

Hell at the Breech By Tom Franklin **Hell at the breech tom franklin** He held various jobs as a struggling writer living in South Alabama including working as a heavy equipment operator in a grit factory a construction inspector in a chemical plant and a clerk in a hospital morgue. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** The recipient of the 2001 Guggenheim Fellowship Franklin now teaches in the University of Mississippi's MFA program and lives in Oxford Mississippi with his wife the poet Be Tom Franklin was born and raised in Dickinson Alabama. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** He held various jobs as a struggling writer living in South Alabama including working as a heavy equipment operator in a grit factory a construction inspector in a chemical plant and a clerk in a hospital morgue. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** The recipient of the 2001 Guggenheim Fellowship Franklin now teaches in the University of Mississippi's MFA program and lives in Oxford Mississippi with his wife the poet Beth Ann Fennelly and their children. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** He knows how to build a story how to create suspense he gives us characters that are human in ways good and bad and puts words in their mouths that let you see into their souls. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** There is a lot of violence and cruelty in this book but let's face it: 1898 in a community of mostly poor tenant farmers who waged a daily battle just to keep their heads above water was not full of all the charms of the civilized lives we lead today. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Mitcham's Beat Alabama was a hard to reach place miles from the nearest town and it's lone sheriff so when a group of men formed to get revenge for a murder it was easy to keep their identities secret. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** That did happen! The author based this novel on real events that happened in the 1800s in an area close to his own home town and while he made real history sound well real (not every author does well with the based on true events genre) there was such robust gun slinging and other forms of murder that the impact left me. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Author what he does is cook up a quasi-class conflict via a gang of hillbilly rubes who got sorta sore at the cityfolk from a town called Grove Hill who bound to be thinkin' they all walkin' in high cotton and what-not. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Author tosses into the boiling pot a teenage boy overflow'n with testosterone seein' things he ought not a be seein' smellin' that honeysuckle in the air Faulkner wrote about and fancyin' a bite of the proverbial forbidden fruit what you come up with is a combustible potion just waitin for explodin. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** A surprisingly strong surprisingly powerful maiden effort that clearly heralds the blooming genius of the talent that would go on to pen Crooked Letter Crooked Letter one of my favorite novels of 2011. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Sadly I haven't yet read Daniel Woodrell or Donald Ray Pollock (both are on my priority TBR list) but based on some stellar reviews from GR friends I think this chews some of the same cud in terms of atmosphere and tone. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Additionally the main character Sheriff Billy Waite kept conjuring images in my mind of Sheriff Tom Bell from No Country for Old Men in both his world-weary discomfort with the violence around him and his cynical view that more of the same is written into the future. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** PLOT SUMMARY: A fictionalized version of the real life Mitcham War that occurred in Clarke County Alabama in the late 1890's between the wealthy townfolk of Grove Hill and the poor farmers who worked the townfolk's land. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** The farmers led by the villainous brother of the murder victim form a secret society the Hell-at-the-Breech Gang to wage a year long campaign of terror against the residents of Grove Hill who they believe responsible for the killing. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** A large cast of characters populate the story but the two primary POV belong to Sheriff Billy Waite the aging "decent" sheriff whose sympathies run to both sides of the quarrel and Mack Burke a 15 year old boy who harbors a dark secret central to the events of the story. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** I found myself comparing passages to McCarthy's efforts at evoking similar feelings and deciding that McCarthy had been far more effective in constructing moments of power by saying less. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Additionally while I generally enjoyed the non-linear nature of the story and the way Franklin deftly put the time-jumbled fragments together I felt the frequent flashbacks and backstory regressions tended to stall the momentum a bit. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Was a time back yonder in my ambitious years when you was still chasing girls in pigtales where I knew just about

