



Transmetropolitan, Vol. 1: Back on the Street

Warren Ellis , Darick Robertson (Illustrator) , Garth Ennis (Introduction)

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After years of self-imposed exile from a civilization rife with degradation and indecency, cynical journalist Spider Jerusalem is forced to return to a job that he hates and a city that he loathes. Working as an investigative reporter for the newspaper The Word, Spider attacks the injustices of his surreal 23rd Century surroundings. Combining black humor, life-threatening situations, and moral ambiguity, this book is the first look into the mind of an outlaw journalist and the world he seeks to destroy.

Transmetropolitan, Vol. 1: Back on the Street Details

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Author : Warren Ellis , Darick Robertston (Illustrator) , Garth Ennis (Introduction)

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From Reader Review Transmetropolitan, Vol. 1: Back on the Street for online ebook

Purple says

Everyone seems to love this! Whether they are reviewing the series or just this first volume is sometimes unclear, but with this first installation I was mostly disappointed. It's one of those comics series that you hear about here and there, so I decided to give it a go. And to me it mainly seemed crude just for the hell of it, and with characters that you're not supposed to care about or relate with. Spider is supposedly meant to be a moral character, and yet when the story starts it is made abundantly clear that he isn't - he'd signed a contract, taken the money and ran. He blows up a bar, for no discernible reason. He then leaves his car in the middle of a traffic jam and wanders over everyone else's. It also appears later on that he still has his car.

It just seems to me that this could have all been thought out a bit better. The writing seemed to be rushed, and, while the artwork is good, it rarely stays constant. I shall try the second book in case there's something I'm clearly missing, but as a start to a series 'Back on the Street' leaves something to be desired...

Andrew says

I found this comic pretty irritating. It's the story of gonzo journalist Spider Jerusalem, who's pulled out of sylvan retirement when his publisher demands he deliver on his contractual obligations. Impoverished and drug-addled, Jerusalem has no choice but to comply; he gets a job writing a column called I Hate It Here, a chronicle of his experiences in the scifi megalopolis known as The City.

Throughout the comic, Jerusalem is portrayed as an underdog, fighting for the rights of the common man. He takes on religion! He takes on TWO presidents! He even wrestles with a cult leader! The problem is that Jerusalem is not, in fact, the underdog; he achieves all of his goals through bullying and brute force, and he's never in any danger. He even recovers from the neurological illness that almost humanizes him in the latter half of the series! Basically, he's a jerk. But he's a jerk the author clearly wants you to empathize with.

I'm not saying Spider's antics aren't endearing; I like it as much as the next guy when crazy religious leaders are threatened with violence. But I find it a little disturbing that he is portrayed so sympathetically, and I think my chief problem with the series is that the audience is supposed to see him as a largely moral, ethical character. He's an easy character to get behind, because of his aura of rebellion, but he isn't actually rebelling, and that's the problem. Spider Jerusalem gets everything he wants. He is the authority.

The comic also fails to deliver on its science-fictional premise. Practically all of the futuristic elements are introduced in the first two volumes, despite the immensity of The City and the world, and some events seem a little too grounded in contemporary life. People care that the President has sex with a prostitute? In a world where you can download computer viruses into your brain for pleasure? In a world where people change species when they feel like it? I don't buy it.

Anyway, most people seem to like this comic, so odds are you will, too. It's pretty funny, sometimes, and the art is generally good. But don't come running to me when Spider Jerusalem beats the hell out of a pathetic half-alien with a busted chair leg, all the time yelling about truth and being an outlaw.

Anne says

I don't really know what to say about this one, except it was off the wall and crazy in the best way possible.

The main character is this deranged genius of a journalist, who only comes back to the city because he owes his publisher and the money is already spent. For years he's been living off the grid like a hardcore prepper and is loathe to come back to civilization. And never misses an opportunity to say so.

I should mention that this is set in a nutty *futuristicsque* world where the mundane and the insane comfortably mingle together.

Spider Jerusalem (<--fucking awesome name, btw) is one of those journalists who lives to peel away the artificial bullshit and get to the truth. And within a few days of living in the city, he breaks one of the biggest stories of the day, simply by following his instincts.

