

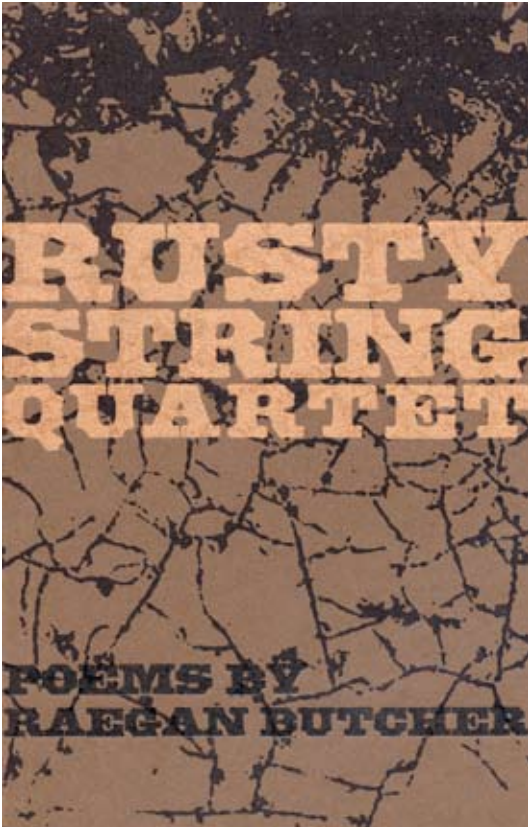
In August of 2006, the last copies from the first limited and numbered printing of *Stone Hotel* were sold. While we might still do a reprinting in the future, we decided to make this PDF of the book freely available in the meantime to keep the text in circulation and help promote Raegan's writing and 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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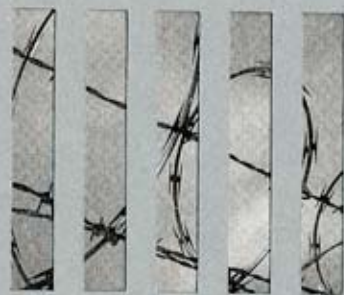
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# Stone Hotel

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](http://www.crimethinc.com), or by writing to:

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PO Box 1963  
Olympia WA 98507

### *this book is a fund raiser . . .*

for the ongoing anarchist outreach publishing project *Fighting For Our Lives* ([www.crimethinc.com/fighting](http://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 5<sup>th</sup> floor of the snohomish  
county jail june 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.



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

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

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

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

*2<sup>nd</sup> hand smoke*

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

i sit above him  
breathing in his 2<sup>nd</sup> hand smoke  
for the 100<sup>th</sup> 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:  
2<sup>nd</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 27<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> chance. not everyone gets a 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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

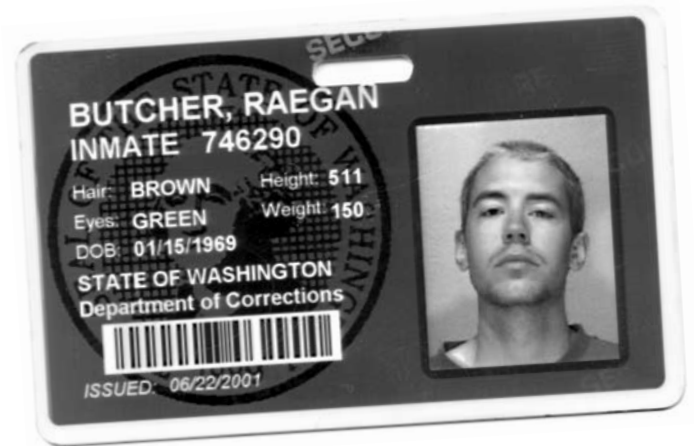
*dimestore dillinger*

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.

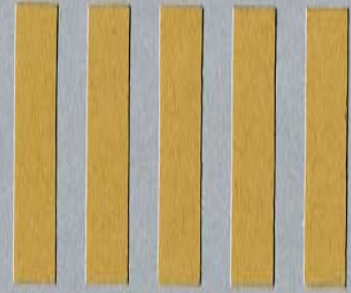
He is looking forward to getting letters from kooks and malcontents from all over the world. You can send mail to him in care of *CrimethInc. / PO Box 1963 / Olympia WA 98507*.

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.

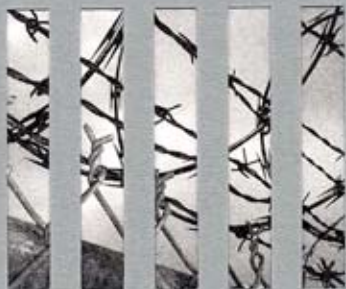
Along with Günner, five residents of Duren formed an anarchist union to produce the lead type in their spare time so as to make it available for free to anyone who desired it. At night the wolf would watch over its daughter while she slept, and its strong and coarse scent would enter the type-makers' 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

