

# Air in the Paragraph Line

Entertainment for the Deranged

Issue 9 \$2



In this Issue:

Fact and fiction by Jon Konrath, Ray Miller, Larry Falli, Gregory Moore, Laura Barcella, Jennifer Wagner, Chicago Basil, Derek Raugh, Daniel Crocker, SiD, and J. W. Fail, including three dream journals and tales about drunken parties, the Chicago Cubs, a war against Iraq, walking home drunk, virtual reality, space stations, how to fly, useless legal advice, Satanic music, and tales from Seattle, Chicago, Florida, East Memphis, Amherst, Fullerton, Eugene, Pittsburgh, and more.

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Cover art by Daniel Fortine. Back cover ads: Jon, Larry, Chicago Basil.

# Facts and Figures

Everything you might need to know about this magazine

Air in the Paragraph Line  
Jon Konrath, editor  
600 7th Ave #520  
Seattle, WA 98104-1933 USA  
email: [jkonrath@speakeasy.org](mailto:jkonrath@speakeasy.org)  
<http://www.speakeasy.org/~jkonrath/>

Air in the Paragraph Line is published quarterly. Issues are two dollars or the usual, payable to Jon Konrath. Trades are welcome and encouraged. Issue #8 (featuring an interview with Jello Biafra) is still available for \$2. An anthology of issues 1-5 (32 full-size pages) is also available for \$2. Contact me for wholesale rates.

Writers and artists - submissions are welcome. Please enclose an SASE for a sure reply. I don't assume liability for any manuscripts and don't return anything that doesn't come with postage, so please don't send me the only existing copy of your masterpiece. Submission in some functional electronic format is preferred. I can't print everything I get, but I'll at least give you an honest opinion of your work. Contributors will receive a copy of the issue in which they appeared.

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# Editorial Bullshit

Jon Konrath

Hello, and welcome to the ninth issue of Air in the Paragraph Line. To continue a proud tradition in zine publishing, I'd like to start by saying I'm sorry this is late. I looked in the editor's letter in issue #8 and found no promises for an issue #9 release date, but I know I told everybody I was planning on a January 1 date. This is, obviously, the stupidest time to release a zine, because of the holidays. I didn't have many submissions by January, and I didn't want to write half the damn thing myself. But then I got some good writing in the mail, I scared some more stuff out of a few friends, and I managed to crack out some stories myself. I also got a lot of mail after issue #8's overwhelmingly positive review in Zine World #5. So it's late, but probably much higher quality than a January release would've warranted.

I wanted to have a theme for this issue, and come up with a bunch of common writing ("The Serial Killer Issue!", "The Ostomy Issue!", "The 14th Century Druid and Political Activists Issue!"). Between me, Ray Miller, and Gregory Moore, I almost had enough writing for a science fiction issue, but I started having nightmares about peddling zines at Star Trek Conventions. I later got the idea to do an issue full of dream journals and stories about dreams, especially since I know a lot of dream journalers with pretty fucked up dreams (including myself), and almost all of Ray Miller's short stories have to do with nightmares. But I didn't find enough dream writing for a whole issue, and I got a lot of other good fiction I didn't want to push back into #10, so this issue is a mix of dream writing and the usual insanity.

The goal at Air in the Paragraph line continues - I want to make a readable issue with a lot of uncategorizable but enjoyable writing, stuff that's too far out there for the big journals, but that's nonacademic enough that you can sit down and page through it more like a reader's digest than a literary journal. This means I don't have record reviews or ads or pages and pages of drawn-out rhyming poetry that looks like it was written by a 17 year-old on the tail end of a relationship. I don't want to waste your two dollars or my time with any political posturing or lectures - I just want to publish the stuff I like to read.

I got scared putting together this issue, because I didn't have something as cool as the Jello Biafra interview from #8, and I didn't have as much artwork to use. But along with the usual gang of idiots, seven new writers grace this issue's pages. I was accused of having an Indiana-centric writing staff in #8, but now we're coed, and have 11 writers from 9 states, and only one from Indiana. I also had to bump a half-dozen pieces into the next issue, and serialize something I wish I could've printed in its entirety. That doesn't mean you should be lazy about submitting stuff for #10, though...

Also, more than a few of you wrote me and asked about the meaning of Air in the Paragraph Line. Maybe for issue #10 I will write a story about it.

As always, drop me a line if you get a chance and let me know how I'm doing. Enough rambling, let's get started.

-Jon

# Dream Journal #1

Jon Konrath

6-2-96

I remember some brief fragments, like being in a room with my sisters and a bunch of other people, and I was taking apart and packing a weight set. Later, a bunch of us were making social rounds, and we spent too long at one party, and someone, I think Chris Wilson, was mad at me. We spent forever walking in a parking garage and taking escalators, which reminded me of some Burroughs book. I remembered a factoid that Burroughs never rode escalators because he was convinced that the government took your pictures and stole your mind when you rode one, and he was worried that someone would then write his books before him. Then I had weird thoughts about book 3, that it should be more of a Blade Runner-like a technothriller about manic depression instead of a biographical piece. I envisioned a future where the government could instantly tell if someone was a drug user with some equipment, but this caused so much drug-use backlash that it exploded the drug war. As I was waking, the ambulances coming up the hill outside my apartment kept talking to each other using their PAs, yelling at cars to get the fuck out of the road.

7-4-96

I remember the president getting shot. [I guess this was the Reagan-Hickley thing] Sitting on the floor of my mom's living room, my mom and my old stepdad were there. In the middle of the news, I said "oh god... president BUSH!" in this spiteful tone. A bit later, Mr. Rogers was on and he was airing this live or almost live episode specifically about the president getting shot, where he was using all of his child psychology shit to break the news to little kiddies that the president was going to a better place and that a bad man was involved and all of this.

[Separate part, maybe] I walk into a kitchen similar to my mom's with two other people. Some friend of ours is there, and the place is covered with blood, helter skelter style. The guy has a giant butcher knife, and his girlfriend's corpse and a fetus are completely dismembered on the counter. The other guy (the 2 friends were a couple?) was trying to reason with him. I was deathfully afraid he was going to kill all of us, or that because I saw all the stuff, if I didn't call the cops I would be an accessory to murder.

I bolted from the house, and after a panicked sprint, went to the neighbor Chris's. He was having some sort of dinner party, and there I am, drenched in blood, covered in dirt and grass clippings because I fell down during my run. He thought I was just out mowing the lawn or something, so I went with that story. He was serving food on a front deck to a couple of old guys with severe cases of rickets, who couldn't walk normally and kept dropping the trays of food until me and Chris helped them. One of the guys offered me some of his french fries, and I declined, but then ate all of them anyway.

I asked Chris what was up with his life, since I hadn't talked to him in 4 or 5 years. He started talking about someone he was dating, also named Chris. Since I questioned his sexuality, I didn't know if this person was a male or female, but then he started saying "she" so I assumed it was a female. He gave me this 4 or 6 page letter,

laserprinted with line art and a decent layout, and I read it. The manifesto explained his relationship with this woman, which I assumed was his first real relationship. She lived in southern Indiana, and their relationship consisted of many roadtrips across the state. They both enjoyed stopping at all the cities, parks, nature areas, and old landmarks in the state, learning the details and names and history of every minute point between the two towns.

I never got to read the rest of the letter, and the dream morphed into a long part where I sat in my mom's kitchen, playing with an Ibanez 6-string piccolo bass and arguing with my mom about some gay rights issue. She then assumed that I was gay and not out, but I tried to explain that I learned all about gay rights from listening to Savage Love Live [a Seattle sex advice radio show].

8-12-96

I went to see Microsoft's new "network computer". It was a unit about as big as a refrigerator, with a detachable keyboard about the size of a mixing board. It was huge, and it cost like \$50,000 but people were comparing it to the Newton in every aspect.

I went to visit Ray and his parents had bought Grandpa and Grandma Ellis's old building. They were in the living room, and were trying to buy a racehorse and pay a jockey to run it so they could make a bunch of money. They had a racing form that looked like a phone book, and were all insane over it. I remember thinking "Bukowski's right, people are idiots."

The apartment had been stripped of virtually everything that was my grandparents. I dug all over the place looking for old remnants of them. The only things I saw were the marks on the floor where the old dog Max used to pace back and forth and wore the color off the tile, and a calendar in the bedroom on the wall, still on May 1989, when my grandma went into the hospital for the last time.

I went to a bunch of bars and parties with Ray and a few other people. I was burning through all of my money on cover charges. We went to some party where a house was filled with peanut shells on the floor. Suzi Sorozac was there and led us to the place. We paid \$4 and you got all the peanuts you could eat, but had to walk around barefoot in shells up to your knees. They were playing a bunch of dumb hippie music and both me and Ray felt ripped off about it.

8-19-96

There was a vote going on to cut the military completely. I was at a dinner party with some woman that reminded me of Rachel, and then Bukowski showed up, and Sestrick. I couldn't hang out with either because of this woman. I vanished to go fight crime in some batman like crime fighting team. They had some helicopter like Airwolf, and a robocop. I asked about robocop's prime directive problems and they said it was fixed with a pcmcia card add-on. I got back in time to talk to Bukowski, who was in a wheelchair.

8-25-96 (early evening)

I was in a dorm room, sorting through a shitload of papers. Duane Wickey came in and said him and Shawn Kemp were hanging out in room #420 and I should come and hang out with them. I said I'd be down in a while. In a glossy-laminated

folder, I found a journal from 1994 that had been ripped into fourths and shuffled around. I started reading it, excited that I had forgotten about all of this journaling, and laid out the squares on the bed, trying to match them up somehow.

9-1?-96

I had to share a hotel room with Shawn Kemp. I bragged to him how I didn't miss any practices when I was in 6th grade basketball.

Buchanon was president and they were detonating a nuclear weapon just outside of Portland, just to prove to 3rd world countries and terrorists that we could. A bunch of people were going to protest, and a bunch more to get stoned and watch the thing blow up.

8-27-97

I was living in the basement of mom's house and it was the Friday of a summer, and a payday. I owed Angie [my sister] money for some reason, but my check didn't auto-deposit, so I couldn't give it to her. I really wanted to leave for the weekend. I thought about Chicago, so I called Bennett, because he was living there with Simms. Simms answered, but the number had been forwarded to Bloomington, and they were there. He told me to come on down, but I was worried about the driving distance (4.5 hours vs. 2).

I was trying to get a job teaching electronics, although I didn't have any experience with teaching or electronics. I talked about it via email to Mimi Tzeng. She told me about Kirk Sluder's wedding, and how the people in the wedding all dressed like the 4 seasons and then symbolically met together to form the equinox.

I met dad at the Scottsdale mall, where there was a Roman Catholic church in the food court. He kept asking the priest if there was any holy water to drink. I decided to leave for Bloomington, so I went back home to get my stuff.

At this time, I found out I wasn't at mom's, but was in Seattle, and it would be a 45 hour drive to Bloomington, which I couldn't do in a weekend. I was all depressed and then I got a bunch of phone calls. Virginia Lore kept calling me over and over, babbling about some guy she met and about going to the tanning salon. I found a giant book that I wrote for some class while in Bloomington. It was a coffeetable book with a bunch of pictures and stories in it, many of them having to do with phone pranks and other creative terrorism.

Throughout the dream, I had a satellite dish that was broken, and about half-way through, I went and looked and it had been hit by lightning and a hole was cut right through it.

At the end, I was watching some movie with Keanu Reaves that was similar to Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure. Everything went wrong for him, and at the very end, some FBI agents were at the door to arrest his dad. He told his dad that some people from M&M/Mars were at the door and wanted to give him a free candybar, and he fell for it.

12-3-96

I was working as one of those secret service guys that wears a suit and guards President Clinton. My mom came to watch a presentation where the President gets up on a stage at some hotel or bank and dedicates something and gives some little speech,

hands out a plaque, whatever. I'm sitting next to the President, but I'm kindof nervous and I don't talk to him or anything, I just sit there and do my job. When I am done, my mom is there and she gets all bitchy at me because I didn't introduce her to the President. I try to explain that it's not like he's my best buddy or something, and she's going ballistic over it.

Later, she finds a small notebook of mine in the living room of the house on Ironwood and, of course, read all of it. It's a small diary and I said something like the situation at home was "screwing me down" or something like that and she's going insane over it. I tell her it's just a metaphor and she says "well maybe you shouldn't be writing in metaphors". When I woke up, I instantly thought that when I go home later in the month, I should lock any journals and books in my suitcase when they are not in my immediate reach.

12-5-96

I was working at wards again, or maybe temping while I was at my mom's house. It was an hour before I was supposed to be at work, and I was taking heroin by putting drops of the stuff in my lower eyelids, which were completely red and bloody. The stuff looked like blue ice from one of those freezer pak things, and was in a liquid form, in a clear plastic tube. I remember feeling the feeling - it was like when I took codeine, when I was falling asleep yet awake, more asleep than the most tired day of my life - but I was still conscious, squeezing the stuff in my eye and wondering how the fuck I would sober up enough to be at work in an hour. I remember thinking "why the fuck am I doing heroin?", thinking about how extremely taboo the whole thing was to me.

1-20-97

I was riding a plywood skateboard/waveboard like thing that was almost like a speeder from Jedi, but lower to the ground and you had to push it with your feet while you lay on your stomach. I visited Ray at Taco's, and then I had to leave. I was driving down Hiveley, but I had the Kilroy's glass I got on my 21st birthday. I couldn't set it anywhere and I couldn't break it, so I was thinking of stashing it in someone's front yard.

Later, I was either watching or was in a docudrama about a girl who was burned on 100% of her body, but still walked around, went to school, etc. She was black all over, and shiny, like a rotisserie chicken that's been in too long. She had only strings of new hair, and one arm and one leg were deformed, just stumps with no hand or foot. She had a cousin that was insanely jealous of how much attention she got, so he burned himself all over, too. But everyone just thought he was a dumbass. So they were at a picnic, and she was there, and he took one of his remaining non-stump arms and put it right in the grill, in an attempt to get more sympathy. Everyone tried to stop him but was just horrified at his insane jealousy.

4-29-97

I was on some sort of safari tour that was like the Disney riverboat tour, except all of the animals were real. I somehow stepped out of the boat and was wandering around and realized that there were tigers and it was only a matter of moments before they'd see me and get to me. I crawled up a tree as far as I could, maybe 8 or 10 feet up, and a tiger charged at me, and climbed up the tree. He was right in front of me and I

hoped that if I held still, he'd just go away, but I knew this wouldn't happen and I was just fucked. It felt so real as I was shaking in the tree, knowing this was my last stupid mistake and it would only be a matter of seconds before I was dead. The tiger tore into my face and hit my jugular, and I was in intense pain as I wondered how long it would take me to lose all of my blood and stop feeling the wound.

I somehow shifted consciousness into another body, a clone of me that was on another boat, going to where my real body was. An African doctor was with me, and I was explaining to him that I wanted as much of my memory recovered as they could handle. I didn't see them capture the body, but I saw it in some sort of box, like a box of some sort of preserving fluid. I went to some lab and they told me not to look, but I had to. I saw that they had pared away most of my body except the spinal column and the head, and it was on some sort of lab stand. The face was pale white and looked artificial, and it was practically cut in half on one side from the tiger. There were a million wires and tubes hooking it up to some equipment, and they were performing some sort of backup on the brain.

6-16-97

Daniel, Roger Eppich, and I were collaborating on a book. We kept arguing about every detail, usually because Roger wanted to do something fucked up. We were in Seattle, but it was dark, gloomy, and gothic. At some point, we were inside an abandoned church or auditorium.

[unrelated] I was living in a total shit boardinghouse. Jim Manges was living in a nearby building. He was clean, and just got out of jail for something serious (it was implied that he killed someone, but I don't know). He spent all of his time lifting weights, and looked like a pro bodybuilder. Simms lived upstairs from me - to get to his apartment, you had to scale up a cheap wrought-iron staircase that looked like a fire escape. My apartment looked like it belonged to a pornographer previously, and had a bunch of cameras and tripods. Once, I looked out the window, and it looked like a porno - a bunch of women were naked, and one was having sex with a guy right there in this atrium between the buildings. I was hiding behind the drapes of my picture window, trying to watch. I grabbed a camera and tried to take some pictures. She saw me and was like "hey, come on out here" but I thought it might have been a trick, like 10 guys would come out and kill me. I got really paranoid that something bad was going to happen, and I started thinking about buying a shotgun.

10-28-97

I was at a Rush concert with Derik and a couple of other people. Our seats were behind the stage and far back, so we could only see the semi trucks that unloaded all of their gear. We pushed through the crowd, and although I was afraid of pissing someone off, we got right up to the side of stage left. A bunch of people were sitting in a semicircle around the side of the stage, and we sat in the middle of it. I swore Neil looked right at me and smiled (of course, I was like 15 feet from him). Geddy started joking around with us - Derik was standing there, staring at Neil's drum kit, and Geddy jumped off stage, right next to Derik, and went "blaaaah!" and scared the shit out of him. I had a bass guitar with me, a fender, and Geddy came down from the stage and started talking to me like I was taking a bass lesson from him. He came up and tightened the e-string until it played about like a G. I woke up in terror because the turning peg sounded just like someone turning one of my teeth. It was about 6:20 AM and it bothered me so

much, I almost got in the shower and left for work. [Possibly later, possibly earlier:] I was living at home and mom was giving me major shit about everything. She was searching through my stuff, and saying she was going to ground me. I bought 3 pairs of pants and it turns out they all were McDonald's uniforms - they had the golden arches on each of the pockets.

11/24/97

I was helping Simms and Bennett move a bunch of drum sets. Later I was with some chick from the IU School of Law and we were making rice-a-roni in Larry's old apartment. I thought it would be hilarious to jerk off in the rice-a-roni bowl. I was going to tell her, but I didn't. I was then going to call Ray to tell him but I thought that he'd think it was gay.

1/12/98

It was xmas. I gave Dani B a carrot that I wrote 'merry xmas' on with a pen, as a joke. She had just broke up with Mark, and I wanted to get back together with her. We were both staying at some dorm or hospital in Chicago, maybe Northwestern, in adjoining rooms. I built floors out of old screen doors, and one was Grandma Konrath's screen door that said "Konrath" on it. I talked to Tanya and told her that Dani B and I were back together, just to make her upset.