That does not even scratch the surface of Transmetropolitan.

But I'm honestly at a loss as to how to explain anything else! If you enjoy the bizarre with a hint of reality, then this is the book for you.

Recommended by Artemy for our Shallow club's **Daisy Chain Buddy Read**. Thank you! This was not something I would have found on my own. *tips hat*

Patrick says

Written by one of my favorite comic writers, Warren Ellis.

This series is in the running for my top five favorite comics of all time. That might seem like faint praise until you consider the fact that it's competing with comics like Sandman, Bone, Hellboy, Lucifer, and Girl Genius.

J.G. Keely says

Comics have been going through a very public struggle with maturity for some time now. They were well on

their way to catching up with other art forms until they were hit with the 'Comics Code' in the fifties. The code was an outgrowth of reactionary postwar witch-hunting a la McCarthyism, and succeeded in bowdlerizing and stultifying an entire medium for thirty years.

For example, all crime had to be portrayed as sordid, and no criminals could be sympathetic. There goes any comic book retellings of Robin Hood. Good always had to triumph over evil and seduction could never be shown *or suggested*. In trying to write around these and other rules, it's not surprising that code era books got a little weird in their search for original plots. 'Superman's Pal' Jimmy Olson was forced to marry a gorilla no fewer than three separate occasions.

When they finally did shake off the yoke, following trailblazers like Steve Gerber and Alan Moore, authors were a bit over-enthusiastic, full as they were of pent-up stories and themes. What followed is colloquially known as the 'Dark Age', where all heroes were bad dudes, everyone had guns, and Wolverine guest-starred in twelve comics a month.

The release of all that pent-up violence and sexuality hit the industry like a ton of bricks, and soon, anyone who was anyone was penning stories of decapitation and prostitution, until someone titled a comic *Youngblood Bloodshot Deathmate Red: This Blood's For You!* and everyone decided it was time to go home. The authors seemed to assume that the inclusion of mature themes made for mature stories, when in reality, they were about as mature as a high schooler's marginalia.

And this struggle is still going on, to one degree or another. At the low end, Liefeld is still out there writing the same action plots, and somewhat better is Ennis, whose Preacher is a love letter to swearing, gross-outs, and bromance. Transmet (for brevity) also has its share of sex, violence, and puerile humor, but for Ellis, this is more than just an exploitation romp, it's a means to an end.

Though underground comics were rife with subversion and political satire, mainstream comics have shown up rather late to the party. Moore's comics are often political, especially his early works, Watchmen and V for Vendetta, but these were rather serious takes, coming from the school of post-modern realism.

In Transmet, Ellis is coming at the issue from a later vantage, that of subversive culture-jamming, most evident in his nods to Hunter S. Thompson's 'Gonzo Journalism'. In the sixties, writers of varying stripes adopted this style in rejection of the repressive fifties, but it took longer to spread to comics.

We can see the same form in action in Transmet, in Ellis' protagonist, Spider Jerusalem, a post-cyberpunk stand-in for Thompson. Most of the time, Spider is following a spiral of madcap self-destruction, doing ridiculous, violent, amoral, childish things in order to break people out of their daily ruts. The first step of this kind of subversion is always to break through assumptions, refusing to play within the system because house rules favor the house.

There is a good deal of humor and adventure in these romps, and their childish unsophistication is part of their charm, and their power. He's an unpredictable, moving target, and though all his actions are focused on specific goals, he makes sure that he is dangerous and entertaining enough to make his mark.

This is where the second step comes in. Once you have grabbed their attention and torn down their expectations, your audience is primed to listen to you with fresh ears. This is the whole point of bombast, wit, and humor. Comedians and Court Jesters are funny because it command attention and allows them to approach issues obliquely, sidestepping the usual thought-terminating cliches.

When Ellis gets these moments, he doesn't put them to waste. As a writer, he is capable of a biting vibrancy that few other authors can match, in comics or sci fi. He hits some of the high points of his impressive career in this book, but then, perhaps that's not so surprising.

