

Air in the Paragraph Line

A Newsletter about Jon Konrath's writing and life

Issue 4 - June 1996

The latest:

Hello again and welcome. If you're new to Air in the Paragraph line, let me give the quick, ever-changing synopsis. This is a newsletter describing my trials and tribulations as a writer in Seattle. I use it to tell my friends about what's up with my life, keep people updated about my writing, and unleash some prose to the world. So let's get started here...

First, thanks to everyone who replied about the last issue, especially about my trip to San Francisco. I'm glad some people enjoyed the story I wrote, maybe in some future issues. I'll do the same sort of thing. Once again, an apology for the incredible delay in getting issue 3 out the door. Some of you will probably get this issue only a week or two after the last, so think of it as some sort of bonus or something.

The conference at WWU was a lot of fun. I went with almost no speech prepared, but it became a very informal presentation and quickly broke into a long question and answer period. I got to talk to some great writers, including Don McQuinn, FM Busby and Bruce Taylor, and I talked to some great people, too. The drive up there was a bit of a haul, but it was well worth the effort.

A quick recap on writing: Rumored To Exist is still in a heavy editing stage, making the advances to its second draft. I've been in great turmoil about what writing to keep, what to completely rework, and what to drop. After some heavy cuts, I'm happier about the direction of the draft, but I think some of the dropped text was stuff that people really liked. It's a complicated mess, but hopefully in a few more weeks, it will all start to make sense.

I've started (and pretty much finished) working on a chapbook called Sound Advice for the Insane. It's a bunch of dropped text from Rumored, respun and edited for a small digest or mini-digest booklet. I haven't done the layout or artwork yet, so I don't know how long it will be, but I'm aiming for a 32 page booklet. I want to keep the cost down so I can sell them for a buck or maybe 2. More word on that when I get the layout done and ready to work with.

I'm starting a small press (very small press) to handle the chapbook, this zine, and some other future projects. It will be called

Metropolis Press, and will basically just be me and maybe some occasional input from others. I'd like to someday be able to print my own books, and invite over a few other authors for chapbooks, poetry, maybe a compilation volume, or a few other books. It all depends on money at this point. But if you have any input or ideas, such as distributors, good writers, places to advertize, or whatever, drop me a line.

No new work has gone down with Summer Rain, but I'm waiting for a chance to do some edits. I've started thinking about my third book, and it will probably start where Summer Rain left off, but go in a different direction. I'm currently incubating the third book, thinking of ideas and sketching character ideas, but no actual writing has started yet.

Nothing else has happened, writing-wise. No magazine deals, and I'm going to stop plugging the ones I was in a few months ago, because it's become boring. I haven't had time to do much other than edit Rumored and keep from going insane, so there's nothing else to report.

Also, not many books to review this month, mostly because this Bowles autobiography took up a lot of my reading time. I purchased a lot of books, and I started reading more books than I finished. Maybe next month will have 30 reviews.

And a correction - you can't get Kurt Brecht's stuff in Tower records anymore. I guess they have a new buyer who isn't cool. Send a SASE to Kurt Brecht/Dirty Rotten Press, 2440 16th St. #279, San Francisco, CA 94103 for a catalog of his stuff.

Okay, let's get rolling...

Scraping the Bucket

A Taste of March's outgoing mail

hey sicko whats up - i am at a cyber-cafe-restaurant somewhat near chinatown in san fran. i saw the shop of vomit video but i couldnt find a place to park for 900 miles. it was there tho, saw the videos from the street and everything. maybe later tonight i dont know.

now that i'm using compuserve ppp, i know why we didnt make our subscription numbers. you could encapsulate slip over smoke signals and get a faster throughput.

anyway i was in california and just got back. i had a lot of lot of fun. i went to san francisco and saw that big red

bridge and i saw a lot of chinamen and a lot of stuff. it was cool. you shoulda been there. i got you a t shirt that says you shoulda been there.

hey yes i have your book. you can have it whenever. you should come back and visit all of us. unfortunately your buddy tim oren isnt here anymore so you wont be able to hang out with him.

i did hang out with my friend virginia friday night - she came over and we both dragged out years of spiral notebooks, taking turns reading aloud random pages from each of our journals. lots of kicks from that - we both have some fucked up moments in our past which are now funny and memorable.

