware stores, horse
stables, grocery stores,
prison work camps
and visiting rooms.
my friends always
seemed to have jobs
that were somehow
more bearable; they
worked in record shops
or vintage clothing stores or their
parents had their
own businesses and
they worked for them.
i always ended up
as a janitor.
in prison that term
is never used; instead you
are a porter.
i am not sure why;

i thought a porter
was a guy who helped people
get on trains
or something.
all thru my teens
and twenties, right
up until i got arrested
i worked crappy little jobs with low pay
and zero prestige;
let's face it,
scrubbing toilets isn't
a sexy occupation.
it seemed that whenever
i found a job that
paid well i was laid
off within a few months.
i've never been laid off
from a job
that only paid minimum wage.
i had to quit those jobs, only to be
forced to find other, similar
jobs after a few months
of starving
and sleeping on people's couches.
it wasn't much of
a life
but it was what
i did.

smokey

real name
Robert Bebb
the prison barber
he'd give you a decent cut
free of charge
but
a pack of menthols
showed your
appreciation

he was interested
in writing and writers

knew all the touchstones:
Bukowski, Bunker, Celine

cancer killed him quick
a month after diagnosis

this one
is for you,
man

you shouldn't have died
behind those
walls

stretch

is what everyone
called him

on account of

he is about 7 feet tall
but slim

he was in
for killing
someone

over a drug deal

the pigs found
him

stabbed to
death

under the bleachers
in the gym

apparently
over a gambling debt

some called it
justice

i called it
just another day

the loser's club

i see these young
kids
scared
acting tough

they are usually in for drugs
or car theft

they don't have much time to do

one or two years

they do nothing
they learn nothing

they spend all their time
in the dayroom playing cards

trying to fit in
be one of the fellas

stupid macho shitheads

they think they're cool

but they're just
scared kids
acting tough

short eyes

the hypocrisy is
stunning

the biggest
jesus freaks

are the rapists
and the child molesters

diseased sinners
scurrying to church
clutching vinyl covered bibles

and the preachers
sanctimonious con-men
are like benevolent sponges
wiping away guilt
like spilled
milk

it's bullshit

some things are beyond
absolution

these bible-backed pieces of shit
make me sick

their lips tremble with prayer
but their eyes dream
future crimes

God may forgive them

but i sure as hell don't

eddie

the never-do-well son
of my next door neighbors
he was somewhere past 40
with busted teeth
twinkly blue eyes
and a head full of curly brown hair
he lived off and on in a tarpaper shack
in their backyard
i used to sit in there
with him and drink
whiskey out of coffee cups
i don't remember a single conversation
but i do recall feeling
very heavy and important
drunk at 10 in the morning
i was 15 years old and already
knew that there wasn't much to life
but if i had had any idea
what an avalanche of horrifying shit
was coming my way
i would have never left
that run-down shack
and probably be better
off for it today

tough guys

on the mainline
on the yard
everyone trying so hard
to be a tough guy

it gets boring
and ridiculous

as if
denying their fear
will make them
immortal

the graveyards
are full

of tough guys
who didn't
realize

they stayed alive
only as long
as the cowards
let them

paranoia

paranoia
is rampant
in prison

no one is immune

imaginary insults
breed festering resentments

there's no such thing as
an accident

every slight is an attack
upon one's manhood

it's tiring and stupid
yet i suffer from it
like everyone else

enemies appear
where there are only
thoughtless acts:

the black guy who bumped me when i was on the phone
(he did it on purpose!)

the redneck who ignored me while he talked to my
friend
(that was deliberate!)

a million signals, gestures,
postures and comments

this place is oppressive
and filled with threats

april 7th 1998

walked the yard
alone

it rained for a minute
or two

the smell of the rain
on the pavement

brought memories

of the summer of '93
when i lived
with my girlfriend and child
on Casino road
until things went bad

regret and lost love and missed opportunities
crunching under my shoes

miracle

i seem to be tempting fate quite a bit of late
but usually i do it on purpose.
consider this:
when i left for work this morning
i unwittingly left my locker open.
not just unlocked but wide open,
both doors swinging wide and inviting
major theft of just about everything i own.
and yet
in spite of the fact that i live
in a dormitory with 50 killers,
thieves, rapists and drug dealers
not a single item was taken.
it's almost enough
to reignite my belief
in the essential decency
of the human race.
almost,
but
not quite.

conversation

you're in for murder?

yeah.

who did you kill?

some bitch.

how?

beat her head in with a pipe.

why?

she owed me money.

how much?