This book is relying on two very powerful writing traditions: Gonzo and Cyberpunk, which both use similar methods of witty, idiomatic information overload to communicate their message. What saves this book from the cartoonish violence of a book like *Preacher* is what always saves cyberpunk: the pure strength of writing.

Both styles share an obsession with synthesis: creating a complex mix of disparate social elements and theories without growing too focused on any particular element. That is why the baroque high-water mark of revolutionary psychedelic writing shares the same location as the birthplace of cyberpunk: Philip K. Dick and *Illuminatus!*

Gibson really blew everything else out of the water with *Neuromancer*, and the attempt to pick up the pieces is called 'post-cyberpunk'. It's a collection of disparate writings sharing a theme and a setting, but widely disagreeing on most everything else. Gibson's book was so prescient (and still is), that everyone else is trying to prove themselves the next technological and social prophet.

There have been a lot of people jumping on the bandwagon, but Neal Stephenson's *Snow Crash* stands out as one of the most interesting, complex, and purely enjoyable of the lot. Consequently, I spent a lot of time trying (and failing) to find another book that could match it, but with little luck. Not even Stephenson's been able to live up to it.

But there is a lot in *Transmet* that meets that desire for another *Snow Crash*, and maybe that shouldn't be so surprising, since *Snow Crash* was originally scripted to be a comic. It's almost as full of ideas, it's as unpredictable and enjoyable, and the writing has that precise mixture of intellectual and pulp action.

That being said, sci fi is not Ellis' strong suit. This is a soft sci fi if there ever was one, and Ellis' society doesn't hold up to the originality and perverse plausibility of Stephenson's. Ellis gives us sentient nanoclouds next to still frame cameras activated by button. It's not as bad as *Star Trek*, where you can disintegrate and remotely reintegrate people but can't fix a broken back, but it's not a hard sci fi built around the changes technology brings.

Ellis is more concerned with his characters and his politics, but luckily, he tends to hit his mark with them. Spider, like most of Ellis' protagonists, is a black-hearted, cynical bastard who lives by his own code and leaves a swathe of destruction behind, but as usual, he still manages to make him sympathetic. At his best, Ellis manages to remember that Spider's flaws are flaws, though sometimes, and particularly as he wraps the story up, Spider gets to be too much 'crotchety hero' and too little 'amoral force of nature'.

But it's a good comic, and more than that, it's a good piece of sci fi, though more on the 'Speculative Fiction' end, since it's more concerned with exploring the question of 'what makes us human?' rather than 'what makes travel above *c* possible?' It's sad and unfair that it never got an Eisner; it surely deserved it.

In fact, it's a crime that this great sci fi series ended in 2002, and that same year, the Nebula *and* Clarke awards went to a rewrite of *Flowers for Algernon* whose sci fi elements were superfluous to the story. But then, it's usually too much to hope that a book will both be well written and get accolades.

Robertson's art is also solid, though I'm hard-pressed to think of any interior artist who could match Darrow's covers, but Robertson does admirably. His vision of the future is amusingly detailed and unusual enough to

transport us away, and his sense of pacing is strong.

It's worth noting that it took the world twenty years to catch up with Neuromancer, with the premiere of the first Matrix, and that this series predates that landmark social event by several years. As we move closer to The Singularity, and technologies are developed more and more quickly, predicting the future will become more and more difficult. Already, sci fi is shifting to predicting next year instead of next century.

But Transmet looks further than that, because like all great thinkers, Ellis recognizes that to look forward, we must look back. His update of the dystopia to revolutionary politics post WWII is inspired, especially as it is twisted with Gonzo Journalism and Post-Cyberpunk. The best ideas are never one idea, and though Spider's politics sometimes grow to dominate the series, Ellis still contrasts them with a multitude of concepts, leaving us with a pleasing depth of insight.

I can only hope that more comic authors will realize that sex and violence--even at their most over-the-top--can be vital, complex parts of a story, but only if they have a point. There is no story element too outrageous for the arsenal of a talented, driven author.

As usual, it's a joy to see Ellis' madcap style, as he plugs the dangling cords from the cyberpunk machine into the rusty dystopian engine until the whole thing lights up like a 500-channel cold-fission laser-guided Christmas tree. You could do worse.