everything went on in my county no matter how delicate from the bowel movement of men to the ministerial cycles of women. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** "His coat hung by the door with the badge pinned inside it and now for the first time in his career as a sheriff he could feel the metal as an organ gone bad liver mossy or kidneys hardened heart flattened out and its rivers of blood damned off. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** McCorquodale holds a lot of paper on the rural people and of late he has gotten more aggressive about shoving people off their land; their little dab of red earth that they raised just enough cotton on to keep them in beans and bullets. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Between the fields there were less level unplantable space lush deep wooded ravines with sprawling water oaks in the bottoms and hollows crowded with pine and other evergreens limbs hung with Spanish moss ivy wisteria and honeysuckle creeks where cool water smooth the surfaces of wide white rocks. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** The fascinating part about this short story is that you will get to see Billy Waite as a younger man when he knew exactly where the sun set in the sky when a fly landed on a stack of horseshit. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** com/JeffreyKeeten Literature Fiction When I was a young 'un when everything was new and there was no bitter experience to cast a cynical shade over whatever was before me I would read everything. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** There's this exercise the teacher pulled out sometime in early elementary school and then later in late high school a paragraph where you were supposed to count all the letter e's. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** I think I'd been able to read those FSF books indiscriminately because I didn't notice quality of writing just the escapism of the story in the sense that my thoughts were fully occupied to the exclusion of all other troubles. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Caught in the maelstrom of the Mitcham War are four people: the county's aging sheriff sympathetic to both sides; the widowed midwife who delivered nearly every member of Hell-at-the-Breech; a ruthless detective who wages his own private war against the gang; and a young store clerk harboring a terrible secret. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Based on incidents that occurred a few miles from the author's childhood home Hell at the Breech chronicles the dark events of dark days events that lead the people involved to discover their capacity for good for evil or for both:

Hell at the breech tom franklin

And an ending that doesn't provide an easy happy wrap-up. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Literature Fiction The events within this story takes place about a 30 minute drive from where I sit today. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Looking at Tom Franklin's bio informs me that he is also from this same county in Alabama, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Franklin may not be the sharpest tool in the shed but he ain't stupid either: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** There are some names within this book that have been changed. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Not so much to protect the innocent but just so as not to incriminate the family's, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** It's safe for yall to read this book now and it's a good'un. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Literature Fiction



In 1897.

Hell at the breech tom franklin

Tom Franklin was born and raised in Dickinson Alabama, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** In 1997 he received his MFA from the University of Arkansas, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** His first book Poachers was named as a Best First Book of Fiction by Esquire and Franklin received a 1999 Edgar Award for the title story: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Franklin has published two novels: Hell at the Breech published in 2003 and Smonk published in 2006, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** In 1997 he received his MFA from the University of Arkansas, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** His first book Poachers was named as a Best First Book of Fiction by Esquire and Franklin received a 1999 Edgar Award for the title story, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Franklin has published two novels: Hell at the Breech published in 2003 and Smonk published in 2006. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** {site_link} This is my 3rd Tom Franklin book and after finishing each of them my first thought on closing the book is Wow this man can write!: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** The main characters of Billy Waite the sherriff Macky Burke a sixteen year old store clerk and Granny Gates the midwife all have their own secrets to keep. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Most of the tension in this novel comes from their choosing if and when and how much of what they know should be told: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** As is usually the case plans for revenge spiral out of control. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** This book gets 4 stars because I am (maybe unfairly) comparing it to Crooked Letter Crooked Letter which was the first book I read by Tom Franklin. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** I loved that book and this one while excellent just couldn't quite compare: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** But Macky Burke is another shining example of a Franklin character that will remain in my head: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** 5 I knew I was in for it with an opening chapter titled A sack of puppies, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** I closed the book for a few moments then opened it back up and began to read, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** When Mackey is handed the sack and charged with taking care of the problems inside his transition from boy-no-longer begins to intensify quickly, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** He's about to be a catalyst for and get sucked into some nasty business where it's every man for himself women and children fair game, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Fabulous writing as expected with this story inspired by true events: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Reviews from male friends gave it five stars with the women coming in at four: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** For myself the nonstop gruesome violence and murder was way overdone eventually overriding the characters and story: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Sometimes violence works for me and I'm not sure about the cut off point, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Generally speaking I can not get through a Quentin Tarantino movie yet loved Inglorious Bastards so it's kind of complicated I guess: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** This was my third and least favorite of the author's work—Crooked Letter Crooked Letter remains my favorite: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** I loved this outstanding work by Franklin but will not reread because of the - did I mention? - intense and (to me) over-the-top violence. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** If we're gone level things with the folks responsible for killing my cousin we're gone have to level the whole goddamn town of Grove Hill: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** And yep - Toooh Bedsole and his group of vigilantes basically kill nearly everybody around, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Somebody did in fact kill Toooh's cousin but it was an accidental shooting by a kid not used to handling a gun let alone in the dark of night: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** He is too scared to admit it and a conspiracy theory takes off, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** The irony was that the consequences of one death would manifest in semi regional slaughter. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** You would have thought somebody had shot some archduke and then erupted a world war - wait. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** By the time the 14th or 15th dude got gutted I didn't know whether to yawn or roll my eyes. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Quentin Tarantino might've easily gotten some ideas for D'jango Unchained from this - that's how ridiculously bloody it was and why I docked it a whole star, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** I will say that this was especially