p.s. i am not here until midnight every night. i usually leave at 5:01 or 5:02, but ive been known to stay as late as 5:11.

you were all drunk and i didnt get a chance to hit on you... sigh congrats on finishing finals and stuff i didnt have finals i just have this dumb job

i did get a new pair of shoes boots actually and i want to rush home and try them on and stomp on things.

oh well what is up here - i keep hearing courtney love sing that live through this song on the radio there is some live version with her husband signing the back ups. weird. hey i think that oliver stone should do a kurdt cobain film and val kilmer could play him. whatta ya think?

umm that is cool that you got your friend a charles bukowski book he is awesome. it is not awesome that your friend lives in south bend though tell her to move or something.

they let me log into my bronze account so i could grab a copy of everything and change my forward info. all of the mail from limp-hair is lost. sigh. i guess teh book i end up writing about that era will be more fact than fiction. oh well. i have thought about writing her and asking if she had any of the shit i sent her. she is the kind of person who keeps EVERYTHING i think she has every ticket stub to every movie shes seen in her life. but then maybe she deleted all that shit in a fit of rage. who knows.

hey did you join the navy? why were you going to? is it the men in uniform thing? cant you just get a job at UPS or something?

i am a zombie today very tired from only a few hours of sleep. i had a dream that they built a 200 story building right next to my house i was very bummed when i woke up and it wasnt there.

so what else is up - i have been writing and balling insomnia lately. been having a lot of sleep-related problems lately which isnt cool. i think it is because i washed my sheets and now i have some psycho somatic problems with the cleanliness. i dont know. you tell me you are the one who knows about psychos and stuff.

I NEED A NAP I NEED A HAMBURGER I NEED AN INFLATABLE DOLL THAT DOESNT POP SO EASY I NEED A NEW BED I NEED A DOLLAR

ARE YOU THERE HELLO HOW ARE YOU sorry im in one of those moods lots of insomnia little writing reading or constructive anything really hows the job? hows the writing? hows umm hows the weather bleah i am gonna go try to read or draw with crayons or something

all i can really say is that i re-re(re re)read it tonight and seriously looked at each piece to see if it fit proportionally and soforth. i'm about halfway through the book right now, either marking each piece for removal, rewriting or other modification. i like more of the book than i dont like, which is a good sign. and i have a lot of ideas for rewriting. ive also decided what pieces i dont want to include, and right now it is 39 of the first 129 pieces, which isnt a horrible percentage...

i guess a lot of it is i dont want people to perceive the book as a comedy book with a bunch of brief one-liner types of gags in it. the first part of the book is full of that stuff. although its funny and some people seem to really like it, i want the book to be deeper than that. i dont want people to read it and think i am a humor writer and then pick up the next book and get bummed that it isnt the same thing all over again.

another strong thing is that i have a hard time thinking of this as a "serious" book because of the short length and because of the really weak pieces within. I think if I replaced all of the weak parts with longer, better pieces, I would be much happier with the whole project. So that's the goal for the next month or so, reworking some of the draft and replacing some of the pieces with more textured,

literary chunks.

youre going to school this summer? that can be a downer - i did summer school for a while. i was a gradual student for my last couple years, just took a couple classes a sem all year round and worked all year round. now that i just work, it sometimes seems like a vacation...

always good to hear someone survived doing time up in north indiana, hell of all hells. sorry your friend is up there and stuff my best friend was also in south bend when i was in bloomington. he was in bloomington and moved back over a GIRL what a dumbass she dumped him later anyway and he was stuck. so i know your pain. well not really but you know what i mean.

the new metallica was on the radio. dumb dumb dumb. i used to worship those guys in like 86 or 87 now they are just stupid. their new album sounds more like blind melon than metal. they should change their names. the guys in dark angel changed their name to the organization when they stopped playing metal music.

i vbought a copy of "Deranged" the Ed Gein story for A DOLLAR paperback at this store. there was some cute red-haired chick working htere but she looked about 17 or something so i didnt invite her back to my place to see my serial killer books or anything. that line never worked anyway and id be scared if it did.

new details magazine is out. nick cage on the cover. love of my life jenny mccarthy is inside. heh. she isnt really the love of my life i think tori amos is farther up the top ten list.

im still editing book 2, it is slow but it is going okay i guess... i went to a writers convention yesterday, i was one of 7 authors who spoke. i had a lot of fun and i got to meet don mcquinn and fm busby and a bunch of other people. i talked to this woman who writes erotica novels and she gave me a copy of her book so i will have to read it so i am even more sexually frustrated. i also stole some new milk crates so now i have some more room for books. actually they are already full, i have way too many books at this point but i guess you can never have enough. kinda like money, computer equipment, sex, pez dispensers, any of

those things.