My Suggested Readings in Comics

Sesana says

This is manic, biting, and brilliant. Ellis takes on everything he can think of: magpie popular culture, the media, politics, and anything else in his path. And though I haven't read everything he's ever written, I can definitely say that this is one of his best works. You know, I was a little irritated when I got the trade and saw just how thin it is, only three issues. But those are three powerful issues, with more substance than six issues of 90% of the comics out there.

Arielle Walker says

Seems all too relevant right now.

Sr3yas says

The word '*unique*' doesn't even start to describe our title character and the story. From the moment I heard the name of our guy, I was hooked!

Spider Jerusalem, (crazy) journalist: *A man who sees through everyone's bullshit.*

if that's not enough to win you over, look at the character design!

It's like the combination of the two band members from System of down!

I Hate it here!

Spider Jerusalem was one hell of a journalist. But after years of Journalism, the man had enough of the city. He has been living on top of a mountain for last five years like a very peaceful monk....on drugs.

He is a junkie, paranoid and pretty sure he is crazy too. He hates everything: His life before, his life now, the mountains he lives in, the people, religion, politics and the bureaucracy.

But he can only function as a writer in his own personal inferno, his hunting ground, his city... which also he hates.

So Spider goes back into the underbelly of the city he loves to hate. But the city is so not ready for him!

The Broken City

Transmetropolitan paints a disturbing futuristic city which subtly mimics our own world. A world filled with hate, over-the-top reality shows, bureaucracy, crazy sales executive, hypocrites and religious fanatics. Just to make things crazier, there are machines on drugs, genetically engineered cats, and flying shoes.

The first three chapters introduce our crazy character: His return to the city in all glory and his first live reporting... which blew my mind. I have never read anything like this. It is a dark, gritty, vile, and an unforgiving story with a peculiar shade of ironic sense of humor.

The rest of the three chapters are more episodic in nature. In those chapters, Spider and his new assistant, Channon, tackle a new aspect of society. These three chapters are basically rants of a junkie with a brutal sense of honesty, albeit a bit over the top at certain places.

Overall, this is a great beginning to an unforgettable world and a title character!

Jan Philipzig says

When these comics originally came out in the late 1990's, the comic-book industry lay in ashes. The speculation bubble had just burst, hundreds of retail stores were going out of business, many publishers were downsizing or declaring bankruptcy. It was a time when comic books had to reinvent themselves or fade into obscurity - a time when something as unconventional and confrontational as *Transmetropolitan* felt like it might actually have a chance, when somebody as cocky and subversive and spectacular and capable as renegade gonzo journalist Spider Jerusalem seemed like the man for the job.

Rereading the series now, I see little more than a cartoon version of the Hunter S. Thompson persona - competently done and entertaining enough, yes, but not exactly groundbreaking. Still, I've always felt that pop culture belongs to the young, so I am not going to sneer at mini-me: five stars from my younger (and better looking) self, three from the current one (who is in the process of packing up) - four sounds like a fair compromise.

StoryTellerShannon says

I put off reviewing this graphic novel to give it a fair shake but my feelings haven't changed. I found the main character to be chaotic and without much in the way of morals and most of his attempts to be funny just turned out crude or got a question mark for me. The artwork felt jammed on the page rather than flowing nicely. There were certainly some interesting ideas within but I found myself struggling in the latter 20% of the the graphic novel. I will give the second volume a chance but I don't have a lot of hope for this series.

ARTWORK: C plus to B minus; STORY/PLOTTING: C plus; CHARACTERS/DIALOGUE: B minus; OVERALL GRADE: C plus to B minus; WHEN READ: January to early February 2012.

Irena says

What can I say? I love the main character.

Loony, unpredictable, mood-swingy Spider Jerusalem (I'm excited to find out about his name) - fighter for truth and justice :D kh..khkh..