good with the Audible narration - Pine's deep gravelly voice was perfect. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** If you have a long road trip turn on your Kindle-Audible app for this: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Alabama cowboy-shoot-em-up with glorious depth and uncomfortable authenticity for the late 1800s rural Alabama, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** That this was his debut novel tells you how good Tom Franklin is: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** This author really is fantastic and I LOVED his later Crooked Letter Crooked Letter so much that I've read it at least twice. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** His The Tilted World was a little too sweet with some cartoonish characters. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** I compare the three of these books to the bears' belongings in Goldilocks. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Hell at the Breech belongs to Papa Bear - way too rough. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** But Crooked Letter? Baby Bear it is just right! Goldilocks knew her stuff - go for Crooked Letter instead of this, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Literature Fiction Redneck Aristocrats Good Ole Boys and Mean SumbitchesA Primal Splurge that Never Quite Sparked my PlugsThis takes you to the late 1890s in L, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** (Lower Alabama) backwoods 'bout 75 miles north o' my neck o' the woods in a fictional story based on real life events: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** What you got here what you got is one small-time alky sheriff one borderline psychopathic vigilante and one nouveau-riche redneck with daddy issues, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Hell at the Breech is a well-written primal splurge that lacks a little in character development and never fully sparked my plugs: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Literature Fiction Toooh BedsoleBased on a true story it tells the story of the rise and fall of a criminal syndicate in a small post-Civil War south Alabama community, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Literature Fiction Western noir...despair-filled hickory-smoked literature echoing the matter-of-fact cynicism of Cormac McCarthy and the conspicuous immorality of Jim Thompson. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** That's the best way I can think of to describe Tom Franklin's impressive first novel, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Oh...wait...I forgot there were puppies a whole litter of them but they were put into a sack and drowned in the river during the first chapter...thanks for that Tom. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Do you think next time you can give the reader a few pages to get settled in before you throw that at us? Anyway let's continue, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** And While Franklin's prose is not McCarthyesque in either its sparseness or its allergy to punctuation I was constantly reminded of two of Cormac's novels while I read this. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** The hellish unromantic depiction of the western life and the casual brutal and graphic violence imaged on the page reminded me of Blood Meridian, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Given that I loved both of those novels these comparisons boded very well for my opinion of this work. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** The trouble starts when a popular politician from among the farmers is mysteriously murdered on the eve of an election that would have dethroned a Grove Hill fat cat, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Extortion backed by crop burnings brutal raids and multiple murders leads to the townfolk fighting back just as viciously. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** All of this culminates in a massacre that leaves very few on either side alive. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** THOUGHTS: A superior achievement made all the more impressive because it was Franklin's first full length work. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** In his efforts to convey mood and emotion I thought he occasionally flirted with melodrama, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Still those are such minor quibbles in the context of what Franklin does so right in this work, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Franklin create a sense of place that is so enveloping and so detailed that you exist along side his characters: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** You can taste the grit and dust in the back of their throats and smell the blood sweat and smoke wafting up from the bodies after a bullet exchange, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** His world is a scorched and infected with malice and his people are callous and hard and without empathy. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** There are no heroes no silver linings and no endings modified by happy. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** And yet the word gorgeous springs to mind when I think about the story. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** The story is a grim despair-filled sermon of cynicism and hopelessness...but the telling of it is magic: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Dawn crept up out of the trees defining a bole a burl a leaf at a time the world he'd spent