## Dream Journal #2

J.W. Fail

i'm riding to a flea market in ohio with a friend from work and this guy who i don't know too well. i'm in the backseat, and my friend is driving. i keep leaning forward to tell the guy i don't know too well about the time i called steve albini and asked him to fix my microphone. it's taking me a long time to tell the story, and i can tell he's not too interested. we get to the flea market and there are tons of people there. it's in a building that looks like the one in the video for "personal jesus" by depeche mode. i see some famous actors there and start talking to them. my friend from work is not impressed.

brian, brett and myself are in brazil. there's a huge road that runs all the way through the country, from the north tip to the south. we are traveling south on it and stopping at every ice cream store on the way. after five or so, we are totally sick of ice cream but brett keeps pushing us on. brian eventually leaves us. brett and i go into another ice cream shop. there are two sorority-type girls working there. they ask us if we go to pitt, because they are transferring there next semester. i order a soft-shell tortilla with vanilla ice cream and raspberries, rolled into a burrito. it's real good.

i am going to my aunt's ex-husband's house to visit. it's actually a trailer, but an incredibly huge one. i ask if it is the world's largest trailer, but he tells me it's the second largest -- the largest is next door, and it is way larger. but this thing is like a mansion on wheels -- several stories and lots of wide hallways. i am trying to find something to eat,

because my ex-uncle went to buy fishing lures. everywhere i look there are pop-tarts, but no substantial food. eventually i go into this room and russell simins from the blues explosion is in there. he's trying to get me to smoke some pot with him, but i don't want to. he doesn't have anything to eat either. by this point there are about six people in russell's bedroom - they are all either smoking pot or trying to find something to eat. i leave and go into this big room. it's an art gallery.

i was starting college at pitt, and they forced me to live on campus. my room was in this posh hotel that had all kinds of nice carpets and steps.

i went to crimes of fashion to look for some clothes, but the owner wasn't there. i went out the back door and he was sitting outside, with three policemen. "why aren't you working in your store?" i asked. "because i'm being arrested for selling crack cocaine," he said. "oh. well, did you actually do it?" i asked. "oh yeah." "so this store is a front?" "yep." "then can i steal stuff?" "go ahead, i don't care." i went back in as the cops put him in handcuffs. i took a bunch of clothes, and i also found a nice guitar effects board with lots of different sounds on it.

my band was playing our upcoming show, but we were really lousy. there wasn't very many people there, but the people who were there hated us. seam was playing at cmu and everyone was there instead, so i went to see them. it didn't look like seam; it was an 8-piece band that performed show tunes from musicals. everyone hated them too, but i thought they were really good.

i was in a giant parking lot, which i later realized was the library. all of the cars had to be parked in order, by license plate number (alphabetically). if one car came in and there wasn't a space for it, all of the other cars had to be shifted -- backed out, and moved over.

i went over to the music and art department, which was another parking lot, and tried to buy adam's bass off of him. i played 'the arguement' by the sea and cake on it.

brian and i were driving to ian's house, but i ran out of gas. i left the car on the side of the road with brian, and went looking for a gas station. i took an empty gallon of milk to put gas in.

i thought i found a gas station, but i had to climb through all of these weeds, which later turned into a bunch of pop bottles and other food items, wrapped up. i was emerging into someone's refrigerator, but the door was open.

i could see the owner of the fridge sitting by it, but she couldn't see me, so i remained hidden. she was watching a special on vh1 about tom waits.

after fooling around with some girl (in my brother's room), i went on the school field trip. we were going to every country in the world, but in alphabetical order, so there was a lot of flying around. in malaysia, no one would change our money over. we didn't speak the language either. we tried to swim, but the fish were scary, so we followed the teacher in charge down into a cave. inside the cave we played nintendo 64.

i was sitting at a large dinner table with a bunch of other people, which was all on some kind of platform that floated in the ocean. on another larger platform floating next to us, the olympics were going on. someone who i was eating with told me that none of the

networks wanted to cover the olympics because they had all lost so much money last time. so no one cared about them. i said i'd pay \$10 for the rights to olympic coverage, and i was told that it was a deal.

i lived in a small midwestern town, and we were under attack. the entire town ran to the community bomb shelter. i was in front of everyone. we went through all of these tunnels into the ground for a few hours, then came out.

then, i was in oakland with nick and we were shopping for music. the bassist for pavement had joined nirvana. we went to mellon institute and nick found a guitar. it was a big black acoustic/electric. a few moments later, i found a guitar too, which was also black, but a smaller electric guitar.

finally i was at home and my parents were forcing me to get a pet. they insisted on getting me a blind dog.

after going to the dentists, i received a card in the mail that said i had to go back and take a test. at the dentist's, i was given a xeroxed packet about the disney corporation and all of their atrocities. i was instructed to write an essay about disney's unethical behavior. i didn't feel like writing it, so i left.

i was hitchhiking with my friend joe, this kid richard, and a mysterious fourth party who was wearing lots of black. he was a seer of some sort. we climbed in the bed of a pickup truck driven by a fundamentalist christian. richard and him got along, but joe and i were arguing theology with him (he had the window open, so we talked as he drove). as we were talking, we were going through his luggage which was in the truck, but he didn't notice. joe found a cassette tape that said "HATE" on it. i asked the driver what he thought about hate. he told me that he didn't believe he ever felt it, but when other people did he copied them a tape (obviously the one we found). joe stuck the tape in his pocket.

we also found a globular thing that resembled a magic 8-ball; you could look inside of it. the devil was in there, and you could talk to him. i looked in and it was just dark clouds and stormy weather. then, when the devil talked, there was a blinding flash of white light for each syllable. i was just kinda like "hey, what's up." richard took the globe, looked it, and told the devil he denied him. richard suddenly flew away, right out of the truck and into the sky. the mysterious fourth party took the globe and threatened the devil, saying that he was only a human with a big job. then, he asked for a favor. he needed to get to new zealand. as requested, the guy flew out of the truck into the sky (presumably to new zealand).

we thanked the christian and got off the truck. or maybe he kicked us off. either way we ran into barry, and joe slipped him the "HATE" tape (put it in his briefcase without him noticing).

the next day at work, barry wasn't around. i got worried, since he was supposed to be there. i called home, but he wasn't there. i was afraid that the christian guy had somehow found he that he had the HATE tape and hunted him down, or else barry listened to the HATE tape and there was something weird about it. so i went to his friend nimec's house to see if he was there.

nimec's house looked just like mine, but it was his. nimec was in his dining room putting his shoes on. he didn't know where barry was, but he advised that i stick around for about 5 minutes, since my family christmas party was being held at his house this year and was about to start. all of my aunts and uncles started coming in; my mother was

there. they all had green ice cream concoctions -- they looked like rocket pops, only larger and green. i started eating one when my mother told me they were alcoholic.

my father and i were teaching my brother to ride a bicycle. we were standing at the top of my street, and i looked off and saw several mushroom clouds across the horizon. they had dropped the bomb on us. i put my head between my legs and closed my eyes. after a few minutes it was all over -- they had dropped nukes right on us. i heard a voice and he said not to worry, and not to open my eyes because of the radiation until i swallowed the ice. i felt fingers push ice down my throat and then i knew it was ok to open my eyes. my father and brother were still there with the man who gave me ice. he was wearing all black. all of the houses on my street and surrounding vicinity were still standing, and everything seemed to be the same. in fact, the sun was shining and it was a pleasant summer day. the man told me he had to decontaminate my brothers bicycle. he started screwing all kinds of metal hooks onto it. then he told me that i had basically escaped the radiation, along with everyone else, and that the only problem was that i couldn't have children (or something like that). so, while it wasn't a \*good\* nuclear holocaust, it wasn't a \*bad\* nuclear holocaust.

I'm going to CMU with Brian (which I really did the day of this dream). We get there, and it looks just like Seneca Lake, Ohio (where I go with my family in the summer). There's 2 desks on the edge of a cliff, with the lake below. Brian had to talk to the guy on the one desk, so I went to the other desk and started talking to the two guys there.

"We hate Net-Easy," said one of them, who had a white moustache.

"Well, I work for them," I said. They told me that they were going over to Net-Easy to fight with Bill, the owner, and would I like to come along?

They see Bill (the net easy office is just on some rock) and start yelling at him. i stay above them on this cliff, where there's a large concrete slab. I start breaking up the concrete, and there's a 20,000 year old japanese man in there. suddenly, the slab is back together and it's like i've gone back in time to before i broke up the slab. i tell some passerbys that there's a 20,000 year old japanese man in the slab, but they don't really care. and then i'm in a bookstore with brian, and we're looking at books on a shelf. i know the bookstore is in bloomfield. there's a whole shelf of books i used to own but i had lent brian and he had kept them. "hey, there's The Green Knight, remember when i lent you that?" in reality, i've never heard of any such book ....

I get these new contact lenses. My Dad brings them to me. They fit over my old contacts, just like extra contacts. I try putting them in my eyes for 20 minutes, but they're WAY too large. It's almost as if they are the perfect size for Mickey Mouse -- they sit in my palms. I get frustrated and throw the lenses in the sink. I throw a towel on top of them, and sulk away. Then, a voiceover says (Seriously -- a voiceover in my dream) "Little did he know that these were not contact lenses, but the remaining pieces of the brain of famous physicist (somebody)". I don't remember what the name was.

My friend Tim had begun working at Wendy's, the fast-food restraurant nearby my house (in the dream, not in reality). I knew (in the dream) that I HAD to contact him for some reason.

His hours were 2:30-5:00 AM, which was pretty odd. I didn't even know they were open. I repeatedly tried to call him. The first time, this is what happened:

"Wendy's."

“Um, yes, is Tim Howe there?”

“He CAN’T talk now, he’s BUSY!” The line was hung up. After several more attempts (with the same outcome) I decided to put it behind me and go fishing. The most logical place to fish would be Europe, of course. I went to an area somewhere in Western Europe, most likely the center of France. The exact location wasn’t totally clear to me, but little is in dreams, eh?

This area had a most remarkable public transit system, which was almost identical to the trolleys in Pittsburgh. A large trolley station was just across the road from where I was staying, conveniently enough. I took the trolley down to the next stop, which was only 40 or 50 feet down the line.

The next station was on top of a large cliff, maybe 10 feet off of the water (it was a lake, probably one of France’s lakes). It was of course identical to a similar precipice where I stay in Ohio. Exactly. The woods leading up to it were even the same, except there was a trolley on them.

There were maybe 10 people there fishing. A tall, pale gentleman on my left was casting right down into the water, not even one foot out from shore. Out of this shallow water he pulled an extremely large grey fish, unlike any I’ve ever seen before.

It was very round, and quite lumpy. I could see at least 10 more feeding in the shallow water. I had to go back and get my pole! I dunno if the trolley service was free, or if I just wasn’t paying for it, but I skipped back to my place to get my pole. I don’t remember if I actually brought my pole back to the fishing spot, because I have no recollection of it. Regardless, I thought how pointless it was to trolley back one stop, since I could easily walk there in less time (since it had to load passengers). I figured I’d take the trolley anyway. After I did or didn’t get my pole, I took the trolley again to the the next stop. Unfortunately, the driver didn’t stop for me. I went right past the fishing spot and on to the rest of the route. I was trying to communicate to the driver that I wanted off, but he didn’t hear me. The trolley wasn’t just a local service, it traversed all of Europe. I distinctly remember traveling through Belgium, and then across the Netherlands. It was a lovely scenic tour, quite splendid. In Holland we went through a residential area and I observed many fine Danish people in narrow apartment buildings.

I finally managed to get off the trolley somewhere in Denmark. The town, I remember vividly, was named Helmholtz (I never did check to see if that is a real city.). I got off the trolley and crossed the street, hoping to catch a trolley back to France, or wherever.. I didn’t have to wait too long; after four or five minutes I could hear another trolley coming around the corner. At this point, I saw an extremely familiar figure hobbling down the road towards me. The blue shirt and baseball cap looked familiar -- it was my friend Barry! What the hell was he doing in Denmark? In fact, what the hell was I doing in Denmark?

Could he see me? I started waving to him, but he didn’t seem to notice. The trolley came, so I wisely got on -- hey, I was in Denmark, my parents back in Pittsburgh were probably wondering where I was. As I got on the trolley, I looked across the street. The Andy Warhol museum was there. I dunno if it had moved, or if it had opened a new branch in Helmholtz, but the building was large and white, and shaped kind of like an old baseball park.

It took a little bit longer to get back to France than it did to get to Denmark -- maybe 40 minutes. Still, that’s pretty fast, although it seemed to me to be moving at a normal trolley pace.

There was a man with curly hair next to me on the trolley. He was an American, so I started talking to him. He was attending the University of Kentucky. I didn’t know why

he was in Europe, but I really didn't know why I was in Europe either.

He got off to buy a sweatshirt before I got back to my fishing spot. I think he got off in Austria but logic decrees it to be probably the lower Netherlands. Although, if I believed in logic, none of these dreams would be possible.

I returned to my fishing spot, but it was too crowded. I went back to the place I was staying.

My mother is filming a movie in our dining room. I don't know why, but she somehow recruited me to play the waiter. There are a bunch of her friends seated around the table, and I am trying to serve them. Mom is doing the camera work herself, using only a camcorder. I think the whole thing's stupid, and I keep laughing and screwing up. It takes a long time and some other stuff happens but I don't remember. I get mad or possibly bored, and go into the living room. Two acquaintances of mine from school are in there, I don't know why. Possibly they are going to be in the movie. The one girl, Jaime, shows me the new pager/beeper she just bought and asks me to call it. I go into the kitchen to call. For some reason, the phone is on the floor. Anyway, I call but get her answering machine.

The answering machine is pretty neat -- it's in stereo. Her voice is in my right ear, and some guy is in my left ear. I don't know how I heard things in both ears, I was using the normal earpiece. When it beeps to leave a message, I say "Hey, that was neat. Who's the guy?". In my left ear, again, I hear his voice say "My name is Jason." Then, I say "How did you do that, in stereo and everything." His voice says "We used a 'channel splitter'."

I hang up and go find my Dad. "Dad, can you make me a channel splitter?" He says "Sure" and takes a rectangular piece of white felt. He draws little boxes on it, like a map, for almost 10 minutes. I get bored and say "forget it", and leave.

I go up a large set of steps, not normally in my house, and come to a big room where everything (walls and floors, not ceilings) is covered in the turquoise tile the adorned the locker rooms of my grade school. For some reason, I find that reassuring, and started walking through these bathrooms. There aren't any toilets, just shower nozzles and drains. By pushing some of the walls, they move and I can enter other rooms.

As I explore these bathrooms, I know that I am going further south -- not just slowly, every couple of rooms are several degrees latitude. Eventually, I KNOW I am in or very near to Antarctica. I keep looking around, because I also know that if I keep looking, I will find Gary Numan.

I was at the doctors, getting treated for my watering eyes. The nurse gave me kleenex, and told me to soak up the eye-juice onto them. For some reason, whenever the stuff from my eyes touched the kleenex, it turned them blue wherever it was absorbed.

It was weird, like when I soak up blood, but this stuff was as blue as Windex and it was coming from my eyes. She kept telling me to soak up more and more, cause I hadn't soaked up enough yet. I was getting freaked out, so I left. The doctor's office sort of looked like my high school, but not entirely. My parents came to pick me up.

# Dream Journal #3

Jennifer Wagner

Tuesday July 12 1994

Last night I had two dreams that I can remember today. At one point, I was in the body of an attractive young man, dark skin, dark eyes, dark curly hair that curled down over my left eye... I checked my appearance in a mirror several times and was pleased with it. I was with two or three other people... two women. We had done something bad, and were brought before a man for judgment and punishment. I felt afraid for the man I was. The man we were brought to was a magician or elder; he had multitudes of wooden beaded necklaces around his neck that hung down his chest; I knew they were powerful. Then I realized that this man was Mr. Roark, I was on Fantasy Island, and I hoped that I could get a fantasy fulfilled as myself (suddenly I was apart from the young man.)

At another point, I was at a school or at a party, and my high school nemesis Julia (who slept with my boyfriends) was there. Adam admitted to me that he had slept with her. This made me angry, but not emotionally upset... I was deeply disappointed, because I told him before that if he ever did anything like that I would have to leave him. And for some reason, even though I wasn't very upset or jealous, and I still loved him, I had to leave anyway, just out of principle. It was a sad dream, it left me feeling badly when I woke up.

July 14, 1994

Last night I dreamed that I and a group of family (Mom, John etc) had gone to meet another relative who was arriving at a plush hotel. On the way in, I saw a dark man in a car who was watching me. I knew that they (he was part of some organization) were biding their time until I was alone to kidnap me. I was not afraid; I was kind of excited because they wanted me because I had some kind of power. Anyway, we went into the hotel to use the swimming pool, there were free drinks and breakfast for those who wanted it. I swam and had a good time. There were lots of people around in the pool and playing in the sand. Mom and I had our blankets down in the midst of some cute guys. At the end I accidentally threw my towel in the hot tub while trying to toss it to the side. This was a very warm, colorful and happy dream. I don't know where I was... maybe LA?

Jan 21, 1994

At one point, dreamed that the Sandman was going to introduce me to his sister, Death. But she never showed up. She left before we got there.

Aug 17, 1994

In the past couple of nights I have had amazing dreams. In one, I had magical powers of levitating objects, but I couldn't make it work (because I didn't fully believe I could do it - I thought I was awake.) But, I could fly. There was a flood of some kind, and I ran from it with someone - we had to leap over a log in the surf. I came upon a depression in the ground that I knew was magical, so I flew into it and sat down.

Next night, I was flying all around New Orleans, over the quaint buildings in the French quarter. I flew down into a crowded bar, where I met The King of Dreams, the Sandman. I bowed to him, on my knees with my arms crossed in front of me like an Egyptian mummy. It amused him. I wasn't there for very long before I was transported to a theatre, a strange avante-garde dance stage with black pipes and crepe. A young man, very striking with very white skin dark hair and a slim, powerful physique. At the end of his dance, he poured a pitcher of milk over his face and mouth. He had very red lips and his skin matched the milk.

Next night on TV, I saw a very similar man in a French avante garde dance performance. How ODD! Only this guy was thinner and much younger. Yet the similarity can't help but strike me...

Aug 20, 1994

Last night I dreamed that I still lived with my mom and dad in the house on Onyx St. I came in the living room and slave Jim was sitting in an easy chair in the living room with my dad, reading. He had a short haircut and seemed more clean-cut, and nodded pleasantly at me as I went up the stairs into my room. Once I was in my room, I knew/saw that my mom had sex with Tom Cruise in my bed using pudding. There was pudding everywhere.

Aug 23, 1994

I dreamed that I squeezed a zit on my forehead, and pus came out like a squirt of toothpaste, in great volume. I probed further, and I pulled up a flap in my forehead and saw metal underneath. I quickly smoothed it down and hoped it would go away. Then the mirror spirits started playing tricks on my and every time I looked in the mirror, I had the face of a chimpanzee. (I read research articles on monkeys that day)

Aug 24

Last night I dreamed that I flew down to the ocean (as I jumped up to fly, I thought "oh, I'm dreaming") where there was a group of school children on the beach. Small dragons started washing up on the beach, thousands of them. They would burrow into the sand and then grow. One the size of a small cat clamped its mouth around my arm but I was OK cause it had no teeth and we pried it off. They were all very hungry. Flash to an old three-story brick school. The children and I are there. Hungry dragons are in the courtyard. The building is old and decrepit. If I can get up to the roof of the building by some back way, I can eliminate the dragons and rescue the kids. As I embark on my mission, Arnold Schwarzenegar is there too, to help me. I walk up to a teacher's desk and stop; he is against me from behind. I can feel his huge erection pressed against the small of my back. I protest that we have no time for this, we must hurry to save the children! That's the end!

Aug 26

Last night I dreamed that I was in a group of people with mental powers such as telepathy, clairvoyance, and the ability to be mediums, etc. One of them became possessed by an evil spirit and I had to fight her.

I dreamed I worked at a grocery store and Jerry Johnston was my manager.

I dreamed I was coming home from work, and I stopped at the New Frontier Market to

buy some juice. I was extraordinarily stoned and I knocked over some books, and I could not get my hands to function well enough to stack them up again. I saw a black grease pencil on the shelf (the kind used to mark prices) and drew an elaborate design on my face, like Japanese Kabuki theatre face paint.

Aug 28

Last night I dreamed that I was at the theatre, asleep in the office when I was supposed to be working. I woke up as the movie got out, and I realized that I had not opened the curtains or gotten the projectors ready for the next show. I went up into the balcony/ projection room to take care of it, and accidentally started the movie up again. Then I went downstairs and fell back asleep in the office. I drifted in and out of sleep, and then woke up long enough to realize I had not sold any tickets to the next show. I would walked out to the front, and Jesse and Jenny were just getting there.

Aug 30

Last night, I had a "lucid dream". I was on a hill, and as I flew down, I said, "oh, I'm dreaming." So I decided (as always) to fly to Seattle and visit someone. I went looking for friends. I put my head through a window (I could go through walls and glass) and met some nice girls who knew Jenny Wehrman. Then I flew past a neat apartment so I peeked through the shut door. A guy was in there. He followed me out and watched as I floated down to the first floor. He and his friend were going somewhere, so I hopped in the car with them. (His apt. was decorated with neat art and pictures of the sand-man.) Then I tried to fly through a mirror, but all was white and cold behind it.

Sept 6, 1994

Last night, I dreamed I had invented a small rocket that I could hold in my hands and fly with. Some man wanted it and took it; I escaped. It turned out he couldn't make it work, so he had to come back and get me too.

Sept 7, 1994

Dream 1: I had a lucid dream: I was trying to fly, but new Dave at school kept holding me back, saying I couldn't fly. But I broke away and flew and then I knew I was asleep (looking down was very scary at first, before I was sure I was flying and asleep.) I could not decide where to go, so I went to the 5th st. Market and looked at stuff though I have no money.

Dream 2: I am going out to a prom with my friends (I don't know who they are), we are all dressed up. We come upon a sweet faced blonde girl and I proceed to tell her how much we all dislike her. She blissfully informs me that she doesn't care. We continue talking, and suddenly I'm trying to impress her and be her friend, because I realize she is OK. So, we're partying after the prom at my mom's house. I mention that I had fun, because I never went to my own prom. I looked in the mirror, I had long bleached blonde FRAZZLE permed hair, crunchy at the ends and wished I had hair like I have now.

12/14/95

I dreamed that mom was driving a huge van with me and John, who was a small child

again. As she drove, she kept flipping the van over and over again. I cradled John's head to keep it from getting bonked during the crashes.

Then I was home, upstairs in my old room, doing something important related to the crashes when my mom came up and pointed out in disgust that I was naked and blood from my period was dripping down my bottom and my upper thighs. I was self-righteous - we were in trouble and I was taking care of it and didn't have time to clean up.

12/18/95

Had many strange dreams... dreamed I was walking down the street and came upon an owl who had been hanged by some evil person from a tree. As I looked around, I saw many animals - squirrels, raccoons, more owls - hung in a similar fashion. Then I saw a squirrel eat a nut off of the ground (part of a pinecone, really) and it went nuts and started chasing me and trying to attack and kill - something in their food was turning all of the animals murderous.

Then I was with the schedules and we were walking back to Eugene from PDX when Brett and his woman Mona pulled up in a van and offered to give us a ride, but we needed to stop at his friends' house first. Brett climbed in the back of the van and started wrestling with me and flirting and I felt extremely guilty because I enjoyed it, but Mona was right there in the front seat! At his friend's house, his friend was flirting with me, but he had a girlfriend too... so I wouldn't respond.