50 bucks.

you beat a woman's head in with a pipe because she
owed you 50 bucks?

it was the principle, man.

yeah? ok, see ya later.

somebody's husband, somebody's son

his wife
wanted a divorce

he did not take
rejection

well

so
he responded

by beating her head

with a
baseball bat

then strangling
her to death

and fucking her
corpse

said

it was
the best piece

of ass
he'd ever
had

the devil's dandruff

i've tried just about every drug there is and i must
confess that when it comes to cocaine i don't
see the allure. i've snorted it, smoked it, and shot
it directly into my main-line and
everytime it feels the same: mild euphoria
followed by an intense craving for MORE.
it's like that old joke: how does cocaine make you feel?
it makes you feel like having some MORE cocaine.
when i shot coke my heart started slamming
around in my chest, my body shook,
i began sweating. it was like a very expensive
anxiety attack. i can get that feeling
any number of ways: armed robbery, car crash
at 80 mph, watching
the birth of my daughter.
i don't need cocaine. might as well just drink 17 pots
of coffee
and flush my wallet down the toilet.

january 15th 1969

is when
all this
trouble
started
for me
(and a few
others too)
as i
ripped
my way
out of
my mother's
vagina
with no
anesthesia
for the
unfortunate woman
i'm afraid
i've been
nothing but
a pain
in the ass
(and other
delicate places)
to that
poor
woman

ball & chain

a few old girlfriends write to me in prison
it's nice
they all have boyfriends, husbands, children
and good jobs

i have concrete and razor-wire, steel doors
and psychopathic neighbors

but i don't think
i'd trade places with them
because in a few more years
i will be free
and it seems that they
never will be

denise has got her shit together

she's got a good job, new office, 401K.
she rents a house in a nice neighborhood.
she has a 6 year old son
but she doesn't have a husband or a boyfriend
and she tells me that sometimes she gets lonely.
i write to her from prison
(i get lonely sometimes too)
and i tell her that she's lucky
for there is much pleasure
in being alone.
but i understand how she feels.
it is also good to share your victories with someone.
the trick is finding the right someone.
i hope that someday Denise finds that someone.
and for that matter
i hope i do too.

preacher

black and balding
always jolly

and quick with
a kind word

they say
he killed his
wife

cut her throat

with a butcher
knife

and stabbed her
47 times

he's doing life
plus 200 years

whichever comes
first

i fought the law

being moved
from one prison
to another

in the van
the guard had
the radio
tuned to the oldies
station

Bobby Fuller sang

“i fought the law and the law won!”

and
it was
one of
the few
moments
since my arrest
that felt
right

hey muchacha

driving thru town
on the prison bus
summertime
windows down

a teenage girl
on the sidewalk

a Mexican in front of me
leaned out
and leered

“Hey Muchacha! Te quiero mucho!”

her arm shot up
quick
defiant
without even looking

she flipped him off
truly beautiful

we roared
with laughter

all the way to prison

monday january 1st 2001

brand new day
brand new week
brand new month
brand new year
brand new century
brand new millennium
same old me

disowned

21 and drunk
i smashed up
my father's car
and ducked a DWI by fleeing the scene in a panic
but still had to face the old man

he told me over the phone

“all that matters is that you're ok; i can always get
another car but i can't get another son.”

but we both knew
he meant just the opposite

he already had another son

an anniversary, of sorts

i haven't spoken to my father in 10 years
and that suits me just fine.
it isn't tragic.
there is no sense of loss.
i don't miss his company.
he never approved of me
and i'm grateful to him
for precipitating the break
because now i don't have
to listen to his lectures
or endure his pompous scorn
for my every action, thought, or dream.
the man simply didn't like the person i turned out to be.
that's fine with me.

