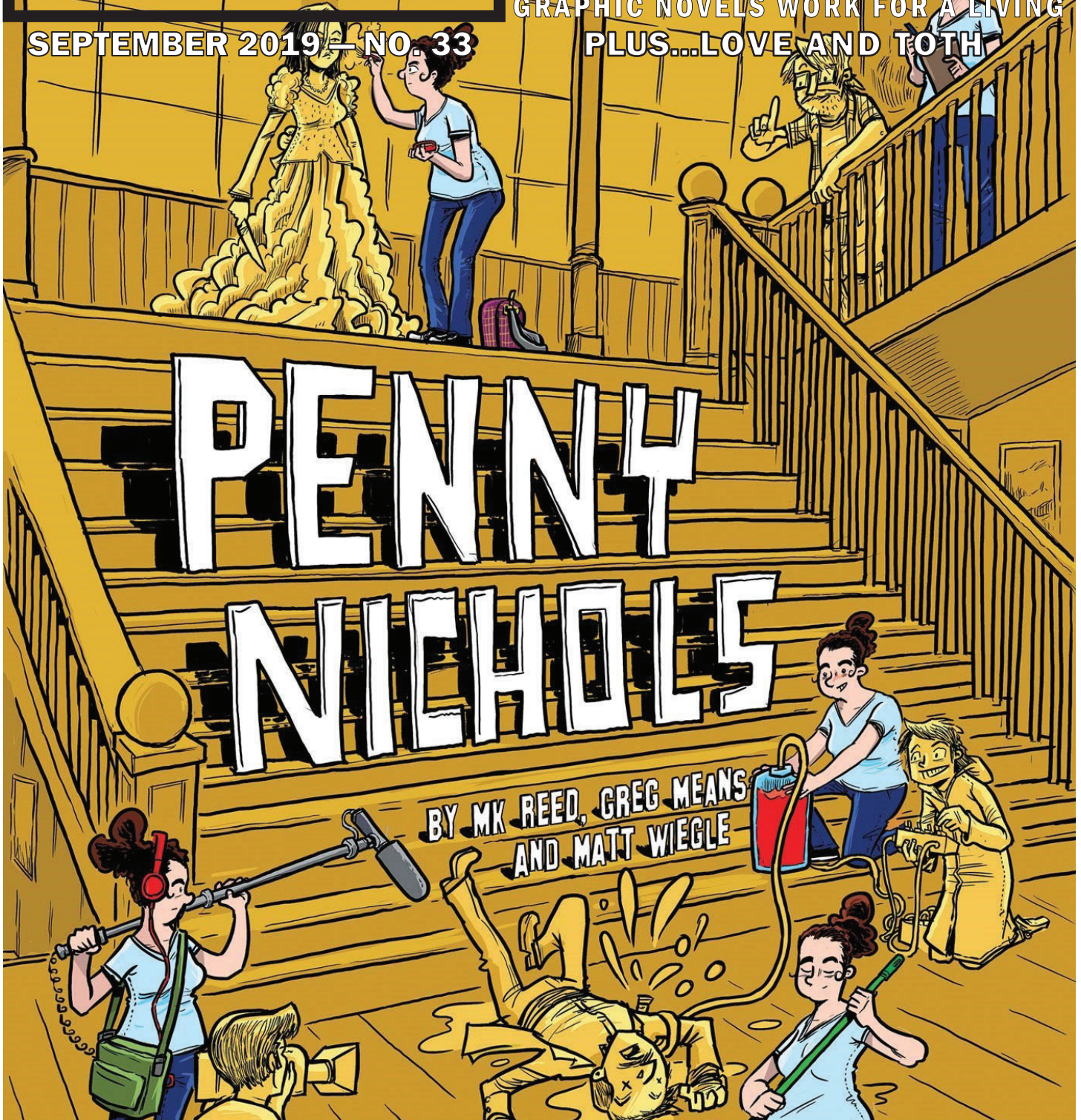


741.5

TAKE THIS JOB AND DRAW IT

SEPTEMBER 2019 — NO. 33

GRAPHIC NOVELS WORK FOR A LIVING
PLUS... LOVE AND TOOTH



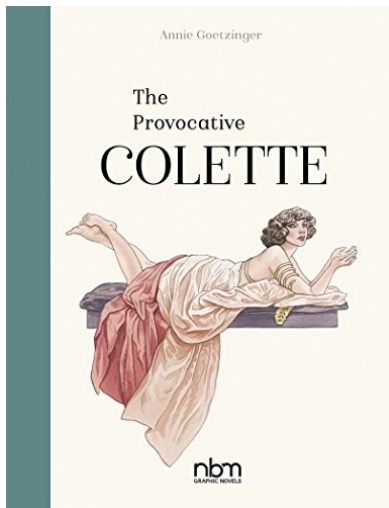
PENNY NICHOLS

BY MK REED, GREG MEANS
AND MATT WIEGLE

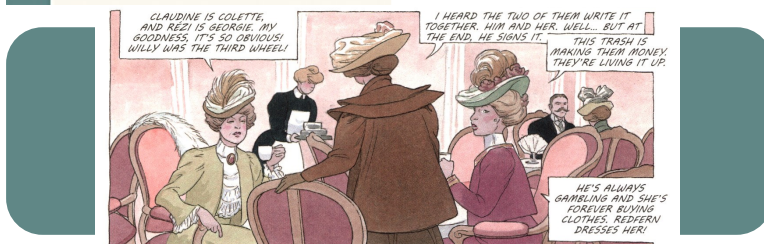
The Comics & Graphic Novel Bulletin of



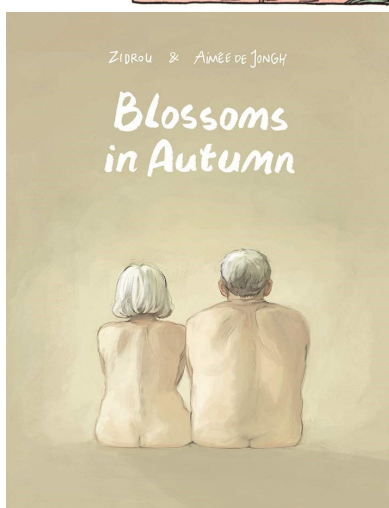
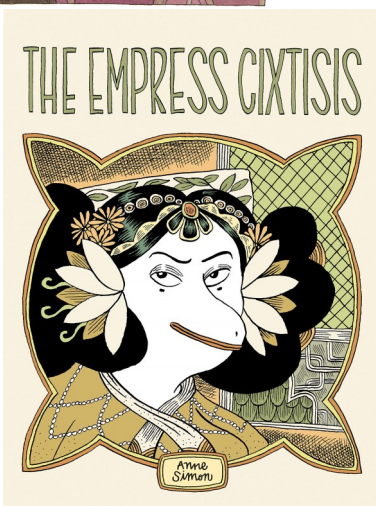
Lexington Public Library
Reading Is Just the Beginning!



A trio of books with similar looks and similar hooks are now available from Lexington Public Library. Each share a visual approach with a certain creaminess in both coloring and rendition. The latest in NBM's series of "comics biographies" that gave us the recent graphic histories of the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, *The Provocative Colette* focuses on the youth of the famed French writer and performer. Cartoonist Annie Goetzinger shows the slow but sensational development of a dreamy country girl into the libertine trendsetter who shocked yet epitomized the