Earlier, I dreamed Adam and I were in a bed, naked and he began to try and fuck me with his gnarly long nailed first toe. I leaped out of bed - I knew I mentally didn't like him anymore, I craved closeness, but not with him and certainly not with that - the whole scenario disgusted me.

Also dreamed I was in grad school again, only it was set in a high-school building with lots of lockers. Dr. Gayle Olson was looking at my inner ear canal, which was rotting away and clogged with mucus. She bandaged it and I went on my way. Walking down the hall, I couldn't remember what my next class was, where, or what time - I went to my locker to get my schedule, but when I got there, the door was missing and everything was in a huge heaping mess.

12/21/95

Dreamed I was in a special center for women - a building that housed us and encouraged the arts, fitness, etc. I was flying in the front yard; then I was in an indoor arena or next door on the front lawn. When some man attacked me martial-arts-style, I was doing very well, blocking all of his moves and getting quite a few kicks in of my own - when he pulled two short swords. Soon I was on the ground, one of my hands cut, trying to wrest one of the knives away from him, but up close he was too strong and I couldn't win free - he didn't hurt me any more once he had won and I knew that since he won the fight, I was his now.

Walked away from the arena - same or different fight? - I had won, I was sweaty and breathing hard and I felt great. I was tan with a muscular stomach!

Dreamed Dad and I were in a workshop - I was cleaning a glass square in a frame so that he could draw a cartoon or some kind of scene on it.

Dreamed I was making up my hair in a mirror on the wall, when Lance from work came up and started giving me unwanted advice about how to do it... I was his roommate. I wondered to myself why I was sharing an apartment with him when I dislike him so much?

Was in a huge parking lot, where many semis were parked. It looked like a fair was unloading. I found a bunch of melting ice cream cones and went to put them back in a huge ice cream truck... it was playing music just like a regular one, same decorations, but it was the size of a semi. It was in a dark cityscape - tall buildings, dim outside and mysterious, like all of my dreams of Portland or Seattle.

Dec 15 1997

Dreamed I was in a class of adults taught by an obnoxious, sneeringly superior blonde sorority girl type. Jen Wehrman was in it too. I tried to help a dark haired woman fly, but she was too tense. So I showed the rest of them how I flew. I told her I had a degree, she said I was known for me "nice photography." I said my degree was in English language and reading. I went outside and from above saw circles in the tall grass, where ancient but very high tech objects were hidden. Took them to school. Then, found an ancient elevator door in a wall. Jen and I pried it open. At one point, it snapped shut and I was trapped in the dark, screaming for help. Someone named "Robert" I screamed for opened it. Jen and I opened another door in the back of the elevator. There were stairs going down, that were cement, dark, dank, with abandoned TVs and garbage on them. Suddenly, I knew our world was actually a large building and we all lived on different levels on it. The level we were on was dark, filled with old mall type stores, with spotty electricity. As we went down the stairs, there was trapped water, and we were amazed to see plants growing and sunlight. We came upon a cave with religious monks inside, who had mystical symbols that represented the world like piled stones, but I knew they were corrupted versions of the old buildings we lived in. Something, like a nuclear war, had happened that trapped us inside. I had to find out what happened and if the outside world was habitable yet.

At this point, local authorities started to chase us. Jen could float a little but couldn't fly like I could. So, I grabbed her and we jumped off a ledge to land below, where it was grassy and like the earth outside. We flew to a house of recovering drug addicts, who were missing arms and legs. I knew one of them knew about what was happening with the world, but he denied it. He had loving, sparkly blue eyes and dark curly hair and a beard.

Jen and I were separated. A man and woman in crisp blue uniforms with piping were chasing me and the dog and suddenly had with me. They were talking about how we could not be allowed to disturb their carefully controlled gene pool... (there are already 200 "bob" types and 100 "Jen" types) Although I know the man was interested in isolating my flying ability; he tried to shoot me with a laser/stungun, but in the air I nimbly danced out of the way of the shots. This intrigued him. (it was the result of psychic powers) The woman went after my dog, and chased him into some huge gears, and I heard him dying painfully, howling and whimpering. Meanwhile, the man shot me with a strange round that stuck to my leg and I fell to the ground unable to move. It was a neural disrupter, I was full conscious but helpless. The man was coming for me... That was the end! I woke up.

# Don't Wake Up

Ray Miller

I sat up in my bed, suddenly awake and looked around my room. It was dark, but a measure of light seeped in around the blind drawn snugly over my lone window. I was warm, and felt refreshed, as if I had slept the perfect amount. With no hint of sleepiness I rose and got some clothes from my closet. *Odd, I thought, It seems awfully quiet.* I then realized that the fan in the hallway was no longer running, no longer drowning out the trains that go by less than a block away. But there were no trains. There was only silence as I walked downstairs and took a shower. A feeling of loneliness overtook me as I dressed. I quickly headed outside, thinking I would, at least, see some other people. I was stunned to find not one car drive by, not one bird sing, not one bee buzz. I walked out into the street and looked first south then north. *Where is everybody?* I thought, already knowing the answer. "I must be dreaming." I said to the air. Exhilarated, I ran back to my driveway and lay down on the cement to think. "If I'm dreaming," I thought aloud, "I can do anything. Well, since I seem to be the only person in this dream, my options are somewhat limited." I briefly tried to create a woman from nothing, and, when that failed, decided it would be really great if I could fly. I stood and leaped into the air. And fell immediately. "What now?" I screamed as I held my newly bleeding knee. *There must be some secret to flying, even in a dream,* I thought as I stood again and this time took three steps before launching myself into the sky, exactly the way I had seen it done years before on the TV show "The Greatest American Hero". This time it worked and I soared effortlessly through the air above my house. It was strange to see everything from this new vantage point and I thought how much I envied birds that they could become detached from the world, to explore the sky with no road or path to restrict them. I circled my house a few times, like a huge vulture surveying the newly deceased, then headed south two blocks to the 7-11. *I could sure use a Big-Gulp,* I thought as I landed in the vacant parking lot. I walked inside and was instantly overwhelmed by the fact that behind the counter stood the most beautiful woman I have ever seen.

"Hi." She said, her deep brown eyes staring through me, if only for a second, then returning to whatever magazine she was reading.

Still shocked to see another person, I responded a stunted, "Yeah, hi." As I half-stumbled to the back of the store where the soda dispenser lives. I pulled a Big-Gulp cup from the display and began to fill it. As the foam was rising, I turned to look once more at the girl behind the counter. From my position, all I could see was her wavy, brown hair, falling gracefully past her shoulders. I sighed and returned to the task of filling my Big-Gulp, trying to think of something to say to this perfect woman. Then it hit me, *This is my dream -I'll make her talk to me,* I thought. I concentrated on her and attempted to broadcast, *Speak to me!* The silence was deafening and I reasoned that there must be a trick to mentally commanding someone in a dream, just as there proved to be one for flying. *Damn, I thought, this really sucks. I'm dreaming and the only girl in my dream is completely ignoring me. What the hell, I'll just fly around until I find someone else.* And with that I put a lid on my Big-Gulp, grabbed a straw and headed for the door.

"Hold it." Said the girl. "That'll be a dollar."

"What?" I asked, confused by the thought that I should have to pay for anything in a dream. I turned, walked back to the counter and set the Big-Gulp down.

The girl was not wearing a name-tag, I noticed that first. Then I was drawn, once more to her eyes. Two dark pennies surrounded by sculpted features more perfect than any I had ever seen in waking life. She pulled her hair to one side and raised an eyebrow quizzically, then said, "You all right?"

"I guess so. I, uhh don't have any money." I started, suddenly very embarrassed. "Well, I'm dreaming, so I didn't think I."

I was cut off as she set her magazine down and leaned slightly towards me, "Dreaming?" She asked, almost laughing. Her face lighting up, lips drawn back in a little smile.

"Yeah, I'm dreaming. You're the only person in my dream- well, except for me- and, uhh I didn't bring any money with me." I said, feeling stupid.

I tried to look away from her eyes, but found that I was unable. I was mesmerized and listened intensely as she said, "You're not dreaming. I just had another customer about a minute before you came in. You probably saw her leave."

I thought back. I had seen *no one* except the girl now before me. "No." I answered, "I didn't see anyone. I really am dreaming. I know it. I flew here from my house."

This comment seemed to worry her. Perhaps she thought I was insane and might try to hurt her. "You can't fly." She stated as she moved slightly back from the counter, away from me.

I thought for a moment. I remembered flying. I remembered the feeling of the wind through my hair. The feeling of freedom as I circled my house. I couldn't remember breathing, but I thought I must have. I said, "I can. This is all a dream. All *my* dream. You're just a character in my dream. Now let me have my Big-Gulp. I want to fly again before I wake up." I was beginning to doubt if I was in fact dreaming or not. But how could I explain that I could fly and that I had neither seen nor heard anyone else, except for this unique girl. I started to say something, then stopped, not sure exactly what I should say or do.

"If I'm just a figment of your imagination," she started, "then you created me, right?"

"I guess so." I stammered, feeling more and more like maybe I wasn't dreaming. I could feel my ears getting warm, the blood pounding through them.

She leaned forward a minute amount, a confident smile blossoming across her flawless face. "If you made me, then you make my thoughts too. Tell me what I'm thinking."

This had not occurred to me. *Yeah, I created her. I make her thoughts. What is she thinking?* I concentrated, straining to pick up her thoughts. I could not. Worried, I moved away from the counter and tried again. *It must have a technique just like everything else.* I thought as I gritted my teeth and squinted my eyes. I could feel my blood flowing and my heart beating and my blood pressure increasing, but still I could not perceive her thoughts. For several minutes I tried, in vain, to know her mind. Then, exhausted, I grabbed my warming Big-Gulp and took a long drink.

"See." She said and smiled. The smile that previously enchanted me, now made my head split with pain as my blood pressure continued to increase. I feared that if I became too upset I might wake up. Not wanting to return to waking life, I gave up on reading her thoughts. The experience had left me drained and I felt awkward and sluggish.

"OK, you got me. You got me. I can't read your mind." I stumbled on the words, almost too tired to speak them. "But I swear I'm dreaming all this. Would you

believe me if I flew for you?"

"Yeah," She answered quickly, almost as if she had expected the question, "You fly and I'll believe whatever you say."

I stood, for a brief moment, transfixed by her features. I was almost scared of her as she followed me outside.

It had gotten brighter and I was seriously doubting my ability to fly. *Maybe I'm not dreaming. Maybe I didn't fly. Oh God, what if I've gone insane. No, I thought, I remember flying. I know I do.* Exhausted, yet determined to prove myself, I turned to face her.

"Hurry, before I get another customer or the phone rings or something. Come on, fly for me." She jeered, her voice becoming less commanding.

She seemed strangely out of place in the sunlight. As if her features were being blurred by the sun's intensity. She seemed softer, less chiseled. Still beautiful, breathtakingly so, but to a lesser degree than before, when she was inside. This puzzled me and I wondered why I couldn't sharpen my focus on her. Everything else was still crystal clear. *I'll worry about it later,* I thought. *I have to fly now.* I looked away from her and launched myself into the air. And fell. I heard her muted laughter from behind me as I picked myself up. I had landed knee first again and again it began to bleed. Then I remembered the procedure. *Three steps, then jump.* I thought, feeling stupid. "Wait," I said to her as she turned to go back inside, "I did it wrong." Then I took three steps and easily propelled myself into the sky.

"Oh my God!" She screamed, half crying. "Come back!"

She was crying freely as I landed. I went over to her. Tears were streaming down her delicate face onto her shirt. "What's wrong?" I asked, taking her into my arms much the way one might hold a wounded puppy.

"What's wrong?" She screamed, her face contorted into a mockery of her perfection. "You *can* fly! What if you *are* dreaming?" She began to gasp and I tried to soothe her, but she was shaking and she stared at me, her deep eyes open wide, and finally cried out, "If you're dreaming, then I'm not real! When you wake up, I'll die! I'll cease to exist! If you wake up, you'll murder me!"

Shocked, I tried to pull away, but her strength was maniacal. She picked me up and began to shake me. Her once perfect features, first blurred by the sun then twisted with fear, were gone, replaced by a hideous doppelganger. I was terrified and I yelled out, "Let me go!"

"Don't wake up!" She pleaded as she shook me. "Don't wake up! DON'T WAKE UP!" She repeated the phrase until it had no more meaning to me and with each repetition she shook me more violently, until my entire world was her shaking me and screaming "Don't wake up!"

My eyes ripped themselves open and I shot up-right in my bed. I was crying and trembling and sitting in a pool of cold sweat, with the murdered girl's last words echoing hideously inside my mind.

# Sand From My Eyes

Laura Barcella

There is no one who does not dream.

I dream nightly, as do you. I want to remember my dreams. They haunt me in the mornings, shadowing my thoughts and my demeanor like elusive spirits. They taunt and torment me. They make me hate you.

Sometimes I can force myself to remember my dreams, if I tell myself before sleeping, *You will remember your dreams tomorrow.*

Sometimes, like lately, I awaken with that funny familiar feeling in the core of my insides, and I know I have dreamt, I know a dream is still hovering inside me, but it has slipped away amid the hollows. It has fallen through the darker cracks in my consciousness. It has tried, successfully, to dodge me.

When I awaken, I am aware only of a piece of the dream. I am aware only of the small shard which hasn't slipped through the cracks, the shard with your face on it which tells me I dreamt about you.

There is no one who does not dream. I wonder what this means in terms of you. Am I there, ever, floating through your head and your body while you sleep? Am I there, ever, slipping through the cracks as you wake up? Do you awaken, ever, groggy with my image behind your eyelids, knowing that I was there last night, that I haunted you in

the darkness and I will continue to haunt you in the daylight? Do you awaken, ever, with my image-sand caught in the corners of your eyes? Do you ever try anxiously, then violently, to wipe the sand from your eyes, only to find that *it will not go away?*

# Da Fuckin' Cubs

Larry Falli

It was supposed to be a big deal. Half of my law school class was supposed to come. My brother and his fiancée were coming. By the time I got to Wrigley it was me, a date, and Rafferty. My brother locked his keys in his car in Schererville, Indiana. My roommate couldn't get up by noon and everyone else passed out as well.

It was only noon and Rafferty was pissed. We were 20 minutes late because we parked so far away that we had to take a bus from the car to the bar where we were supposed to meet. Still, he was happy I brought the camera I got for him from Camel Smokes (tm). He took a picture of me buying a beer. Then Rafferty gets a plan. He says he always wanted to be on a rooftop across from Wrigley.

Sure enough we bullshit our way onto the roof of a house behind right field. Of course they have free beer and fritos. Then the owners realized we weren't invited guests so they threw us out.

We went back to the bar. There we found Barney. He's my scalper. He knows that if I'm there in the 3rd inning I'd buy a couple off of him at a loss. Usually Rafferty begins the ritual: "Lord Jesus, they're already losing- it's gonna rain ya know- who's that pitcher they started today- they're 15 games outta first," all in a drunken Irish brogue. But today not a peep. He musta still been pissed that I was late. Barney gave us three \$12 tix for \$35. Usually Barney gives me a better deal, but I was having an off day. So was Rafferty. At least we saved a buck.

By the time we crossed the street I was convinced I had dropped the change from my last beer, when actually I used it to pay for my Ticky. Things got better once we got inside the friendly confines. My date later said that she watched the entire stadium go from being entirely sober to wasted. I don't think that's entirely true. No one was pure sober when we got there.

Some dude put down one of those plastic baseball helmets, so me and some guy in a wheelchair were fighting over it. The cripple finally said he was with 2 guys from England. I told him Rafferty was from Ireland (he really is) and we were gonna bomb his shit. He gave me the helmet.

By the fifth inning, some guy standing in front of us kept stepping on my date's foot, (she was wearing Birks). She said "Sonofabitch!" or something like that. Toolbag and his two friends turned around. Of course I was watching the planes that were looping back to the lake for the airshow.

Toolbag #1 pulls the old "You gotta problem?"

My date says "he keeps standing on my foot."

I slur "That sounds like a problem."

Toolbag #2 squeaks "He (me) looks pretty big."

Rafferty adds "Yah, and he's drunk and mean."

Toolbag #3 says "Lets leave, nothings going on." They left.

And everything was going on. Rafferty found the budweiser district sales manager in the stands and we're getting free beer. There are fighter planes flying all over. I met three girls from Atlanta and one of them went to UTexas so we're talking. AND the Cubs let the other team hit a homerun.

The fan throws the ball back. Another home run- back to back. This time the ball is outta even the seats, It's out on the street. It still gets thrown back, from the street, over the wall, past all the seats to the field.

And then bedlam. Home run #3 in a row. The Cubs are now losing (shocker) but here's the thing. The guy with the ball won't throw it back. The whole stadium is yelling "THROW IT BACK, THROW IT BACK!" Even the players are looking at this guy. Does he give in? NO. Rafferty says to me "This isn't gonna be good for the game." I say, "This isn't gonna be good for anyone." The fans finally lose patience with this guy whose \$3 ball is worth more to him than one of the finest traditions in baseball.

Suddenly as if acting under one mind, everyone throws everything on the field. There was so much trash on the field they had to bring the ground crew out to pick the shit up. When the ground crew left the field, everyone once again threw shit on the field. Well - the ushers started ejecting people by then so we had to leave.

How was your weekend?

## Letters of the Insane

D Raugh

Feb 13th  
3:02 AM  
Hell, Florida

Jon-

I got your mail regarding submissions to AITPL and I have been meaning to send ya a bit of immortal genius (HA!) in return for letting me use yours in my little rag. I come up with nothing but asinine ravings of paranoia and doom. I am in Southern Florida and my system is out of wack. There is too much green - it is not natural for Feb. Give me the freezing pain of Phila. This was supposed to be a pleasant little business/pleasure trip. Much writing was in the planning but nothing (business, pleasure, writing) has been accomplished. I sit inside with the shades drawn, drinking stolen vodka and watching CNN and MSNBC (cannot Clinton get a better caliber of woman? He is the president, for Christ's sake). I fear the streets here. It is a different sort of crime; all the retirees clad in their pastel sweat-suits, brandishing golf clubs - I swear they aim those wicked white balls at me. Some of the fuckers are getting close. When I am not dodging their balls or carts, I am busy trying to convince the local authorities I'm not a thief, drug fiend, or child molester. White-haired bats drive around in new sedans - painted to look like cop cars - "Community Security Patrol" in small print in the door - and radio in my whereabouts every time I leave the house. "It's the long hair and tattoos" my friend tells me. I now have severe heat rash from wearing long sleeves, my hair is falling out and I get a massive case of the shakes every time I quit drinking. So, perhaps the next issue ... say a prayer for my soul.

-Derek Raugh

Sorry 'bout the snailmail - nobody can figure out a VCR down here let alone a computer.

# Tenth and Walnut

Jon Konrath

Wet snowflakes covered the darkened Tenth Street like powdered sugar on a pastry. The dim moonlight's reflections illuminated the fluffy blanket of pure white coating the trees, houses, buildings, and sidewalks of the college town. And in the middle of the night, no cars or pedestrians scarred the virgin layer of cotton. The solitary tracks I left while crunching down the sidewalk remained the only mark of man in the soft terrain.

Three AM, Sunday night, two miles from home. No buses, no car, no bike, and no money for a cab. Plus, in a few hours, I'd have to drag my ass out of bed, take the bus back to campus for a 10 AM class, and try to read two chapters while freezing to death at the bus stop. The bitch had required attendance, and surprise quizzes so often they weren't very surprising anymore. If I missed 3 classes, I'd flunk. I'd already missed two, and it was only a month into the semester.

I trudged onward, my leather jacket, jeans and hair drenched with the melting snow. Henry Rollins laid his spoken word across the walkman's headphones, stories of airports and Australia and desolation and woman and Black Flag and drop-dead travel across the world. I focused on his stories of Paul the wino and punching out a guy's teeth in Australia instead of the freezing cold seeping through the seams of my black leather jacket, the melting snow from my hair and face creeping down my shirt like a half-frozen slushie down the neck. The distraction almost worked.

As I walked, I kept thinking "did this evening really happen?" It all seemed too strange. I met some girl on the computer. I visited her, I bought us a pizza. We ate it, joked around, and the next thing I know, I'm fucking her. Three hours later, I'm still fucking her, in every conceivable position, and she was loving it.

Then we finished, I said bye, and I hit the door, to a campus full of new snow. No weird politics, no attachment, no mushy goodbyes, no 'when will I see you again'. Thanks for the pizza, thanks for the fuck.

Maybe I was just hallucinating. Maybe I was in the library, and after hitting my head on a photocopier, I was dreaming about someone I saw in the Reserves section. With my recent bad luck in the woman department, I don't see how I made it in the front door, even with the pizza. It must've been a dream.