the concrete blues

they are selling my city
to dot.com millionaires
too young to shave.
i should've listened to my parents.
stayed in college.
gotten better grades.
i'm no longer young.
time speeds up, slips away.
my hair is almost completely grey.
i haven't done any of the things i wanted to do.
i feel 60 but i'm only 32.

swerve the bullet

there are
certain ages
which can snare
a man and take
him down

27 is a particularly dangerous year

it got
jimi hendrix
janis joplin
kurt cobain
jim morrison
and my friend blair scott

i'm 32
so i managed to sneak past
that gravestone

but next year
i'll be 33

same age as jesus
when he died
john belushi too

i'll have to be careful

i'm not ready to join
the ranks of
the illustrious dead

only the dead don't grow old

by the time
i was 32
i had a head
full of grey hair
that was also noticeably thinning.
my back ached all the time
as did my neck and hips,
which gave off loud firecracker pops
whenever i moved.
15 years of drinking and taking pills
had given me the liver
"of a 70 year old"
according to the prison doctor.
but at least
i didn't have AIDS
or hepatitis
from my days
of shooting drugs.
everyone shows some wear and tear
eventually.
the only people
who are past
feeling any pain
are pushing
up the
daisies.

realm

i've always admired
the last words
of condemned men

the epitome of false bravado
and i've often thought
that that would not be a bad way to end

to go down snarling
screaming for revenge

if not in this life
then in the next

swearing vengeance
in another
time
place
dimension

great

a kind of victory

i knew what i wanted to be
when i was 5 yrs old
but that didn't fit
with what other people wanted
so i took a lot of shit
i wish i could say that i
was strong and overcame all
that shit but the truth is
i got distracted for a number
of years by a lot of other shit
and so here i am almost 35 years old
and i'm still not doing what i want
to be doing
but i haven't given up
i haven't quit
i have the same desires and the same goals
i had when i was a child
and i'm still trying to reach them
slowly but surely
and i guess
that's a kind of victory
in and of itself

a good man feeling bad

i wrote more when i was on amphetamines
i wrote more when i was drinking
i wrote more when i was in love with you
i wrote more when you were mistreating me
i wrote more when i was broke and homeless
i wrote more when my life seemed hopeless
i wrote more when i first came to prison
i wrote more before my hair turned grey and
 started thinning
i wrote more when i was sleeping with the wives of
 other men
i wish i could write now like i used to write then

1996

i used to sit
and cry
and hold a loaded
gun up
to my head
but
i chose a
slower way
of being dead

2nd hand smoke

my celly
sits on the bunk below me
and smokes a cigarette

i sit above him
breathing in his 2nd hand smoke
for the 100th time today

but it isn't so terrible
at least he isn't punching me
in the face
and butt-fucking me

he could if he tried
he is much bigger
and stronger
than i
am

i would resist, of course
i would fight with the energy
of panic and fear born of
desperation

but he would win eventually

that's the way it is in here
the law of the jungle

that's the way it is everywhere

tuesday afternoon in a cage

my celly lifts weights
is a Reverend of the Universal Life Church
and has a pierced nipple

he walks in
calls me a freak
laughs
turns the boom box up louder
says CRANK THIS!

i tell him
it's loud enough in here

he laughs

this is how time passes

don't say a word

i'm locked
in an 8 x 10 cell

with
a pig of a man

who
farts
chainsmokes and wipes his boogers
on the
walls

he outweighs me by at least 150 lbs
so i don't
complain

my pedigree

German
Irish
Scottish and Cherokee

what does that make me?

