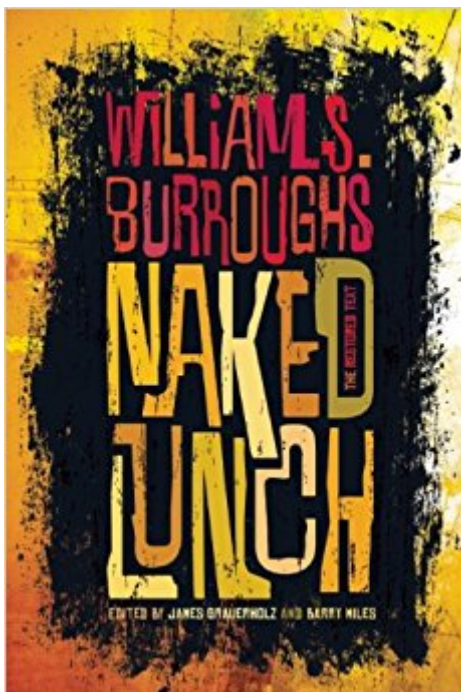


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# Naked Lunch



## Synopsis

Since its original publication in Paris in 1959, *Naked Lunch* has become one of the most important novels of the twentieth century. Exerting its influence on the relationship of art and obscenity, it is one of the books that redefined not just literature but American culture. For the Burroughs enthusiast and the neophyte, this volume—that contains final-draft typescripts, numerous unpublished contemporaneous writings by Burroughs, his own later introductions to the book, and his essay on psychoactive drugs—is a valuable and fresh experience of a novel that has lost none of its relevance or satirical bite.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A masterpiece. A cry from hell, a brutal, terrifying, and savagely funny book that swings between uncontrolled hallucination and fierce, exact satire. Newsweek; A book of great beauty and manically exquisite insight with a wild and deadly humor . . . The only American novelist who may conceivably be possessed by genius. Norman Mailer; Burroughs is the greatest satirical writer since Jonathan Swift. . . . The net result of *Naked Lunch* will be to make people shudder at their own lies, will be to make them open up and be straight with one another. Swift and Rabelais and Sterne accomplished a step in that direction, and Burroughs another. Jack Kerouac; *Booby* brought back from a nightmare. The New York Times; Burroughs called his greatest novel *Naked Lunch*, by which he meant it's what you see on the end of a fork. He's a writer of enormous richness whose books are a kind of attempt to blow up this cozy conspiracy, to allow us

to see what's on the end of the fork . . . the truth. J. G.

Ballard; It's a completely powerful and serious book, as good as anything in prose or poetry written by a Beat writer, and one of the most alive books written by any American for years. I don't see how it could be considered immoral. Robert Lowell; An absolutely devastating ridicule of all that is false, primitive, and vicious in current American life: the abuses of power, hero worship, aimless violence, materialistic obsession, intolerance, and every form of hypocrisy. Terry Southern; Burroughs was the last great avatar of literary modernism and *Naked Lunch* is his most important work. Like an intrepid explorer in to the inner space of the human psyche, Burroughs was unafraid to offer up his own unconscious as a kind of test bed, within which to allow the most sinister and viral of ideas to propagate. It was this activity; part alchemical, part psychological; that allowed him to prophesy with unerring accuracy the hideous modes that human behavior would assume in the post-apocalyptic second half of the twentieth century. *Naked Lunch* is essential reading for anyone who maintains any illusions about anything; to quote its author: Rub out the word. Will Self; Burroughs is a superb writer, and *Naked Lunch* a novel of revolt in the best late-modern sense. . . . If there should be a twenty-first century, this is one of the few works historians could turn to for a grasp, both imaginative and intelligent, of the strange historical phase of the human condition we are living through. E. S. Seldon; A creator of grim fairy tales for adults, Burroughs spoke to our nightmare fears and, still worse, to our nightmare longings. . . . And more than any other postwar wordsmith, he bridged generations; popularity in the youth culture is greater now than during the heady days of the Beats. The Los Angeles Times Book Review; Only after the first shock does one realize that what Burroughs is writing about is not only the destruction of depraved men by their drug lust, but the destruction of all men by their consuming addictions. . . . He is a writer of great power and artistic integrity engaged in a profoundly meaningful search for true values. John Ciardi; This book, which is not a novel but a booty brought back from nightmare, takes a coldly implacable look at the dark side of our nature. Civilization fails many; many fail civilization. William Burroughs has written the basic work for understanding that desperate symptom which is the beat style of life. Herbert Gold; A landmark experimental novel. Los Angeles Times; Probably the most audacious book by any American writer since Henry Miller's celebrated pair of *Tropics*. Chicago Tribune; *Naked Lunch* is a dark, wild ride through the terror of heroin addiction and withdrawal, filled with paranoia, erotica and drug-fueled hallucinations. NPR; An astonishingly lurid account of an

