

O BIG PLANET RBIT

Volume 12 #5

"News, reviews and opinions from the world of comics"

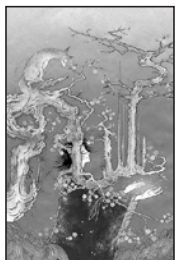
December 2008

Russell revisits 'Sandman'

P. Craig Russell revisits the Sandman once again, this time adapting Neil Gaiman's prose novella *Sandman: The Dream Hunters*. Originally presented as a hardcover with illustrations by Yohitaka Amano (Vampire Hunter D), Russell has transformed the original story into a 4-issue mini-series.

No stranger to Gaiman's work, Russell has previously adapted Gaiman's short story, "Murder Mysteries" for Dark Horse, as a stand-alone hardcover. Prior to that, Gaiman and Russell had also collaborated twice previously on Sandman—in Sandman: *Endless Nights*, with the story "Death and Venice", and they won an Eisner Award for their Arabian Nights story, "Ramadan" in Sandman #50 (currently available in Sandman Vol.6: *Fables and Reflections*).

In case you haven't read *The Dream Hunters* in prose form, we won't give any spoilers, but the story is set in old Japan, and stars a monk, a shape-changing fox, some demons, and of course, Morpheus (aka The Sandman). And if by some chance, you haven't read any Sandman before, try it—you'll like it.



Secret Invasion: Dark Reign

The invasion is over! The Skrulls have won and the entire Marvel Universe is now under their control! Earth's only hope lies in a failsafe anti-Skrull virus buried deep within the brain of Reed Richards' robot butler H.E.R.B.I.E., but there's one problem: H.E.R.B.I.E. has been taken over by the brand new Ultron! As a global robot/Skrull war breaks out the heroes of earth and counter-earth combine forces to defeat H.E.R.B.I.E./Ultron and end the Skrull/robot "Dark Reign."

I have to be honest with you here: I made that entire last paragraph up.

The truth is I have no idea what Dark Reign is all about. Nobody does. It could be about Norman Osborn, Doctor Doom, Emma Frost, Loki, and Namor ruling the world, or it could be about the Marvel Apes invading the 616, but you know what?

It's written by Bendis and drawn by Alex Maleev so no matter what it's about this thing is going to be awesome.



Hellblazer #250

Everyone forgets the backbone of Vertigo, Hellblazer, but with issue



250 we're getting holiday stories by five great teams, including original series-writer Jamie Delano, Brian Azzarello (100 Bullets), Peter Milligan (Shade), Dave Gibbons (Watchmen) and superstar-fantasy author China Mieville! Nice.

Punisher: War Zone

If you missed it the first time, Punisher as a title and character was saved by Garth Ennis in a 12-issue series called "Welcome Back, Frank" with bear attacks, flame throwers, and people suffocating under obese men. You know, Garth Ennis-style. So now we have a sequel, 6 issues, weekly!



Punisher MAX X-mas Special



Then to continue the Punisher mayhem, our new fave writer Jason Aaron throws us a special Xmas Special? It will be awesome! And violent...

Superman: New Krypton

The Superman line has needed a kick in the pants for a while now. Despite the excellence of All-Star Superman, not much else in the Superman family has been terribly exciting. Until now that is. Spinning out of the events of the recent (and awesome) Geoff Johns issues of Action Comics, the Superman: New Krypton cross-over looks to be exactly what



Supes' fans need. Major paradigm-shifts? Check. Super-fights? Of course. Krypto? Well, I don't think anybody was asking for Krypto, but he's in it too! Just read the thing. There's a part where a Kryptonian punches a whale! (Editor's note: No actual whales were hurt in the making of this comic)

Spawn #185

Todd McFarlane returns to the book that made him famous! Well, his name is on it at least. Who knows if he really has anything to do with it. Either way, there's some crazy stuff going on in this issue. I didn't understand any of it, but it was definitely crazy!