the night trying to comprehend, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** But what would daylight offer except the illusion of understanding? At least in darkness you were spared the pretending, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** "Good sheriff has to know things be they secret or not: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** A fly couldn't light on a stack of horse shit I didn't know about it, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** But then it happened I got older as men will and had to let some slack in my grip, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Now the habits of flies are unknown to me and men shit and women bleed unattended, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** And so there's two or three places I've let go too far, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** He took a cigar from his own shirt pocket and put it in his lips: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** "What's it mean?" "Means I'm fixing to go to the bottom of some things, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** "Sheriff Billy Waite is feeling every mile of his existence in 1897: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** By the force of his will and sometimes by the vigilante justice of his gun he has kept Clark County peaceful: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** And while he drinks he spends more time thinking about his past and some of his indiscretions weigh heavy on his mind: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** "When Billy hears about a shooting an ambush it is no surprise that it has happened in Mitcham Beat. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Now the men in Clark County are a tough bunch but the men in Mitcham Beat might be up there with some of the toughest sons-a-bitches in the known world. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Many of them were in the war so they crossed that line decades ago between being just tough and having killed a man, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Whistling lead is music that guides their fingers to the triggers of their own ready weapons: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** "Who killed Arch Bledsoe?" Billy knows he is not the man he once was but he hopes he has enough coal left in the furnace to do what needs to be done: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Too much Bledsoe cousin to Arch has formed a gang of men who call themselves Hell at the Breech, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** The catalyst for this band of miscreants to form was the death of Arch but it has just as much to do with the actions of McCorquodale, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** You take everything away from people and they are bound to take exception. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Some will fall into drink embracing their misery with both arms wrapped tight around their own failure but others will decide that they didn't get a fair shake: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** They don't go to the law because it is rigged to help those with money: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Bullets aren't cheap but they are good shots raised to shoot from a young age and it will only take a couple to stop the black heart of that sombitch McCorquodale, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Billy is only beginning to investigate the murder of Bledsoe when this new murder has thrown his time table up in the trees. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** "The fog along the ground resembled smoke as if the world were smoldering in its heart. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** "She sat in a caneback chair by the table wearing a housedress breaking snap beans into small pieces and dropping them into a pail between her feet: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** He raised his eyebrow at her but she kept breaking the beans. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Her dress was spread at her knees over the pail showing her white skin blue veins: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** How old must she be now? Fifty? Her hair was blond as ever though: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** "Billy feels something wiggle he hasn't felt wiggle in a long time, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** " "Lord just as green a rich town boy ever got lost in the woods: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Come in here with your ding-dong about to bust out of your britches you and your cousin Oscar both: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** "Only thing I care about today is if somebody come by last night. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** "This conversation only lasts a few pages but had me snorting; and well maybe even giggling as Annie just kept making Billy more and more uncomfortable. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Oh and by the way Billy remembers his youthful encounter with Annie in technicolor. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Annie might be the most dangerous person in the whole county because she knows "the ins and outs" about everybody whether they be from Mitcham Beat or from Coffeyville, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** "The land grew pretty to Waite's eye: field beyond field beyond field for well-kept cotton each tuff white as a senator's eyebrow: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** A farmer could tend his crops and as he

