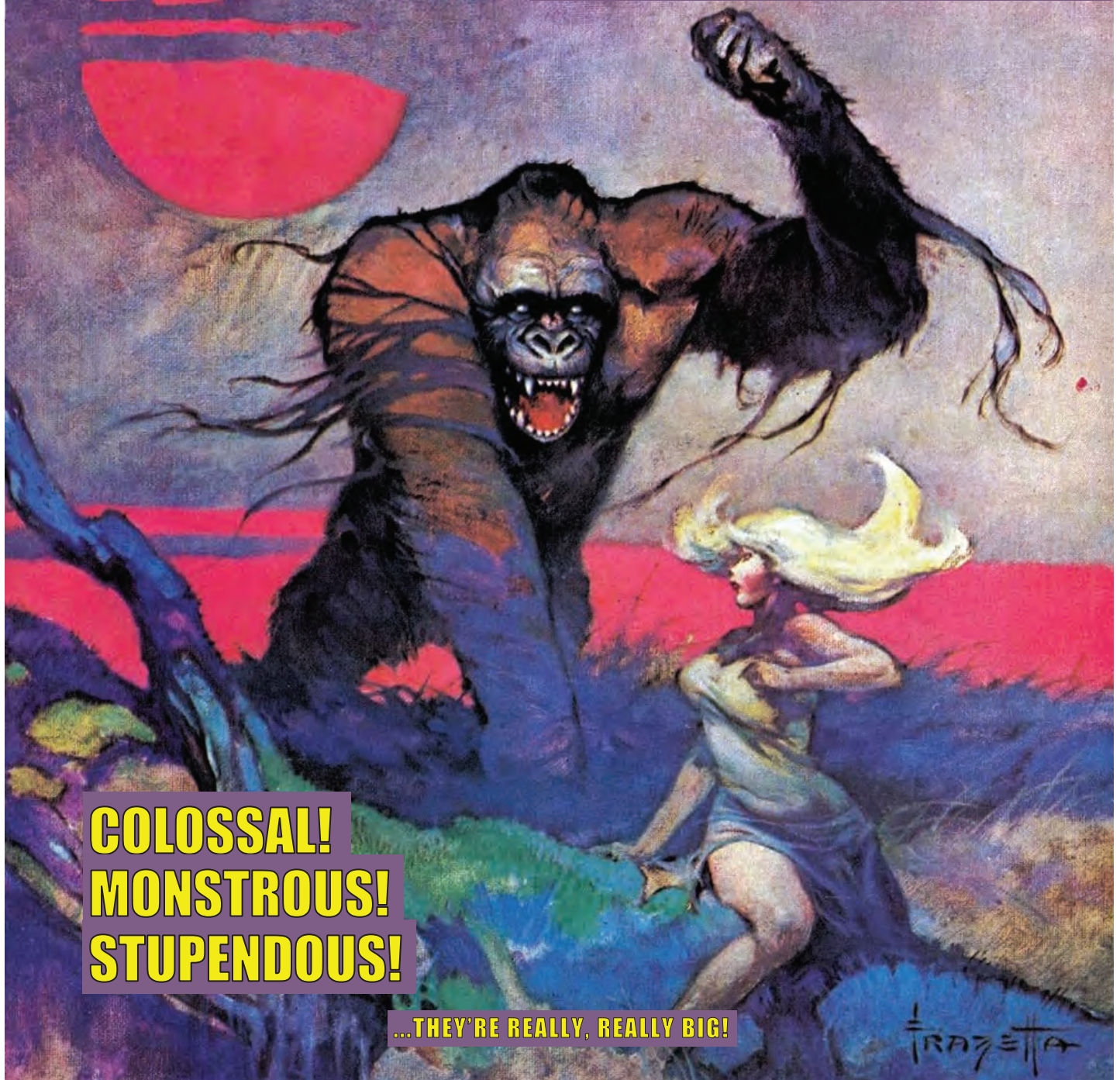


741.5

BIG

DECEMBER 2023 NO. 109

OL' FUNNYBOOKS



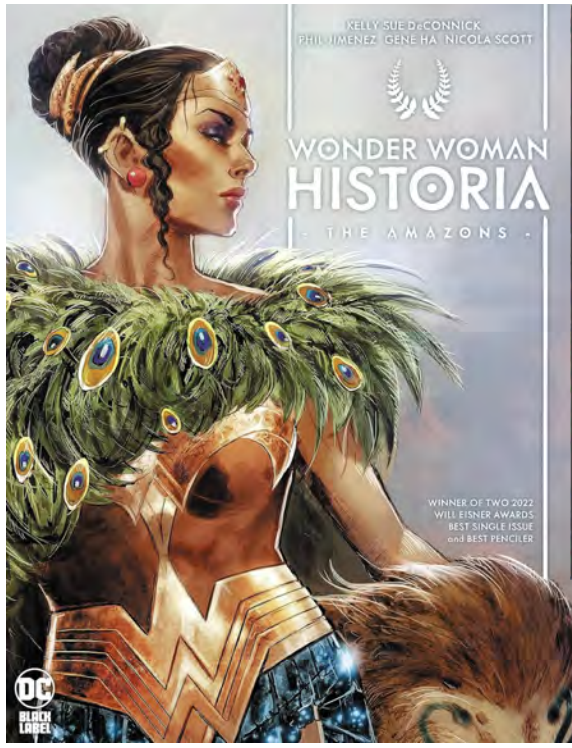
**COLOSSAL!
MONSTROUS!
STUPENDOUS!**

...THEY'RE REALLY, REALLY BIG!

The Comics & Graphic Novel Bulletin of



Lexington Public Library
Reading Is Just the Beginning!

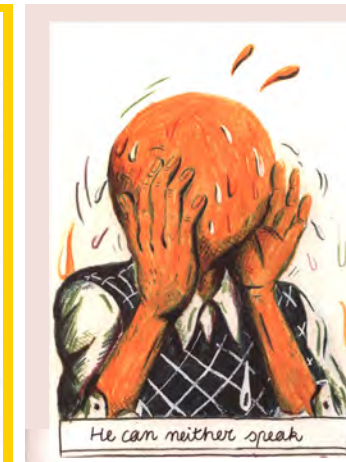


As above, so below. And like Brother James sang, it's a man's world. Olympus, home of the Gods, is no different. Hera, Queen of the Heavens (above), is tired of that. So tired. Thus begins the grand conspiracy to free Woman, earthly and Olympian, from the oppression of Man. Goddesses great and small aid in the creation of the Amazons, as Hera keeps an eye on a feisty troublemaker named Hippolyta (above right). Phil Jimenez, Gene Ha and Nicola Scott join a roster of ace colorists drawing this exquisite slab of comics!

741.5 just promoted the Dark Horse reprints of the horror comics published by Jim Warren in the 1960s in issue #106. But now that said items have reached LPL shelves, ye Editor is frankly blown away by the quality of work showcased in *Creepy Archives* Volumes 1-3 and *Eerie Archives* V1. Candidly, the stories are basic horror fare, including adaptations of Poe and imitations of Lovecraft. But the art? From EC icons like Cran-



dall, Williamson and Orlando to DC and Marvel guys like Gene Colan and Steve Ditko (left), all the artists obviously had a grand time drawing crazy, spooky stuff. Free of the damnable Comics Code and taking advantage of the monochrome printing and much larger page size, Alex Toth (above), Johnny Craig, even Manny "Adventures of Big Boy" Stallman (below) made balefully beautiful comics now available via lexpublib.org/



Fantagraphics continues its global outreach, bringing to our shores *A Book to Make Friends With*. Created by Belgium's **Lukas Verstraete**, *A Book* is approximately 12 x 15 inches of cartooning so raw, so creative, even that massive size can barely contain it. **George Grosz** jumps in the mosh pit with **Milt Gross** and churn up a dance of dementia rendered in colored pencils wielded like paintbrushes full of bombs. The "plot"? **The Man with the Briefcase** (below) fights like hell to get it back from mystical mob boss **Lilith** and her minions, while the **Ball-Headed Man** (left) seeks peace and justice in a weird world that has neither. Find this Oversize *Book to Make Friends With* at Central and Village!