Wolverine: Manifest Destiny #1

Wolverine + Jason Aaron = A recipe for rad. Even better than the previous "Get Mystique" storyline, Wolverine: Manifest Destiny is shaping up to be the best Wolverine story of the year that's not called "Old Man Logan"!

Batman: Cacophony #1

Kevin Smith writes Batman! I expect that the last issue of this 3-issue series will ship in 14 months and for some reason Batman will talk about Star Wars.

Ultimatum 1 & 2

By now you've all read the first issue of Ultimatum and you know that it's about Magneto destroying most of the Ultimate earth, so the writers of Marvel's Ultimate titles have a more streamlined universe

to tell their stories in. If not, I just ruined the first four pages of issue #1 for you.

30 Days of Night: 30 Days 'til Death #1

If I told you there was a new 30 Days of Night mini coming out I imagine your reaction would be something like this, "Wow, that's awesome...NOT!" After pointing out that your slang is out-of-date I would tell you this book is written and drawn by David Lapham (of Stray Bullets and Young Liars fame) and you would shut up.

Garth Ennis' Battlefields: The Night Witches #1

If you don't like war comics, read Ennis' stuff and you will. This time he combines the perspectives of the all-female Soviet biplane corps and a beleaguered German infantry unit on the Eastern Front. The first issue is amazing, and I'm sure a happy ending will come for everyone (Editor's note: NOT!). He'll be doing more stories under the Battlefields title soon too.

Marvels: Eye of the Camera #1

The long-time-coming sequel to Marvels! Kurt Busiek is back and this new Marvels mini-series looks to offer the same street-level view of what it's like to live in the Marvel Universe. My guess is...pretty weird.

Incognito #1

Incognito is by Ed Brubaker and Sean Phillips. Those are the guys that put together the amazing series Sleeper. They are also the creators of Criminal. If this book about an ex-super villain in witness protection is half as good as those books, it'll still be awesome!

Courtney Crumrin and the Prince of Nowhere

I would love to see another four-issue Courtney Crumrin mini-series (or a new Polly & the Pirates!), but until then, these prestige format one-shots will have to suffice. That's right. Reach for the stars, my expectations!

Acme Novelty Library Vol.19 HC

More Chris Ware goodness is always welcome. I'm a bit confused, though. Chris Ware has always been the master of crazily-sized books, but this makes three in a row in the same format! Maybe the next one will be eight feet tall to make up for it. Watch out Kramer's Ergot!



Ted McKeever Library Book One: Transit Ted McKeever Library Book Two: Eddy Current

A perpetually underrated creator, it's nice to see Ted McKeever finally getting some respect in the form of a nice hardcover collection. Bonus materials abound as well, with the Transit hardcover even containing an unpublished finale to the story! Nice!

Silverfish TP Young Liars Vol.1: Daydream Believer TP

The David Lapham revolution has begun! Sure, we'll probably

never see a new issue of Stray Bullets, but that doesn't mean that Silverfish and Young Liars aren't as awesome as Stray Bullets ever was! Young Liars might even be better! So quit being an old fogey and pick up some new books by a guy who is still as talented as you remember him being.

Warren Ellis' Frankenstein's Womb

Another short by Ellis like Crecy or Aetheric Mechanics, this one is looking at what inspired Mary Shelley to write Frankenstein.



Big Planet's Gift Guide 2008

The Abyss Superhero satire from the guy who wrote Star Wars: Tag and Bink Are Dead.

All Star Superman TP The greatest Superman ever by Morrison and Quitely, at last in softcover.

American Flag! Howard Chaykin's classic comic finally available for a new generation.

American Widow Autobiography of a woman whose husband died in the terrorist attacks.

Asterix Omnibus Some of the greatest comics ever, in a new 3-in-1 reprint!

Astounding Wolf-Man Robert Kirkman's new hero, who's a werewolf.

Atomic Robo The story of America told through the eyes of a robot.