But in dreams, I never dealt with snow and freezing weather this realistic. Even my worst Nyquil nightmares weren't as boring as the walk from campus to my apartment. My face reddened and lost all feeling, and I kept smashing size 10 imprints into the layer of fleecy cold on the sidewalk. It takes 15 minutes for hypothermia to kill someone in cold water, I thought. This walk will take another hour...

A week or two later, I sat in this cancer class I took because I thought it'd be an easy grade. Instead, it became about 10 years of biology and anatomy taught in a semester. I never took a life science before, even in high school, so blowing off the one-day summary of anatomy and physiology wasn't a good move. Really, I just took the class to find out if I had testicular cancer or an overactive imagination. Plus I heard that on the last day, a lady showed up and removed a scarf to reveal a hole in her throat, and that sounded cool.

"Sarcomas come from tissue that arises from mesoderm or mesenchymal tissues," said the teacher, talking to a semi-circle of mostly empty seats in a huge amphitheater.

theater with a balcony. Some people took notes, but I wrote stories in my spiral notebook, mostly about the teacher. She looked like a 25 year old version of a freshman I dated a year before, someone that darted in then out of my life before I even knew her. The reference was probably reinforced because the class was in the chemistry building, and the 18 year old version was some kind of biochemistry prodigy. Part of my Friday night routine was walking her to a Saturday morning lab, then sleeping on a wooden bench in the chemistry building atrium for three hours so we could go to breakfast together. The fact that the teacher also taught a Human Sexuality course didn't exactly slow my fantasies, either. My red notebook filled with bizarre stories about visiting her during office hours and launching into long, involved sexual trysts on the desk, where she announced the Latin name for every obscure sexual position while we performed them, and later told me of a Swedish study where scientists took ultrasounds of couples fucking in 29 positions to determine optimal clitoral and penile stimulation. Even though a hundred other beautiful women surrounded me every night, wearing their fuck-me jeans and too much perfume in a sad attempt at snaring a pre-med student with a promising salary potential, I dreamed of the teacher. It also didn't help my chances with the fellow students that I regularly wore a shirt that said DRINK MY PISS in foot-high letters.

"Okay, that's all for this week. Before next class period, read chapter 6, on invasion and metastasis."

The few members of the class that managed to show up on the night of a basketball game shuffled their papers and headed for the doors. I stashed my notebook in my backpack, and armed the walkman with a Danzig tape for the walk home. Before sunset, a mix of rain and snow hailed the landscape, and I knew I'd either get drenched or have to walk over iced snow for the two mile hike.

I hit the front doors leading to the veranda and saw the limestone surface covered with a slick layer of rain. The second I opened the door, I saw this attractive woman sitting on the veranda. What the fuck? I stepped onto the veranda and figured out what was going on as I instantaneously ended up on my ass.

"Hey, watch out for the ice," she told me, half-laughing. We both sat on the thin sheet of frozen water, too proud to get up and admit we were stupid for even trying.

"This looked so much easier on the Olympics," I said. Her books lay all over the veranda, so I scooted over and helped her gather everything together. I got a better look at her and recognized her from the class. She looked intelligent, like some kind of honors student who still had a good body and kept up the hair and wardrobe like the rest of them. Instead of another line, all I could think of was: if I had a car, this would be a done deal. Even if it was a piece of shit 1973 Nova with three bald tires and a cracked windshield, I'd be her hero forever in exchange for a ride home.

I made it across the street to the IMU, determined I didn't have the cash to call a cab, and started a slip and slide back home. Every surface - sidewalks, streets, curbs, steps, streetlights, everything - was covered with a thin yet solid coat of ice. During the hour and a half, step-at-a-time, uphill battle, I dreamed of having a BMW or a Acura in the lot next to Chemistry. Then, when she was on her ass on the veranda, I'd scoop her into the leather interior and drive into the future. A nice dream, but I still fell on my ass four more times that night.

The ice melted, my student loan check appeared, and I decided to blow off the second half of the 3 hour cancer class for some beer. I hiked across town in the cool March air, a real change from this statewide weather disaster bullshit, and found my

favorite bar that week, the Crazy Horse. Even with a game on the tube, the wood-covered bar and grill didn't have many people for a Tuesday night, and I had no problem snagging a bar seat. I pulled my eighty beers around the world card out of my wallet, unfolded it, and decided to clear some cheap domestics off the list first. The bar maid found me, and I asked for a Molson Golden and handed her my punchcard. "Did you know there are fifty kinds of Molson in Canada?" I asked her. She gave me a weird look, and asked "do you want to run a tab on this?"

"Yeah, that'd be great," I said, taking the green bottle she set in front of me. When I was in Kitchner, Ontario a few months back, I closed the hotel bar every night. The Canadian barkeep, much cooler than this one, told me loads of Canadian beer trivia, like that they brewed Budweiser in Toronto and Molson Golden in St. Louis. This bar maid didn't even talk to me, but at least I got a tab running. In a college town bar, that's like being approved for a million dollar home improvement loan when you don't have a house.

I pulled back the Molson, a Bud, a Michelob and a Miller before I managed to scare some nachos from the kitchen. The game continued on the TVs above the bar, but I still couldn't figure out who was playing who. Since I didn't own a TV or follow any sports, I was lucky to know it was basketball. I left my jacket on my barstool, and found the men's room for my first round of beer postprocessing.

Next on the list was some cider. The Woodchuck was my first try at cider, and the taste of apple juice and alcohol was a strange combination, but by the end of a bottle of Woodpecker, I thought I could get used to it. The cider and nachos didn't taste right together, so I got a Corona with a lime.

The people on either side of me kept in conversations with others, or watched the game. I wondered how people like Bukowski could do this every night, drinking at the bar with nothing to do and nobody to talk to. My stepdad was a hardcore alcoholic, and spent a lot of his time at an Eagles lodge, drinking with his brother and pals. If I went there every night, so the bartenders knew my name and other regulars would ask me about my day, it'd seem cool, just like Cheers. But tonight, I'm just getting drunk.

I ordered a Sapporro, which I liked, and a Kirin, which was okay but not \$3.75 great. Everybody talks about these heavy German beers, but I didn't care. I just wanted to finish the beers on the card. The nachos started to lose their taste, which was a welcome addition. I guessed they were designed to be eaten after 5 beers.

After another stumble to the bathroom, I realized I was really fucked up. The only times I ever drank this much was when I was hiding in my room depressed, or making a complete fool of myself amongst my friends. Drinking this much while sitting around a bunch of total strangers was a new experience to me. I guess depression was a reason for the evening by myself, but it was more for something to do. I spent so much time in front of the computer, talking on the phone, and wishing there was something else to do. Sitting at the bar killed my time, but I was still alone. And I already forgot how much I had on my tab.

Once back at the bar, I ordered a Becks, and finished the last of the nachos. When I was ready to order again, the game was over, and a few more people shuffled through the door. The dude next to me asked "hey, what's that?" and pointed to my card.

"80 beers around the world," I slurred. The card was a circle of paper as big as a coaster, divided up into 80 pie-slices, each with a name of a beer on it. "Every time I drink a beer, they punch the card. When I drink all 80, they put my name on the plaque." I pointed to a far wall with a million tiny nameplates riveted to a piece of wood

above a fake fireplace. "I figure I've got to achieve something during my five years on campus."

"Something to tell the grandkids about," he said.

"Damn straight," I said. The bar maid returned, and I ordered a bottle of Tecate. "Mexican Lager," I told the guy next to me. "Then I gotta hit the road."

"You're driving home?" he asked.

"No, I'm walking," I said.

I took a piss, paid my bill, and stumbled out the door. It was already 11, and I was about 15 blocks down and 5 blocks over from my house. The busses stopped running, and even if they were, I'd be a disaster trying to catch one. I tried to think of a route home where I wouldn't get hit by a car or worse.

The lights and cars of downtown Bloomington quickly turned into dark and quiet backroads full of tiny houses and abandoned warehouses. I didn't fuck with my walkman - I figured I'd break it, and any music would freak me out even more. The sound of nothing during my stumble would help my concentration. A horrible thirst lined my throat from the beer, and I wished I was at home, taking off my shoes washing the cigarette smoke from my hair and drinking a gallon of cool water. Instead, I both sweated and froze, my face numb from cold and the inside of my jacket covered in sweat. I kept lugging my backpack up the hill on College and toward my apartment.

If I only would've saved for a car last summer, I thought. Even if I would've saved a couple twenties from each check, I could've bought some piece of shit with no radio, no heater, and a primer paint job. Anything would've been better than this walking two miles each way bullshit. I focused on walking, the challenge of an uneven sidewalk requiring all of my attention.

I crested the hill around 10th and College, and saw the Wafflehouse. The idea of pancakes with hot strawberry topping and a tall glass of ice-cold Coke sounded incredible to me, but then I thought about how horrible it was in there when I was sober and not alone. Besides, I'd probably puke them after the rancid nachos and gallons of beer..

Just past 10th, a magical site illuminated in the darkness in front of me. At the side of a closed gas station, two Coke machines bathed the darkness in red and called to me. I ran to the machines, and dug through my pocket looking for change. Silver ran through my fingers, and I fumbled with the coins, managing to slip two quarters into the slot. I hit the button, and with a ca-chunk, a freezing cold aluminum can fell into my hands. I cracked open the top, and breathed in the sweet elixer, pulling the taste from my throat and filling my veins with caffeine.

After drinking the can's contents in a single chug, my head felt much clearer, but my bladder felt ready for release. I'm an hour away from home, I thought. The men's door on the outside of the tiny building, was padlocked. I looked for cameras or neighbors, and when I found neither, I went to the back of the store and pissed on the wall. That'll teach them to lock their bathrooms, I thought. I went back to the machines, bought a second Coke, and hit the road.

I trudged up College and watched the occasional car zip past on the one-way street while I sipped from the Coke. Only a half hour, or forty five minutes, I thought. The buildings on either side of the street greeted me, the same houses, insurance agencies, law firms, and tiny strip malls I saw twice a day, every day. My internal monologue went from trying to deal with the beer to thinking, dreaming about doing something besides working a shit job, taking shit classes, and watching the world around me as a

visitor. I dreamed of a life where I didn't wonder what I had to do next. Led Zeppelin said there's always time to change the road you're on, but I feared waking up at 40; single, destitute, and sitting around in my underwear, writing fan mail to Teri Hatcher.

Past the railroad viaduct, the hill crested, and I saw the only business besides the gas station that was still open: the College Street Adult Bookstore. The well-lit parking lot, full of cars carefully backed into spaces to hide their license plates, beckoned me. "Come on in, movies are just a quarter. Three packs of magazines, just \$9.99. Marital aids, video games, and tape rentals."

I walked closer to the store, the wad of student loan cash telling me to go inside. What the fuck, I thought - this'll be fun drunk. Besides, I could use a distraction. I stumbled to the windowless door, and went inside.

# One Good Use for Money

Daniel Crocker

Jason Coleman and I had just finished defeating 8 straight people at quarters. We played in teams of 2's. Jay and I against anybody willing and there were a lot of people willing although they all knew we were the best. We seldom missed at the fine art of sinking those silver moons into thick shot glasses full of Southern Comfort. My secret was to always bounce the quarter into my mouth with only my right hand before my shot so I could get it to a 45 degree angle. My left hand was always on a beer.

The last team we faced were two girls by the names of Tina Brown and Mary Kreft. Tina was a tall and thin lesbian who looked as if she may be starving and her sharp hard features emphasized the point. They said, "I will eat you." Mary was a doll. She had short, bobbed blonde hair and wide aqua eyes. She had a little meat on her bones and it looked nice on her. But, it was her tits that drove us all crazy. They were the biggest tits on any of the girls that ever showed up to these parties. Plus she liked to fuck and didn't care who knew it. And we didn't care that she liked to do it. It gave her power. It made all the boys want her.

These two were by far the most competition we'd had that night and since we had started to buzz we were a little worried. Tina wasn't that good at the game but she was a big drinker and that made her hard to put down. Mary wasn't quite the drinker Tina was but she had a knack for putting the silver in the glass and she loved the game. She loved all games.

But, Coleman and I were the biggest drinkers there. We did it every night, party or not. So, although we were both drunk by the end of the game we didn't puke. The game ended when Tina walked away saying she couldn't take anymore. Mary was left sitting on Jay's lap. Her tits hanging dangerously close to his face.

"You wanna see these things?" He asked me pointing to her boobs.

"Fuck yeah." I said, and Mary laughed.

He lifted her shirt up for me.

"Goddamn!" I said.

They were huge and nice. Her nipples were full harvest moons and the rest were pretty firm considering their size. However, they had one fatal flaw. Blue highway veins mapped them in spider webs. Jay found this so funny he spit his beer all over them in laughter. He wasn't trying to be mean it was just that the things had been so

coveted for so long it was weird to see a blemish, no matter how slight, in them. Mary pulled her shirt down. It was the first time I'd ever saw her embarrassed. Then it came. Brown liquid puke from Mary's mouth all over the table. Mary looked at it, stood up and went into the next room with the rest of the party. Coleman and I drank some more shots.

Eventually we made our way into the next room. I hoped Mary hadn't passed out so I could tell her how much I really had enjoyed her tits. As it happens she was up, dancing to a Nirvana song. I figured I could join in and perhaps get back on her good side so I slam danced my way over to her.

"What do you want?" She asked.

"Well," I said, "I..." Someone slammed into the back of me and I started to choke. I'd stuck the Goddamn quarter in my mouth at the end of the game and now it was stuck in my throat blocking my windpipe. I couldn't speak. Mary stared at me. Finally she danced off to someone else.

I looked around for help, but no one seemed to notice I was choking. My best friend, Glen Jarvis, sat bleary eyed in the corner of the room. He was trained in first aid but the lights were dim and he couldn't see me well. People were bumping into each other with such violence I knew I'd never make it to him in time. I held my hand to my neck giving the universal sign of choking but I guess it doesn't work on drunks because no one took notice.

I was on the verge of passing out. I knew if I did that I would die and no one would know until morning. They'd think I'd just passed out from the liquor. Hell, they would have spent the whole night laughing at my dead body. What a wuss they'd say. I did the only thing I could think of. I had no idea a human's hand could go so far down their wind pipe but I did it. I dislodged the quarter with my fingers and pulled it out. It was covered in thick saliva. I sucked in a gallon of air. On the exhale I puked my guts out.

"Well, the big bad drinker's had his limit." Tina said. I just looked at her and shook my head. I was embarrassed, but I was happy to let everything think I'd just puked from alcohol. I didn't want to tell them about the quarter. It was an idiotic thing to do.

My throat hurt worse as the night wore on. It felt like someone had rubbed sand paper across it. I did see Mary once more that night. She was dancing with a guy from a different town who I didn't know.

"Mary," I began.

"Fuck you." She said.

# Hairless

Greggory Moore

i was young seventeen years ago, believe it or not; but i digress, my darling. Yes, by the way, i am talking and writing to you -- directly to you, my lovely, for whom else is there but you? Oh, you may doubt and you may scoff, but you'll soon see, no may about it. But now i am mumbling, laterally. Let me start at the beginning.

which is the  
start of things

i was thirtythree, which, i know now, indeed, indeed was young..., which i was, seventeen years ago, which i said, not quite seventeen years ago, unless you are following me very slowly, very. well. ...the very flower and breath of youth, a new breeze, not yet cooled by the fires of time. True, warm air does rise, as you -- Owonderful you! -- well see and well know, but i, too, walked on wind. From high above the rhythm of the sun pulsed for me alone, for, in my wonderfoolish youth, i would not share anything in the world for all of it. i put clouds up -- beneath me but between the earth and the sun, you understand, being as perspicacious as you are -- and the camel flew toward, presumably upon seeing this, but, as Jimi Hendrix has said, not necessarily so, but beautiful.

“you know,” he began in perfect Greek (which i, of course, did not understand, because it was all Greek to me), “it’s not fair of you, and you’ll never have her!”

Well, as i know darling you can imagine (and do!), i was quite quite insulted. And even a lesser insult should be dealt with immediately. But of her i shan't talk yet. (No, no: i shan't, i shall not.) So i grabbed Jerry (his name was Jerry (Ask me not of how i knew that knavish camel's name, for it is a painful and disorderly tale, and far too excursive in its relation to my current one (tale) (Perhaps i'll tell you of it (the tale that (for the nonce) is too excursive to be of use (in its relating) here) when i come to visit.) (One can tell the sex of a camel only by its teeth when it speaks (or spits incidentally, incidentally), for the females often (but defiantly definitely not always) wear fake penises (This shouldn't surprise you (but i'm sure it didn't (common knowledge as it is (though a thoroughly trivial point (But, as well you well know (i'm sure (as we both know you are very wise)), trivial facts (and even minutiae!) often prove themselves useful (on occasion, i mean (which you're certainly well-aware of (well-wonderfully special as you are, my lovely you!)))))))))) by his pendent head and kicked him in his throatal nodal modal lump, known to most of Christendom (and (virtually) all society that it (Christendom) has influenced) as the Adam's apple (vide Genesis 3:6 (Any version will do.)). He spit (showing his teeth (and (by proxy (for talking)) his sex (male)) and gagged (showing nothing but a camel (male) gagging), choked, coughed, his camel-eyes grew big and bulgy, he gasped, kicked -- missing me by a good distance, as i am very adept and quick at getting out of the way of camel kicks and all such sort -- spun, upended, turned ever-slightly blue, and died, his camelcorpse falling like dead weight -- which it was, i suppose, so i shouldn't have been surprised (which i wasn't, incidentally) -- into the sea, sinking, but settling on the ocean floor nowhere near the non-extant Atlantis of yorelore. Camel fur soaks up surprising water (as i'm quite sure Jerry and/or his fur had no idea he would die and sink on that day!) surprisingly well.

A moment of silence please for the dead.

Well, Jerry so dispensed with, i did not wish to await upon any imminent eminent vengeance -- for all camels are "royal" -- though -- in reality -- they're not only supercilious bastards -- not in the literal sense -- of "bastards," i mean -- that is, of "questionable" parentage -- for i never question one's parentage -- as if that might be one's own choice -- i mean, look at her, for example -- -- -- -- but in the figurative meaning -- which you well know -- not to make any -- or even an -- implications about you yourself -- except that you are very intelligent -- that i don't mind saying -- at all, in happy fact! -- -- -- most intelligent, i should say -- and know and are able to extricate exactly what my meaning is here -- -- -- -- and vengeful -- i crossed channel and canal and ocean lake pond river and stream, but never land -- for i might have been seen -- until i did (cross land), and was over Honduras, where i landed, purchased a coconut from a local inhabitant, and went straight over to Australia. Of course, i avoided the Great Victoria, Gibson, and so creatively named Great Sandy Deserts, respectively (south to north) -- for who knows on which continents vengeful but "royal" (You understand my desire to use quotation marks ("") perfectly well, i believe.) camels roam, and on which they do not?! And who would be willing, in the perilous position i was in at that time (thirtythree), to take that ever-so-dangerous risk? Not i, i am not ashamed to tell you, my lovely sweet and dear! -- and instead wound my way along the southernmost coast, landing in Albany. But i had somehow fallen under the mistaken impression that this was the one and same Albany that lies and resides in New York (where i am not from, but have never been to, but have heard of) landed here. Seeing that this wasn't the case -- which, through my great intellect, i was able to ascertain and deduce in only four (4) days -- i rented a boat and drifted out from the continent (southerly), so that my takeoff would not be viewed by any of the "royalty" (You understand me here.) i so wanted to avoid. i never did return the boat, i am sorry to say. If it is your father's, do not tell him.

Upon my stealthy levitation, i gained speed and was soon hungry. i had planned on eating the coconut for lunch, but soon realized that i had nothing to open it with. Angry, i flung it from me towards the ocean. It dropped through the clouds and out of sight. It was a cloudy day.

Stopping only for a 1/2day on the United States' Territory Johnson Island (170 deg. W. Lat., 17 deg. N. Long.) shortly after passing the International Date Line (which is unmarked, by the way (In truth, i must say that i did expect to see a line in the sea.)), i continued northeast, dropping into the Gulf of Alaska three miles offshore (i was in need of a bath, you surely see (i am, for the most part, always very fastidious.)). i swam onshore in Seward, and chartered a helicopter to loft me to Anchorage. From there, Air Alaska flight 1714 (i was immediately frightened because of its (the number in the flight number) adding up to thirteen (13), though i am not superstitious.) to Seattle. From there, i bought a coach ticket on the redeye run to Los Angeles, which arrived downtown sometime the next day. However, i was sleeping, and, as a result, did not detrain until the end of the line, which, propitiously enough (as, at the time, i had no foreknowledge (nor knowledge at all, for that matter (until i arrived, anyway)) of this fact (though i now know it well)), was San Diego. Ecstatic (for i had thought San Diego to be a northern outlying suburb of Brussels), i thought i would surprise her. Yes, it is true that even her hate-mail (rainbowcrayon-scrawled and wonderful!) had stopped arriving at my

Phnom Penh p.o. box, and that her parents had stabbed me five times in the stomach when they caught us together in her room, but she was only seven, and i was willing to forgive it all. Besides, all parents want their daughters to be virgins when they marry, don't they? But i -- after lengthy deliberation -- was now willing to marry her, so it would be just as if she were marrying virginal, because i, her husband (after the ceremony, obviously), would have been and be the only one to have made sweet love to her darling, hairless seven-year-old vagina (so sweet, i'd like to kiss its pinkish lips right now, this very moment!), which, i supposed, would be an eight-year-old vagina by the time we were married, as i only wanted the best for her, and that meant the grandest wedding ceremony her parents' money could buy, which would take at least six months to plan, don't you agree?

