



## **Doing Time: 25 Years of Prison Writing (PEN American Center Prize Anthologies)**

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“Doing time.” For prison writers, it means more than serving a sentence; it means staying alive and sane, preserving dignity, reinventing oneself, and somehow retaining one’s humanity.

For the last quarter century the prestigious writers’ organization PEN has sponsored a contest for writers behind bars to help prisoners face these challenges. Bell Chevigny, a former prison teacher, has selected the best of these submissions from over the last 25 years to create *Doing Time: 25 Years of Prison Writing*—a vital work, demonstrating that prison writing is a vibrant part of American literature. This new edition will contain updated biographies of all contributors.

The 51 original prisoners contributing to this volume deliver surprising tales, lyrics, and dispatches from an alien world covering the life span of imprisonment, from terrifying initiations to poignant friendships, from confrontations with family to death row, and sometimes share extraordinary breakthroughs. With 1.8 million men and women—roughly the population of Houston—In American jails and prisons, we must listen to “this small country of throwaway people,” in Prejean’s words. *Doing Time* frees them from their sentence of silence. We owe it to ourselves to listen to their voices.

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