I'm not a public speaker. I got out of high school speech, and in college I took an early morning summer class so I only had to talk in front of 6 people. The first speech I ever really gave was in front of about 500 people, consisting of mostly execs and VPs of the company I work for. This is probably the 3rd or 4th time I've had to go up in front of more than a few people and talk like this. Strangely enough, I never had stage fright musically, and when I was still playing bass, I played in front of 10,000 people once. So I don't know what the deal is.

The wedding, by the way, is July 13th. This wedding will not be a meat market, it will be a family reunion with a more formal dress code. Unless I want to do the incest thing and hit on cousins, I don't think there will be any meat market stuff going down. Also, I don't really drink, and I especially don't drink around my mother. So at most I can hope for a short reception and few stupid questions about what I'm doing with my life. My relatives ask me what I do at my job, but to them, a three-way lamp is too technically advanced to understand. And I don't like to explain my writing to people who can't read. So I'm expecting a real horrorshow, but after I leave, I will have an incredible newfound respect for the pacific northwest and its incredible improvements over the midwest.

When I'm depressed, I like to torture myself by remembering that a woman who works with chimpanzees at the Brookfield Zoo in Chicago couldn't put up with my crap. Oh well..

I sent a resume to that email you gave me. I hope this isn't like that time you told me that if I sent a death threat to president@whitehouse.gov, candy would fall out of the computer. I am still trying to get all of my stuff back from the secret service.

nothing up here just killing time and waiting to go get a haircut. no no color change. job interview tomorrow. the drapes will still match the carpet. after i get the job i will consider the carbon paper look though.

of course i wouldnt have to worry if you came up here to visit and see laservana because if you saw my pornography im sure you wouldnt be appalled. same with the collection of dead bodies and various iggy pop records.

on the dan savage show there were a bunch of people on from an improv comedy group. and someone called in and they were talking about the clitoral hood and one of the people mentioned "little red throbbing hood" and "girls in the hood". heh...

I won't say anything bad about (deleted) because I'm still whittling away all of the bad karma I earned from signing up Tim Oren as a lifetime member of NAM-BLA and putting that ad in the Stranger's "Men seeking Boys" section with his home phone number. I've learned my lesson about ordering porno with a stolen American Express corporate card.

i went to a bar to see a friend's band play. actually, this guy has a record label, this small thing that he runs in his house with all of these satanic metal bands. im not really into metal-type stuff anymore, but it is always a trip to hang out with this guy. it was free, and fairly fun. but i didnt get all drunk or anything, i had to walk home from this bar, which involved 7 blocks up the 28% grade hill. so ya can't get too hammered.

i went and saw BLOOD RITUAL play last night, they are on Moribund and pretty decent sounding. it was at this indian restaurant right downtown, near the stadium and the post-baseball game wanderers, looking for sport bars or new orleans bars or whatever. very surreal scene, these guys with turbaned heads and giant beards, serving drinks to people completely decked out in pentagrams and leather. gotta get back to writing. catch you later.

a lot going on here since you left me high and dry with no email buddy to write to for the last ten million years. i spent a bunch of money on books, i probably bought 10 or 15 this weekend. i also bought a chair, one of the swivel types with the lever that raises it and lowers it. and two cds - i bought the newest Anal Cunt album, which is pretty entertaining. they are a noise metal band that's pretty amusing.

i am sort of depressed and listing to Rollins Band really, really loud to counteract it. i had this dream about this old ex, one of two people i was really, truly head over heels in love with. the dream was incredibly realistic and when i woke up, i expected her to be right there with me. in reality, i havent heard from her in over a year and i just passed the four year mark of when i last saw her face to face. i dont even know what state she is in now. so i am majorly bummed about the whole thing, which is kind of stupid.