ATLAS COMICS LIBRARY NO. 1 ADVENTURES INTO TERROR

The man who would one day own Marvel Comics had one rule: find out what's selling and put out a dozen imitations. But Martin Goodman was ahead of the market in one genre: HORROR COMICS. He was among the first to put them out and one of the last men standing when the Comics Code put a stake through the heart of horror. At the mid-50s height of the genre's popularity, Goodman's ATLAS line pub-



lished 399 issues of eighteen different titles like *Spellbound*, *Uncanny Tales* and *Journey Into Mystery*. Indie leader Fantagraphics has teamed up with Mighty Marvel to release a series of oversize prestige editions reprinting in their entirety the best of Atlas horror comics. One of the original slate of Atlas spook books, *Adventures Into Terror* was the real



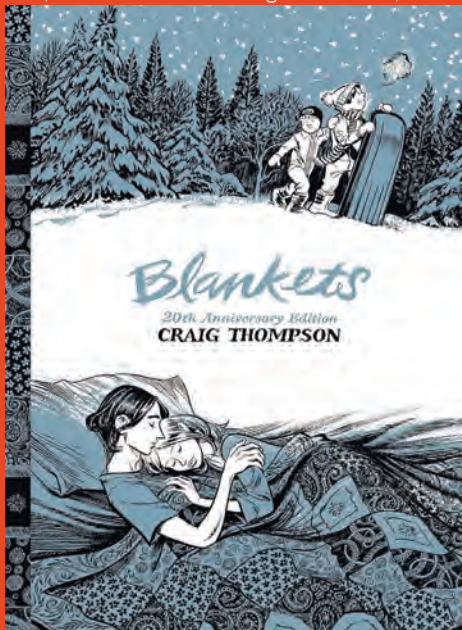
thing. The short, punchy stories and shock endings were expressions of pulp, film and radio influences cranked to maximum mania by guys punching a time clock. Editor Michael Vassallo gives us a look at the workaday world of Heath, Bellman, Sekowsky, Rico and the rest of the original Bullpen as they create a new genre of comics. Go to Central and Village for that old school drool!





Comics come in lots of formats these days. There are big ol' funnybooks and itty-bitty funnybooks. The next three items are examples of the latter. Her *Girl Juice* was one of my Top 10 Comics of 2023 (see 751.5 #101). But before that, cartoonist **Benji Tate** whipped up the small batch saga of a gal named *Lorna* (Silver Sprocket). Unlike *Juice's* twentysomething swingers, *Lorna* and her pals'n'gals are tweens. But, like *GJ*, single-page gags lead to a longer narrative as the familiar social and personal fumbles of That Awkward Age are given a sinister cast thanks to *Lorna's* propensity for knifeplay. Fans of the Netflix

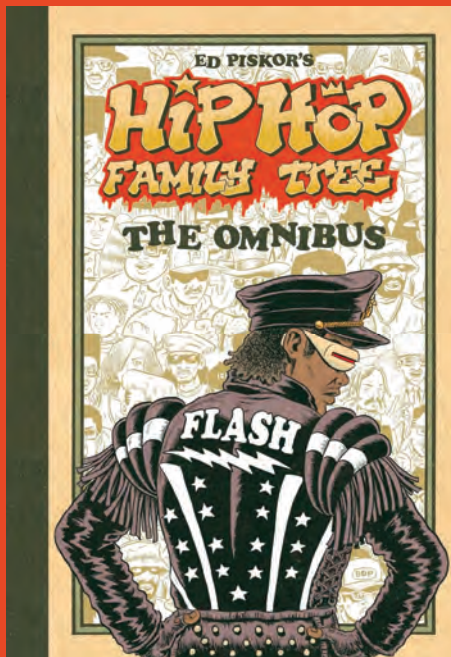
Size isn't just an expression of width, but heft. These next three items are chonks o' comics. Thicc, as the kids say. Take, for example, Drawn & Quarterly's 20th Anniversary Edition of **Craig Thompson's** career-making *Blankets*. Formatted at the usual sevenish by nine-ish inch size of alt comics novels, it's also 640 pages of swirly, snowy adolescent angst. Sweet-natured angst, though; that's what separated Thompson from the usual crowd of hipster self-flagellants. That, and he draws like an angel. Meanwhile, the OG