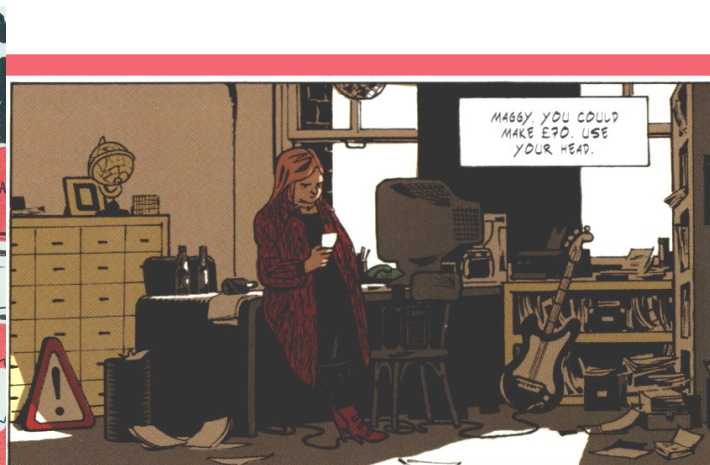
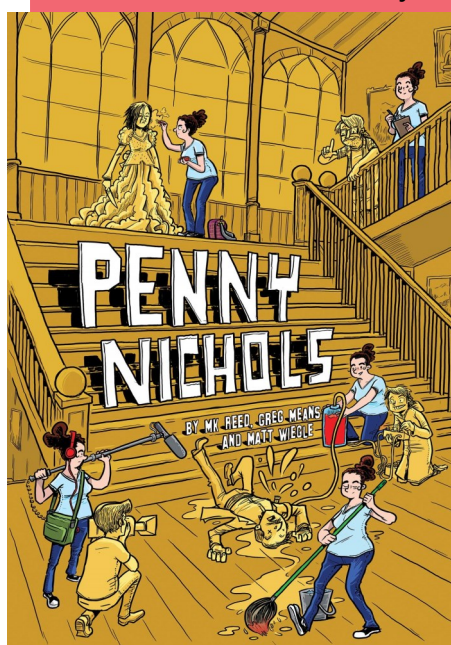
Belle Epoque. Goetzinger's art is a smooth dessert of flesh and fashion, a luscious spread of cream, rose and plum. Green is the dominant color in the palette of Anne Simon's *The Empress Cixtis* (Fantagraphics). Green as in wealth, green as in envy, which drives the Empress of Tchitchinie to kidnap the menfolk of Suffragette City. This sequel to *The Song Of Aglaia*, which was based on Greek myth, riffs on the true story of Chinese Empress Cixi. Simon's scratchy, detailed art recalls the manic imagination and world-building prowess of Gary Panter and David B. A couple with quite a bit



less in common become *Blossoms in Autumn* (Self Made Hero). Both the story by Zidrou and art by Aimee de Jongh are authentically real but luminous with romance. A unwillingly retired mover and a former model turned cheesemaker find an impossible love in the twilight of their years. The ending is a shock, for both characters and readers, but a nice one. It's a sweet story— and funny. "...The worst move of my life? A comic book collector (with) 15,000 books! We swiped one to see if he'd notice. And he did, the jerk!" For reserves, go to lexpublib.org/



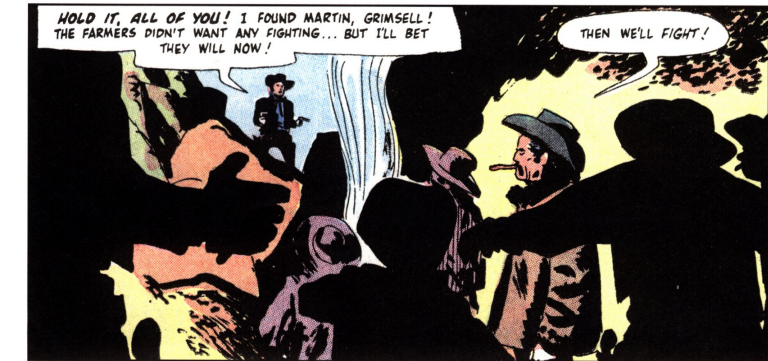
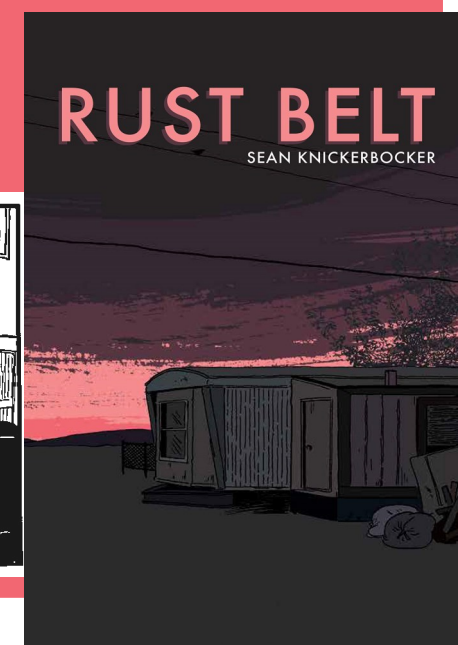
A quartet of graphic novels clock in with four different takes on labor and life. *Wage Slaves* (Conundrum) is the true story of cartoonist **Daria Bogdanska's** struggle to make a living in a new land. Immigrating from Poland to Sweden to attend art school, Bogdanska finds the "Scandinavian Miracle" less than extraordinary. For one thing, she's caught in a Catch 22: to work legally, Daria needs a Swedish personal identity number. But she can't get the number until she gets a job. Stuck in the underground economy, Bogdanska bounces between restaurants while she bounces between boyfriends. Drawn in a squirrely, loose-limbed style reminiscent of **Julie Doucet** (see "Meanwhile"), *Wage Slaves* will ring true for anyone who's worked a low-level job.