i had a very vivid dream about an ex last night and now i am in this stupid 'i miss her' kindof mood. i am refraining from drinking a bottle of windex or something and im glad i no longer own a copy of pink floyds the wall i am going to find my shoes and go for a long drive and listen to some dumb loud music and get some junk food with lots of grease and i will be back to the good old jon we all all know and love and then i will write you more and maybe even joke around a little about bondage or frotteurism or something

Spent most of today fairly depressed. I had a very realistic dream about an old ex-girlfriend (Patty - the one from the Summer Rain book) - filled with small details I had completely forgotten about her voice, her looks, her movement... woke up thinking I would just be able to call her room over in Forest quad and talk to her again. In reality, it's been probably 4 years now since we've talked on the phone, and I have no idea what continent she's on.

I'm digging the city now. I got some more money back in January, and I might be moving to another company in the near future. Now that I've built a trade for myself with this WinHelp and technical writing shit, things are getting more comfortable with the job stuff, which makes the evenings and the writing more relaxing. I'm slowly getting into the other stuff in the city and getting around a bit more - it's a lot more ground to cover than podunk, indiana. But I think I'm staying here indefinitely. The mix of the weather, the attitude, the high-tech, the cleanliness, and the literary community is pretty much perfect for me. All of this Kurt Cobain shit is unnerving, but I'm hoping that will go away at some point. And I picture Seattle as being a great literary community like SF in the 60s, NY in the 40s and Paris in the 20s. I think a lot of fucking great novels will come out of this city in the rest of the 90s. (and I hope one or two of mine will be on the list - or at least the B-list..)

i was all depresso yesterday and the lack of sleep aint doing much for it. i eventually ate at dennys and got fried shrimp, which helped me somewhat. i also listened to loud, dumb music for a while, which likewise aided me in my turmoil. if i woulda had a video and a bunch of nasty VHS tapes, i woulda been set.

i read a copy of pregnant woman magazine in the check-out of Target. theyve sure got some hot pregnant models for some of those maternity fashions. too bad about 4/5ths

of the kama sutra isnt possible in the 8th month of pregnancy.

nothing is joyous about the little things in life. in fact, they piss me off. the little things aren't kitty cats and rainbow days. they're speeding tickets and broken toilets and flat tires and \$300 phone bills and the coke machine eating your last dollar bill. i dont consider suicide an option because everyone would think i moved to seattle and shot myself to be just like kurt cobain or something. so my little things in life that make me go one are a little different. i like to watch the company's stock drop. i like to watch couples fight in the parking lot of the movie theatre. i like to go to junk yards and look at all of the cars and imagine all of the putzes who wrapped them around trees and think that im better than them. then i like to write about it. so, how are you?

At one point, I thought of making a zine of just photocopies of all the checks I couldn't cash, with snide little comments in the margins. The collection became rather humorous, when you figure all of the permutations of my name and the fact that people couldn't even spell the name of my zine. I think I still have some \$3 checks to John Kornrath somewhere in my closet.

Bookworming

A review of the books I read in May

Paul Bowles - Without Stopping (An Autobiography) . Reading books like this makes me wonder why I have a day job. Bowles weaves an intricate yet breakneck-speed bio of his life, starting with childhood and racing to his life in Tangiers in the early 70's. The biggest shock to me was the amount of work this guy got done. He was writing ballets, scores, soundtracks, books, poetry, newspapers, pamphlets, and orchestra pieces almost nonstop. Even as a kid, he'd write pages and pages a day, and later, he'd type for hours without stopping, hence the title of the book. His travels are also amazing; in an age with little air travel he zips to France, Morocco, India, Panama, Cuba, the Bahamas, all over the US, and dozens of other places too numerous to count. Plus he's met and had long friendships with scores of famous people: Salvador Dali, Bela Bartok, Aaron Copeland, Gertrude Stein, Arthur C. Clarke, Bill Burroughs, Jack Kerouac, Tennessee Williams, and many others. The book is thick and takes time to crawl through, but every time I set it down, I wanted to either start writing a book or a play or take off for a distant region. My only complaint is that sometimes Bowles like to insert a random line of French or Spanish, which annoys me because I know either. And he tends to drop names rapidly, making you wish you had a score card or a flowchart or something. But Bowles is definitely an interesting guy, and his life story is worth reading.

