

741.5

TEA FOR TWO

RADICAL & SMAHTGUY
THE GOOD ASIAN PTS. 1&2
BUSIEK'S MARVELS — AC VS. EC

MARCH 2023 - NO. 91

SHAUN TAN

CREATURE

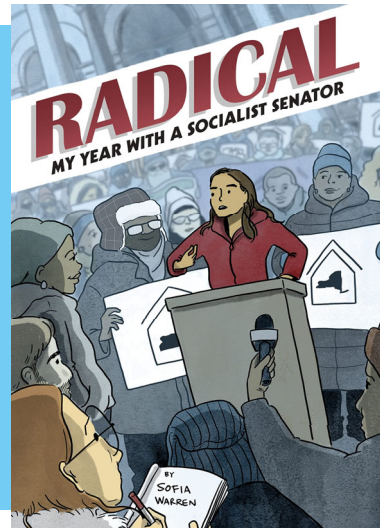
PAINTINGS, DRAWINGS
& REFLECTIONS



The Comics & Graphic Novel Bulletin of

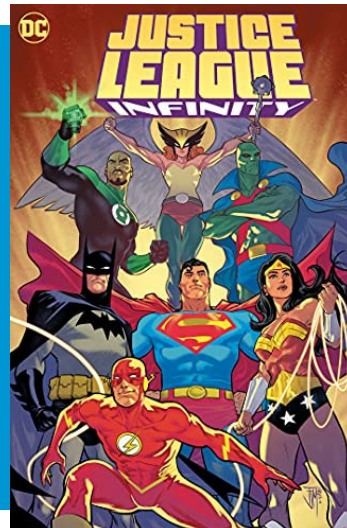
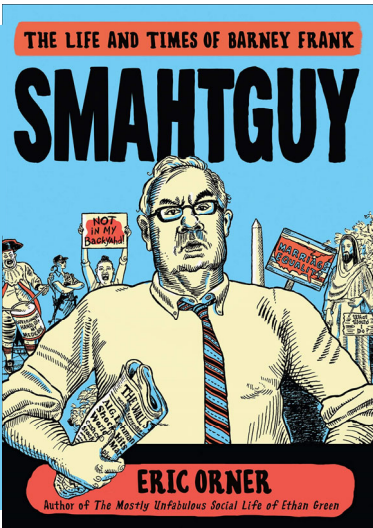


Lexington Public Library
Reading Is Just the Beginning!



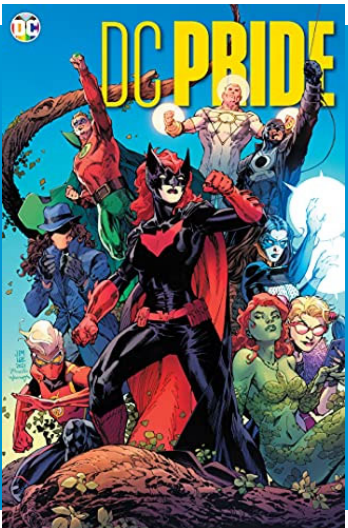
“Whatcha doing?” Sofia Warren: “Trying to draw Andrew Cuomo...he keeps coming out looking like a zombie.” Sofia’s pal: “Sounds about right.” That lack of love for the former Governor of the great state of New York is shared by many who appear in the graphic history *Radical* (Top Shelf). Brooklyn’s first-year State Senator Julia Salazar worked tirelessly to pass laws protecting tenants from the capricious rule of all-powerful landlords. Cartoonist Warren spent *A Year with A Socialist Senator* and saw up close and personal how the legisla-

tive sausage is made in Albany. But some people are born to be butchers, and Barney Frank was one of them. His original plans to join academia were sidelined when he got involved in politics and turned out to be damn good at it. Over the years, Frank became the killer combination of liberal firebrand and legislative workhorse that made him a national figure. All while dealing with the often problematic fact of his own sexual identity. Eric Orner’s art is as homely and detail-oriented as the subject of *Smahtguy*, *The Life and Times of Barney Frank!*