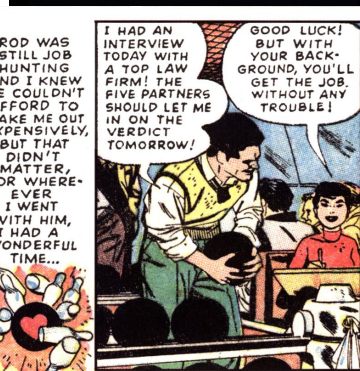
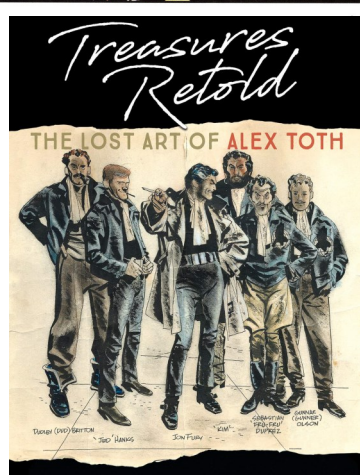
"After work, all the happiness in your body can disappear in one second," writes Bogdanska. But sometimes work can provide meaning, purpose, identity, as hilariously shown in *Penny Nichols*. Published by Top Shelf and written by **MK Reed** and **Greg Means**, our cover feature is the story of Penny Nichols, twenty-something ne'er-do-well. Stuck in an rut of temp jobs—including shilling her control-freak sister's vile "health" product—Penny doesn't so much jump at as fall into an opportunity to assist the crew of a low budget indie horror film, *Blood Wedding*. She gets to know her fellow would-be film-makers at "Satan's Fingers Productions"—Sam the flakey writer/director, skirt-chasing cameraman Bobert, homegrown special effects artist Spazzy and lively leading lady Lix, joined by Sam's pregnant wife Angela and hambone actor Adam. Day by day, Penny takes over more of the responsibilities (*below*) as the deadline looms for the film to be entered at Splattercon, "America's premiere independent horror film festival." And the more work she does, the deeper she gets in with this gang of weirdos, the happier Penny is. Artist **Matt Wiegler** pays his rent as an industrial designer, which means he draws amazing backgrounds through which his physically and emotionally expressive characters do their zany turns. A delightful, funny tribute to the pleasures and pains of DIY pop culture, *Penny Nichols* is available at Beaumont, Eastside and Tates Creek. Those locations also feature *Maggy Garrison* (Self Made Hero). Though written and drawn by French cartoonists **Lewis Trondheim** and **Stephane Oiry**, this street-level detective story is set in England. Our heroine is a luckless Londoner looking for a job. By sheer



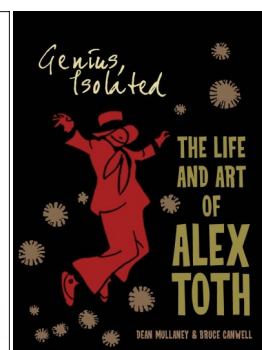
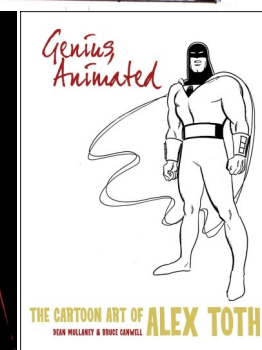
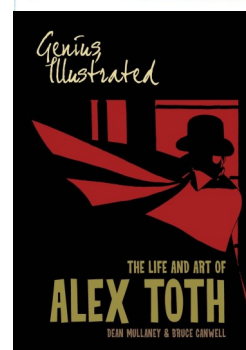
mule-headed pluck, she becomes the "assistant" of a private eye. Her first case is finding a missing canary. The job gets more complicated after that as Maggy follows a trail of bloody, bruised bread crumbs into the English underworld. At least she meets a cute guy along the way, even if he is a leg-breaker for a local crime boss. Oiry's slightly cartoony naturalism, like a less vicious **David Lapham**, is the perfect medium for Trondheim's tricky but true-to-life yarn. On the other side of the pond, broken men and beaten women try to get through another bad day on the lousy job in America's *Rust Belt*. **Sean Knickerbocker's** art is a rough-hewn update of vintage working class comics like *Gasoline Alley*. Go to lexpublib.org to reserve this fine Secret Acres book!

