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able from Lexington Public Library. Each share a visual approach with a
certain commonness in both color-
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NBM’s series of “comics biogra-
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graphic histories of the Beatles and
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Couture focuses on the youth of the
famed French writer and perform-
er. 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 lascivious spread of whimsy, rose
and plum. Green is the dominant color
in the palette of Anne Simon’s The
Empress Cattus (Fantagraphics).
Green as well, green as in en-
voy, which drives the Empress of
Titchesene to kidnap the merfolk
of Sufargaste 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
scratches, detailed art recalls the
manic imagination and world-buil-
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David B. A couple with quite a bit

A quartet of graphic novels clock
in with four different takes on
labor and life. Wage Slaves (Co-
rundum) is the true story of car-
tooneer Daria Bogdanina’s strug-
gle to make a living in a new land.
Immigrating from Poland to Swe-
den to attend art school, Bogdan-
ska finds the “Scandinavian Mir-
acle” less than extraordinary.
For one thing, she’s caught in a Catch
22: to work legally, Daria needs a
Swedish personal identity num-
ber. But she can’t get the number
until she gets a job. Stuck in the
underground economy, Bogdan-
ska bounces between restaurants
while she bounces between boy-
friends. Drawn in a squarish, loose-
limbed style reminiscent of
Julie Doucet (see “Meanwhile”),
Wage Slaves will ring true for any-
one who’s worked a low-level job.

Summer’s here and Daria is
more interested in winning a job
in the underground economy.
Bogdanin

Her first case is finding a missing
mule – the “assistant” of a private eye.

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
nerd-to-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 oppor-
tunity 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
Angelika 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 Splatter-
con, “America’s premiere independent horror film festi-
val.” And the more work she does, the deeper she gets
in this gang of weirdos, the happier Penny is. Artist
Matt Wiegle pays his rent as an industrial designer,
which means he draws amazing backgrounds through
his craft drawing every kind of com-
pics. With a background in animation, Toth honed
his craft drawing every kind of com-
pics collection. Get it now!

His name hasn’t shown up in any
movie credits, so Alex Toth is
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The lousy job in America’s

Himself’s tricky but true-life yea-

On the other side of the pond, bro-
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Sean Knielerber’s art is a
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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

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