Bat Manga Based on the campy TV show, the Japanese gave us their take on Batman!

Batman RIP Morrison weaves a crazy saga of Batman losing his mind. Plus Bat-Mite!

Beetle Bailey The first strips, including before he joined the army.

Berlin 2 The historical epic of '30s era Berlin continues at last.

Black Jack The renegade surgeon from the mind of Tezuka!

Black Summer What if superheroes thought the President was a war criminal?

Bottomless Belly Button Dash Shaw's epic tale of a dysfunctional family.

Bourbon Island 1730 New Trondheim historical adventure on an island!

Buffy TPs More Whedon goodness as "Season 8" continues. With Dracula and such.

Creepy Archives The classic horror comics mag collected finally.

Criminal: The Dead and Dying Brubaker's tightest crime saga yet, spun Rashomon style from each viewpoint.

Dark Tower King's epic fantasy series gets a prequel.

Disappearance Diary Autobiographical manga about creating comics. Very dark and very funny.

Dresden Files Brand new adventure of Dresden, actually written by the author!

Dungeon Monstres New Dungeon series, with a guest artist for each volume.

Echo Terry Moore follows up SiP with a sci-fi tinged thriller.

Fables Covers by James Jean James Jean's amazing covers get their own books, with pencils and more.

Fear Agent 4 The fear agent's killed plenty of aliens. So how about some space pirates?

Ganges 2 Kevin says best ever! Plus lots of video game action!

Green Lantern Sinestro Corps War Sinestro decides to take things downtown.

Green Manor Murder, mysteries, and humor.

Heavy Liquid Pope's sci-fi Philip K. Dick-influenced drug adventure reprinted with new color.

Hellboy Library Mignola's first Hellboys collected in oversized glory.

How to Draw Stupid Kyle Baker teaches you how to make it as a comic book artist. Really.

Incredible Herc Hercules takes on the Skrull pantheon – with Earth's God Squad!

Indiana Jones Adventures

New cartoony Jones adventure and not a Crystal Skull in sight.

Jeff Hawke One of the earliest great sci-fi adventure strips.

Joker HC Some minor Batman villain gets a book of his own. Oh, he's in a movie?

Journey A story of Wolverine in the 19th century. Nope, not that Wolverine. The frontiersman one!

Kaput & Zosky Aliens invade, Trondheim style!

Katy Keene Fashion comics for the Tim Gunn in everyone.

The Last Musketeer The Fourth Musketeer fights Ming the Merciless in outer space. Yes, it's as great as it sounds.

Life Sucks Vampire convenience store clerk falls in love with a goth girl.

Little Orphan Annie The early years of everyone's favorite orphan in one giant book.

Local HC Twelve stories in twelve cities in twelve issues. It's also twelve times better than most other comics.

Locke & Key A family deals with their father's death at a spooky haunted house.

Maintenance 3 More time-travel aliens and cavemen than you'll ever need.

Mammoth Books A series of super cheap samplers of some of the greatest comics over the years – Zombies, Crime, Horror, War.

Marvel 1985 HC The supervillains of the Marvel U invade our Earth in 1985.

Marvel Zombies 2 Eh, what's so funny about zombified superheroes? Eating the universe is a good start.

Me and the Devil Blues: Robert Johnson A huge book on Robert Johnson's life.

Mini Marvels Cute li'l scamp versions of your fave Marvel guys, collected together.

Moomin 3 Newest collection of these classic strips.

New York Four Brian Wood and Kelly do it up teen drama style in NYC!

No Pasaran 3 Wow, the final part of this Spanish Civil War thriller.

Northlanders Vikings. Brian Wood. Mass decapitations.

OMAC Kirby's complete OMAC reprinted at last. Lots of mohawk action!

Phoenix Wright Ace Attorney I object! That you have not purchased this book!

Proof So if the X-Files investigated only monsters, why not hire Sasquatch?