He's on a roll from the very start:

"Working this tollbooth all week, pissing in a whiskey bottle and weakly jerking off over the radio porn that aerial picks up...must be a tough life. But you really are everything I moved to the mountains to escape from. A worthless scrap of frogshit with a pulse and a bit of authority." :D

Soon we enter a completely new world where *unmodified* people live among *transients*, a group of people who traded goods for alien body parts in order to enhance their own. It's quite an interesting concept if you think, the change of species requires a new set of human rights (which, of course, still lack here, but we see the people fighting for 'em). These people can't get jobs. One would think that aliens descending on planet Earth would end in something like Mars Attacks but instead we have this:

"So the aliens are having to peddle their own genetic structure to body-perverts in order to survive? Horrible."

Our main char, who has been completely isolated up in the mountains finds all of these novelties out together with the reader and he's simply *befucked* to find out what madness has been going on while he's been away.

The comic's a crazy mix of all kinds of cultures, races, cyber punk, prostitution, open, free LGBT fun, heavy body modifications, crime, poverty, filth, high-tech and high tech xD see below, I do beg you

I was trying to label this mixture of futuristic with present or even old-time tech, but now it's impossible to call it any other way but *sci-fi on crack* copyright 2012 I.K.

Next, look at this adorable putticat. It even has a kill mode you can switch on and off!

Now, the main character Jerusalem, no matter how disgusting his outer, how aggressive and unpredictable his behaviour, he distinguishes clearly right from wrong. Very cynical [*all people are scum. No matter how they look like*], but self-righteous, fights when action is required, condemns society's passiveness while injustice is happening and that's why I find him so likeable.

Your first deadline's tomorrow. I want to see 8000 words. Printable words. I still remember that essay you wrote when the beast got elected. I do not want to see the word "fuck" typed 8000 times again.

I mean..just look at this crazy ass :D

It's quite hilarious. Jerusalem has this illegal bowel disruptor with "watery", "loose" and "prolapse" setting :D his cat smokes unfiltered black Russian cigarettes and he..he smokes Carcinoma Angels :D :D
Then there goes the scene where he decides to watch TV all day in order to determine a society's culture and :D I was crying so hard.

And boy..for him, journalism is *SRS BSNS!*

Idk, he could easily be some loony justice fighter. *You pissed in the economy. You shat on the law and wiped your ass on the truth. You ought to be peeled, salted, driven through the streets by mental patients with spiked planks, and then used as a toilet and jizz-catcher by baboons in heat. At best.*

I thought I'd be highly annoyed at his assistant the moment she entered, but she was everything but. Amazing character development. Amazing action. Fun crazy ass main character. Adorable puddicat mainly in the mood to do only foul things. Whatever. Can't wait to read the next volume!

Jeff says

Hunter S. Thompson -> Uncle Duke -> Spider Jerusalem?

Whether Ellis' creation is an intentional ape of the Doonesbury character or not, it seems like a natural progression – putting Trudeau's profane character in the future and turning him loose on social injustice and stuff.

After a long, imposed exile, Spider's back in the big city and in order to keep the creditor hounds at bay, he's looking for work as a journalist.

Armed with a bowel disruptor, righteousness, his wits and a mouth that would make your mama cringe (yay!), Ellis points him at a lot of easy targets ripe for a satirical beat down – politics, religion, discrimination, TV, the police state...

The final issue with its New Testament-ish tossing of the faux religious zealots out of the temple convention center was a little over-the-top...

...but anyone who ingests caribou eyeballs can be overlooked a lapse of the obvious.

Bottom line – Satire isn't everyone's comic book bag; however, this is some of Ellis' best work – edgy (back in the day), funny and pointed, though, I don't remember ever seeing the ads for a bowel disruptor on the back of my comics.

Book Riot Community says

I wrote a whole thing about how amped I am about having read Transmetropolitan, but I'm just gonna have to be redundant: this cyberpunk tale of political corruption being faced head-on by a badass journalist and his badass assistants made me happy in my heart. I binge-read like 60 issues in three days.