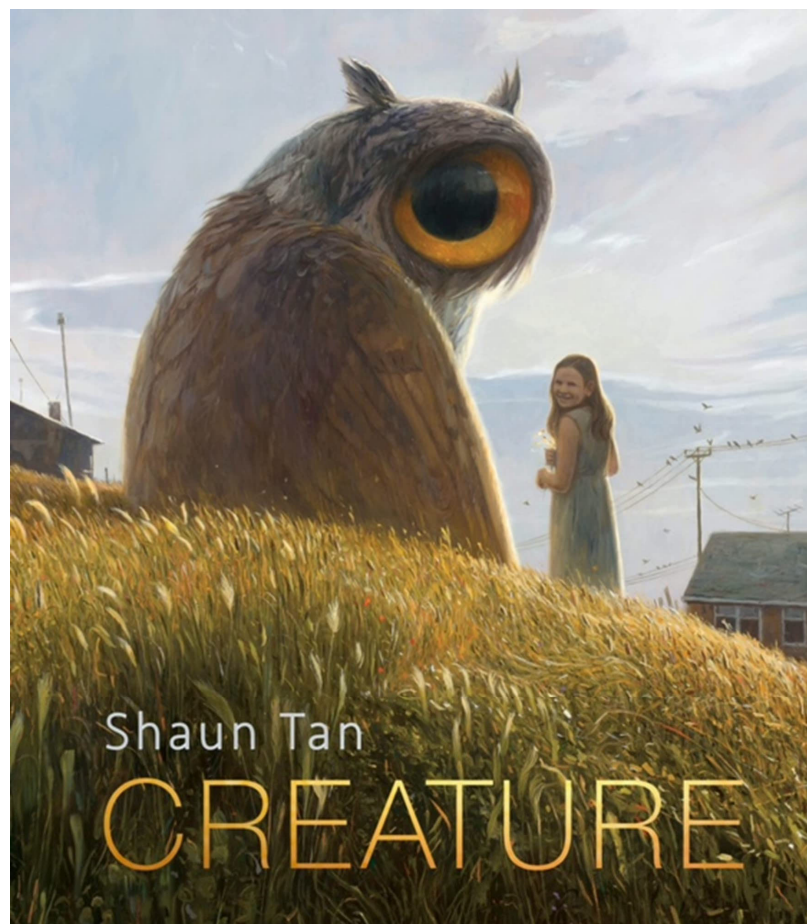


Expanding on the good work of the resurrected *Batman Adventures*, DC has spun off more comics based on the various animated programs. Riffing on the *Justice League Unlimited* series, *Justice League Infinity* plays with the multiversal tropes DC did so much to establish. In this case, the Timmverse confronts the fascist Superman introduced in the Final Crisis. He’s where our Superman oughta be because reality has been broken by the cosmically empowered android Amazo. More cracks between

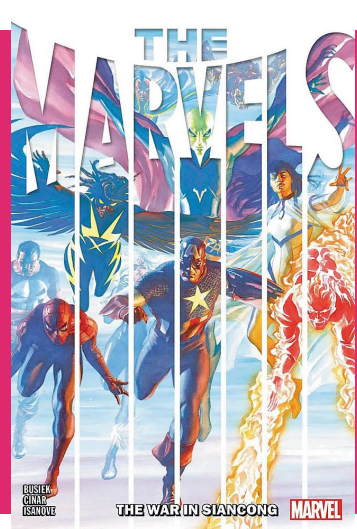
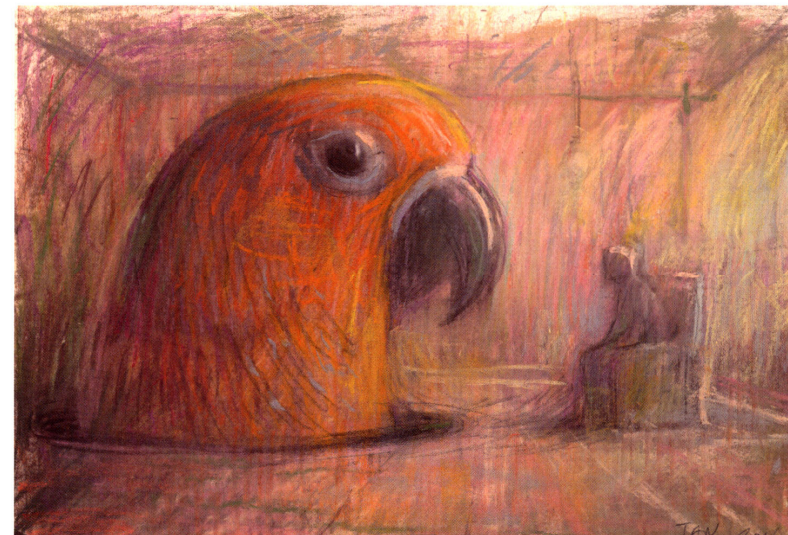
universes open and we meet Black Superman and his League even as other members of the JLU blink out of existence. But sometimes just existing can be a heroic act. Living one’s truth in a world that prefers certain lies is dangerous for LGBTQ+ folks. Even if they work under a mask. *DC Pride* is an anthology of stories starring the various characters, new (Crush and Dreamer), old (the Golden Age Green Lantern) and in-between (Harley & Ivy), whose Love Dares Speak Its Name...loudly!



“A creature does not necessarily represent one thing or another; it just is. A mysterious being in a mysterious world, much like you and me, trying to fit in, trying to be unique, or just trying to make sense of things as best we can, to exist.”

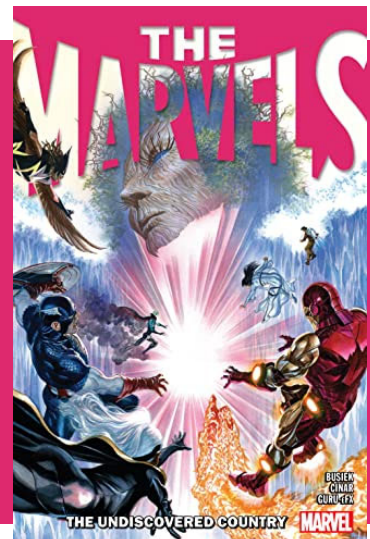


So writes illustrator & author SHAWN TAN in the Introduction to *Creature* (Levine Querido). This large and lovely collection of “Paintings, Drawings, and Reflections” is divided into chapters dedicated to “Lost Things,” “Companions,” “Myth & Metaphor” and “Birds.” Tan’s trademark combination of the sweet and creepy, everyday and bizarre, the vast and the cozy is on display in sketches and completed works. *Creatures* can be found at Beaumont, Central and Bates Creek under 741.64.



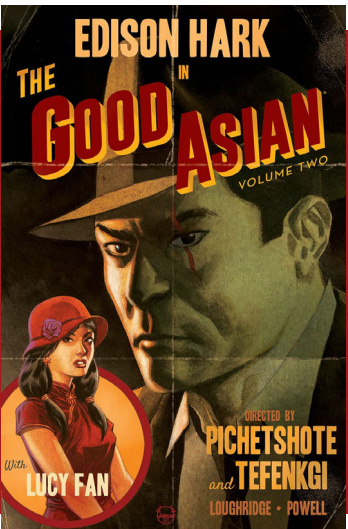
As noted in “Meanwhile,” writer Kurt Busiek established a leading role among contemporary comics creators with *Marvels*. Busiek has returned to the House of Ideas with *The Marvels*. Like the original, this series is a historical, revealing untold tales of the Marvel Universe. The initial story arc concerns *The War in Siancong*. The Marvel version of the Viet Nam War, the conflict in Siancong cast a long shadow over many characters, from Reed Richards to Frank Castle. Volume 1 and

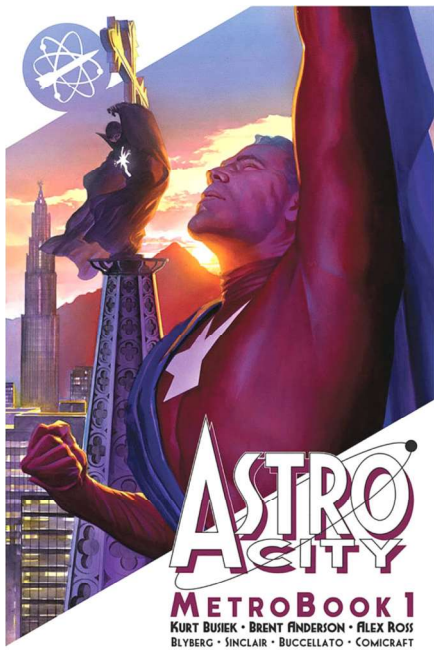
its sequel, *The Undiscovered Country*, show the Avengers and allies joining with Aarkus, the Golden Age Vision, to deal with the self-proclaimed leader of Siancong, Lady Lotus. Traumatized by the War and its aftermath, she has raised an impenetrable dome over her nation. But the power at its heart could be a bigger threat than the invaders. Flashbacks to the ‘70s showcase Bronze Age battlers like Nomad and Mar-Vell while new heroes Aero and Warbird join *The Marvels* of today!



Attacks on Americans of Asian descent have increased, instigated by the combination of COVID disinformation and an emboldened racism. But the status of Asians in the United States has always been tenuous. The first laws passed against immigration were aimed at Chinese migrants. Meanwhile, those Chinese who had made a home in America played it safe and kept their head down. Even then, the white majority, especially the police, would wreak havoc on a whim. That’s the background of the Image crime series, *The Good Asian*. Set in the Chinatown of mid-Depres-

sion San Francisco, this intense whodunit follows a detective, one of the few Chinese to wear a badge. He hunts a legendary hatchet man bent on revenge...and the Chinese girl who knows his secret. The cop’s own racially confused life story gets in the way as falsehood feeds on lies and the bodies keep piling up. The slippery script by Pornsak Pichetshote and Alexandre Tefenkgi’s smooth and shadowy art is why *The Good Asian* appeared on more than 20 “Best of the Year” lists for graphic novels. Go to Beaumont, Central and Village for this mystery based on history!



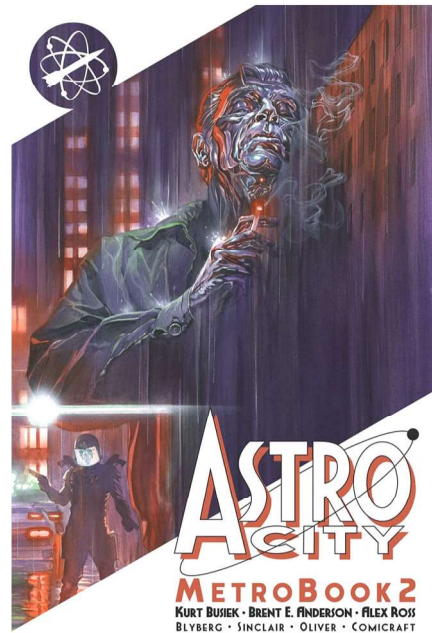


Teaming up with artist **Alex Ross**, writer **Kurt Busiek** blew fandom's mind with *Marvels*, a street level look at the history of the Marvel Universe still available at LPL. **Busiek** took that same concept, superhero comics told from the viewpoint of the average person, and expanded it with his self-owned title, *Astro City*. Featuring cover and concept art by **Ross** and internal art by **Brent Anderson**, the rightful heir of **Colan** and **Buscema**, *Astro City* published over 100 issues under a variety of imprints. Now Image

It's rare that a fanzine becomes as iconic as its subject. *Squa Tront* is one of those rarities. Dedicated to Entertaining Comics, the legendary EC, *Squa Tront* is known for its lovely design and in-depth articles and interviews. Its 14th issue, released by Fantagraphics, continues the legacy with interviews with **Gene (Daredevil) Colan** and the late great **Russ Heath**. Both were regular artists for Atlas war comics (see 741.5 #57), subject of a typically intense review by **John Benson**. Add to that news clippings from the height of the anti-comics crusade, ad art by **Jack Davis** for Coca-Cola, an overview of influential fanzines of the 50s, and



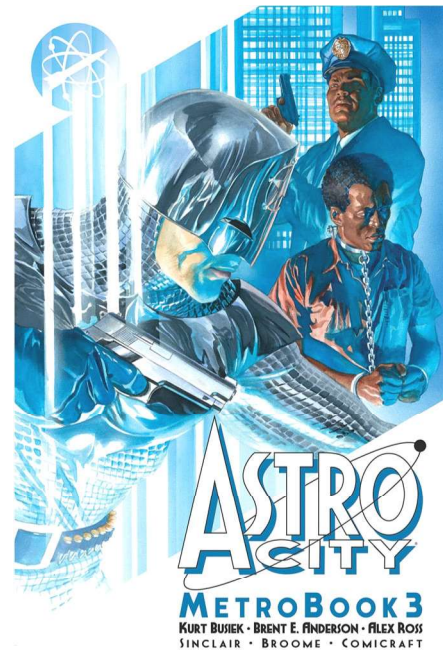
has begun the awesome work of collecting all those series, mini-series and specials in the *Astro City Metrobook* compilations. Volume One introduces that town of renown and its world-famous heroes. The superman, the dark avenger, the amazing Amazon, the supernatural guardian: these funnybook tropes and more are given fresh new names, faces and stories in **Busiek's** world. He ably explores the humanity of the characters, supers or civilians, while still supplying those crazy



MEANWHILE

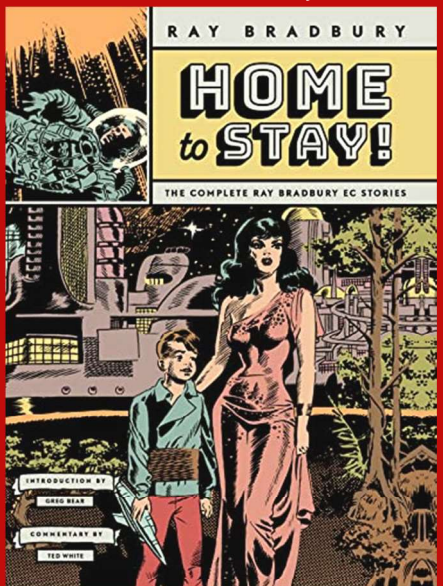


much more, including unpublished art by EC founding father **Johnny Craig**. He's the headliner of the latest volume of the EC Artists Library, available at Central and Village. *Deadly Beloved* is almost a "greatest hits" compilation for **Craig**, containing some of his best stories, such as the *Crime Suspensory* "Understudies," the descent into madness "Whirlpool" and the infamous Xmas shocker, "And All Through the House" (see 741.5 #38). **Craig's** work is so strong, the panel above from the sardonic "Twin Bill" shows why he's the only artist to be featured



costumed kicks. Highlights include V1's "Welcome to the Big City", as a new arrival and his two daughters face the astounding realities of their new hometown; the hard-boiled mystery starring former villain Steeljack and the chilling tale of the Blue Knight in V2; and *The Dark Ages*, a two-fisted critique of Bronze Age and Reagan Era comics that makes up most of the upcoming Volume 3. *Astro City* is so real, even people who don't like superheroes will enjoy their visit! Go to lexpublib.org for reserves!

twice in "Meanwhile". The effort to find stories worthy of such virtuosity led EC to adapt the works of best-selling science fiction writer **Ray Bradbury**. At first a marriage of convenience (**Ray** busted EC for swiping his stuff; EC copped to it and cut a deal), the relationship grew into one of the greatest collaborations in comics history. Another Fantagraphics joint, *Home To Stay* is an Oversize treasure trove of exquisite artwork by such titans as **Wood, Frazetta, Williamson, Krigstein, Ingels**, and, yes, **Craig**, who kills it with the crime classic "Touch and Go"! You're *Home to Stay* at Central!



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