Well, when i arrived at her house, i loudly knocked on the door. i had purchased a football helmet -- which i was wearing on my O too-balding head -- and i felt just the sight of this should intimidate her parents from trying to use force against me again; and, verily, when her mother opened the door, she did not do a thing but shriek and cower in fear, except for quickly closing the door.

"Hello," i said. "i am here to see her."

i stood there, waiting for a reply -- as i felt it was the polite thing to do, as i knew that her mother was probably quite surprised, as she should have been, i suppose (It can be understood, in any case.), as i was quite ready to accept, as you do see, but after about ten minutes, i resolved that i should knock again. However, before i could do so, several car automobiles -- apparently belonging to the San Diego Police Department -- arrived. i was promptly and rather roughly placed inside of one (the back) -- quite against my will, i feel compelled to add -- and driven.

## Camels.

While in San Diego (which is not in Brussels at all!), i learned of the painful truth that my lovely younglove had quite passed on from this world. You see, not long preceding my arrival, she had just embarked on the return portion of a therapeutic Australian cruise she had taken with her father for the convalescent purpose of recovering from some previously incurred trauma. Apparently, it (the cruise) had been quite successful in accomplishing this end, and had helped her purge her catatonia (She was even able to feed herself again.), until her father anally raped her on the sundeck in front of a group of aged (a relative term, isn't it?) Club-Med members. Into the ensuing tumult, a coconut fell at an apparently maximum freefall rate and hit the love of my life, throb of my pulse, tongue of my lick on her skull, promptly caving it in and -- as if that wasn't enough, in-and-of itself, O most cruel coconut! -- crushing her brain with a loud and liquidy "squish." Her affectionate father (thirtythree), a balding gentleman, then took the opportunity to bathe his palms in the blood (for, by all accounts, there was quite a lot of it, as the lovely you well wellknows) and leapt into the lineless sea, drowning himself while the cruiseship's public-address system faithfully broadcast Abba's "Dancing Queen." It was a cloudy day. Oh! the impetuousness of youth! 62 62 62

# Inverted Bitch Fister

an interview with Lord Hellfuck

Ray Miller and Jon Konrath

Even if you've never heard the thunderous Black Metal assault of their last 4 CDs ([Fuck the Christ](#), [Satanic & Insane](#), [Jesus Cunt](#), [Superwhore](#), and [Raping the Mother of Dog](#)), you've probably heard of the exploits of this band within the underground. Although their releases haven't been as popular in the United States, their church-burning, fire-breathing, goat-fucking, nun-sodomizing, schoolgirl-violating tactics have started to appear in the headlines of major media. And of course, T-shirts featuring their logo, an H.R. Giger painting entitled "vomit chamber chainsaw fuck factory" have been popping up on the backs of true Black Metal supporters across the globe. I stepped off the plane in the Oslo, Norway, international airport, thinking how lucky I am that Juggernuat can afford to send its reporters all over the world. After a long flight from Chicago to Copenhagen, I met with Jon "Psycho" Konrath, who just finished research for his book on amputee sex slaves in the foreign Soviet regime. No stranger to the fringe areas of Satanism, ritual vomitology, and necrophilial bestiality, I invited along Psycho to help me with this interview.

Hellfuck stood waiting for us at the gate. Wearing almost seven feet of black leather, spikes, and a ripped up NUCLEAR WINTER t-shirt, he donned full corpse-paint right there in the airport. He had what appeared to be a nun with him, on all fours, a choker-chain around her slim neck, her habit torn and faded. "Hail Lord Hellfuck!" she yelled when he knocked his leather boot into her head. He made the sign of evil, and we were off to Burger King, home of the Satanic Whopper. I stayed with Lord Hellfuck and his harem for only two days, but in that time I feel I came to know him, and the other members of IBF: Count Deathking, Jesus Hitler, and Cunt Rapist. The following interview with Lord Hellfuck is one of pure blasphemy, and as such is not intended for the mentally weak, nor those who are not true followers of the left hand path.

How is work going on the new album, and has a name been decided for it?

Lord Hellfuck: Nearly all the songs have been written, but Jesus Hitler still needs to come up with guitar leads. We decided not to let him improvise in the studio anymore, since I'm sure you know that he snuck a kazoo into some of the songs on [Raping the Mother of Dog](#). That's what I get for using half of our advance money for crack. I should have used it all, like we did on the first three CDs, then Hitler couldn't have afforded a kazoo. Always remember kids: Do all the drugs you can, send us your money and sisters, then kill yourselves! DO IT NOW! A title for the new album... I want to call it [Satan Says Suck My Dick](#), but the other guys like [Necro-anal Vomit Bitches in the Service of Lucifer](#). We have some really pretty artwork for that title. I'm not sure which one we'll use. Maybe we can put it out under both titles, and with different covers, so all our fans have to buy it twice. We'd get more cash then, and we all like more cash.

Speaking of more cash, is it true that the new album will have exclusive tracks on every different format?

LH: Of course. It will be available on the standard LP, cassette, CD, DVD-ROM, and

also on MiniDisc, and as a four 3" CD mini-box set. The box set is for Japan only, 'cause they'll spend the fucking extra money on it! If all goes according to plan, the LP will have 8 tracks, the cassette 8 (but one will be different from the LP), the CD 7 (but with 2 songs unique to it!), the MiniDisc 11 (with 4 tracks not found elsewhere - Sony's paying us to promote growth in the MiniDisc market, since we are the #1 Black Metal band on Satan's Earth! Hail Sony! I mean Satan!). The 3" CD set will have all the tracks from all the other formats, except 1 from the MiniDisc, and will also have 1 bonus live version of our hit "Mother Mary's Piss Enema"). The DVD-ROM will contain videos for "Unholy Endoscopy of the Penile Death Probe" and "Satanic Deathfuck of UnGod's Creation," and an interactive game called "Grogan Necropolis in the Piss Catheter of Death," where you have to search a planet based loosely on the Phillip K. Dick speculative fiction novel Man in the High Castle, collecting unholy artifacts of death and forming a colostomy gateway to Hell and the 9 shadows of the afterworld. We want everyone to be forced to buy all the different formats to get all the songs on this album. It is by the command of Lucifer, and the truly evil will understand and buy them all without question.

INVERTED BITCH FISTER are listed as influences by nearly every band I've interviewed. How does that make you feel, and who are your influences?

LH: There are other bands? Certainly none as truly evil as we. You know of course that I have only been out of jail for a few months. I killed my dog. He was walking backwards, and I remembered that dog backwards is god, so he had to be exterminated. Any band who is influenced by us is clearly smart, since all bands should sound like us! Do not form your own sound or style! You must sound like us or you are not truly evil! As for our inspirations: We thank no one but ourselves. We hate you all.

So you listen to no bands other than your own?

LH: I see what you're getting at. My NUCLEAR WINTER shirt. Well, they are the exception to the rule. I have listened to them since their first rehearsal tape way back in 1984, but they have not influenced me, or the other members of IBF. Except that we also hate god, rape nuns, wear corpsepaint, read the same comic books, play in the exact same style, drink the same drinks, and use the same kind of equipment. I even sing kind of the same way. But that's not them influencing us, it just happens that they played in the style we now do. Pure chance that they are my second favorite band, next to IBF, of course. No other band is as 100% Metal as us or NUCLEAR WINTER. Hail Necrowarlord!

A few years ago, the band was involved with a lawsuit in France, about those two boys killing themselves. For those who are not familiar with that infamous case, tell us about it and what happened.

LH: Never be so bold as to tell Lord Hellfuck what to do!

*(At this point, Hellfuck pointed at me, and his dozen-or-so slave-girls jumped me and Psycho. After a brief attempt to get away I had a desperate idea, and yelled "It was a question!" We were released. Psycho seemed to have enjoyed getting his ass kicked.)*

LH: I did not understand it as a question. My English is perfect, though, so I'm not sure what happened. Well, about the case in question: We played some shows in France in support of our Jesus Cunt, Superwhore album, and at one of them two of our fans did as they were told and killed themselves. It happened during the song "Fucking Commit

Suicide.” The two of them jumped up on stage, knives in hand. I’m not utterly clear on what happened next, since I had to run behind the drum riser to check on something, but after the song was over, they were on stage with their necks slit. I pulled some slut up on stage and fucked her ass during the next song, using the kid’s blood as lube. The cops showed up soon thereafter, and took us all to jail. To this day, I can’t figure out how they thought any of that was our fault. It’s not like Count Deathking gave the kids one of his knives! And despite what that bitch says, I know she really wanted it in the ass! Anyway, we eventually skipped the country, and came home. That’s the last time I go to France. They must fucking like god over there, or something.

What do you do outside of the band?

LH: Rape, murder, star in porno movies. That sort of thing. Well, I mention rape a lot, but the real fact is that a lot of the women I fuck actually want it. It’s just more evil to say that I rape them. Other than that I spend all my time sleeping. INVERTED BITCH FISTER never practices, unless we have a tour coming up, or we’re going to record soon. Fuck, even then, we only run through the songs once or twice to get the basic idea of them, and then I wing it. I can’t let the other guys just make it up as they go along anymore, due to the aforementioned kazoo incident. So they’ve got to practice 3, maybe 4 times before we record.

Speaking of recording, will you use Treblinka Studio again?

LH: Yeah, they understand us there. They know we want to - nay, have to - sound like shit. So we spend most of our advance money on booze and heroin, and go in to Treblinka with \$50 and some sluts. That gets us a day of studio time, on 4 analog tracks. It’s more than we need, really.

Most bands have line up changes all the time, but not IFB. In nearly 13 years together, your line up has never changed. What’s the secret?

LH: The original IBF line up has not changed, but the spirits of both Deathking and Cunt Rapist have possessed several physical shells in the last decade. When their current bodies can no longer hold their dark powers, we invoke the ancient rituals and their essences are vomited into new shells. We fucked it up one time, and for almost six hours, Cunt’s mind was in the body of a neighborhood cat that had gotten a little too close to our unhallowed ground.

Your first CD, Fuck the Christ, came out in 1993, but you said the band has been around for 13 years. Did you use a different format before then?

LH: We have always been the most evil and blasphemous Satanic Black Metal band around, but from 1991 to 1993, the band’s name was PREMATURE AUTOPSY and we recorded two demos at Sunlight Studios, in Sweden. From 1987 to 1991 the band was based in the San Francisco Bay Area and was called XtremiX. Prior to 1987, we were called LiXXX and opened for WARRANT on an extended European tour. However, despite the spandex, leather pants, women’s makeup, and power ballads, we have always been a true and Satanic band in all other aspects.

Do you think that Black Metal has become trendy since its recent resurgence of popularity?

LH: We have always been 100% true evil Satanic Black Metal!

I mean are other bands trying to cash in on the current popularity of Black Metal?

LH: Why do you keep asking about other bands? What fucking other bands are there?

CRADLE OF FILTH, EMPEROR, the newly reformed VENOM. There are dozens of Black Metal bands...

LH: Pussies, the whole lot of them. I know CRADLE OF FILTH. They are little English girls who try to be tough. Did I ever tell you how I fucked their singer Dani up the ass? He squealed like a bitch! And EMPEROR? They are from here in Norway, right?

Yes...

LH: As I thought. We don't have anything bad to say about them.

Were you involved in the murder of Euronymous?

LH: What?

He was in the band MAYHEM, remember?

LH: That's right. Yeah, I killed that guy. Jesus Hitler and I went to see MAYHEM play several years ago. It was terrible. Some idiot was breathing from a ziplock bag on stage before he'd sing. Those guys were the biggest gay homosexuals I've ever seen.

So you don't get along with the other bands from Norway?

LH: You will stop talking about other bands now and concentrate this interview on me and INVERTED BITCH FISTER, or one of my bitches will invert you and fist your asshole!

I think I was about finished anyway, but before I wrap this up, I have two more questions.

LH: Deliver them with all possible haste. "Friends" will be starting in a few moments.

Okay. What merchandice do you have available, and how does one go about contacting the band?

LH: Nothing is available directly through us, but feel free to send your money, panties, or rare gems to us anyway. All truly evil record stores should carry all of our merch. If they don't have INVERTED BITCH FISTER stuff, burn the place to the fucking ground and rape someone. Then try a different store. Keep burning and raping until you find an evil store. You can steal our merch from the store if you want, since they already paid us for it! But be sure to rape someone on the way out, or at least kill, or maim! Break one of the ten commandments every day! You'll feel good and get to cum a lot, too! It's fun being bad! As for contacting us, we'll find you.

Finally, do you have any advice for new bands?

LH: As I said before, be as much like INVERTED BITCH FISTER as possible. We are the supreme band. We are supremely evil. We fuck the supreme sluts. Kill yourselves for us - but send us your money first. We need it to continue the war against all good things, and for Burger King. If anyone is thinking of starting a band, don't do it! Why bother? INVERTED BITCH FISTER already exists, so you'll never be the best. In fact, you'll never be anything! Give up! Just remember to buy our CDs and come to our shows with your girlfriends, so we can gang vomit-rape them. Fucking commit suicide

for IBF!!!

And with that my interview was over. Psycho and I hitchiked back to the airport and were on our plane back to the USA and Juggernaut corporate headquarters, where ripple and Asian hookers awaited us.

### **IBF line up:**

Lord Hellfuck - vocals, bass & nun-sodomy  
Count Deathking - guitar & scat-porn  
Jesus Hitler - guitar & Zyklon-B canister  
Cunt Rapist - drums & fucking 'em wether they like it or not

### **IBF Discography:**

#### **Full-length releases:**

Fuck the Christ - CD, LP, cassette, 8-track

Satanic & Insane - CD, LP, 2 10" EP set, cassette

Jesus Cunt, Superwhore - CD, LP, picture disc LP, cassette

Raping the Mother of Dog - CD, LP, 4 7" EP box set, cassette, DCC, MiniDisc

As yet unnamed fifth album... - CD, LP, cassette, MiniDisc, DVD-Rom, four 3" microCD box set (Japan only)

#### **EPs and singles:**

Mother Mary's Piss Enema - 7" EP, 7" picture disc, 12" dance mix, 12" etched picture disc

Corpse Rapist - 12" EP, CD EP, 3" picture microCD

Unholy Endoscopy of the Penile Death Probe - 7" EP, 10" picture disc (with poster), CD single, CD-Rom single

Masticated Vagina - cassette single, 7" EP, 3" microCD, 2 flexidisc set

Satanic Deathfuck of UnGod's Creation - cassette EP, 12" EP, picture CD EP, CD-Rom EP, 2 7" box set (with postcards), DCC EP, MiniDisc EP (Japan only)

Fucking Commit Suicide - cassette single, 7" EP, 7" picture EP, 3" microCD, 3" microCD signed and numbered limited edition (limited to 10,000), MiniDisc EP (Japan only)

Sticking Our Fists Up Their Cunts Live - 12" EP, 2 10" etched Box set, glow in the dark CD EP, 2 3" picture microCD box set, Mini Disc EP (Japan only)

## The Nasty Astronaut

Greggory Moore

If one were to achieve the proper vantage point at the proper time, one would be able to see Col. Robert William Stevenson shaking his fist at the world. This was confirmed by the crew of the space shuttle *Mercy* over twenty years ago as they maneuvered to dock with the United States' second space station, *Skylab Revisited*. The mission did not have a scientific purpose, but was one of what had already been a triannual tradition for the better part of a decade. In all of that time, Col. Stevenson had been stranded in space, forever orbiting his former home planet of Earth, never to return.

\* \* \*

It began some two years after the completion of *Skylab Revisited*, a space station built

in reaction to Russia's nascent orbital monopoly and in the likeness of that country's hugely successful *Mir* line. There had been four successful sorties to *SR* when Stevenson's turn came. He was to stay on the station indefinitely while implementing some top secret improvements in satellite communications for the military. The projected duration of the mission was four to six months.

Approximately two months into the mission, Stevenson began to complain of a certain light-headedness which he experienced in tandem with a recurring headache. After this condition had persisted for nearly a month, Mission Control became concerned. They began to re-evaluate Stevenson's medical information, and eventually, via various virtual simulations, found an extremely discomfiting bit of news. They had known all along that while Stevenson had a common enough type of blood -- B positive -- his red cell count was high enough to make his blood .074% more dense than is normal. They had also known that, as a child, Stevenson had suffered from an occasional minor ringing in his right ear. What they had not realized was that this had been due not to the garden variety of ailments suffered by a preponderance of children but to a particular misalignment of bone and cartilage. In itself, it was harmless. But, from playing various computer scenarios, NASA learned the cause of Stevenson's present problem. Apparently, the persistent lack of gravitation, when combined with the aforementioned factors, had created the particular ailment from which Stevenson was now suffering. They dubbed it *vascular vestibular phlegmatisis* in effect, "thick ear blood." Because of the particular irregularity of Stevenson's right ear and the higher density of his blood, it appeared that, over time, the blood flow to and from the right side of Stevenson's brain had been slightly slowed. While it seemed that this condition would persist for the duration of Stevenson's habitation in anti-gravity, it did not appear that the condition would worsen. However, further computer projections revealed a more alarming problem. It was determined that there was an 85% likelihood that once Stevenson was returned to a gravitated state, even if only gradually, the blood flow in his brain's right hemisphere would be stalled for a trice -- but a trice just long enough to begin a succession of bursting blood vessels in Stevenson's brain that would finally result in an agonizing death.

It was a week before NASA determined that their data was indisputable, another before they communicated this information to Stevenson. For his part, Stevenson handled the news with the stoicism one might expect from a career military man, saying that he knew of the inherent risks when he had volunteered for space flight. He told them that he would gladly complete his assignment and then brave the return, come what may. However, the lawyers and public relations personnel for NASA did not appreciate such courage. In a convocation featuring representatives from the upper echelons of NASA, the federal government, and the military, the *real* dangers of bringing Stevenson back to Earth were discussed. It seemed that while the public had forgotten the three US astronauts that had long-ago died in an oxygen fire, had never cared about the number of Soviet cosmonauts who had perished (no one at the meeting had the exact figure handy), and had felt a renewed interest in the space program in the early 1990s thanks to the film "Apollo 13" (which smothered a story of near disaster with Hollywood's formulaic "triumph of the human spirit" rigmarole. "If those idiots knew the *real* story!" one department head exclaimed to the amusement of all present.), they could not seem to forget the televised image of the *Challenger* explosion of 1986. "If you fuckers hadn't had to have that fucking school-teacher, we'd have been fine!" yelled a top lawyer at a top PR person. No use in squabbling, gentlemen, the die has been cast; and all agreed that NASA, always over-budget and playing catch-up to the Russians, could

not afford another embarrassment -- even if it was only one astronaut. No, they reasoned, he must stay in space.

NASA hoped that Stevenson would face life as well as he had faced death and that they could spin this *contretemps* as a “triumph [etc.]” story that was so popular with the general public. (“If Ron Howard were still alive, he could make the movie!” one eager young trainee was said to effuse.) However, Stevenson did not meet this eventuality with the same *aplomb*. “What are you talking about?” he asked initially. “I’m willing to die for my country, but I’m coming back.” No, Col. Stevenson. No, you’re not.

\* \* \*

The first morning after the news, NASA sent along the usual wake-up call song-of-the-day to Stevenson. Although perhaps only an unfortunate coincidence, the insensitivity and bad taste of playing Woodstock-era pop standard “Love the One You’re With” to an isolated and lonely astronaut cannot be denied. The news had not yet been made public, but the wake-up was carried live on early-morning CNN and various cable channels. The music began, a live feed of the inside of the space station being broadcast to an estimated twelve million homes across the country. A moaning was heard. Then the soon-to-be unmistakable and world-famous voice of Robert Stevenson rained down through the atmosphere: “What is that: Crosby, Stills, and Nash? Don’t play that crap! ARE YOU TRYING TO DRIVE ME CRAZY?!! FUCK YOU! DON’T EVER WAKE ME UP AGAIN!”