— Susie Rodarme

from The Best Books We Read In December 2016: <http://bookriot.com/2017/01/03/riot-r...>

Zach says

Transmetropolitan's main character, Spider Jerusalem, is annoying at his best and exasperating at his worst. His childish, hyperactive antics would be funny if they didn't involve blowing up buildings, burning people with his cigarettes and shooting up bars. Spider gleeful spreads his the wanton destruction aimlessly, all while expressing a holier-than-thou attitude toward virtually every person on the planet, all the mindless sheep he hypocritically despises; he decries their addictions as he throws back handfuls of pills, laments their addiction to entertainment in his weekly shock column, and calls them out for their selfish, shallow pursuits in the city after he spent years getting stoned in a lonely cabin in the woods.

After his publisher threatens to sue for not completing a contract, the (in)famous Spider ends his self-imposed exile and returns to the City to write a few more books and wreak a lot more havoc. He blasts a politician with a bowel disruptor, crank-calls television shows, and swears like a thirteen year old who's just watched South Park for the first time. If all the crude content had a point, I could easily forgive Spider's tediously amoral character and give this comic a higher rating. However, instead of offering insight and ideas, Transmetropolitan offers only smug sneers and cynicism, worse than any mindless entertainment. Skepticism can be useful in unraveling a lie or puzzle, but cynicism all too easily becomes hateful spite and

offers nothing but boring tirades for those unlucky enough to associate with a cynic.

Unapologetically shallow and unforgiveably stupid, Transmetropolitan is one of the worst comics I have ever read.

Sidharth Vardhan says

Well, I changed my avatar to Spider Jerusalem. I think a review is redundant.

Lyn says

DEVILISHLY FUN!

Hunter S. Thompson is alive and well done, shambling across the pages of Warren Ellis' 1998 Transmetropolitan volume number one: Back on the Streets.

First published in 1998, this only demonstrates the great vision Ellis had then, he was a canary in the coal mines as much of what he wrote 20 years ago could have been created today.

Spider Jerusalem. As great a character name as Velveeta Jones or Hiro Protagonist. Spider is a journalist, an inflammatory writer, a brigand of the TRUTH! Drawn down from his mountain lair five years after leaving the city, he returns to see racism, sexism, corruption, drug addiction and crass commercialism – all the elements of civilization that drove him away before and that pulls him back in again.

Warren Ellis and illustrator Darick Robertson collaborate to create a lightning rod, two fisted, hammer down monster truck rally of gonzo-esque TRUTH HURTS. The kind Carl “The Truth” Williams used to assault other boxers in the ring. Spider's journalism is the kind that damages, leaving psychological scorpion stings, and Ellis provides a suitable backdrop and setting for his particular kind of tuned in crazy.

This has become something of a cult classic in the graphic novel universe and for good reason as it provides a tableau for much of what is best accomplished in this medium.

Recommended.

Trish says

This comic definitely is nothing like I've ever heard of.

The city this comic shows is called Future Babylon, but really, this is like Sodom and Gomorra. There is every sin imaginable portrayed. We have people abusing their power, corruption, drugs flooding every-day life, prostitution, violence, poverty, ... and a movement about genetic alterations (people changing their species, which definitely is the author's way of addressing current transgender issues).

Future Babylon is extremely bad. Without giving too much away, not even the most optimistic reader can find anything good about the place.

Then we have the MC, Spider Jerusalem. Weird name, huh? But the guy himself is even weirder. So not your hero. Then again, having a hero would have been ridiculously unrealistic and not fitting the story.

We meet a very paranoid, very dirty Mr. Jerusalem right at the beginning ... he kind of looked like a Merlin with his tribal tattoos and too long hair ... not sure if his outer appearance a few panels later is much better, but ... that's not the worst about him. He uses drugs like a normal meal and has a lot of weapons (or used to) and no regard for other people's property or even their lives - which is not what one pictures when thinking about a JOURNALIST / AUTHOR!

However, after the first few impressions of the city he lived in and now has to go back to, it was no surprise he turned out this way. Also, he kind of hands out the violence where it is due.

Seriously, there is nothing positive here. We have relatively harmless bad visions of the future like constant news feeds and ads and shit (already bad enough). But we also have really dark stuff like religious movements, the physical alterations (not just on humans but on animals too), drugs for basically everything imaginable, plain and simple violence and everyone seems to be a nut job.