the race card

the blacks
the asians
the mexicans
and the indians
all hang together
when there is trouble
they back each other up
and find safety in numbers
very few whites do this
and it makes me wonder

privacy

doesn't exist
in prison

you shit
shower
shave
eat
read
fart
smoke
piss
work
watch tv and sleep

in the company
of other convicts

and
under the watchful eyes
of bored
and stupid guards

an easygoing guy

highly religious
overwhelmingly friendly
neat in appearance
meticulous in his habits
worked the same job for 30 years
paid his bills on time
loved his wife
kept his garbage can lids on tight
and murdered over 49 women

big shirley

black
homosexual
tipped the scales
at 300 lbs
was always
in the dayroom
braiding someone's hair.
and then
a slim young blond kid
moved into big Shirley's cell.
God only knows what he was thinking;
he must've wanted what happened
to happen.
at least that is the story i heard.
it went like this:
2nd night together
big Shirley whipped out
his huge member
and started to put it to the kid.
the kid told him to go slow
but big Shirley broke wild
and just rammed it home.
the kid didn't like that
so the next morning
he went and told
and they both went to the hole.
i don't know how much
if any
of that story
was true.
but i never saw
either one of
them again.

derek

was a crazy white guy who thought
he was an indian
when i say crazy i mean
a schizophrenic rage-a-holic
with extreme religious mania

he would spout off for hours
about his own personal brand
of half-understood indian mysticism
and quasi-christianity
and tell me i was "evil" when my attention wandered

he was really hard to get along with

hot rod

a 50 year old
speed-freak
meth cook
dope dealer
had SS lightning bolts
on his neck
told me he'd
"stabbed a nigger" at san quentin

and i believed him

sparky

was short
bald and hyperactive

said he was
in for 1st degree arson
but was probably
a rapist

tran

spoke no english
and beat me at chess
on a regular basis

they deported him back to vietnam
when his sentence was over

he cried

jeremiah

walked into the cell
put down his bed-roll
and said, "i worship satan."

brian

also worshipped satan
and talked endlessly about
nothing at all

dan

was known as the gentleman bank robber
he seemed too intelligent
to be in prison

but bad luck doesn't
discriminate

ron

looked like nick nolte
and told outrageous stories
packed with more bullshit
than a politician's promise

nathan

was a homosexual body-builder
with a pierced nipple
who made me very nervous

smitty

had acne scars and a crabby
attitude
he went to the hole
on a regular basis
for fighting
and failing piss tests

todd

molested his niece
and whined
about his 4 year sentence

chris

accidentally killed his
infant daughter
and stoically accepted 26 years

buzz

was a short-tempered indian kid
with 2 felony strikes
already on his sheet

he got out
and was back in the can
within 5 hours

some kind of record

the keeper & the kept

what you see
is what you get

power dynamics
are rarely so naked

the pot-bellied bullies
who lock us in cages

are a bigger bunch
of lawless thugs
than we criminals
could ever hope to be

we are locked up
because we got caught
and the law applies to us

but who watches the cops?

given the power of Life and Death
they puff up like poison toads

and punish us with impunity

november 3rd 2001

i'm sitting
at this
metal desk
in front
of the window
looking out
at the coils of
razor-wire

sitting here
sick with the flu
while they clear
away rubble
in New York City
and fret about
anthrax in the mail

i've got my own problems:

a daughter
who now resides
in another state

a mother
married to a
religious maniac

a neurotic sister
plagued by
anxiety attacks
and high cholesterol

(mine is pretty high, too, for a guy of only 32)

so
i'm sitting here
with my fever
and phlegm and cholesterol-choked heart

while bombs rain down
on Afghanistan
and the world spins wildly thru space

i don't believe
i will die today
or even go insane

i think i'll take a shower
and masturbate
instead

forever war

my country
it seems
is always at
war.
whether it's stomping the shit
out of helpless 3rd world
nations
or brutalizing its own citizens
here at home
it's clear this country
is out of control.
a vicious gang
of rich thugs
have constructed
a mechanized military monster,
killed off the buffalo,
paved the continent
from end to end
and declared war.
the war on terror
the war on drugs
the war on crime
the war of the rich against the poor
war war war
the human beast
is loose in the streets
screaming for more.
i am afraid
it will go on and on
war without end
until
unfortunately
everyone is dead.