Things degenerated more quickly than any computer simulation could have predicted. Stevenson, being a communications expert, had set up the first webpage in space. Foreseeing that space travel -- at least on an orbital level -- would one day be routine, NASA had anticipated that extra-atmospheric communication must be made equally routine. Establishing the Orbital Weblink was the first step down this path; and Stevenson would be its trailblazer. That first step would be simple: Earth-bound, computer-friendly astrophiles would be able to e-mail messages to and receive replies from Stevenson (as well as have access to various graphics, a FAQ, etc.) while he orbited above them and with as much ease as they enjoyed in communicating with any of their other Internet pen pals. It turned out that since NASA had not anticipated the severity of Stevenson’s reaction, they had not taken the proper steps to sever this communication in a timely manner. Immediately, news of Stevenson’s predicament was known worldwide. Before NASA could react, Stevenson had retained legal representation and had filed suit against NASA for negligence. It was then that NASA added cyberspace to the areas in which Stevenson was isolated; but it was too late. By now Stevenson websites and chat rooms had sprung up across the WWW and Stevenson’s sudden silence was correctly attributed to NASA by the ever-growing number of people following his story closely. The ACLU joined Stevenson’s attorney in taking action against NASA, claiming that this was a clear violation of Stevenson’s First Amendment rights; and that unless they could prove he was actually betraying confidential military information (which he had not done), they’d better restore his Net access, but quick! NASA’s attorneys knew that NASA had no legal leg to stand on here, and Stevenson was again among us, in mind if not in body.

He became an international sensation. Fan clubs sprang up, even cultish churches of which he was proclaimed head -- if not a prophet or a god. The largest of these, the AstroBobs, soon boasted a worldwide membership of twenty-three million. For his part, Stevenson took an unintended hand in his own fame. As noted above, Stevenson did not take the news of his orbital perpetuity well. In fact, this permanent state of affairs gave rise to an ever-increasing amount of venom in Stevenson’s communication

with his lost world. By the time of the first *Mercy* mission to replenish his provisions (food, toiletries, etc.), he was unwilling to associate with the visiting crew. By the second, he met them in his now-permanent living quarters with clenched fists. Unfortunately for NASA, this battle royal was carried live by CNN, complete with Stevenson's rantings. At one point, he could clearly be heard to scream, "YOU NEVER COME INTO MY HOUSE AGAIN! YOU BRING ME FOOD AND THEN YOU GO BACK TO FUCKING EARTH!!!" As the crew retreated from Stevenson's assault, he broke into a sort of song: "You goddamn cunt cunties / You little cuntbag cunts." (Although it may be only coincidental, perhaps it is worth noting that this particular crew was an all female one.) While the majority of his words did not make it past the delay (set up by NASA since the Stephen Stills (mistakenly attributed by Stevenson to CSN)/wake-up incident), the consensus is that the fisticuffs and floating chase scene is rivalled only by the finest moments of the short-lived 1990s series "Twin Peaks" as the most surreal spectacle in television history.

\* \* \*

He persevered. NASA medical experts originally projected that, even with proper exercise, the bone deterioration and blood loss experienced by all those subjected to extended periods without gravity would kill Stevenson within seven years ("That's seven years *or less*, right?" a nervous liaison queried. "Like, it could be, say, six months?"). But Stevenson outlived their predictions, just as he has outlived many of the predictors themselves. And for the entirety of Col. Robert Stevenson's misadventure, I have followed his life: every word, every detail. You see, I've taken such an interest in Robert because he was my closest and dearest friend. We grew up together on the same cul-de-sac, we played on the same Little League baseball teams, attended the same all-boys prep school. We learned to drive together, first experienced sex at the same time, and we went to the senior prom together; and I have only the fondest memories of him. I also remember that from the day he learned of the existence of men who went into space, he desired to be among their number. No one was more supportive of him than I when he decided to forsake college for the Air Force; and no one happier or more proud when he was accepted into NASA. And as you might expect, no one was more crushed by the news of his final assignment than I. We stayed in touch at first. I was the attorney retained by Bob (my dear Bob) of whom I wrote earlier, and it is I who have done the most to help secure his place in history, I who have made him exist in this realm as much as is possible considering his bodily absence from it. Eventually, his psyche or patience deteriorated, and my only communiqué from him consisted of a single, four-word sequence:

you are who with

But I do not blame him, and do not take it personally. A quarter-century of light-headedness and headaches while being worshipped as a demigod from a distance is apt to do strange things to a person, no matter how perdurable and dedicated he may be. Now, I must be content to continue my friendship with him in memory and in the love I will always feel for him. Every now and then, though, when the night is perfectly clear, I'll take my telescope into the backyard and find my friend floating above the world. And sometimes, in those moments in which I miss him the most, I feel I can almost see his tiny, shaking fist moving across the sky.

# Dead But Dreaming

By Ray Miller

Jon slowly lifts his head and looks around. Unsure of where he is and how he got there, he tries to think about the previous night. Nothing. His mind is horribly empty. Suddenly, he sits upright in the unfamiliar bed, and she enters the room. *Rachel*, he thinks.

"Good morning, Jon." Rachel purrs as she climbs into bed beside him.

Confused and unable to make sense of what is going on, Jon manages a quiet, "Uhh, yeah."

*I'm naked. She's naked. This is cool. I wish I could remember who she is.* Jon's thoughts are interrupted as Rachel reaches under the covers and wraps her strong fingers around his increasingly erect penis. *I'll worry about my memories later.*

When Jon awakens the next time, he discovers that he is alone. There is a note on the table, next to the bed, from Rachel, that reads: "Jon, I had to run some errands. I'll be back in time to fix you dinner. I'm making your favorite. Love, Rachel. "

*My favorite*, Jon thinks, *what's that?* Getting up, Jon decides to look around and try to jog his memory, but nothing seems to work. On the table, there are holograms of Rachel and him. Carefully, Jon picks one up, the three dimensional image shimmering in the artificial light. Jon is crying as he sets it back on the table. *I can't remember my life...* He wanders off toward the bathroom to shower. *How do I know where the bathroom is? I wish Rachel would come back.*

Jon quickly showers and dries off. He opens the bathroom door to discover Rachel. "Here Jon," Her permanent smile shining like the sun, "I brought your favorite suit for you."

"Uhh, thanks, Rachel."

He watches her walk back towards the kitchen. *She's beautiful.*

"When would you like to eat, Jon?"

"Anytime you say is fine."

"All right, how about in an hour? That will still give us plenty of time to get downtown."

*Downtown?* "What's going on downtown?" Jon stares into the empty hallway.

"Your party, silly. You didn't forget, did you?"

"No." *What the Hell is going on? What party?* Suddenly Jon is more than a little scared.

Dinner was fantastic. And Jon is starrng across the table at Rachel as she quietly rises and takes the dishes away. *Something here is not right*, Jon thinks and gets up to wash his hands.

"Jon, I want this night to be perfect for you. Tell me how I can make sure that it is."

Reluctant to answer, for fear of giving away his secret memory loss, Jon simply says, "Just be yourself." For which he is rewarded with a passionate kiss, and a whisper telling him that there is no time to make love now, but as soon as they return from the party, no force on earth will stop her from pleasing him.

*This is cool, but weird. Hopefully, someone at the party will be familiar. Maybe I should tell Rachel. I wouldn't have to say I don't remember her, just everything else. I don't*

want her to get mad. She is so perfect. And for a split second, Jon has a strange feeling. Like something is very wrong. Like someone is watching him. It passes as quickly as it came and like the rest of his memory, it fades into nothingness.

They arrive at the party, which was already very crowded, and the guests stop talking and begin to applaud their entrance. *What the Hell?*

A tall black man in a tuxedo comes over to Jon and Rachel. "Rachel. Always a pleasure." Sticking his hand out to a bewildered Jon, "And Jon, you old dog, it's great to see you again." The handshake becomes a brotherly hug.

"You too," *Mike.* "Mike." *How did I know that? Maybe my memory is coming back! I can't seem to remember anything else about him, though...* "What's that?" Responds Jon to Mike's ignored question.

"I said, does Nick know you're finally here?"

"I don't think so. I haven't seen him." *Not that I'd know him if I did...*

"Well, come on. Rachel if you will excuse us for a moment. Guy stuff."

"Of course, Mike. I'll go get something to drink. Jon, what do you want? A Pepsi?"

"Yeah, that's fine. Thanks." *Who is Nick? Nothing here looks familiar at all. And what is this party for anyway? I wonder if it's my birthday? I must be famous to have this many people at my birthday party.*

As Jon and Mike cross the huge room, people pat Jon on the back and congratulate him. For what, he has no idea. Finally, after wading through the plethora of unknown friends, they finally make it to where a short Mexican man is standing. Jon knows him to be Nick, but remembers nothing else. Nick immediately rushes up to Jon and puts his arm around him. "Jon, thank God you're all right! Brother, it's great to see you again."

*All right? What happened to me?* "Well, it's great to see you too, Nick."

Nick turns to face Mike, his arm still around Jon, who thinks it has been there a little too long. "What's up, Mike?"

"Nothing. Just glad to have Jon back with us." Mike turns and smiles at Jon.

This is spooky.

"You know," Starts Nick, "it was really stupid to test the Life Simulator on yourself."

Mike jumps into the conversation, "Things could have turned out a lot worse. Just don't try anything that crazy again, OK Jon?"

Breaking free from Nick's arm, Jon turns to face the two men. *Life Simulator? I've got to find Rachel and get out of here.* "Guys, I'm still not feeling too well. I think maybe it is too soon after what happened. All the excitement and all. Maybe I had better go."

Suddenly Rachel is there. She hands Jon a glass of Pepsi. "Jon, you look tired. Maybe we're pushing your recovery too fast."

Mike leans toward Jon a little and puts his hand on his shoulder. "Jon, there is no need to prove how tough you are. If you want to go, that's no problem. Everyone understands and I'm sure they're all just glad to see that you are all right."

"No one expected you to stay very long anyway." Says Nick with obvious concern. "We all know what you've been through."

*Apparently everyone except me.* Jon thinks as he says his good-bys to Nick and Mike. The crowd seems sad to see them leave, but everyone agrees that it is for the best.

It's cold outside, but a hover-cab shows up right away. Silently, they get inside and Rachel leans forward and tells the driver: "414 South Mitchell, please."

"Nice neighborhood, Miss." And as smooth as a thought, they are on their way.  
"Rachel, I need to talk to you." Jon looks over at her. Black hair falling in loose curls well past her shoulders. Her dark eyes showing a deep concern. *She is too perfect. Something is not right here.*

"What's wrong, Jon. I'm sorry if it was something I did."

"No. That's not it at all. It's me." Pausing to collect his thoughts, Jon again suddenly has the feeling that something is terribly wrong, but like before, it quickly passes and he continues.

"Rachel, I... I'm not sure how to say this..."

She leans over and wraps Jon in her arms. "No matter what it is, you can tell me. I love you."

"I... I can't remember anything that happened before today."

"What? Jon! Oh my God! Why didn't you tell me sooner? Do you remember me? What about your friends?"

Still in Rachel's embrace, Jon feels secure and confident the she will be able to handle the truth. "I don't remember anything. Not you. Not Nick and not Mike. Everyone at the party was a stranger to me."

"But you knew my name... And..."

"I somehow just know people's names when I look at them. I can't explain it."

Rachel leans away from Jon a little, but still holds him. "That must be a good sign. Maybe your memory is coming back. I was told that you might suffer some memory loss, but I thought everything was fine."

"Tell me about the accident. It might help to restore my memories."

The cab driver slows the hover-cab and turns to face the couple, "You said 414 South, right?"

Without turning away from Jon, Rachel answers the driver, and he announces that they have arrived. Rachel pays the fare and she and Jon walk silently into her apartment. Jon sits on the couch and Rachel snuggles up beside him. "Jon, do you really want to hear about your accident?"

"Yes."

"All right, let me know if anything sounds familiar. What do you remember?"

"Nothing before I woke up today."

"Maybe I should get your doctor..."

"Please tell me about the accident first."

Rachel moves her hair out of her eyes and sighs. "OK. You were doing research on Virtual Reality and are more or less the leader in the field. Your experiments were supposed to prove that it would be possible to construct an artificial reality, or Life Simulation, that would be linked with the user's brain, via a data-link at the base of the skull. Does any of this sound familiar at all?"

"Not in the least. But it's very interesting. Now, what about the accident?"

"I'm getting to that. Be patient. Anyway, a data-link is not an uncommon thing, and you already had one installed several years ago." Rachel takes Jon's hand and places it on the back of his head, where it connects with his spine. "Feel it?"

It feels like a strange rash under Jon's fingers and he wonders if skin has grown over it and if the skin would have to be removed before it could be used, but he does not ask. "Yes, I feel it."

"You theorized that since data could be inputted directly to the brain, that it should be possible to input enough data to create a virtual reality. All contact with the real world would have to be cut off, so you constructed a chamber that is, what did you

call it?"

"Reality Sealed." Says Jon, without thinking. Suddenly, he is shocked that he remembered the term. "Maybe this *is* helping. I can't remember anything else, but I knew *that*."

Rachel kisses his cheek. "Your memory will come back. It must be temporary, because yesterday you could remember everything."

"Really?" *This is strange*, thinks Jon. *Really strange*. "What about the accident?"

"Well, you tested the chamber and it apparently removed all outside stimuli.

And so you wrote a computer program that would feed a simulated reality directly into your brain. I guess something went wrong. You were supposed to experience a very simple scene. Maybe like taking a shower or something. It should have only taken a few minutes, but you were pulled from the chamber an hour later in a coma. You woke up two weeks ago and your memory was fine until - I guess when you woke up today?"

"Yes, this morning." Jon is worried. *A direct feed into my brain? Virtual Reality?*

*This sounds like a movie*. "Do you remember anything else?"

Rachel sits back, thinking. "You said that the program you wrote to drive the Life Simulator was self modifying. That it would be like a dream and adapt to each user by accessing their memories. The doctors think that something may have happened to you while it accessed your memories. I guess that's what happened." She rises and walks to the picture-phone and says into the screen, "Doctor Konrath, please." The screen lights up as the connection is made. Turning back to Jon, she smiles. "Everything will be fine. Dr. Konrath will know how to help."

Jon is visibly shaken, but attempts to hide his fear. *I don't remember the experiment. I don't remember my life. What if I am still in the Virtual Reality chamber? What if this is some fantasy created by an over active computer program? Rachel is almost too perfect for words. And whenever I needed a name or term, it just came to me. No. That's crazy. I could tell if this was real or not. I can feel things... But I guess that would be the whole idea of Virtual Reality.* And for the third time, Jon feels as if something is horribly wrong and that someone is watching him. This time, however, the feeling stays with him. He closes his eyes and imagines himself floating in a womb-like chamber, with tubes to feed him and remove his waste, and a network of wires tapped into the base of his skull. Rachel's image blurs as he opens his eyes. Tears cascade down his face and he remembers entering the chamber.

# Possession

Chicago Basil

So the roommate starts explaining to me, during one of his drunken rantings, about how he had in his possession, at one time, four souls... He won three of them on stupid bets, and the fourth was his own - which he apparently doesn't believe he has any more.

Having just taken a course in Property, I explained to him the following:

He has a present possessory interest in the life estate of his own soul. This means he can currently use his soul during and until the expiration of his life, upon which it transfers to the holder of the future interest. Of note, if he commits any voluntary, permissive, or ameliorative waste on the property, he will be liable to the holder of the future interest - more on that later.

He held vested remainders in the future interests of the other three souls he had won, but actually did not "own" them, as he had believed. The "remainder" is the interest (ownership) following the expiration of the estate that comes before it, and this is "vested" because there is no condition that must be met for a possessory interest to take place.

And again, if those holding the present possessory interests of the three souls should commit any waste, they will be liable to the roommate - or, whomever currently holds their future interests. These include: 1. voluntary waste - affirmative action causing harm to the property (for example, depleting its natural resources); 2. permissive waste - inaction, or passive failure to maintain the property; and 3. ameliorative waste - an affirmative action that alters, but increases the value of the property... (these possibilities are better left to your imagination).

The Rule Against Perpetuities does not apply here, since no shifting or skipping executory interests have been established.

The roommate now realizes that this is much more tricky than he had originally believed, and so I've convinced him that he should contact an attorney immediately for further advice.

Disclaimer: I am not an attorney. I am not licensed to practice law in the State of Illinois. I am not offering legal advice.

I have been corrected: Since gambling was illegal in the jurisdictions in which the roommate "won" the additional souls, all the contracts to transfer their future property interests are void. There is also the problem of an "alternative executory interest" by someone/something that may also be making a claim to these souls (or may already have a claim to them), in addition to the roommate, but we won't go into that here.

Please send further corrections, suggestions, advice for the roommate, etc. My only reply, thus far (from Rick in the People's Republic of Santa Clarita, CA), has been: "Basil, you're going to make a lot of money." Yeh, probably, but not as a lawyer...

# Summer Vacation

Larry Falli

I recently applied for a summer position with the Army. The position is law clerk under a JAG Corp attorney, but here's the catch: They may send me anywhere there is an Army installation. I figure with my luck I'll end up in Iraq in a position verging on being overrun by the enemy. I was thinking to myself, "What would I do in a position like that?"

"Captain, I know I'm a civilian, but the Iraqis are 300 yards away. Just give me a gun to defend myself. You have 50 cases of them that are just gonna be confiscated anyway if the Iraqis over-run us."

OK, but I'm only gonna give you one bullet.

You've gotta be fucking kidding me.

Look kid, I can't have civilians running around shooting up the place. It's one bullet or nothing.

Fine, I'll take it.

**Dateline Friday, May 26, 1998.** A report has come in from the gulf that a civilian law clerk has stolen 40 thousand rounds of ammunition, a carton of cigarettes, and a 1978 Datsun. He has driven into the desert yelling, "Remember the Alamo!" The commanding officer on the base where the clerk was working stated, "We're really pissed about the cigarettes."

**NY Times, Saturday, May 27.** It appears an American civilian has killed 500 camels and a dog in Iraqi territory overnight. The pentagon reports the individual is armed and not operating under US command.

**Stars and Stripes, Thursday June 4.** It appears the law clerk, who has been identified as Lawrence Falli, wiped out a platoon of enemy infantry single handedly. All that was found at the ambush cite were enemy bodies, cigarette butts and pages of the 16th edition of the legal Blue Book, known to be the bane of many a law student. General Hamilton's office reports, "This Falli is operating beyond the pale of any standard of human decency. Apparently he urinates on his victims and shoves Blue Book citation exercises into their mouths. He has clearly gone insane."

**London Times, Thursday, June 4.** As reported nearly a week ago, a law student began his own private war against Iraq. Reports indicate that after Falli killed the nearly 500 camels and a dog, enemy operations in that sector dropped off to nothing. A spokesperson for the American Central Intelligence Agency indicated, "Apparently he killed the right dog." A Times reporter encountered Falli deep in the Iraqi desert. When asked by Ian Throatwobblermangrove to comment on the gruesome killing of the animals, Mr. Falli only replied, "I didn't do that," after which he spun his 1970s era Datsun into the desert and drove off. Commenting to the BBC General Hamilton of the American Armed Forces stated, "His hit and run tactics are screwin' up the whole friggin' war. We launch sorties at targets which are burning heaps by the time we get there. Falli is out of control. How can I fight a war when he keeps killing everything? Our press wants pictures of actual kills. Falli just needs to let the military do our job. What's this world coming to when the military can't kill someone 'cuz they're already dead?"

**CNN, Saturday, June 6.** Under heavy small weapons fire and rocket attacks, the law clerk gone berserk drove his Datsun within 6 feet of an Iraqi heavy tank and tossed a flaming bag of . . . is this right? He tossed a flaming bag of human feces on the tank. This afternoon Saddam Hussein issues a decree setting the top priority of the Iraqi military at eliminating the American “jackal” who “Mocks our might.”

**Washington Post, Monday, June 8.** Under pressure from the United Nations citing the Geneva Convention, the President of the United States vowed to assist in bringing Lawrence Falli to justice. A White House aid stated, “We appreciate the enthusiasm of Lawrence Falli, but he has to understand war has to be fought by rules. We can’t have people driving around foreign countries shooting at people... even if we are at war.”

**Radio Free Europe, Tuesday, June 9.** Several reports have come in that a British journalist caught Lawrence Falli, the law clerk gone berserk, on film. The reports say he was fueling his Datsun at an Iraqi oil refinery near Baghdad. When asked to comment on the photo, top American officials remarked, “He follows no rules. Look at him. He’s filling his gas tank and smoking a cigarette. He’s a menace to himself and everything around him.”

**NY Times, Friday, June 12.** Lawrence Falli, the berserk law clerk has pulled his most daring stunt to date. Just south of the northern no-fly zone imposed by the coalition. Falli surfaced on an Iraqi Air Force runway. He drove his infamous Datsun down the runway in what can only be described as “a game of chicken.” Taking off at over 400 miles per hour, the Iraqi pilot, now a POW in British hands, claims Falli drove the Datsun straight at him at an estimated speed near 100 mph. The pilot states that he tried to pull up, but Falli’s car clipped his nose gear, forcing the plane down approximately 300 miles away where the British 14th Division picked the pilot up. In the pilot’s final remarks to the press he stated, “It’s like he didn’t even see me. He lit his cigarette with the car lighter and was tapping the steering wheel like he was listening to the radio--right at me.”

**Wall Street Journal, Monday, June 15.** Tobacco futures are expected to skyrocket today. The Iranian ambassador to the US met with Secretary of Commerce Daley to express concern that the renegade law student, Lawrence Falli may cross the Iraqi frontier in an effort to seize control of the Tigris river valley tobacco fields.

**Houston Chronicle, Wednesday, June 17.** Four hundred Iraqi soldiers were found bound and gagged near the Kuwaiti border this morning, many of them weeping. Those who could talk told of “A crazy American with a gleam in his eye.” Their stories of torture reach from having cigarettes and paperclips jammed into their ears to being beaten on the testicles with a bungee cord. To quote one POW, “the hook fuckin hurts,” though unusual for Iraqis to swear.

**Headline of the Weekly World News, June 15-22.** Lawrence Falli is the Reincarnation of John Wayne.

**NY Times, Monday, June 22.** Peace talks have ground to a halt upon news that the American known as the berserk law clerk has collected an harem of Iraqi women, which he keeps in his secret desert hideout. The Iraqis are concerned for the safety of those women. One member of the harem who was picked up by US Marines told investigators of horrible depraved acts being performed on the women by the law clerk.

Unfortunately she was too dazed from her ordeal to give the location of the secret hide-out. She is now on a Naval Hospital boat listed in serious condition from dehydration and the presence of foreign objects in several body cavities.

**Stars and Stripes, Sunday, June 28.** Lawrence Falli struck again. In what was supposed to be a sneak attack upon a highly fortified Iraqi strong-hold, several teams of alliance forces approached the stronghold without meeting any resistance. Upon reaching their goal they found dozens of dead Iraqis, covered in human filth and Blue Book pages. Many of their fingers had been cut off, and it appears several were tortured to death with a microwave oven. A visibly shaken Marine could only say, "It was disgusting... Yeah, disgusting is the word."

**NY Times, Monday, June 29.** The reign of terror brought upon the Iraqi people may have come to an end early last evening when 2 F-18s destroyed what appeared to be a Datsun in the Iraqi desert.

**AP, Wednesday, July 1.** The reports that Lawrence Falli had been killed were premature. Early this morning a convoy of 101st airborne paratroopers saw a silhouette of a "smoking man" on a distant sand dune. When a detachment went to investigate they found the mutilated bodies of two Iraqi infantry men and a cigarette butt. No departure tracks were left in the sand.

**NY Times, Saturday, July 4.** PEACE

**Chicago Tribune, Monday, July 6.** Local student, Lawrence Falli, known to many as the berserk law clerk surrendered today to coalition forces just north of the Saudi Arabian border. At the time he turned himself in, Falli had in his now severely damaged Datsun, several small arms, a Zippo lighter, a dog, and several hundred photos of dead soldiers, live nude women, and toilet bowls. It is assumed by many Falli will be made to stand trial for war-crimes and crimes against humanity.

**Washington Post, Tuesday, July 7.** In a shocking move President Clinton pardoned the berserk law clerk, Lawrence Falli. Clinton, through an official press release stated, "Not many people fought so long and hard (huh uh huh) in this conflict as my new friend Larry. He did more for the morale of our fighting forces than anyone else. Besides, some of those pictures are a hoot." Mr. Falli's press agent said his client only requests that Seinfeld be put back on the air.

# Dog Tracks

Jon Konrath

“Hey man, you ever been to Arkansas?” he yelled over the sound from the tinny, in-dash speakers. I looked up to see a sign that read ‘Next Exit - Dog Tracks’. “You have been now,” he laughed. “Let’s stop at this gas station and see if any Arkansas state troopers can get us chicks.”

Lars shifted the red CRX into fifth gear, the July night slamming into the windshield at over a hundred miles an hour. He wore a loose hockey jersey and cutoff shorts, dressed down for the heat and the voyage with his parents’ semi-stolen car. They knew he had the car for the weekend, but didn’t know about the few thousand miles we’d be adding to the odometer.

“I think I made it to Houston from Elkhart in 20 hours once,” he said, eyes locked onto the road ahead, free hand jacking his red U of H baseball cap over his short black hair. “But I had my old Cadillac, ‘72, a real beast, got about ten gallons to the mile. Had everything I owned in the back seat. Even with the pedal buried, I could only push 80.” He took a hit from his can of Coke, then belched. “One time me and Eddie fucked two chicks in that car. In Houston, after we saw that Doors film, Val Kilmer. Batman. Eddie had one chick in the back seat, I had one in the front. After a while, we switched. That was the same weekend the car broke down in El Campo and we spent fourteen hours listening to honky tonk music in some redneck bar, until his dad could wire us some money for a water pump...” Lars droned onward, a caffeine-induced rage of endless stories from the man on the wheel.

Hunched in the confines of the sports car’s low-slung interior, I dug through my grey backpack, a familiar companion during roadtrips and daily campus wandering. Books on my two current pursuits, guerilla dating tactics and how to complete your first novel, rode in the top of the pack. My spiral journal, an expensive fountain pen I bought to influence my writing process, and a camera sat underneath, with socks and toiletries for the trip. In the back hatch of the two seater rode my gym bag and his bowling ball case, both filled with enough clothes, towels, and gear to survive the weekend. We also packed half a case of warm Coke and a frozen bottle of Absolut, in case any situation warranted alcohol use or abuse.

The mighty G.G. Allin tore through the speakers. Drink, fight - drink fight and fuck. I pulled out the journal to scrawl a few notes. By daylight, we’d be in Texas, sleeping at his old fraternity, preparing for a weekend of chasing women and jumping bars throughout the Houston scenery. I still thought of the woman in Indiana, the one who perplexed and confused me enough to force Lars to drag me on an insane journey to clear out the madness. Maybe I should call her when we stop for gas, I thought...

‘Somewhere in Arkansas...’ I wrote in the spiral notebook.

A sign said FIREWORKS in giant red letters, next to a neon drawing of a larger than life M-80 with a flickering fuse. I remembered seeing a similar gas station when I went to Florida as a kid. A combination diner, service station, fireworks warehouse, Elvis memorabilia museum, it swarmed with late night truckers and people on the road. The gas gauge on E, Lars pulled up to a free pump and got out to refuel.

“Hey, I’m going to go in and call her,” I said.

“Dude... don’t call her,” he said with a disgusted tone. He put the nozzle in the car and locked down the handle. “You blew it. I don’t know what happened between

you two, but you blew it and unless she's a lesbian, she's sucking someone else's dick by now. Go inside, look at the Elvis stuff, get us some food, and get back here. There will be women tomorrow."

"You're starting to sound like Eddie."

"I didn't say sluts and whores would jump us at the 7-11 when we walked in the door. I just said there would be women, more women than we'd find if we were sitting at home with rented movies. So forget her, and see what kind of fireworks they sell here."

I typed my MCI card number into the pay phone, leaned against the wood-paneled wall and scanned the East Memphis truck stop. Elvis collector's plates galore. The inside of the store looked like a giant Bob Evans with racks of cheap Memphis souvenirs that were made in China and groceries marked up to four times their actual value.

Maybe she'd be home. I thought about when we went to the movies, when I first met her. We didn't spend much time together before it fell apart, but that wasn't the point. She held a little bit of idealness, like an unopened can of ice-cold Coke: red, perfect, and glistening, just like in the commercials. I didn't care that she retreated, and I didn't really care about her. I just wanted the satisfaction of having something so pristine as mine.

On the third ring, the phone picked up. "Hello, is Julie there?" It was the bitch roommate. "It's Jon. No, don't worry about it, just tell her I called. No, I'm in. I think I'm in Arkansas right now. I'll send her an email on Monday. Thanks."

Lars was right. I went to look at fireworks and junk food.

"It's your turn to drive," Larry said. He was washing the car with a squeegee and rancid water from a bucket, leaving dirt lines on the red finish. "Did you get any M-80's?"

"No, but I got a brick of bottle rockets. And here's your Coke." I almost asked him if he liked the kind of chips I bought, but then I remembered he ate anything. I carried the brown bag of explosives and snacks to the driver's side of the car.

"You called her, didn't you?" he asked. "You dumbfuck. Was she out with another guy?"

"Yeah. Well, maybe. I don't know. I don't care. Let's just get the fuck out of here. Women in Houston."

"That's right, women in Houston. Let's try to make it before the sun comes up and I freak out."

Larry tried to sleep as I jettied us through the darkness and thought more about everything. I never understood "thinking about" something as stupid as a woman leaving, but I spent almost all of my life doing it. It had been 8 months since Jessica left, and I still thought about her every day, every time I lay in bed alone. She had been the epitome of perfect to me, wandering into my life on a rainy March day, after everything in life was going wrong. Broke, suicidal, flunking all of my classes, on strike two of a strike three and you're out academic probation, and still feeling sharp chest pain after a long string of dating failures, it all transformed to a life of long walks holding hands, giggling over lunch in run down cafes, writing love letters in my spiral notebooks, and once again waking in bed with someone in my arms.

She left me the night before Halloween. I stood in my bedroom window in shock, drinking beer and watching people stumbling in and out of Halloween parties in

my apartment building. My idea of romance was selling off some of my CDs so I could afford Pizza Hut and a movie. At one time that quaint gesture was cute and romantic, but it didn't last forever. She wanted romance like some kind of Meg Ryan movie. I could only provide it at the level of a Kevin Smith flick.

What do you do after such a perfect relationship falls apart? I went nuts, drank a lot, drove my grades into the ground, and did anything but start over. When I got out of a bad relationship and dumped somebody, I found it easy to immediately go to the next woman and get the bad taste out of my mouth. With Jessica, it was more like getting back on a motorcycle after being in a bike wreck that broke your back and left you in traction for 2 years. Even thinking about other women gave me anxiety attacks. And when all of this calmed down and I did want to start over, months later, I didn't think of women - I started writing, reading, lifting weights, trying to get used to the fact that I might be alone for a long time.

When Julie came along, I thought that loneliness would end. We talked a lot before our first date, and things seemed to click. We went out to eat once - the first date with my new car, an 85 Mustang that formerly belonged to my friend's dead sister. I didn't have a car for almost two years, which wasn't bad while on campus, but it also meant I couldn't face the competition of guys driving BMWs or Acuras or Jeeps. I probably didn't need a car to impress Julie, but it helped. She seemed shy in person, but laughed at my jokes, and kept up with my conversation. With shoulder-length blonde hair and a petite but firm body like a gymnast, she resembled a young Jodie Foster, It's maddening to think about whether or not a woman would be the next one, especially after a year of living like a monk, but I jumped to many conclusions after the first date, and dreamed about something more.

Among the time on the weight bench or at the journal writing, there were many other maybes, many other first dates. There were dates where I was able to reach the end of the evening with some of my self-esteem left, but many more disasters. When my expectations were high, things fell apart, sometimes before the date was even over. I could almost deal with somebody screening their calls and ignoring their email after the first date. But when the woman left before we even ordered the food, I'd vow to give it all up again, and return to my shell for weeks. The longer I "healed", the harder it became to talk to women again.

Julie and I got through the first date, and the second, but I was certain the 'just friends' lecture would come at any minute. And it did. And the day after I decided to never leave my apartment again, Lars showed up with a semi-stolen car and a tank of gas, and told me to pack my shit because we were going to Houston.

I knew it was a woman's bed when I woke. A thick scum coated my brain, and my body forced me to lose consciousness for another 45 minutes. Pink covers, matching sheets, comforter, pillows - it didn't feel like the cheap blanket and worn sheets of my single bed. And it smelled like a woman's bed, like a beautiful, well-consumerized woman slipped between the sheets every night, her skin aromatic with all of the perfumes, powders, lotions and products that beautiful women wear.

Where the fuck was I? Did I get lucky and forget? I checked my underwear - still there. Okay, I wasn't that lucky, but my body felt so sore, I wasn't sure. My mind faded back from the grave, and I remembered hallucinatory snapshots of the night before. driving with Lars. We wanted to get to Houston, but the contingency plan was his girlfriend's in Tennessee. I grabbed my glasses and focused on pictures, teddy bears, sorority knick-knacks, and other strange mementos of my unfamiliar surroundings.

Lars stuck his head in the door, drying his thick, black hair with a pink towel.  
“Hey psycho, you alive?”

“No,” I grumbled. “Where are we? Houston? Mexico?”

“We’re at Carolyn’s, in Knoxville. Come on, get out of bed, we’ve got shit to do, cops to kill, people to sacrifice...”

Tennessee. Oh yeah, Tennessee. We arrived in Knoxville on his girlfriend’s doorstep at 9 in the morning, looking for sleep, food, and something to do for the weekend. I looked at my watch and calculated that at most, I slept 3 hours. Oh well. I threw on a shirt and pants, and emerged from the bedroom into the loft of a split-level apartment. A wrought-iron spiral staircase descended to a living room where Carolyn, a southern belle with long blonde hair and a dark tan, sat on the couch with her roommate Dawn, a more athletic version of the same person, wearing running shorts and a modest T-shirt. They both sat transfixed in front of the TV, cartoons echoing from the console.

“There’s pancakes on the stove,” he yelled from the downstairs bathroom, where he stood in front of a fogged mirror, jamming a q-tip’s near-entire length into his ear and ramming it in and out of the inner canal. “Eat, get a shower, we’re gonna go hit up a bank or something.”

“They’re called hotcakes,” Carolyn said, her thick and proper southern accent correcting Lars’s northern vocabulary.

“Hotcakes, pancakes, coldcakes, fuckcakes, asscakes, whatever. Psycho will eat them. Once I saw him eat a box of lard when we were in a POW camp in Vietnam.”

“That was Cambodia, and it was butter,” I said, grabbing a plate. “Let’s get the show on the road, before I figure out why we aren’t in Texas.”

After a long, hot shower, a stack of pancakes, two Cokes, and an episode of Scooby Doo, I felt much better. The roommate wasn’t a slut, as Lars promised - she looked like some kind of female rugby player. Cute face, nice hair, nice body, but built like a brick shithouse, with a standoffish attitude to match. She probably spends most of her time being abused by football players, I thought.

Lars and Carolyn vanished to the bedroom, leaving Dawn and I on the couch, watching Johnny Quest. I already decided nothing could happen with her; she reminded me too much of someone I had a bad first date with a few years ago. After so many failed dates, my brain caused involuntary reactions to force me away from similar situations, like a hand pulling away from a hot pan. Without Lars dragging me to the bars every weekend, I’d probably never talk to any women.

We both got bored of TV, but instead of talking or doing anything else, she worked on her chemistry homework. Knowing a line like “chemistry, eh?” wouldn’t work, I pulled my spiral notebook from my backpack and started writing. “Knoxville. Lars is either getting laid or taking a nap. I’m doing neither...”

Hours later, Lars, Carolyn, and I walked around downtown Knoxville, looking at the people getting ready to party on a Saturday night. It still seemed weird to me, the casual differences of being in the south. The accent, the use of the word “ma’am”, it almost looked like I stepped in a time machine and wandered into a Time-Life book about the Civil War, except there were new cars, neon lights, and tall buildings everywhere. The crowds looked the same as I’d find at a county fair in Indiana - everyone wearing Oakley shades and windbreakers they got free for collecting Camel Bucks. It reminded me of many Indiana small towns, with the small ma and pa stores and old two-story buildings, but this small town was probably larger than Indianapolis. I felt

disoriented, but it was nicer than being in a computer lab in Bloomington, pissing away my Saturday night in the VGA afterglow.

“Why don’t we just eat here?” Carolyn said. A Hooter’s restaurant stood across the street. With all doors open, we could hear the big-screen TV and U of T crowd from 50 feet away.

“We’ll never get in the door,” said Larry. “I think there’s some kind of game or something. Maybe we should move over a road.”

“Here’s a hamburger place,” I said. “They probably don’t have liquor, but I’m starving.”

Everyone agreed, and we rustled inside the chrome and checkered building. The place looked like an old 50’s diner, with white tile, a chrome bar, a classic jukebox, and neon trim. We grabbed a booth and sat down.

“Jon, why didn’t you ask Dawn to come along?” Carolyn asked.

“Because he’s all fucked up about this girl in Bloomington,” Lars said.

“Yeah, he’s right,” I replied, before Carolyn could slap Lars. “I’ve been in a drought, and I met this new chick, and it didn’t work out. I think she’s a lesbian or something,” I lied.

“Well, you’ll get over her,” she said. “Tonight, there will be parties in my apartment complex. Maybe you’ll meet someone, have some fun.”

“We’ll see. I’m pretty bad about meeting people, especially at parties. About Dawn - she’s too athletic for me. I’d fuck her if I knew she wasn’t only interested in NFL linebackers.”

“She does date a lot of football players, but I think she’s a virgin,” she said.

“I knew this tri-delt that was a virgin,” Lars said. “She was the biggest blow job queen on the whole campus...”

“Hello and welcome to Grease and Grill. Are you ready to order or do you need a few more minutes?”

I looked over at our waitress and saw an angelic woman - young, thin, long red hair, a short skirt and pale skin. I stumbled through my order, and stared at her with disbelief as Lars and Carolyn placed their orders. My mind reeled at this beautiful woman - how could someone of such class, poise and probably intelligence be slinging burgers at the Inbred Inn?

She walked back to the kitchen, and Carolyn started babbling about soda versus cola. “Dude, you should ask her out,” said Lars.

“She was pretty,” Carolyn said. “You never know unless you ask.”

Ask her what? I thought. It’s not like I’m going to convince her to get in Lars’ car and drive 10 hours back to my apartment. But they were right. If I spent the rest of my life passive, nothing would ever happen. My greatest memories with any of my friends were when I ignored common sense and did something stupid. And now was the time. I thought back to the guerilla dating book, and tried to concoct the perfect line - something that didn’t sound like a pickup, and would cater to a well-scholared woman more than the typical bar wench.

“Okay, I’ve got the perfect line,” I told them. “Wait until she comes back with the drinks.”

We joked and fumbled and watched the half-drunk people wander past our window seat in the diner. After a few minutes, the crimson-haired beauty came back to the table with a tray full of Cokes.

“Can I ask you a question? What’s your opinion on the metric system?” Looks of confusion registered on Lars and Carolyn’s faces, for a moment, then I saw Lars

change face and realize the trick I was pulling.

“Well, I...” she slowly formed an answer, with some interest building in her eyes. She smiled, and replied “I guess I haven’t thought about it. I’m an English Lit major.”

“Like Chaucer, Spenser?” I asked.

“No, more like D.H. Lawrence. And you?”

“Creative writing, at Indiana University. I was lit but couldn’t get past Tolstoy.”

“Next time, try Gogol,” she said, with a smile. “I’ve got to get back - it was nice to meet you. Enjoy your visit!”

She wandered back to the kitchen, and we slurped on the drinks.

“You could’ve nailed her, dude,” Lars said. “I didn’t know what the fuck you were starting with, but it was pure balls. You could’ve fucked her right here on the table.”

“It’s like asking ‘what’s your major’, but it doesn’t sound like a pickup line. If you run into a physics major, they start talking formulas. If it’s an apparel merchandising major, they think you’re talking about those MetRx health shakes.”

“Are you going to ask her out?” said Carolyn.

“Yeah, I’m going to ask her for her number and I’m going to drive down here next Tuesday so we can see a movie,” I said sarcastically. “Of course I’m not going to ask her out. I’m just fucking around.”

We ate our dinners, left the redhead a good tip, and I thought more about the whole thing. If she lived in Bloomington, I’d ask her out in a second, or at least I’d try and mess it up, then spend the next six months pulling my hair out, wishing I could’ve exercised my option at the time. But this time, I proved that I could put my balls on the line and not give a fuck what she said to me. Even when she was everything I wanted, or at least a good ten paces in the right direction, I could realize it would be stupid to think of her as my one and only chance. I didn’t have to stay in the cycle anymore.

That night, we went to some half-assed parties, and spent most of Sunday at the Oak Ridge nuclear museum, crawling over and under the DO NOT CROSS barriers to take pictures of ourselves on top of nuclear missiles. The drive back to Indiana took us through Kentucky during some heavy rains, and I fell into a deep sleep for a lot of the trip. I got back to my empty apartment early in the evening, and started my reading for tomorrow’s classes over a TV dinner. No messages were from her, no emails, but I didn’t give it much thought. I ate frozen turkey and thought of the red-haired waitress hundreds of miles away, and how I’d make it through the summer in one piece.

# A Week in the Life

SiD

## <<LAST FRIDAY>>

5pm means that I can leave so I wave goodbye to Frank and Bill and hit the down button on the elevator. 7 floors later I'm bustling out to my car. I slide the metal back into my face, look behind me and soon work is a memory for a few days.

Like most days I head straight home. I take the interstate so it's a totally mind numbing experience. Often I don't remember making the drive at all. Park the car up 3 flights of stairs and into my loft. The first step is always peel off the work clothes and toss them neatly onto the floor somewhere because I'll need them again in a few days.

I should have a single button by my front door that turns on my TV, my stereo, my computer & grabs me a Little Debbie. It'd be nice if a chair came and met me and whisked me over to my futon so I could crash there and open mail. The more I think about it the more I think George Jetson may have had it made.

Nicole calls to say the Southpark marathon is happening at her place tonight because her best friend is back in town. Everyone seemed to think the Southpark marathon was going to happen at their house but I guess Nicole has made the call so its all good. She asks me to bring something to drink and I immediately assume I'm on alcohol patrol (being the only one old enough to purchase such spirits) but instead she just wants Hawaiian Punch or something "punchy". Okay I'm a little confused and wondering if I'm missing some code words here "punchy" hmmm like something that packs a punch? Is her mom listening in?

For once I'm smart enough to set the VCR to record. I put in some tape labeled "Junk Tape" assuming that is safe to record over. Of course my organizational skills being what they are, who knows what was really on it. I hope it wasn't the Alien Autopsy.

After a few hours of jacking around on the computer and munching on everything I can find in the house I slip on some clothes and head out. I've got about an hour to get there so I stop by the Westport Sun Fresh and admire the freaks and pick up a 12 pack of Hawaiian Punch and a 12 pack of Slice just because I need it at home. Lots of people buzzing around on a Friday night picking up snacks and libations for parties. It almost seems like I'm back in a college town and that gets me thinking. Maybe I romanticize college a bit, but it was an awfully wonderful time. My mother tells me 28 was a very good year for her and that if she could live any one of them over again that'd be the one. I remember when my mother was 28. Maybe I'll just look forward to 28 and forget about 21. That's probably healthier.

Okay back in the car and winding my way out to 75th and Quivera. I really have no idea where I a going but I still have plenty of time. A few poor decisions allows me to wind my way through Mission Hills and out to Johnson where I run into the aftermath of High School Football. I didn't go to many of the football games, I wish I could know. I wish I could root root root for the home team and be a cozy part of the community. I don't know if there IS a high school near where I live. I bet kids are bussed somewhere. So much about this town I don't know.

It's about 5 minute to start time and I'm getting a little nervous. Traffic is really slow. It seems cars drive 10-15 miles per hour slower in Kansas than they do in Missouri. I should do some research sometime. I wonder if tickets are more expensive in Kansas or something like that?

I pop in just in time to see the opening credits and pick my shot glass. I'll be tossing back a few Red Creme Sodas tonight and then working my way into the Hawaiian Punch when I'm ready for the rough stuff. We've got some simplified rules to the drinking game but still it seems awful severe the simple act of Kenny getting killed, someone screaming "Oh My God! They killed Kenny!" and rats eating Kenny means I've got to do 7 shots? Line 'em up.

Helen and her friend Sara(h?) show up a few minutes later only to leave and return an hour later with Vince. By this time Aly is lying face down on the carpet, Rita is hyper as hell, I've got a sugar headache that wont quit and Nicole has been pacing herself with "half shots".

A few hours later I'm half dozing contorted on the loveseat listening to Southpark in that wonderful half dream state. Where you hear everything analyze everything but act on nothing. In elementary school summer lasted forever and when the back to school sales started happening it was incredulous. I couldn't imagine going back to school after being away from it for so long. Being determined to make the most of my freedom I used to ride my bike down to Old Craig Park and lie under the big oak trees on the sledding hill overlooking the football fields. The warm sun and cool breezes of late summer would always put me in that wonderful daze.

Awoken with a jar I'm told I can't stay there, the other 6 or so folks have made plans to stay and go out for donuts the next morning but I need to go. I thought for sure I'd be dead tired but the slight nap I had just taken focused and invigorated me more than anything. At a little after 1 I wasn't ready to go home, but I didn't have anywhere to go. Usually that is when I end up driving.

Up Quivera until it dead ends then I wind me way northeast towards a glow on the horizon. It's very quiet, cool and totally peaceful out here. An occasional farmhouse on wooded one and a half lane roads. I drive really slow and listen to 21 Union Square "it had to happen eventually...". It's totally surreal floating up hills and gliding down them and I'm not sure if I'm really driving the car or not. I am forced to remember that I'm not the only person float through the night when I see the stoplights ahead.

The larger road takes me to the interstate where I catch I-435. Driving alone on the interstate at night is a nice experience as well, especially when you're when you're right outside of a town. The tall poles line the roadway and send pools of light downward for your car to strobe through. The curve from I-435 E to 70 E is marvelous. You turn a corner and suddenly Kansas City is towering in front of you all a glow on top of a dark hill of trees. I'm sure that people who live here don't marvel its design but I can't help but be amazed every time I see the city from a distance.

The car seems motionless as I turn off on the Broadway exit though I'm still going nearly twice as fast as the exit ramp suggests. Suggestions. I head up 3 flights of stairs and climb onto my futon. Generally I sleep with music on, but tonight I just want to listen to the noises outside. Do the trains keep me awake at night? Never, their hum lulls me. I do regret not being able to hear the river though. From what I have read in books about

Kansas City however, this spring the river might move too close stirring different regrets altogether.

## <<LAST SATURDAY>>

Cool Saturday mornings are the perfect day not to get out of bed, not that the rest of the days of the week aren't perfect as well, but Saturdays are allowed. I fish under the sides of my futon for my glasses and reach for the remote in time to watch Life with Louie. I need to buy a bed. Sleeping on the futon isn't physically uncomfortable, it's mentally uncomfortable. When it is "time for bed" you should go up to bed. Climb in a bed in a bedroom and go to sleep. When you wake up in the morning you should get out of bed and go downstairs to face the already alert world. Sleeping on a futon in the "living room" doesn't give me the structure that I need. For an anarchist I sure need a lot of structure. Of course the bed may not be the real issue here. I miss coming downstairs and finding my mother up and in the kitchen, I miss getting up and heading down to the cafeteria for brunch, I miss getting up and finding folks sitting on the couch watching cartoons already. I miss people. No bed is really going to be able to fix that for me - not even the Craftmatic adjustable bed.

All morning I putz around on the computer, re-arranging things and trying to find lost web documents and placing them back together so I can throw out my polished image into cyberspace and see what I can reel in with it. Frustrated with slow transfer times and dropped connections I determine I need a new modem and I go off to research standards and trends and use it as an excuse to bug nearly everyone who I can force to listen to my questions. I already know the answers to my questions but whether it be for validation or interaction or consensus hours are wasted.

I start another tape for myself. Kansas City I it's labeled. Slow and folky with Gordon Lightfoot and Dwight Yokam and Bill Monroe and I could give it to someone and let them know how I'm feeling but there is no one who I could share this tape with.

Nicole calls to tell me where tonight's show is and I am offered to give her a ride. I'm going to go buy a modem first then I'll be by to pick her up but something draws my interest and I spend an hour peering through web cams at exotic sandy beaches and at strangers' living rooms. I gotta get my spy cam back to life.

I'll grab a couple of CDs that I hope will impress Nicole and head out the door. Traffic on 35S is always nasty and filled with bad drivers. Tonight I think I've discovered the over anxious Sunday drivers. We've got only a half-hour to spare and I still want to go by Best Buy to pick up the modem. I've got Robyn's employee ID number and store number in one pocket, and a fool proof plan to get a 20% discount in my head. I spend too much time down In Overland Park and sometimes when I close my eyes I see myself zooming past the waves of stores and businesses from 75th to 119th. All a blur and binocular. I never really thought about it until now but I dream with two eyes, I bet that means something.

Aly is there with Nicole and Nicole isn't ready. We're supposed to meet Rita at Subway at 6:45 though we won't make it there until 7:15. I'll apologize, Nicole will pretend we were supposed to be there at 7:15. I bet Rita wishes a bag of dicks on us all. I know I would.

On the way to Best Buy we stop at the Converse outlet; a Kansas City selling feature that I didn't know existed. I'm happy to outfit myself with some harvest purple low top all

stars and Nicole found some blue ones. Aly was just happy to get my discarded purple shoelaces. On to Best Buy for a quick stop and now over to Olathe. Damn if I didn't forget to use my discount. I never would have forgotten to save \$40 four years ago. I wouldn't have 2 months ago. Money bores me. It comes in and it goes out and I always spend what I have anyway and I live no better than I used to but spend 10 times what I did then. Money bores me.

My first trip to Gee Coffee. I went see my friends much tonight, I won't fit in, I will sell a few things but I'll have to work hard for it. I think "Work hard for it" is a more scene-friendly way of saying I lied to the kids to get them to buy my records. Element were noisy and loose and punk rock (except when they add a cello then they are very punk rock). The Distorted are punk rock and '77 and suburban and stupid. The Lowbrows are snazzy and grand. The kids were very young and many of the grrls were dressed up in long skirts, all of them were smoking.

When the last punk rock kid clears out of the club and I've packed up my wares up I find myself cleaning up. Straightening chairs and pillows on the couch and picking up trash. I guess this isn't a collective. I have no reason to help out. I paid to get in like all the kids who paid and unlike all the kids who snuck in the back. No obligation or anything so I stop. I really wanted to clean up but I made myself stop and I don't now why.

Gee Coffee seems a lot more suited to me when no one is there. When it is dark and quiet and there are no kids sitting on the floor smoking or playing pool or playing cool. I think I'm the last one to slip out the back door. Larry is talking to some friends and I sit down and join them. More likely than not I flirt with the grrl who admires my key chain and I'm forced again to say the words "my ex" when discussing my its origin. I'm told it's a very bad thing to say but I'm not quick enough to edit myself before the words happen. It seems everyone is going to IHOP in Overland Park so I round up Nicole and head over in time to find it closing in 5 minutes.

Sitting on the curb, back against the pillar outside of an IHOP at midnight in Overland Park is a lonely experience. Other kids pull up and I try to be their bud and tell them its closed and we're all going to Denny's right up the road but I'm sure they just wondered who the hell I was and why I was telling them where the fiesta had been moved.

I was informed by Nicole that only the geeks were at Denny's so we continued North so I could drop her off at Jim's house. Per usual I was hungry and the talk of IHOP and Denny's certainly didn't curb my appetite (though maybe they should have). I began trying to talk Nicole into going to Otto's with me and I didn't even need to pull out the big guns or big wallet before I got her to agree. Unfortunately Otto's closed at midnight and I had already passed the last Taco Bell and other fast food options before the mid-town stretch back to my loft.

I walked Nicole over to Jim's house and we rang the bell or rather shouted up towards an open window for someone to let Nicole in. Jim came down in high spirits and invited us in. Having no plans and no one to miss me I walked up the stairs behind Eric and Frac and entered the small unfurnished apartment.

By midnight everyone had already worked through their first bottle and was looking for someone to go buy more. A little frightened by the yellow carpet, bothered by the smoke, and awkward in a room of (admittedly nice) strangers, I volunteered if someone would show me where the liquor store was. Armed with pocketfuls of money from dif-

ferent people, a shopping list of alcohols I had never heard of and my driver's license proving I was over the hill I walked over to the liquor store. A six pack of Heineken wasn't too tough to find but Margaritas? I look through wines and whiskeys and finally got up the nerve to ask the guy behind the counter. He pointed but I still didn't spy. He must have thought me a moron by the third time he pointed me to the row of bottles I had been overlooking. I'm sure he gets lots of morons in there though, I'm just another in his night.

Back out and back up so I can be everyone's best friend, but that didn't really happen. Instead I sat on the floor playing Risk with Vince and Diana who confessed to me after a Budweiser, a Heineken, a few swigs of southern comfort and a lasting love affair with the Margaritas that she liked Jim. How could she tell that was exactly what I wanted to hear? I hate drunks. As much as I tried I couldn't convince Lacey to play. Sara(h) was busy listening to Alex confess his love to her, Helen was busy talking to John, Nicole was busy being confessed to by Jim and Eddie was busy confessing his lack of love to Genevieve.

A boring game got even more boring with Diana left and two empires with pretty even armies and territories were left. When the chance came to invite myself along with Helen and John to Chubby's I jumped at it. Vince wouldn't let the game end like that so we rolled for it and I lost. Vince was the victor. All bow down to the mighty Vince whose Risk playing ability remains unfettered. The four of us landed at a standing room only Chubby's around 4am.

The greasy spoon provided me with greasy mushrooms and a par grilled cheese. Tatter tots seemed to be the meal of choice for the discerning types in the know. I think I borrowed money from someone that night but I'm not sure anymore. When you walk out of a restaurant that you walked into when it was day and leave when it is night you are thrown for a bit of a loop. When you walk into a restaurant when it is night and come out when it is light you are smacked about the head leaving few memories intact.

Back to the apartment and back to the lovers' soap operas recreated with the skill of a golden globe winner by Sara(h). Eddie sat on the floor putting together a tape of "family type music" for the stereo at his work. He decided that "Last Caress" by the Misfits qualified as family music because it did talk about (killing) babies and (raping) mothers. Eddie is not quite right.

John tried to keep us all awake by playing torture the passed-out drunk with Jim but I gave up and went to sleep on the floor next to Helen who moved away quite conspicuously. Had snuggling been anything more than my wildest dreams I might have felt rejected. Luckily at 6:30am my thoughts are very few and I feel asleep quickly.

To be continued...

# About the contributors:

Jon Konrath is a writer currently living in Seattle and working as a technical writer. He has written two books, *\_Summer Rain\_* and *\_Rumored to Exist\_*, and has published neither. He's the editor of this zine, writes a regular column for *Metal Curse* zine, and his work appears in other zines. When he's not writing for work or play, he spends his time sleeping, scheming, collecting books and CDs, or pursuing some new hobby that he'll drop in another week or two.

Ray Miller is the editor of *Metal Curse* zine and runs *Cursed Productions*, where he sells and produces Satanic, nun-raping, goat-fucking, evil and vomitous death metal. He's also in the band *Adversary*. He resides in Elkhart, Indiana and spends his free time screaming at his computer, downloading pornography, watching *Godzilla* movies, and not answering his mail. Send it anyway to POB 302 / Elkhart, IN / 46515, via email at [cursed@michianatoday.com](mailto:cursed@michianatoday.com) or check out his web page <http://www.michianatoday.com/cursed>.

Larry Falli is currently living in his grandparents' basement in Chicago and attending law school until they kick him out. Larry has mowed lawns in Houston, interned at Disneyworld, worked at a liquor store in Bloomington, Indiana, and lived in about 20 other places in the last five years. His hobbies include bleaching skulls, collecting earwax, and writing long love letters about his bowel movements. He can be reached at [GoatMonstr@aol.com](mailto:GoatMonstr@aol.com) or Larry, Basement/2456 W. Superior/Chicago, IL 60612

Greggory Moore; recently got M.A. English from CSU Fullerton (a school he does not recommend, incidentally); favorite authors are Nabokov, Sterne, Stoppard, Dostoyevsky, Borges; works as a waiter; has written both a novel and a novella and has no fucking idea what to do with either of them; yet to be published in a non English-speaking country but has had work printed in England, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and probably over half of the United States; recently sold stories to *Lynx Eye*, *Happy*, *Roswell Literary Review*, *As-Is Fiction*, and *Total Obscurity Magazine*; and other work can be found on over a dozen websites.

SiD (<http://www.bewley.net/~sid/>) is a punk gone computer geek yuppie now living in Kansas City, MO. SiD got his BS in Computer Science from Texas A&M University and is currently working as a Corporate Analyst for a multi-national energy holding company. Most days he is run by his record label, *URININE Records*, and his zine of the same name.

Laura Barcella is a 21-year-old college student in Amherst, Massachusetts. Originally from our nation's lovely capital, she aspires to one day live in New York City and write for a living; preferably at one of those snooty, snotty, pretentious magazines. She loves *The Smiths* and *Morrissey*, sour gummi candy, and griping her days away in her house. She also enjoys procrastinating and not going to her classes. She works as the Women's Issues editor at her school's daily newspaper, where she writes evil articles about how to get called a bitch (speaking from experience, of course). Her work has been published in numerous print and online zines and lit mags.

John W. Fail parses all of the parameters. Member of *wind down*. and *trondle*, occa-

sional non- and extricated revenge fantasies. online shrine to personal chantrouse  
spring 98 (meander): <http://www.clpgh.org/~fail/>. postal is 2324 birtley ave. pitts-  
burgh pa 15226-1538 and teleph askar: 003 +u 02 44 032:6 33. contact by any of these  
means and he will send you “bury my heart” greater than zero in it’s most recent state.

Jennifer Wagner is a secretary living in Eugene OR. She spends her days making copies  
and writing reports, and her nights flaunting her tattoos in dingy bars. She has a pile of  
ugly paintings hidden under her coffee table, and a here-to-for unseen collection of  
incredibly vivid, disturbing and colorful dreams. For a good time e mail bootness@hot-  
mail.com

Daniel Crocker: my work has appeared in about 100 magazines. I’ve authored 11 chap-  
books from various presses. I’ve been nominated for the Push Cart Prize 3 times, twice  
by ALPHA-BEAT PRESS and once by Gerald Locklin. My first full length collection of  
poetry (100 pages, perfect bound) called PEOPLE EVERYDAY will be out w/in a year  
from GREEN BEAN PRESS. Besides that I like to get drunk and play bues harmonica or  
old country songs on my guitar. (send mail to Dan at POB 341, Park Hills, MO, 63601  
and ask about his broadside, PURPLE.)

D. Raugh is guilty of editing the (print) zine/journal WINE WITH THIEVES available  
by sending a a buck or two to: 1018 Bellview Ave. Pottstown PA 19464 or, for real cheap  
pricks: email; DRaugh1036@Aol.com and he might send ya a copy for free.

Chicago Basil has failed at marriage, failed as a teacher, failed at graduate school, failed  
in politics, and even failed at failing out of law school. Now he’s trying his hand at fail-  
ing as a writer...

Daniel Fortine is an artist and the editor of Perezvon Plays Dead ([http://www.speak-  
easy.org/~perezvon](http://www.speak-easy.org/~perezvon)). He spends every second of his free time at a Sony PlayStation.

## Thanks

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A hello and thanks to the following zines: Losers are Cool, Wine with Thieves, Metal  
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ance, and Perezvon Plays Dead.

No thanks to Evergreen Ford in Issaquah.

# Air in the Paragraph Line Classified Ads

## Personals

SWM Syphilitic dwarf, 13, malnourished, celibate ISO special someone with experience in mortuary sciences, small block chevy rebuilds, for joint suicide in Madrid. Must provide stool sample. I'll pay airfare and half the bar tab. Sickos and Mormons need not apply. X-1022

SWM, avid reader, can shit on the ceiling without using my hands... really. If this turns you on gimme a call. Men and excessively hairy women need not apply. X-7448

SW(aryan)M ISO S/D/M/WJF for taking S&M to new heights. Must have own soap and enjoy performing household chores. X-7434

Clinically depressed SWM dark and morose, into suicide conspiracy, alcoholic and intolerable, reprehensible personal hygiene. ISO Elizabeth Shue type for scat and golden showers AC/DC. X-5833

I am 24 yo DWF virgin; if you believe that call NOW, we'll have great fun together. X-7433

DWM, 22, seeks F named Sharyn spelled like that because I have that name tattooed on my crank because of my ex-wife, also must be into fun activities such as Super Mario Brothers and golden showers. X-2723

## Lost and Found

Lost: One kitchen sponge, approximately 31 years old. Appears orangish brown in color, has greenish fuzz on edges and several large brown spots, smells strongly of urine and amonia. PLEASE don't mistake this for garbage, extreme sentimental value. No questions asked reward for safe return. Please call ASAP, my marriage

may depend on it. X-5277

Found: Collection of human ears, similar to those in Apocalypse Now, and copy of anniversary edition "Bloodsucking Freaks" laserdisk, in a Victoria's Secret bag outside Mall of America. X-5667

## Automotive

1973 VW Super Beetle formerly belonging to Ted Bundy. Letter of authenticity, replica murder kit including rope and Prell shampoo bottle. Front pass. seat missing. Runs. \$2300 OBO. X-8337

1968 Bonneville hearse. 427, black finish, Alpine stereo, mahogany coffin included. Needs upholstery, fumigation. \$3200 OBO. X-2666

Wanted: Oscar Mayer Weinermobile. Body damage OK - plan to convert it to be anatomically correct. X-2625

## Services

Why call a lawyer? Public intox, auto insurance dispute, false ID, OB/GYN exams? Skip the middleman, go with us. No checks, credit cards. Call Larry X-4397

We convert any weapon into a full automatic, and return postage is free! Also: rocket launchers, Montana land plots, Anthrax (albums), surplus F-14C fighters, black helicopter paint. X-4077

## Announcements

The Skokie Church of Satan will no longer hold meetings at the White Castle on 114th, due to a food inspection bust last week. True and evil legions of Satan are encouraged to take their business to Bob's Big Boy or Arby's until we can regroup in force later, possibly at the new Chili's by the mall.