Okay...when did Ted Kord come back from the dead? I mean, he was dead a LONG time. Ted Kord was the secret identity of fan favorite Blue Beetle (below). The last time I saw him, he was shot in the head by the villainous Maxwell Lord. But that was many years — and even more reboots/retcons/senses-shattering Summer Events — ago. No doubt Ted was brought back during Flashpoint or the New 52 or his best bud Booster Gold’s recent futzing about with the time stream. I, for one, do not know. It’s just too exhausting to keep up with the constant changes in “continuity.” And if it’s that tiring for the reader, imagine how the actual characters feel. Well, Tom (Sheriff of Babylon) King has done that for you with Heroes In Crisis, DC’s sleeper hit of last year. An unassuming farm in the heartland is where superheroes can go when they’re overwhelmed by the job. Sanctuary is a place to unwind, to rest, to deal with the issues that come with being a caped crusader, an immortal amphibian, or the last Cro-Magnon on Earth. But some people can’t be helped, and Sanctuary becomes a slaughterhouse. Accused of the crime, Booster Gold and Harley Quinn are on the run...and on the hunt for the real killer! Meanwhile, the secrets of Sanctuary are about to be exposed to the world. Though action-packed and unflinching in its intensity, it’s the quiet moments that make Heroes in Crisis as paladins renowned and obscure confess to the camera, showing the human face behind the mask. Get it at lexpublib.org!

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MEANWHILE

home to the other items discussed, including Sam Zabel and the Magic Pen, the most recent novel by New Zealand’s finest cartoonist, Dylan Horrocks. Sam Zabel is a professional comics creator who is utterly exhausted after years of grinding out superhero stories. The Magic Pen was inherited from an obscure NZ producer of old school sci-fi comics featuring hardy explorers and hot green chicks. Using the Magic Pen, Zabel literally escapes real life and ends up in the pages of various comic books. He’s accompanied by Alice, whose webcomics subvert man-made and male-dominated fantasy worlds to her own progressive ends, and Miki, a jet-booted manga character on the run from the malevolent otaku whose perverted desires brought her to life. Desire is at the heart of Sam Zabel, a rollicking but sincere rumination on fantasy and its consequences both within and without. Finding herself among the hot green chicks, Alice tries to recast the rules of that imagined world to reflect contemporary mores; meanwhile, Sam is swept away in those verdant comic book scenes. He’s accompanied by Alice, whose webcomics subvert man-made and male-dominated fantasy worlds to her own progressive ends, and Miki, a jet-booted manga character on the run from the malevolent otaku whose perverted desires brought her to life. Desire is at the heart of Sam Zabel, a rollicking but sincere rumination on fantasy and its consequences both within and without. Finding herself among the hot green chicks, Alice tries to recast the rules of that imagined world to reflect contemporary mores; meanwhile, Sam is swept away in those verdant comic book scenes. He’s accompanied by Alice, whose webcomics subvert man-made and male-dominated fantasy worlds to her own progressive ends, and Miki, a jet-booted manga character on the run from the malevolent otaku whose perverted desires brought her to life. Desire is at the heart of Sam Zabel, a rollicking but sincere rumination on fantasy and its consequences both within and without. Finding herself among the hot green chicks, Alice tries to recast the rules of that

Covid-19 has brought much of our economy to a standstill. That includes the comics industry. Given that few new books have come in, let’s look back at some prime comics that arrived before the inception of 741.5. You’ll find our first item under another Dewey Decimal number, 070.5, the location of books about, well, books, and other forms of publishing. Headquartered in Montreal, Drawn & Quarterly is one of the foremost publishers of modern comics. The imprint started out as a quarterly magazine in the style of the seminal art comic RAW. Then editor/publisher/chief bottle washer Chris Oliveros expanded into single titles like Palookaville and Optic Nerve before focusing on graphic novels and collections such as Doug Wright: Canada’s Master Cartoonist (a gorgeous Oversize book available at Central). Twenty-Five Years...of the best North American, European and Japanese cartoonists are celebrated in comics and essays both personal and historical by artists and fans like Margaret Atwood. Released in 2015, this is a chunk of book weighing in at 776 pages and 4.6 pounds, a perfect way to while away quarantine. Get it from Central. That location is also

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