Punisher Omnibus: Garth Ennis Marvel Knights The earliest Ennis Punisher, when it still had a (twisted) sense of

humor.

Queen & Country Definitive These amazing spy thrillers in a cheap format – if you thought the new Bond was still too unrealistic.

Roy of the Rovers Crazy soap opera-esque 1980s soccer, British style!

Scalped 3: Dead Mothers Scalped digs into some back story for more unhappiness. Good times!

Scud The entire run of Scud, completed and collected!

Showcase Enemy Ace German ace of World War I gets the Showcase treatment!

Sky Doll Lush Italian sci-fi, with robot girls and weird religious wars.

Skyscrapers of the Midwest Josh Cotter's beguiling story of youth in the Midwest. Amazing.

Slam Dunk The most popular Japanese comic ever—a thrilling basketball drama.

Star Trek Year 4: Enterprise Experiment Exactly what it sounds like. Engage!

Star Wars Legacy Star Wars in the future. Wait? Is that even possible?

Starman Omnibus The first of a reprint of one of the greatest character-driven superhero sagas ever.

The Sword 1: Fire Best thriller of the year, plus a lot of carnage!

Tellos Colossal Amazing fantasy series, collected in a huge (and cheap!) book.

Terror Inc. Violent madness of a guy who has to replace his body parts from his dead foes.

Three Shadows Disney animator tells the story of a family and their adventures.

Tick Omnibus The funniest comic ever? All the original great series by Ben Edlund in one book.

Tokyo Zombie In the zombie-apocalypse, our kung fu skills will be more important than ever!

The Twelve 1940s era superheroes awoken in the present. It's like a team of disconnected Captain Americas!

The Umbrella Academy My Chemical Romance singer Gerard Way actually wrote a really good comic about a super-powered family. Less emo than you think.

Vinyl Underground Paranormal investigators in London. Plus assorted Vertigo weirdness.

Water Baby Road trip comic, of a girl surfer who lost her leg to a shark, with Ross Campbell art.

Watchmen HC (recolor) Watchmen is back, again! This time its recolored, and out in hardcover again.

Y the Last Man 10 The great Vertigo thriller at last ties up with its final book!

The Nifty Fifty

Big Planet Comics' 50 best-selling comic titles of the year

(Determined by number of issues sold)

- 1 Secret Invasion
- 2 Final Crisis
- 3 New Avengers
- 4 Batman (RIP) →
- 5 Astonishing X-Men
- 6 Justice League
- 7 Mighty Avengers
- 8 Ultimates 3
- 9 Uncanny X-Men
- 10 Hulk
- 11 Ultimate Origins
- 12 All Star Batman & Robin
- 13 Wolverine (Old Man Logan)
- 14 X-Force
- 15 Thor →
- 16 Fantastic Four (Mark Millar)
- 17 Captain America
- 18 Skaar Son of Hulk
- 19 Trinity
- 20 X-Men Legacy
- 21 All-Star Superman
- 22 Justice Society
- 23 Final Crisis Rage of the Red Lanterns
- 24 Final Crisis Requiem
- 25 Kick-Ass
- 26 Serenity
- 27 Titans
- 28 Buffy the Vampire Slayer
- 29 Final Crisis Legion of Three Worlds
- 30 Green Lantern →
- 31 Cable
- 32 Ultimatum
- 33 Countdown
- 34 Action Comics
- 35 Young X-Men
- 36 Invincible Iron Man
- 37 Avengers Invaders
- 38 Amazing Spider-Man
- 39 Superman/Batman
- 40 Incredible Herc
- 41 Avengers Initiative
- 42 Ultimate Spider-Man →
- 43 Logan
- 44 Black Panther
- 45 The Twelve
- 46 DC Universe Last Will & Testament
- 47 Green Lantern Corps
- 48 Teen Titans
- 49 The Sword
- 50 Detective Comics (RIP)