Kurt Brecht - Whore Stories. The latest book by the lead singer of DRI, this 54 page series of stories takes a quick, first person tour of the world's oldest profession. Brecht tells tales of Amsterdam's red light district, the Reeperbahn, San Fran's Tenderloin district, Waikiki, and just-across-the-border Mexican establishments of sin. The stories are all brief episodes filled with detail about the curious activity of procuring a prostitute in various places, and each tale usually involves something humorous or interesting. With a glossy, full-color cover and artwork, this book is the best yet from Brecht's self-run Dirty Rotten Press. But as with his older books, it made me wish there was more! Hopefully, more interesting titles

will follow between DRI world tours. Or maybe Brecht is off getting in trouble in Eastern Europe as research for the next book? One can only hope...

Kurt Brecht - Notes From the Nest . This is one of those books I love to pull out and read when the bills start piling and I start thinking MY situation is bad (the other is the classic Down and Out in Paris and London by George Orwell). An earlier book by the frontman of the punk-hardcore band the Dirty Rotten Imbeciles, this short book tells of Brecht's days between tours, when he lived in a treehouse in Golden Gate Park and walked to the nearby Haight soup kitchens for food. The struggle against weather, discovery, chance, animals and crime is perfectly described in Brecht's daily routine, and the humor of the situation is also beautifully captured. The book includes some poems/lyrics, along with a few illustrations by Mark Sperry and Eric Brecht. Bonus points go to the book for describing a gig where DRI opens for an early rendition of the band Slayer. The only criticism is the size - it's a great value for the price, but it's such fun and interesting stuff that it makes you wish there were a thousand more pages to read. But it's definitely a good read, especially if you're bummed about your own money situation. When you're done, you'll be glad you aren't living in a tree!

Carole Remy - Beauty of the Beast. I've never really been exposed to the genre of erotica before (unless you count those letters written in to Penthouse. Do you think they're real?) but I'll read any book given to me, especially if it's the author who personally hands it over. Beauty of the Beast ended up a more traditional story, especially the ending, and wasn't exactly what I expected. It's about this woman reporter in the 1950's who goes to investigate this S&M ranch in Texas by disguising herself as a patron. Once inside, she witnesses all sorts of sexual situations, and ends up falling in love with the mysterious and perplexing owner of the ranch. The historical angle puts a good twist on the story and kept me thinking about the time period, the history, the cars, the politics, and so forth. Also, the plot's got some minor twists and turns that kept me reading. The sex part isn't Caligula or anything, it's pretty straightforward and not entirely as hormonal as I expected. Overall, I found the book interesting and a refreshing break from all of this hard-ass literary stuff I usually read. But on the other hand, Remy really

does a good job with characters, setting, and dynamics, making for decent mechanics under the hood. I can't judge this book against other erotica, but from a literary standpoint, I found it pretty solid and a fun read overall.

Etc.

This is our shortest issue ever, but take it as a sign that I'm too busy with the other writing. As always keep in touch and please keep your letters and e-mail coming.

Send all comments, questions, praise, food, photos, computer parts, trades, books, review items, and job leads to:

Jon Konrath
600 7th #520
Seattle, WA 98104-1933
(206) 343-5604 (home)
(206) 957-8254 (work - subject to change)
(206) 957-6254 (Fax)
jkonrath@speakeasy.org
<http://www.speakeasy.org/~jkonrath/>

Air in the Paragraph Line is published monthly, within a few days of the top of the month. Issues are a dollar, a trade, some stamps, or whatever. Back issues are available for a buck or a SASE or IRC. Issues are free to prisoners, bored people, or anyone who begs or sends me something cool in the mail. I will review anything that is sent to me, even explosives or death threats.

Thanks to: Ray Miller, Tom Sample, Larry Falli, Andrea Donderi and the Coca-Cola Company.

No thanks to Evergreen Ford in Issaquah.

Copyright © 1996 Jon Konrath. All rights reserved.

The following blank space contains a hit of acid, in memory of Timothy Leary. Touch your tongue below and think peaceful thoughts: