

741.5

THE WINTER OF THE CARTOONIST

PACO ROCA'S SAGA OF ARTISTIC FREEDOM
CRUMB — TOMINE — TIMM

JANUARY 2021 - NO. 49

PLUS...FLAPPER QUEENS



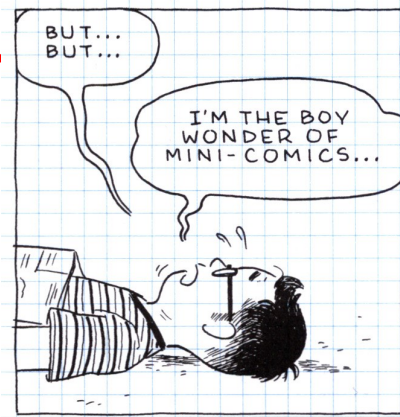
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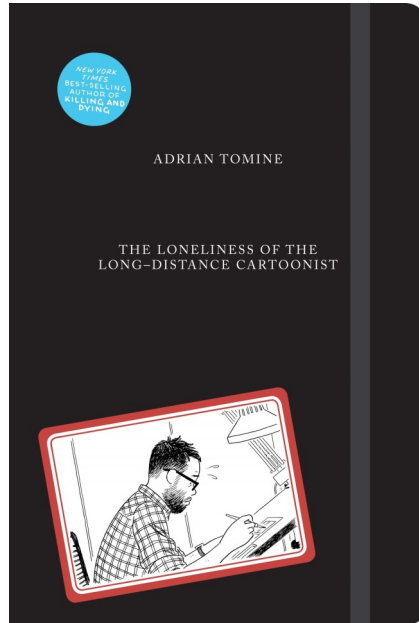
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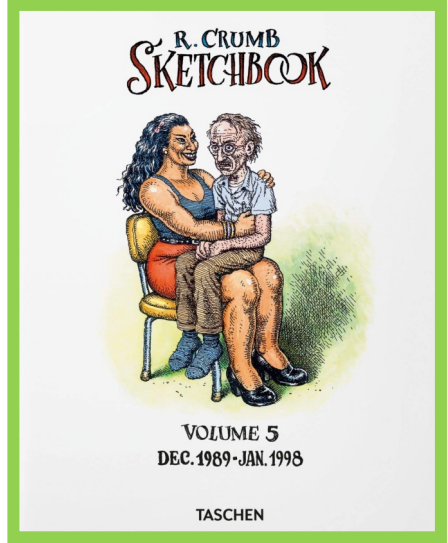
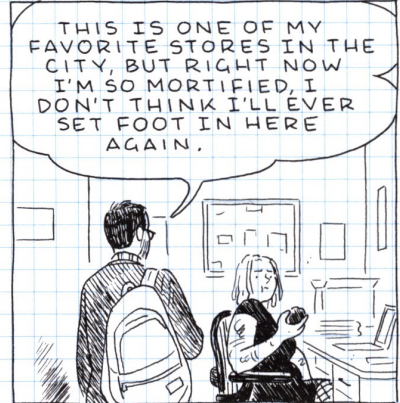
"In Spain in 1957," writes Antoni Guiral in his Afterword, "being a strip cartoonist was a trade. They weren't artists, they were laborers." The most popular cartoonists for the best-selling comic weekly *Pulgarcito* got tired of being underpaid, overworked and disrespected. So they struck off on their own with Spain's first self-published comic (*above*). The dream didn't last very long. The story of that struggle— as political as it was artistic— is told in Paco Roca's *The Winter of the Cartoonist* (Fantagraphics). So are the stories of those who stayed, such as the young editor/writer Victor and Mr. Gonzalez, the man with the red pencil. Roca's work is graceful and humane, featuring that creamy European coloring. Warm up your [Winter@lexpubl.org!](mailto:Winter@lexpubl.org)



Adrian Tomine is one of the most popular alternative cartoonists in America. Apparently that doesn't count for much, not even in the comics biz, as starkly and hilariously delineated in *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Cartoonist* (D & Q). An autobiography of embarrass-



ment, this ersatz sketchbook (hence the blue lines) covers Tomine's career from nerdy childhood to comix hipsterdom to perplexed parenthood. Whether on the playground or NPR's *Fresh Air*, Tomine's experiences with angst and exaltation will ring true for anyone creative.

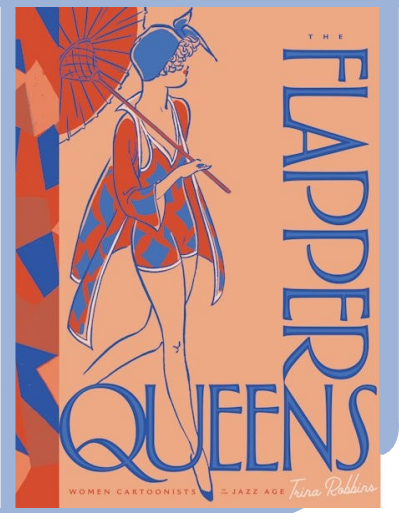
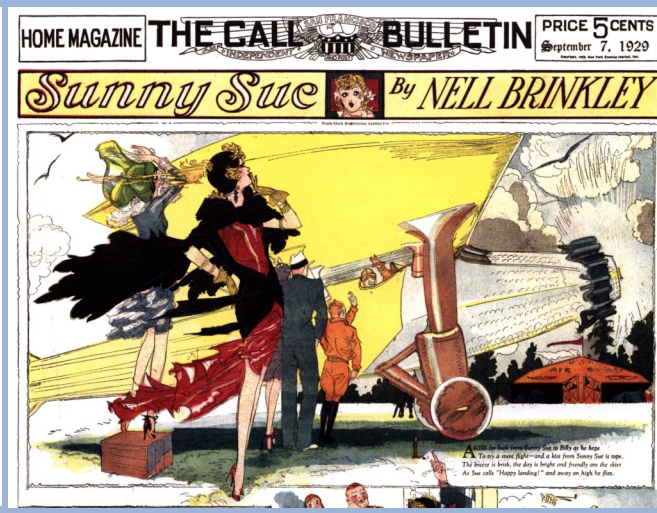
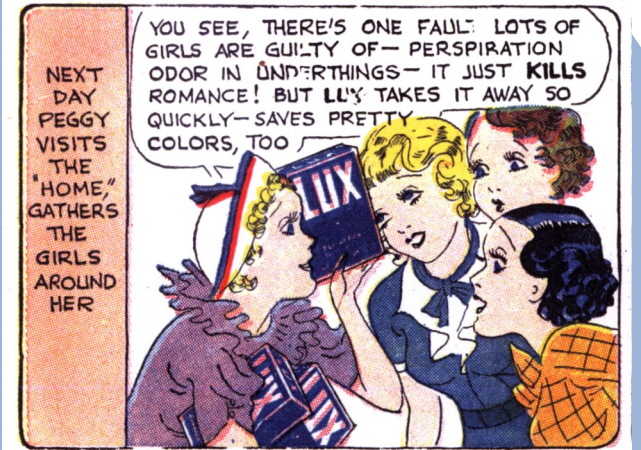


Weird that a guy who got his start selling self-published comix out of a baby carriage has become such an icon of the Ninth Art, his random scribbles garner interest. But that's our Bob! Taschen continues its series of *R. Crumb Sketchbooks* with Volume 5. Crumb's psychic see-saw between ecstasy and despair shares pages with goofy faces and gorgeous landscapes as R. abandons an insufferable USA for *la belle France*. Hardly as dirty as you'd expect, either. Get this unvarnished glimpse into a master cartoonist's raw talent at Central.

Cartoonist **Bruce Timm** doesn't spend all his time overseeing DC's animated properties. He also likes to draw for his own enjoyment. And what Bruce enjoys is women. Lots of slim, sloe-eyed, sleekly nude women. Released by art imprint Flesk, *The Big Tease* unites unpublished work with material from Timm's *Naughty & Nice* collection. The latter now goes for over \$800. But mature readers can get *The Big Tease* absolutely free from Central.



The 1920s were a time of radical change in the roles of women in American society. The "flapper" was the signature symbol of that age, "a fashionable young woman intent on enjoying herself and flouting conventional standards of behavior", according to Oxford. The flapper was the fascination of movies, magazines and comics. At the peak of their popularity and influence, the funnies featured artists who were themselves *Flapper Queens*. The new Oversize history of "Women Cartoonists of the Jazz Age" by Trina (Pretty in Ink) Robbins covers the social satire of Ethel Hays (below top) and Edith Stevens, the ad-ventures of *Peggy Lux* by Virginia Huget (right) and the full-page fantasias by the amazing Nell Brinkley (bottom). Get *Flapper Queens* at lexpubl.org..it's the berries!





Due to the coronavirus shutdown, LPL got a year's worth of comics in the last three months of 2020. Even with 741.5 going bi-weekly, it's going to be April before we get caught up. So Ye Editor has to make hard choices and kick some items to the curb. Sorry, *Wendy*, *Master of Art*. Tough luck, **Tardi**. Adios, *Pulp*. There's only so much room on a page, and we need to talk about the new book by **Blutch**. New York Review Comics gathers the Frenchman's 1990s series *Mitchum* into one volume. Each issue has its own story, its own style. Issue #1 is a mute commentary on seeing and its consequences. #2 is a love story about the grass being greener. The fourth issue is about dance, the fifth a pantomime of surreal tension starring funny animals. The fifth issue lives up to the title, featuring actor **Robert Mitchum** moving from youth and back again in a silent struggle with a karate-kicking hottie straight from a Blaxploitation film. Women of African ancestry are a recurring image in *Mitchum*, acting as muse, model, damsel and doyenne. The art is **Blutch** unleashed: great blotches of black,