series devoted to Wednesday Addams will find laffs aplenty at Central and Beaumont. All locations have a copy of *The Gull Yettin* (New York Review Comics). Art director for Breakdown Press, a British publisher of *avant garde* comics, **Joe Kessler** creates one of the purest comics you'll read this year. Though told in the traditional structure of panels, there are no words. The story—of a young boy rescued from disaster by a bird-like figure who may be the cause of that distress—is purely visual, told in bright, mutating, even explosive colors, a Dickens novel written in graffiti on the side



MEANWHILE

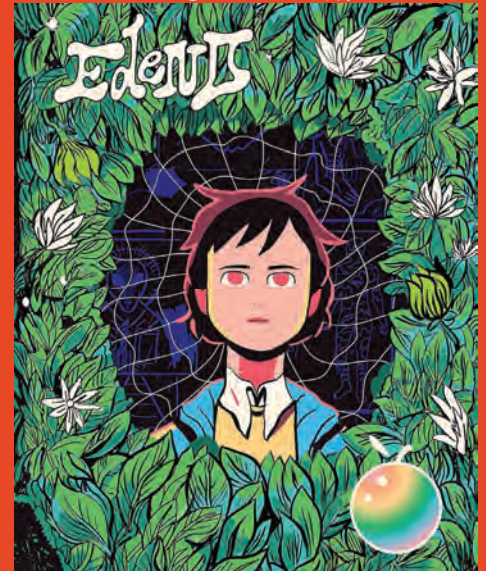


versions of **Ed Piskor's** award-winning *Hip Hop Family Tree* were published in the 10" x 14" tabloid format of the "Marvel Treasury Editions" from the 1970s. The new hardcover *Omnibus* from Fantagraphics sacrifices sprawl for brawn, clocking in at 504 7.7 x 11.3 inch pages, including 140 pages of extra material. An essential document of musical history, *The Omnibus* is currently available at *Tates Creek*. The shelves of *Beaumont*,



of a passing train. You can't really call **M.S. Harkness's** life a train wreck. Because it never stops moving ahead, even when **Harkness** doesn't know where she's going. Her new book is like that, too. The first chapters yank the reader around the calendar, losing you in time. Once **M.S.** graduates from art school, time advances, and so does she. On the one hand, this little block of ink-splattered pulp is more hipster self-flagellation as referenced below. On the other, it's really, really good. **Harkness** goes places most alt cartoonists don't (dig both the realistic MMA fight and the awesome acid trip!) at [lexpublib.org!](http://lexpublib.org)

Central and Village bow beneath the 452 pages of *Eden II*, the latest from **K. (Cannonball) Wroten** (see 741.5 #30). *Eden II* is ostensibly yet another sci-fi story about a virtual reality program that takes over the world. But **Wroten's** protagonists, disaffected youth *Ellis* and the tricky *Dr. Heck*, are sketchy and shifty, the narrative untrustworthy even before their *Eden II* program begins to work its wonders. The layout follows the fluidity of the story, with the usual panel grid giving way to full-page shots, **Wroten's** super-loose drawing rendering a community in transition to other states of being. It looks as trippy as it sounds!



Back issues of 741.5 are available at www.lexpublib.org under the **READING SERVICES** tab!