passed a hollow where he kept a still climb to the bottom and check his mash. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** I've read three Tom Franklin books and enjoyed them all but this was my favorite: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** I thought the depth of characters that surround the brilliantly conveyed Billy Waite were just simply a pleasure to experience, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** I could smell the sweat of the horses the face smacking stench of the unwashed the taste of gunsmoke rising in the air and the tang of old pennies as blood is spilled. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** The only thing that would have made it more perfect is if I'd had a jar of Alabama moonshine to burn my throat and grease my mind. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** If you read the paperback the publisher included a coda that was not in the hardcover version, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** My good friend a prince among thieves a gun toting Grade A made in Alabama knight named Michael Sullivan lent me his copy so I could read the coda, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** If you like historical fiction with the flavor of the old west this is a book not to be missed, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** If you wish to see more of my most recent book and movie reviews visit <http://www.hellatthebreech.com> **Hell at the breech tom franklin** In high school I'd forgotten the trick of it and missed all the ones in the small words the ones I'd skim over in my by-then jaded reading technique: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** I think that mechanical deterioration can describe my current weary and inept reading style now skipping-stone-like: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Man I remember being 9 and taking home about 20 library books at a time a mix of biography science and fiction: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** I wish I'd ranged wider before realizing there was such a thing as genre: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** FSF became the bear trap and I didn't know to chew my leg off to get away, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** By the time it dawned on me that the reason why I probably wasn't enjoying what I was reading was because I wanted something meatier and real I was lost, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** So I'm glad for this site and the way we all shovel through the pile for each other pointing out this and that books that I would never look at twice (this one? But, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** I'd never know there existed such a thing as fiction with themes of and in the storytelling lilt of certain eastern mountain regions: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** But these kinds of books have been an ease to the agitation of my attention span. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** I'm uncomfortable with the thought that the miserable and hopeless lives of these folk have the opposite effect on me. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Does this mean my compassion is also hardening? Do I like these because I'm not them hah hah nyah nyah? I: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** But a lot of these are badly written so that started popping me out of the lull. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Somehow reading about hard times so hard I've never had and will likely never have them works. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** The eternal dispute between the haves and have-nots family loyalty guilt secrets cycling violence duty pain poverty. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** I liked how a seemingly passive character was revealed to have been a fulcrum of events a shield: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Hard times in the rural southwestern area of Alabama known as Mitcham Beat an aspiring politician is mysteriously murdered: **Hell at the breech tom franklin** Seeking retribution his outraged friends - mostly poor cotton farmers -- form a secret society Hell-at-the-Breech to punish the townspeople they believe are responsible. **Hell at the breech tom franklin** The hooded members of this gang wage a bloody year-long campaign of terror that culminates in a massacre where the innocent suffer alongside the guilty, **Hell at the breech tom franklin** It is a mesmerizing and unforgettable display of talent by a writer of immeasurable gifts. A lot of my family originates from this area. Historical Fiction The Mitcham War did happen. No doubt about that. Now Mr. Ergo the historical fiction classification. I recommend it to anyone. Literature Fiction 3. Literature Fiction Bloody hell! Violent violent achingly poignant. Too bad I didn't keep a body count. Tilted World was Mama Bear's - entirely too soft. Literature Fiction Review under construction. A. Mr. Well now when Mr. Morbid consequences soon ensue. The violence and people are disturbing. Franklin does a beautiful job with the details. Mitcham Beat Schoolhouse <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/>. The man can seriously tell stories. But damn if this wasn't dark and dreary and depressing. It could really have used a few puppies. I know...not exactly a fluffy beach read. That said this is not without flaws. The

setting is oppressive nasty and uncompromising. The storytelling is gorgeous. Flawed magic? Maybe. Unpolished magic? I won't argue with that. But magic nonetheless. 4.0 stars. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. Literature Fiction "Tell you something Bedsole." he said. You know. This here is one of 'em.'"That's a good little speech" Bedsole said. He is respected. He is feared. He has started to drink too much. How you treat them they will respond in kind. Punch for a punch. Blast for a blast. Boot for a boot. The split is between rural and town folks. All hell breaks loose. The town people want vengeance and they want it now."His investigations lead him to the whore Annie. A pipe on the table. Behind her against the wall stood her short shotgun. Annie soon has him on the defensive. "You come see me once" she said. "As a customer." "I don't recollect that." "I reckon every boy within ten miles has been here." he said. Mitcham Beat is beautiful. Locations perfect for whiskey-making."Billy's mind is never far from his next drink.jeffreykeeten.comI also have a Facebook blogger page at:<https://www.facebook>. If it had letters I would read it. I was caught for a couple decades.there's no dragon on the cover). Kinda specific and odd to me. I'm not sure why.hope not I don't think that's so. I have no answer even one fashioned in my favor. These I dunno.The book? It's good. I think it's the author's first novel. It's based on real events fictionalized. A sociopath and a psychopath. Hell at the Breech.