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Dan Grote

Incarceration's Mass

Okay, my friend,
you win—I will
admit that your
prison cell's a
bit more spacious
than mine, but
you are doing
time just the
same, everyone is
at the mercy of a
jailor and that
jailor's name is
printed on the
clock, no matter

which side of the
bars you've found
yourself on, the
hours watch as
you kill yourself
to save that which
you will never live
to spend, which
to me, seems an unusually
cruel brand of life
sentence.

Ramblings of a Tortured Mind

It's a bitter, sweet symphony
and there is little to celebrate
in singing songs of myself, hard
to carry a tune while toting all
of this baggage, and all it seems
I've done right is write all
of my wrongs when Time is out
to erase me, so these words are all
that I am, the everything I have
left after giving it all away,
the something I can sculpt into
anything as I go on mining pain
diamonds from this trash heap I
call a life, sifting through the
wreckage, just trying to find the
one who might love me for me,
whoever that might turn out
to be.

Inside the Outlaw

Sentenced to a life of
hard labor and left to
quarry the very

stones

They've used to build my
prison—razor wire and
regret the scaffold
that

Raised these walls, yet
if I had it all to lose
again, I suppose the
script

Would read the same. It
would take these locked
doors to help me
find

The key, the fleeting
glimpse of freedom I
have found within
this

Poetry, the right to
remain silent's given
me much to
say,

And the rat-a-tat-tat of
this old typewriter has
me feeling like
a

Criminal and I am starting
to convince myself that I
can shout my out
of

This mess, one poem at a
time.

Dan Grote is an inmate at United States Penitentiary Canaan in Pennsylvania.