What I loved? That the MC wasn't ONLY a guy with paranoia, a temper and not enough physical hygiene. He was a smart cookie too and he knew how to use his intelligence. It even seemed, if only for just one little moment, that he tried using his intelligence for the greater good. The morale about public perception and the influence journalism can have was done very well.

Oh, and the physical cleaning unit. Bwahahahahahahaha!

And the cat with one and a half heads that was smoking. xD

However, the art. That one is tricky to rate. I didn't like it. If I had to come up with a verb, I'd say dirty or messy or weird or ugly - EXTREME. But then again, that is exactly what this story is; what this city and everyone in it is so it was extremely appropriate.

I think the author managed to pull off something that is unique: this is a satirical take on our world, blown up to its extremes to basically not hold up the mirror to our faces but smash it over our heads. Bad people can be cops in riot gear, a guy taking advantage of a movement, or just normal people who sit around and do nothing! And THAT is very well done. Seriously, this city, this MC and this story have so many layers, one might want to read it more than once to make sure no aspect was missed.

Melki says

~~Hunter S. Thompson~~ Spider Jerusalem reluctantly returns from his self-imposed exile to emerge anew as the premier gonzo journalist.

Anyway, you don't learn journalism in a school. You learn it by WRITING FUCKING JOURNALISM. You teach yourself to wire up your own brain and gut and reproductive organs into one frightening machine that you aim at the planet like a meat gun - -

In addition to his mighty pen, his only other weapon is the truth, and something called a *bowel disrupter* set to *prolapse*. Gulp.

You're miserable, edgy and tired. You're in the perfect mood for journalism.

A kick-ass comic about writing?

Mind blowing.

Ivan says

I don't usually reread but I was in a mood for some dark humor and missed the insane bastard. I think this is second series I started (first was Sandman) since I rediscovered comicbooks and graphic novels. Since the nearly 2 years has passed and dozen of series and over 200 volumes but this is just as good and crazy as first time I read it.

Sam Quixote says

I read the Transmetropolitan series a few years ago but loved it so much I decided to go back and give them a re-read and see if they hold up the second time around. And if this first volume is any indication, they most certainly do!

Living in isolation atop a mountain idyll, renegade journalist and bestselling author Spider Jerusalem is living the life he's always wanted - shooting rats in a hovel far from the bustling metropolis of the future. If only he'd unplugged the phone... His publisher calls to remind him that he needs to deliver two books or they'll come looking for his advance, and if he's spent it, then they'll do terrible things to him. Knowing that he can't write without being in the city, Spider makes the shaky and hesitant journey from solitary confinement to people saturation, losing the Alan Moore look he's been cultivating for the Hunter S Thompson image that we all know and love.

The best thing about this series, or one of them anyway, is the way everything is skewed and different from our world but seems familiar in small ways. Like Monkey Burger or Ebola Cola, to the kind of narcissistic twerps who endlessly blog and tweet and flood the net with their boring lives, there's plenty here that's similar to our world.

More best things about this series: Warren Ellis' writing. It's never been better than in Transmet and it is scathing, righteous, furious, white hot genius morphed into words from the page and searing itself onto your brain. The lack of restraint and free-wheeling nature of Spider gives Ellis free reign to write the most amazing screeds of hate and disgust you're ever likely to read. Put simply, there are more ideas and more poetry in a single issue of Transmet than most comics books contain. It is his best work and Spider Jerusalem is a character for the ages.

Darick Robertson's artwork is magnificent. He too seems to have cut himself free of restraint and plunged headfirst into the madness of Spider's world, embracing it for all its worth and crafting characters and a world that is utterly amazing to behold. The amount of detail he manages to cram into each panel is brilliant and, while I am unquestionably a huge fan of this man's art, Transmet remains one of his best creations, standing above his work on The Boys, The Punisher, and, more recently, Conan.

So, are you a Transmet virgin and wondering to take the plunge? I love comics and this series is one of the crowning achievements in all comics history. Don't deprive yourself of this ribaldry, this chaos, this pure spitting ball of imagination and beauty, of filth and darkness. There's a transient (human turning himself into a grey alien) called Fred Christ and he's calling for a revolution. Spider is on the case... let's see what he has to say about thieves and liars, shall we?
