

The following poems are by Paul Thompson, an inmate at Dorchester penitentiary.

**Cell 20**

alone again  
i approach this long night  
alone again again knowing i'll die again  
alone  
this long night  
i cry  
again

i am a man  
crying  
because i need so much  
because i want so much  
to share and touch  
this long night  
with a woman again  
i am a man  
crying  
to touch and be touched  
again

sleepless  
and not knowing what to do  
with the feeling inside  
sleepless again  
and not knowing what to do  
except cry  
and die  
again

i dream again..  
warm breath on my neck  
and gentle respect  
sweetly rushing toward dawn  
love's smiling face  
love's hot embrace  
and

a guard checks my cell  
breaking my spell  
and i cry again  
and i die again

how long must i stay  
how long must i pay



**A Man**

A man who has lived anonymously  
For thirty years, who has  
attended church faithfully, suddenly  
murders his wife, two children, and  
several neighbours

As the police hustle him  
from the courthouse  
to an awaiting police van  
someone in the angry crowd  
screams:  
"You crazy sick animal!"  
"Yes! Yes!" the man yells back,  
"But I wasn't born this way!"

**In the Beginning**

Down by the river  
Beneath the sweeping willow  
Love began in Eden  
When Evelyn made a pillow  
of her breast  
for her man.

From the blue heavens above  
God watched Adam and Eve  
make love  
and smiled.



**Bullets in the Garden**

Turns the radio off  
when the news comes on because who  
wants a new atrocity  
to ponder and/or  
disregard..

Front and back yard  
paved green..

She comtemplates taking her baby  
to the park for sun and air..  
Can she afford to buy a book  
of poems on the way?  
And will there be tear-gas  
again today?

**Epitaph: For Judy Garland  
and Sylvia Path**

building monuments  
of thought  
i search  
for a suitable  
poem

and fail  
because it hurts to know there are people  
whose chosen path  
puts an end to us all.

**Small Realities**

after 5½ years  
of being alone  
memories fade  
grow old  
so the mind creates  
fresh fantasies  
aided by a centrefold  
and each new fantasy  
becomes a little less  
normal  
desperately bold

prison is unhealthy  
that way



**Strong arm of the Law**

The cop smashed  
the teenage girl yelling obscenities  
in the face  
with a leather-gloved  
fist

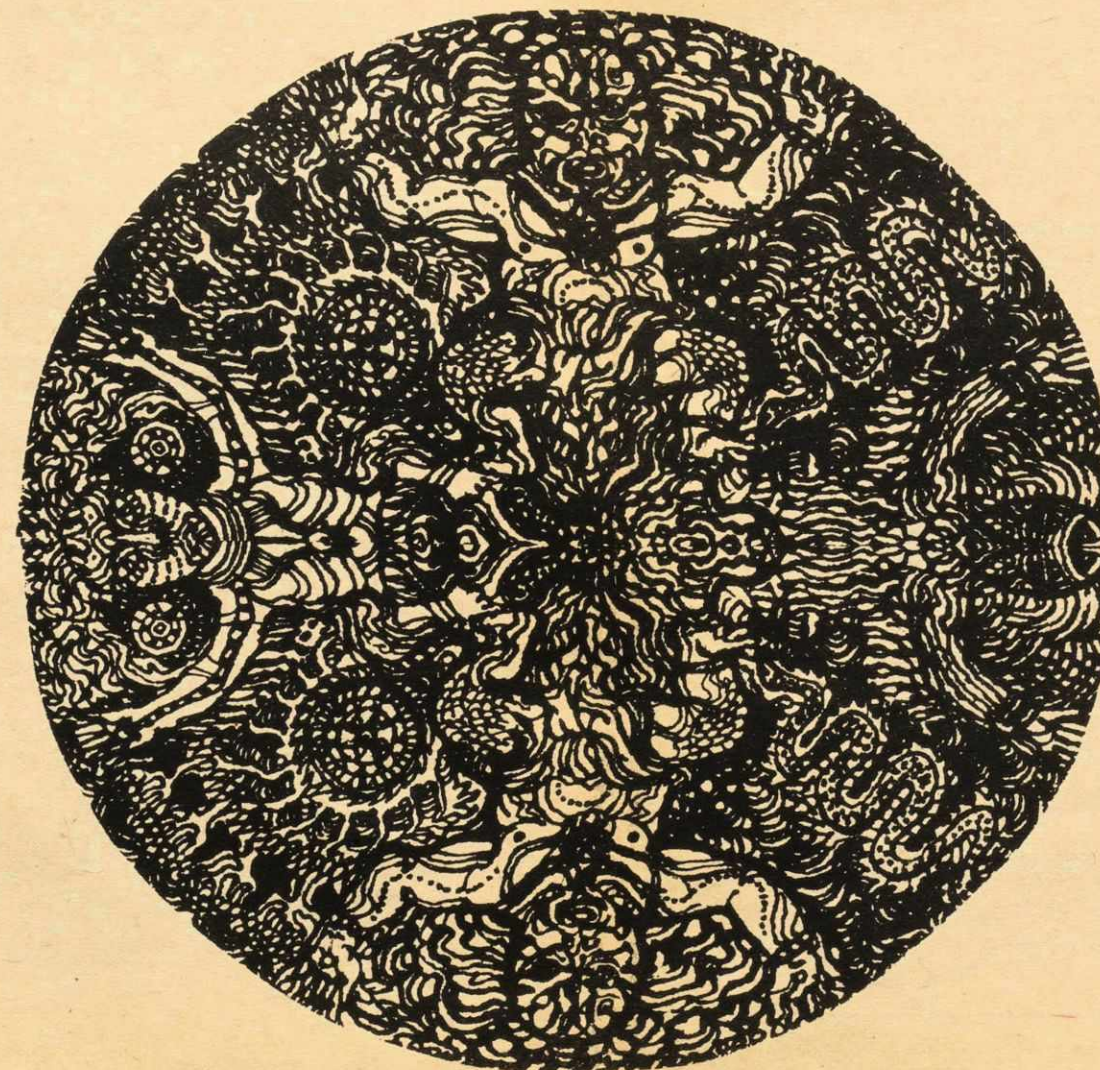
the glove being weighted  
with powdered lead.

**ONION**

**SOUP**

**A Christmas Message**

Why? Why not?  
You know we  
are here in  
this world:  
We don't  
know why —  
or where  
we came from  
but  
let us  
try  
to enjoy  
it  
anyway.  
Dear Friend:  
love me, please  
I need you  
and cry for your  
comfort  
just as you do  
for me.  
So, let's realize this  
and rid ourselves  
of our socialized-Hells  
so that we  
can be  
the best of friends.  
Peace  
within,  
Peace  
without,  
perhaps there will someday  
be  
a  
Silent Night  
and  
a  
laughing day.



**January 17**

I went to the S.U.B. today  
Following my feet; half out of habit  
Half hoping to see a friend; or make one  
Anyway to look at the bulletins and  
posters  
Maybe even read the GAZETTE

and you know I felt a terrible pain inside  
Like Shame and guilt and not belonging  
Of aloneness. And it hurt bad.  
I doubt if writing can make it better.

**All the "students"**

So open, so friendly, so keen to learn,  
So hard working  
Willing no doubt to try out new ideas  
With flexible outlooks and yet firm  
convictions.  
A real tribute to their professors for sure  
Most of all I felt their humility, their  
concern  
for others and their profane honesty.

Certainly Councin Brucie's is a much  
cleaner and  
more wholesome place

I'm a "student" of sorts too  
All my love.

Ralph Pineau