memories of you

i'm tired of hating myself on your behalf
i used to be so hungry
for your mouth, your breasts, your ass
you claimed i made you feel stupid
you resented my tongue and my mind
so you took up with mute knuckle-draggers
who posed no threat to your simple world-view
you complained that i never worked
and i guess that much is true
and although
i swore i would never again
seek the company of your smile
i'm sure it would make you happy
if you knew
i still masturbate
to memories
of you

wrong number

i have no family waiting for me
the mother of my child
is married to another man
and my daughter calls him "dad"

somewhere a telephone is ringing

guilty

last night
i found a dead man
in my cell

dust on his eyeballs
like fuzzy marbles

he died in his sleep
he looks just like me

if you're not guilty
how come you're bleeding?

a long line of dead men

it's foggy outside my window
and once again
i have drank too much coffee
all jittery
i can't seem to find my limit
until i've crossed it

the man in the bunk across from me
grinds his teeth and moans in his sleep

sometimes it feels
as if i'm not in prison at all
but some kind of demented monastery
with crazed and ignorant monks
farting and snoring in the morning

*these ruined years, this wasted mind,
and so much wasted time*

hours
days
weeks
months
years
of my life
stolen from me
by bosses
supervisors
foremen
cops
judges and all the everyday
simple boring idiots
of this
most unappealing world

visiting room

an air
of sadness
permeates
the room.
kids
without fathers.
wives
without husbands.
everyone
wishing they were
someplace
else.

same old story

my parents divorced
when i was 4
i saw my dad on weekends
court-ordered

i wanted him to like me
but he was better
at lecturing

i tried in vain, thru soccer games
and school plays
to gain his approval
but it never came

same old story
everyone has a name
no one has a father

snapshots

having my abscessed
ear-drum lanced when i was 5

being punched in the mouth
in the 4th grade

drinking vodka and orange juice
and skipping school

using money stolen from a church
to buy tickets to see The Clash

rolling a pick-up truck
when i was a sophomore

quitting all those minimum wage jobs
without collecting my last paycheck

wandering the streets of Seattle
in a 2nd hand suit and sleeping in the park

being arrested for drunk
and disorderly conduct

watching my girlfriend
give birth to my daughter
and cutting the umbilical cord

seeing myself on a movie
screen for the first time

being put in a mental hospital
on my 27th birthday

finding out my friend
had been murdered

finding a woman's wallet
and using the money in it to buy heroin

being arrested for armed robbery

being sentenced to 8 years in prison

looking out the bus window at Walla Walla
and seeing a guard holding an automatic rifle

praying for silence

trying to read a poem
at 6:25 in the morning
after a bad night
of sweat-soaked nightmares

trying to gain
a measure of calm
from the words
of another man
who calls himself a poet

i can't do it
because of the constant interruptions

the stamping of feet
the slamming of doors
the flushing of toilets

there is never a moment of silence

i have never felt
more isolated
among the multitudes
in this human zoo

as i do right now

trying to read a poem
at 6:25 in the morning

the hard dollar

prison
is hardly
the free ride
it's perceived to be
from out
on the streets.
they make us pay
for everything
including
room and board.
i thought
i had escaped
the tyranny
of the timeclock
but prison
is just like
the free world:
everyone is hustling
for the hard dollar.

what is left

i had a life
but you could hardly call it blessed
i started out with nothing
and i still have most of it left

9 million rainy days

sometimes there's just nothing
rain outside the window
too much coffee in your gut
time ticking away but somehow too slow
you have thoughts but they're not profound
you have worries and they're average worries
but terrifying too
—how are you going to make it?
you need a car
a place to sleep
food to eat
and none of these is cheap
you need
all the things that everyone else needs
but you don't know how
to do anything
and you feel
ashamed to be selling your books
as if you've joined the ranks
of all the other merchants
the greedy hustlers

just another salesman

if
i had
grown up
in a stable household
with
two well-adjusted
and loving
parents
studied hard in school
graduated with honors
gone to college
gotten a degree
found a decent job
met a wonderful girl
fallen in love
gotten married
and lived
happily ever after
what
in
the
hell
would
i
have
to
write
about?