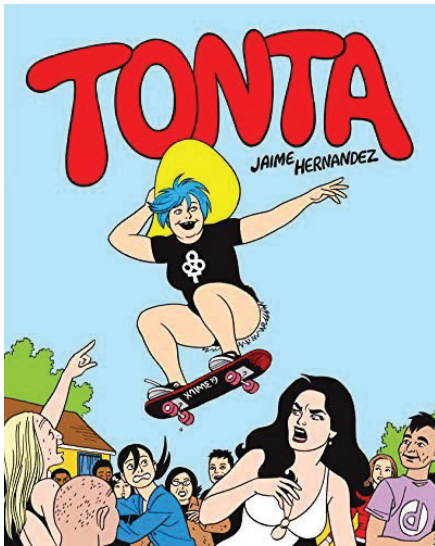


His name hasn't shown up in any movie credits, so **Alex Toth** is still obscure to most. But many are familiar with his work without knowing it. If they grew up watching any of the many TV cartoons designed by Toth, they know the sleek line, the classic costuming, the simple but strong composition of every shot, every figure. Before he worked in animation, Toth honed his craft drawing every kind of comic book there was, from Westerns (*above*) to romance (*below*), with movie dinosaurs and Prudential Insurance promos in between. No

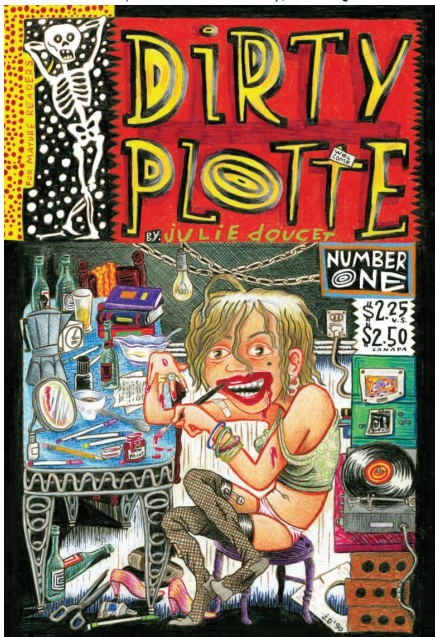


matter the subject, Toth brought his trademark intelligence and intensity, his drive to get to the essence of what makes comics comics. A wide-ranging miscellany of long-unseen work, from sketches to unpublished jobs such as the Space Ghost story left, *Treasures Retold: The Lost Art of Alex Toth* joins the IDW volumes shown below in Central's OVERSIZE comics collection. Get it now!



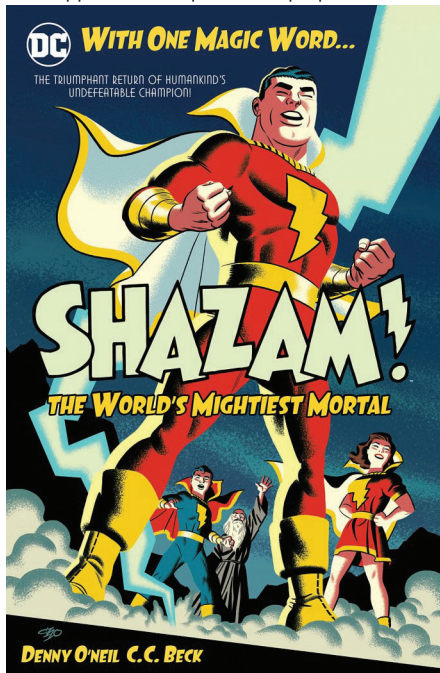


Hot on the heels of the Locas collection *Is This How You See Me?* (see 741.5 no. 30) comes *Tonta* (Fantagraphics). Alternative comics icon **Jaime Hernandez** spins off a new cast of characters, punky youngsters with a few connections to his now-grown-up Hoppers crew. Namely Vivian, AKA the Frogmouth, a brunette bombshell who's trouble with a capital RUB; she ends up dragging her half-sister Tonta into a world of "Crime Raiders International Mobsters and Executioners." Tonta herself is a charming gap-toothed tangle of hopes and hormones, pining for the lead singer of her fave local hardcore combo, hanging with her girls Gomez and the Gorgon, dealing with family drama that takes a dark turn by the end of the book. A story that's silly and subtle and even sinister, often on the same page, is rendered in a perfectly simple and simply perfect balance of black and white. Xaime's work is a Platonic ideal of cartooning, all the more more impressive for how easy it looks. The same could never be said for **Julie Doucet**. One of **Aline Kominsky-Crumb**'s discoveries (see "Meanwhile", 741.5 no. 31), the Quebecois