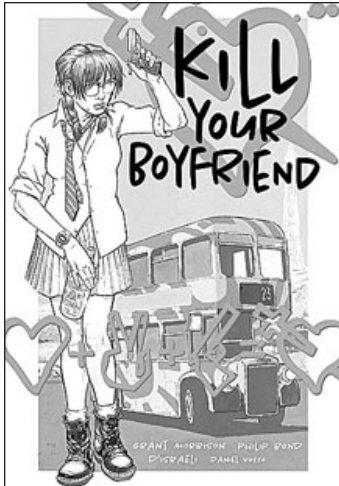
Graphic Novels and Trade Paperbacks

Big Planet Comics' best-selling titles of the year

- 1 Watchmen
- 2 Wanted
- 3 Amulet
- 4 Batman: The Killing Joke
- 5 The Sword 1 Fire
- 6 Y the Last Man 10
- 7 Fables 10
- 8 Joker HC
- 9 DC: The New Frontier
- 10 Incognegro
- 11 Fun Home
- 12 Walking Dead 8
- 13 Atomic Robo 1
- 14 Buffy 2
- 15 World War Hulk
- 16 Invincible 9
- 17 Indiana Jones Adventures
- 18 Green Lantern: Sinestro Corps War
- 19 Serenity
- 20 DMZ 5
- 21 All Star Batman 1
- 22 Astonishing X-Men 4
- 23 Boys 2
- 24 Persepolis Complete
- 25 Girl Genius 7
- 26 Grease Monkey
- 27 Ganges 2
- 28 Dungeon Monstres
- 29 Umbrella Academy
- 30 The Last Musketeer
- 31 How to Draw Stupid
- 32 Order of the Stick 3
- 33 Water Baby
- 34 Aqua Leung
- 35 Savage Sword of Conan
- 36 Scalped 3
- 37 Too Cool to Be Forgotten
- 38 All Star Superman 1
- 39 Facts in the Case of the Departure of Miss Finch
- 40 Criminal 3

Manga Top 11 Best-Sellers 2008

- 1 Dororo
- 2 Color of Rage
- 3 Slam Dunk
- 4 Black Jack
- 5 Good-Bye
- 6 Real
- 7 Gantz
- 8 Tokyo Zombie
- 9 King of Thorn
- 10 Quest for the Missing Girl
- 11 Cowa



Kill Your Boyfriend

Another neglected Vertigo classic, finally back in print! From the twisted mind of Grant Morrison with exquisite art by Philip Bond. Boring girl meets dangerous boy and really, the title says it all.

Showcase Presents: Sgt. Rock Vol.2 TP

Rock and Easy Co. are back with another 500+ pages of classic black-and-white war carnage! Art by Joe Kubert, Russ Heath, and Jerry Grandenetti. See what inspired the current (not quite as good) mini-series by the guy who does Shi.

**Sojourn Omnibus Vol.1
Ruse Omnibus Vol.1**

These were the 2 greats of the second line from CrossGen--Ruse, a Sherlock Holmes-ian detective series with strange sci-fi undertones from Mark Waid and Jackson Guice; and Sojourn, an epic fantasy saga with ridiculous



art by Greg Land (He draws a lot of girls in it, but the story is actually really good too). Now you can get them all in one shebang.

Runaways: Pride & Joy

Runaways is still one of the most amazing books to come out of Marvel in recent years. Yup, Brian K. Vaughan did it, of course. Six teens find out their parents are not only evil--they're supervillains. Almost enough to make you angsty. Finally available in a normal-size package....

Runaways: Dead End Kids

So after the amazing storytelling of Vaughan, what do you do? Let Joss Whedon write it. And send the kids back to 19th Century New York City. Apparently there were a bunch of teenaged super-powered kids back then too.

The Spirit Vol.1 TP

Darwyn Cooke take on the Spirit is second only to Eisner's (well,

maybe Jules Feiffer & Wally Wood too). A great collection of stories that stick the Spirit in the modern world without making him seem like a man out of time. But who cares what I say...it's Darwyn Cooke! You know, the guy who did New Frontier, Batman: Ego, Catwoman: Selina's Big Score...yeah, that Darwyn Cooke.

Fables Vol.11: War and Pieces TP

It's all been leading up to this. The ultimate battle between Fabletown and the Adversary. This might be the best of all the Fables trades, but even if it's not, it's still better than most every other comic on the market.

JLA/Avengers TP

George Perez and Kurt Busiek tackle the tough questions in this "should've-been-in-paper-back-years-ago" collection of the JLA/Avengers mini-series. "What questions?", you may potentially ask in an alternate universe where you actually care. Well, I don't know-- I read this series like ten years ago!

Archie Americana: Best of the Nineties TP



I was gonna fill this with jokes about J u g h e a d b e i n g grunge, but I think that a c t u a l l y happens in this book, so...yikes.

Instead I'll make a joke about other stuff from the nineties! In this book, Reggie Mantle meets Jaleel White at a screening of Independence Day. Looking at me, I'm a Family Guy writer!



Blazing Combat HC

Blazing Combat only ran four issues in the mid-sixties, but what a four issues they were! Featuring the work of Wally Wood, Alex Toth, Frank Frazetta, and a host of others, those four issues are finally being collected in a super-nice hardcover by Fantagraphics. A perfect fit next to your EC and Creepy Archives.

Ghost Rider: Hell Bent and Heaven Bound TP

In the words of the great poet Lucas Cage, "Sweet Christmas!". Scalped + Grindhouse x Ghost Rider = Hell Yeah! Trust me, I got an A++ in Algebra. If you like things that are good, do yourself a favor and buy this book.

Maybe it was that visit to the real Castle Frankenstein in 1816?

RASL Vol.1 TP

RASL took a couple of issues to get going, but who cares? This is a trade paperback, so no waiting months



between issues. Now you can get all of the "ended-up-getting-really-good" that everybody else had to wait patiently for--all in a European-size album that showcases the art beautifully.

Oh yeah, by the way RASL is the new Jeff Smith book, and it's about a guy who travels through time and space to a world with no Bob Dylan.

Beanworld Holiday Special

It's hard to explain Beanworld to outsiders. Um, there are a bunch of li'l bean-shaped creatures, who live all together in a li'l Beanworld... Um, nevermind. Just trust that if you want something different, that will amaze you, try Beanworld. And here is your chance, with the first new story in over 10 years, a special stand-alone story for you, my friends! From the mind of advertising/marketing genius Larry Marder (yeah the same guy that ran Image and Todd McFarlane, Inc. for years--the good years!)

Mister X: Condemned #1

Before Terminal City, there was Somnopolis! Another blast from

the past, Mister X was one of the original alternative comics that really was "alternative"--in a lot of ways, the comic is more about the futuristic city--with some art by little-knowns like, the Hernandez Bros. or Seth or Dave McKean. Now creator Dean Motter is back with a new miniseries (yeah, the same Dean Motter who was the top album designer for CBS records back in the day).

Freakangels Vol.1 TP

Ellis is back with another sci-fi gem, with a world where a small group of psychic kids called the Freakangels tried to save the world--but destroyed most of it. Set in a drowned London of the future, the real find here is the beautifully colored art by Paul Duffield.

Tiger! Tiger! Tiger! GN

Southpaw's revenge! The cute tiger from Scott Morse's Southpaw returns as a paper tiger that Morse uses to talk about his own life. Should be amazing as usual.

Blade of the Immortal Vol.20: Demon Lair

Everybody's favorite "post-punk" Samurai comic is back. At last moving into new territory beyond what was published as comics.

Alan's War GN

Finally available in English! A wholly different book from Emmanuel Guibert--rendered in beautiful inkwash--this is based off of his friendship with American G.I. Alan Cope and his experiences fighting in World War II.