there's nothing to it,
you just pick yourself up, dust yourself off
and get busy kicking the world in the ass.
so your hair is thinning and it has turned almost completely grey
and ok, you don't have any practical job skills;
you're not good with your hands, you're no mechanic, no carpenter,
you don't know shit about computers, but that doesn't matter
because, damnit man, you're finally free again!
you've gotten back the most important thing in the world:
 your freedom!
sure, you lost much more than just 7 years and no one
who wasn't there will ever be able to understand
but you survived! you're alive!
you've got a 2nd chance. not everyone gets a 2nd chance.
sure, ok, it isn't going to be easy; it's going to be a fiendishly
difficult uphill battle fraught with peril
every step of the way.
but i think you're going to make it, man.
i've got a good feeling about you.

strip search

designed to humiliate
dehumanize
demoralize and intimidate

stand naked
lift your balls
bend and spread
your ass cheeks

every time you
get piss tested
go to the infirmary
see your visitors
or move
from one work area
to another

over the years
i've gone thru it
probably hundreds
of times

it's depressing
what a man
can get used to

survivor

all the way
from the Pacific Northwest
thru the jobs
the women
suicidal depression
alcohol
drugs
7 years in prison
to emerge
into the 21st century

squinting into
an uncertain future

worried

i haven't
been behind
the wheel of
an automobile
in 7 years.
i wonder if
i will remember
how to operate
a motor vehicle
when i get out?
it's a silly question.
they say driving
is like fucking:
once you've done it
you never forget how.
well,
i'm worried
about
the fucking part too.

call me butch

for some reason
convicts like to call each other
by nicknames.
some are fairly self-explanatory:
"Fat Pat the Rapo Rat" pretty much says it all.
others are more involved:
"Oral-B" earned that name
by unwittingly brushing his teeth
with a toothbrush
his celly had stuck
up his ass
when Oral-B
was out
of the cell.
as for me,
i've been called many names
over the years.
i've had Mexicans call me "Flaco" (skinny)
and "Carnicero" (butcher)
and for some reason
the Cubans at Walla Walla
called me "Clint Eastwood".
i've been called "Slick", "Sport", "Professor",
"Bookworm" and "International Playboy and Super-stud".
now
most people
just call me "Butch".
i've grown so accustomed to it
that on the rare occasions when someone
uses my first name
it sounds odd and jarring.

that nickname is one
of the few
things i would like
to take with me
when i leave prison.
so if we
should happen
to meet on the street
dear reader,
call me Butch.

words of wisdom

i've had my romance with guns
and breaking the law
i've had my fun with drugs
and climbing the walls
and i'm here
to tell you all
to forget it
it's a waste of time

a walk among the tombstones

smuggling poems out of prison
in the soles of my shoes
i'm way past finding salvation
in the arms of a woman

i look out my window and see
burning flowers and starving armies
but when i look up into the night sky
i see the souls of dead heroes

just the way it is

i was homeless and unemployed for long periods.
i lived on the streets, slept in cars and on couches.
i injected heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamines
 into my veins,
smoked pot almost every day for 15 years,
drank oceans of wine, whiskey, and beer.
i held people up at gunpoint, was chased and beaten
by the police, sat and played chess with men
who were destined for Death Row.
i am not proud nor am i ashamed
of the things i've done.
i do not write about them
in order to glorify them.
i write about them because
these experiences make up
a large portion of my life.
that's just the way it is.