addict on the run from the Man. . . San Francisco Weekly; Naked Lunch will leave the most amoral readers slack-jawed; and yet a trek beneath the depraved surface reveals interweaving caverns that ooze unsettling truths about the human spirit. . . In the same galloping, lyrical way Walt Whitman celebrated democratic toilers of all stripes, Burroughs gleefully catalogs totalitarian spoilers and criminal types; be they human or monster, psychological or pharmacological. . . The Kansas City Star; Naked Lunch still delivers the gut-grabbing jolt of the autoerotic hangings that punctuate its pages, every death erection and post-mortem ejaculation described with a grim relish that walks the line between cry of conscience and shudder of fetishistic pleasure. . . Burroughs . . . shoves America headfirst into the bilge of its hypocrisies. . . Las Vegas Weekly; [Naked Lunch] made Burroughs's reputation as a leader of the rebels against the complacency and conformity of American society. . . An outrageous satire on the various physical and psychological addictions that turn human beings into slaves. . . Burroughs's vision of the addict's life, by which we may infer the lives of all of us in some sense, is a vicious death-in-life of unrelieved abnegation, utter enervation and baroque suffering. Dante could not have envisioned such a post-Holocaust, post-apocalyptic circle of hell. . . The Commercial Appeal

William S. Burroughs was born in St. Louis in 1914 and lived in Chicago, New York, Texas, Paris, Tangier, London, and Lawrence, Kansas, where he died in August 1997. He was the author of numerous books, including Naked Lunch, The Soft Machine, Nova Express, The Ticket that Exploded, and The Wild Boys, and was inducted as a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. James Grauerholz was William Burroughs's longtime manager and editor, and is now his literary executor.

Series of vignettes...mostly about drugs and drug use. It is a defining book of its period and useful for that purpose. I can't say I enjoyed it, not being a part of that culture but I did like it from the perspective of it being a part of that era with historical value.

Naked Lunch "the restored text" is an excellent edition of this phenomenal piece of art or "junk art". I have no words to explain how enigmatic, surreal, trippy, hallucinogenic this book is...Benway, The Meet Cafe, Islam Inc and the parties of Interzone, Mugwumps, Reptiles, Salvador Hassan O'Leary, I.R.s- Identical Replicas, Interzone, A.J., Steely Dan III from Yokohama :-), metallic cocaine bebop (?), William Lee, Hauser and O'brien, Galaxy X, Annexia...this is too much...To

understand how Naked Lunch was written, we must look at the life of its author during the decade before the book was born (Editor's Notes)

It's definitely worth reading, as this is a classic from the beat generation. That said, it's hard to follow, since he was more often high on heroin and other drugs while writing it. At the same time, this sometimes provides for some amazing imagery in his depictions of hallucinations.

I am still trying to work my way through this. I know it is considered a classic, but it truly makes my brain hurt.

Naked Lunch is a Beat Generation novel of drug infused depictions of the torment and rapture of homosexuality in a homophobic society, howls against conformity and control, and promotions of freedom, a "separate life", and similar illusions. For the illicit drug scene and slams against modernity, I prefer Hunter S. Thompson, Will Self, and Adam Thirwell's, Lurid and Cute.

I read the book from beginning to end but am not sure what I read except that most of it was painful. I may not be ready for a book like this.

It is great to have the correct chapter heading restored throughout. But I do miss the Time Lit Supplement debate from the earlier editions of this. More of a snapshot of how Burrough's was beginning to be carried forward by the tide of his urge to write - at times this is hilarious balck comedy, whilst othertimes it just seems distasteful. The themes were refined through subsequent books "Soft Machine" and "The Ticket that Exploded", and I feel are finally distilled to the bare essentials of what Burroughs was telling us in "Nova Express". Not much to add, as so much has been written about this work already.

Although some people might really be into this style of writing I did not enjoy it. It is the type of book where a character would be mid conversation then randomly being mutilated the next moment the conversation would be continuing. I was very much looking forward to reading a hippy/junkie classic but was very let down. If you are looking for a story I would not suggest it. Although If you are into abstract styles this is a book for you.

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