Spiegelman breaks it down

By Scott A. Rosenberg

Cartoonist Art Spiegelman has accomplished a lot in his career. He won a Pulitzer Prize for his stunning graphic novel, "Maus," about his parents' lives during the Holocaust, and he's achieved critical acclaim for his work with the *New Yorker*, the *Raw* comics anthology magazine and his 9/11 book, "In the Shadow of No Towers."

But when he talks about the highlight of his career, he's not talking about one of those things. He's talking about his appearance on "The Simpsons" last year, where fellow comic book creators Alan Moore and Daniel Clowes joined him.

"I know it's a great achievement — just ask my son," Spiegelman says, laughing. "I loved doing it. I love 'The Simpsons,' always have. I thought it was a great honor to say, 'A 'Maus' is in the house.'"

Spiegelman has two new books out. One is an expanded reprint of his 1978 book, "Breakdowns," which is expanded with an introductory comic to provide context for the reprint and an essay explaining the introduction.

"[The introduction] is a way of allowing people to understand the person who did the work in 1978, and also use what I learned after 'Breakdowns' and reapply it to the Modernist concerns that were in the 'Breakdowns' book," Spiegelman says.

The new book, now titled, "Breakdowns: Portrait of the Artist as a Young%&*" is a whopping 14 inches tall by 10 inches wide. And the content matches the book's physical grandness. Even after 30 years, the content is still fresh and as riveting as it was when it first came out.

"I felt like I actually made



something new that was worth making," Spiegelman says. "The opportunity to have this come out again didn't feel like me necessarily looking at some lesser self that evolved into the person who did 'Maus' or whatever, but more like other work which is equally mature."

Maturity is an important word, as there are parts of "Breakdowns" that are definitely not for children, and include an early "Maus" comic, and some experimental strips. It was those naughty panels that made Spiegelman wonder whether the book could be republished. "I'm still living in an earlier version of America," he says. "One in which there are rational people in charge, the economy isn't falling apart and, my God, where pornography is pornography, and

not just naughty bits."

When "Breakdowns" first came out in 1978, and shortly after when *Raw* magazine debuted, the market for underground comix was dramatically different — and it certainly wasn't available in your local bookstore.

"It was really like working in an absolute vacuum," Spiegelman says. "There wasn't contingency for this kind of work — it was a wilderness for cartoonists who weren't trying to do newspaper comics or superheroes."

The idea that Spiegelman would be appearing at a major book store like Politics & Prose was something that he couldn't have imagined.

"There was one moment where it was really arid," he says. "And from that place, one could never have conceived of a place where

the one growth area in bookstores is comics.

Two of Spiegelman's finest works, "Maus" and "No Towers," have come from a place of great tragedy — the Holocaust and 9/11. "Breakdowns" seems to deviate from that tradition. Sort of.

"When I'm feeling good, I don't feel like I have to work," he says. "Work is a way of reattaining balance because there's really something gnawing at me. But ['Breakdowns'] wasn't born of that exactly. I just got to relive my own personal traumas, I guess."

While "Breakdowns" is not kid-friendly, Spiegelman's other new book, "Jack and the Box," about a boy's encounter with a toy, is perfect for young readers. Published by *Raw Junior*, "Jack" is part of the Toon Books line, which Spiegelman runs with his wife, New Yorker and *Raw* alum Francoise Mouly.

While it might seem strange for one man to do very mature work and work geared toward the very young, Spiegelman sees the process of creating each to be very similar. "The work in 'Breakdowns' is built on very severe limitations, whether it be do a comic where the words and pictures don't line up at the same panel [or] a strip where the end of the comic is in the middle of the page," he says.

Doing the book for children allows Spiegelman the opportunity to challenge himself as a cartoonist — making a book that can be read by a child with a first-graders' vocabulary.

"It takes advantage of my bi-polar nature, I guess," Spiegelman says. "To have a book for adults and really mean it, and a book really for very young readers, is two different facets of me."



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