MEANWHILE

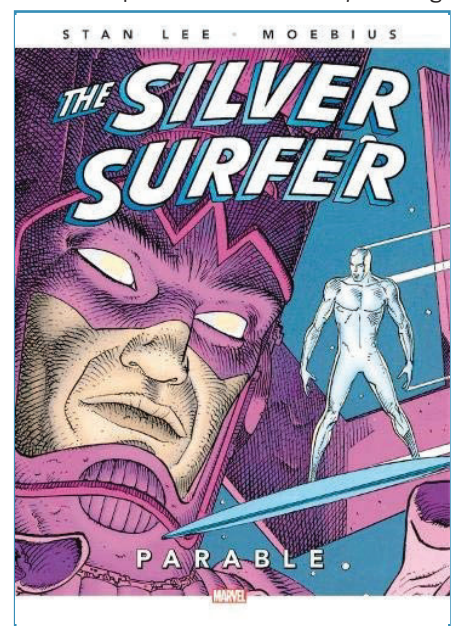
cartoonist quickly gained attention in the crowded alternative comics scene of the early 1990s. Her true-to-life tales of "sex, violence and menstruation" were drawn in a cluttered, intimate and inky style more like her underground forbears than the slicker art of her alienated peers such as **Dan Clowes** and **Seth**. Often as uncomfortable as amusing, **Doucet**'s groundbreaking comic *Dirty Plotte* has been gathered in a two volume set by its original publisher Drawn & Quarterly. Available from Central, these hardbacks stand as testimony to both the power of art and its limits, given **Doucet** quit making comics rather than "be stuck with the 'cartoonist' label for the rest of my life...Now I just can't stand comics." Driven by a similar disgust, another great artist walked away from the drawing board decades before **Doucet** set pen to paper. **C.C. Beck** was one of the titans of the Golden Age, the man whose fun and fanciful approach to superheroes propelled the cha-



racter he helped create, the original Captain Marvel, to a now-unimaginable level of success. (At its peak, the bi-weekly *Captain Marvel Adventures* was selling well over one million copies per issue.) After years away from the industry, **C.C.** was lured back to comics when DC—the company that tried to sue **Beck** and his creation off the stands back in the good old days—decided to release a new Captain Marvel title. And who better to draw the new adventures of the Big Red Cheese than his co-daddy? So **Beck** became the chief artist on *Shazam!* (so-named due to a copyright tussle with Marvel). It was nice while it lasted: **Beck** left before the tenth issue due to creative differences. Apparently the talking vegetables were the deal breaker. But readers looking for comics that put the "fun" back in "funny-book" should check out *Shazam! The World's Mightiest Mortal* from Eastside's TEEN collection. Released to capitalize on the recent hit movie, this volume collects not only **Beck**'s work, but that of his worthy replacements. Readers looking for more mature thrills should



nab the revving, raging *Ryuko* from Central. The latest release from the team of Hard Case Crime and Titan Books is the combine's first *manga*. Sculptor, photographer, musician, **Eldo Yoshimizu** brings to his comics a highly physical style. Figures race across the page in a storm of speed lines, violence explodes in a splatter of ink shrapnel. The tale of stylish Yakuza assassin Ryuko and the girls she's raised in the business will continue in Volume 2. Unfortunately for comics, there was only one collaboration between Marvel-maker **Stan Lee** and French icon **Jean Giraud**, better known as **Moebius**. *Silver Surfer: Parable* is an Oversize 30th Anniversary edition of the limited series that won an Eisner Award in 1989. Space god Galactus returns, but he doesn't want to eat Earth—he wants to run it! Only his former herald stands against Galactus...and the cult that worships him! Get it from [lexpublib.org!](http://lexpublib.org/)



Back issues of 741.5 are available at lexpublib.org under the COLLECTIONS tab!