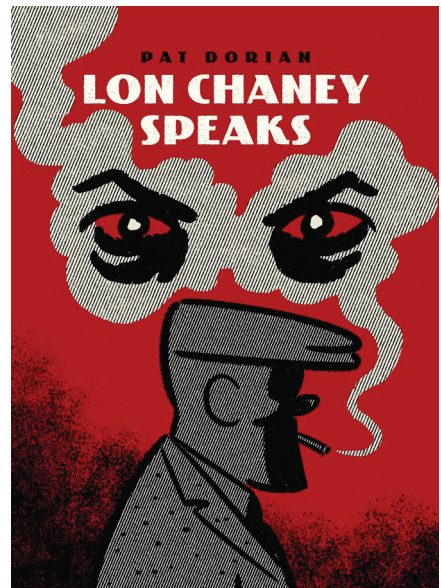


MEANWHILE

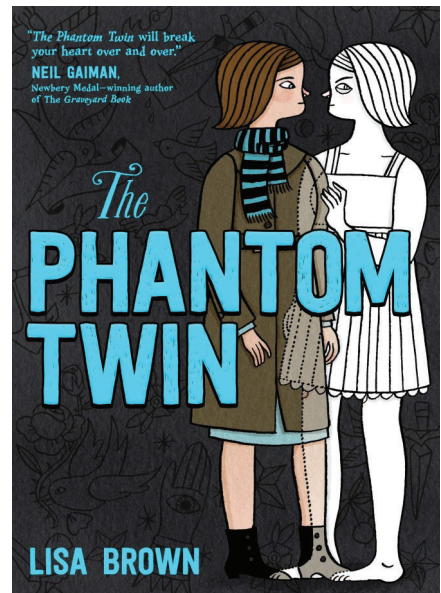
cyclonic line work, a mad-eyed mix of **Toth** and **Giacometti**. Get *Mitchum* from Beaumont, Central and Eastside. Like our cover feature, *Ghost Writer* is set in Spain under the thumb of *el caudillo Franco*. Flying the dictator's flag of "National Catholicism," the Church maintained control over all aspects of public and private life. Laia Eulalia is all too familiar with that heavy hand. She writes for a popular radio show that dispenses advice to the lovelorn. Despite the sorrow and suffering she encounters in the letters from her listeners, the Church won't let Laia give those women the best advice of all, which is *Dump his ass*. Laia must tell her audience to soldier on through the pain; that is, after all, woman's lot. But Laia has other ideas. Bloody, brutal ideas that explode in bright red ink across the solid black and white art of **Rayco Pulido**. His almost schematic style, reminiscent of **Chester (Dick Tracy) Gould** and his *deco* grotesques and cityscapes, is the perfect medium for this fable of deceit and vengeance. An Oversize item, *Ghost Writer* is



available at all locations. So is the latest from **Katie Skelly**. Like *Ghost Writer*, *Maids* is the story of women rebelling against the burdens of sex and class. Kicked out of the convent, Lea joins her sister Christine as a servant in an upper class chateau. The pair become unwilling participants in the drama between their boss and her daughter. It doesn't end well. Based on a double murder that rocked France in the 1930s, *Maids* reflects the artist's interest in Euro-horror cinema, with its hints of psychotic love and creeping dread. **Skelly's** art is as stark as ever, rich colors giving her simple drawings weight and meaning. Look for *Maids* in the True Crime section under 364.1523 P198s. Meanwhile, one of the best graphic novels of the year was *Lon Chaney Speaks* (Pantheon). Cartoonist **Pat Dorian** has worked for everybody from *Mad* to the *New Yorker*, *Adult Swim* to the *New York Times*. **Lon Chaney** was one of the brightest stars of Hollywood's silent era. His peers such as **Charlie Chaplin** and **Mary Pickford** were beloved for playing themselves. **Chaney** was famous for being "the



Man of A Thousand Faces". Raised by deaf mutes, **Chaney** put that experience to work as a master of make-up and body language. Asiatics and amputees, ventriloquists and vampires—**Chaney** played them all with real physicality and emotion. *Lon Chaney Speaks* gives voice to the notoriously reticent actor, an "imagined biography" rendered by **Dorian** in an inky drybrush method similar to classic cartoonists like **Peter Arno** or contemporaries such as **Seth**. Look under 791.4302 C362d for this beautiful book. **Chaney's** last film was a talkie based on his previous hit, *The Unholy Three*, a melodrama set in the carnival midway. Lisa Brown's *The Phantom Twin* (First Second) occurs during the heyday of that twilight world. "Siamese twins" Isabel and Jane work the freak show, until a failed operation leaves Isabel without an arm, a leg and a sister. She pursues a new gimmick for the midway against the wishes of her sister's angry ghost. Like **Skelly, Brown** draws in a deceptively child-like style bolstered by exquisite coloring. Reserve *The Phantom Twin* from our TEEN collection. And Happy New Year from 741.5!



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