nowhere is my home

all of my childhood homes
have been sold to strangers

i'm rootless
cut off from my past

my baby pictures lost
and moldering in a distant garage

left behind by an absent-minded mother

when people ask me
where i am from
i don't know how to answer

born in Seattle
raised in Everett and Snohomish

bounced between all three
my whole life

nowhere is my home

endless, senseless

late at night
is the
worst

with
a human being
snoring on the bunk below

i see
my future spread
out before me

like a dead-end road map

and i want to scream
at the uselessness

i am so afraid
i'll have to go back
to the same

shitty jobs
the same
failed relationships

endless nights
filled with loneliness
and frustration

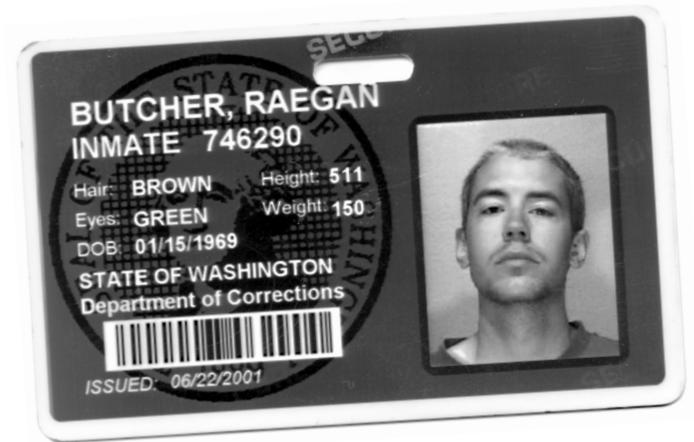
dimestore dillinger

hard time
for armed crime
isn't just
a politician's sound bite

i did 7 years in prison
i don't need to be forgiven

with eyes
like traffic lights
and a spine
like a cork-screw

i've walked thru hell
wearing gasoline shoes



Raegan Butcher was born in Seattle in 1969 but moved to rural Snohomish when he was very young. In 1996 he was convicted of First Degree Armed Robbery and sentenced to eight years in prison. He is currently incarcerated and is scheduled to be released in 2003.

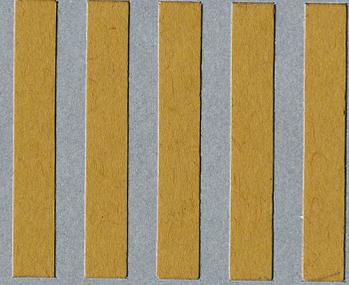
He is looking forward to getting letters from kooks and malcontents from all over the world. You can send mail to him in care of *CrimethInc. / PO Box 1963 / Olympia WA 98507*.

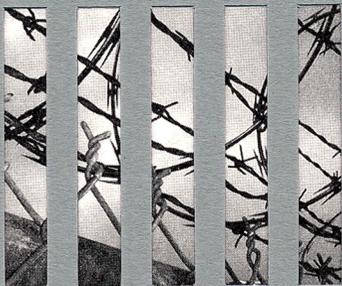
This book was set in the typeface *Oolakat*, designed by Günner Grubumpkin in 1884 in the small village of Duren, located near the Hürtgen Forest in western Germany. It was based on the typeface Caslon and created as a protest against the practices of capitalist typeface foundries. Grubumpkin changed several subtle nuances of the typeface and released it as *Oolakat*, naming it after his first daughter, who is rumored to have been the result of an unusual relationship he maintained for the duration of his life with a wild wolf—whose influence extended far beyond the mere name of the typeface.

Along with Günner, five residents of Duren formed an anarchist union to produce the lead type in their spare time so as to make it available for free to anyone who desired it. At night the wolf would watch over its daughter while she slept, and its strong and coarse scent would enter the type-makers' sleeping bodies and cause them to have the most vivid of dreams. On rare day-time visits, the wolf descended into the village and bit off large chunks of flesh, and sometimes the limbs, of the lead-shapers, but in response they calmly bandaged their wounds and continued their work. No one killed or hid from the wolf as they were all—like Günner—deeply smitten with it.

Up until the day the wolf attacked, ravaged them in their sleep, and carried *Oolakat* off to the dark woods—never to be seen again—they produced hundreds of sets of the typeface that in their lifetimes reached all over the earth; from the rocky coast of Oregon to the opium dens of Hong Kong, from the torch-lit taverns of Finland to a sunken pirate ship at the Cape of No Hope. Or so the legend goes, and this typeface lives on today, proudly used in anarchist publications, such as this one, throughout the world.

Günner's grave is marked by a giant chestnut tree in the foothills around Hürtgen Forest, and is still visited today, by wolves and humans alike.





sometimes there's just nothing
rain outside the window
too much coffee in your gut
time ticking away but somehow too slow
you have thoughts but they're not profound
you have worries and they're average worries
but terrifying too
—how are you going to make it?
you need a car
a place to sleep
food to eat
and none of these is cheap
you need
all the things that everyone else needs
but you don't know how
to do anything
and you feel
ashamed to be selling your books
as if you've joined the ranks
of all the other merchants
the greedy hustlers

just another salesman

