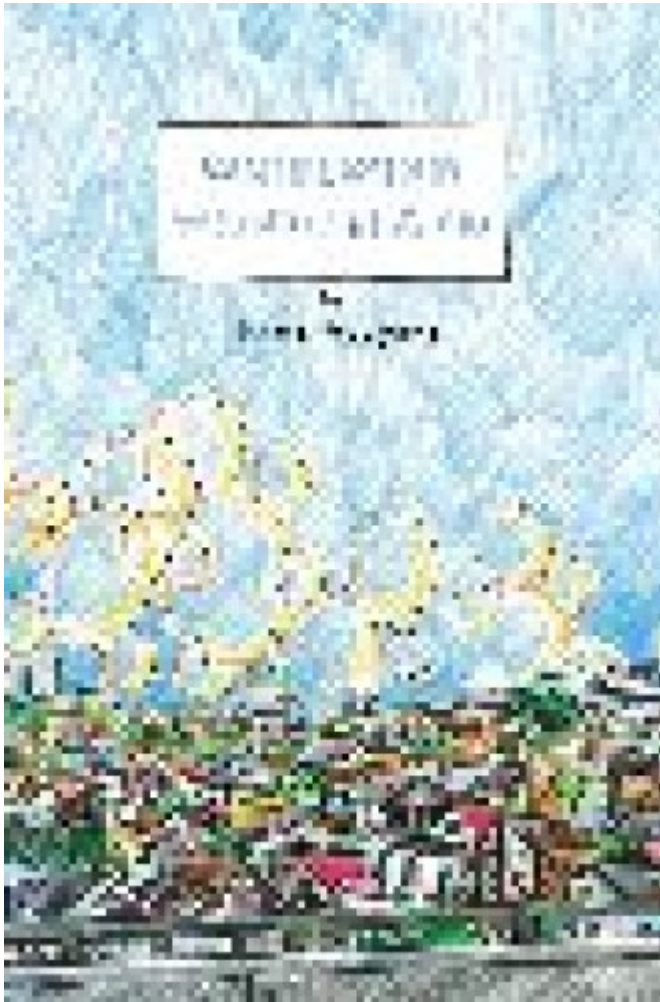


CC recommends

selected by [Gene Luen Yang](#) in the [December 15, 2009](#) issue

In Review



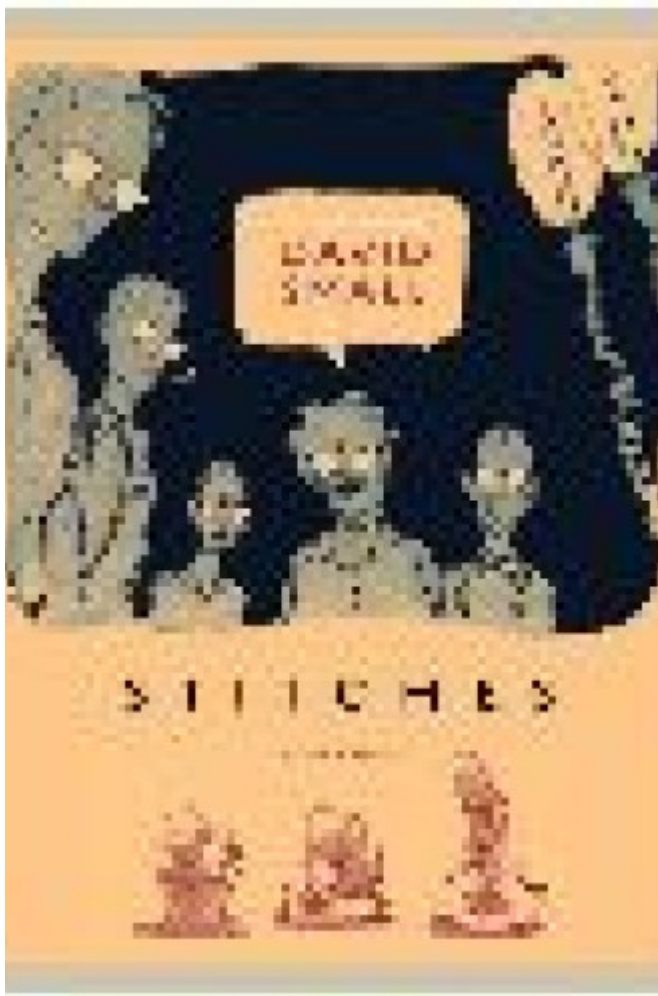
Whirlwind Wonderland

Rina Ayuyang
Sparkplug/Tugboat



Asterios Polyp

David Mazzucchelli
Pantheon



Stitches: A Memoir

David Small
Norton



Pluto (Vol. 1)

Naoki Urasawa and Osamu Tezuka
VIZ Media



Irredeemable (Vol. 1)

Mark Waid and Peter Krause
BOOM! Studios

This pocket-sized volume collects eight years' worth of Rina Ayuyang's self-published autobiographical minicomics. Half the fun is seeing Ayuyang's cartooning skills mature from page to page. She begins with a series of vignettes about her Filipino heritage, her obsession with football, and her boyfriend. By the end, Ayuyang settles on an endearing, rough-around-the-edges style to portray her endearing, rough-around-the-edges family. Available at sparkplugcomicbooks.com.

The story of a self-absorbed architect told from the vantage point of his stillborn twin. With beautiful, crisp cartooning, Mazzucchelli details how a brilliant but impractical man with an oversized ego destroys relationships. Mazzucchelli uses storytelling techniques that would seem gimmicky in the hands of a lesser

cartoonist. *Asterios Polyp* is sure to be the subject of discussion among graphic novel aficionados for years, though some readers may object to its nihilistic perspective and its depictions of sexuality.

Undergoing surgery at age 14, Small lost all but one of his vocal chords. In his debut graphic novel, he chronicles the difficult, mute adolescence that followed. Family memories of heartbreak and mental illness are brought to life in sparse words and expressive artwork.

In a utopian future in which humans and robots live side-by-side as equals, a mysterious murderer has set his sights on the seven most technologically advanced robots on Earth. Detective Gesicht is assigned the grisly task of tracking down the perpetrator, but he has a more personal motivation as well: Gesicht, a robot himself, is most likely on the hit list. Urasawa's meticulously detailed drawing style, intricate plot and taut pacing offer a punch to the reader's gut and a puzzle for the brain.

What if the most powerful superhero in the world were to become evil? The Plutonian, a Superman stand-in, turns his back on humanity. The task of stopping him falls to his former teammates at the Paradigm (a Justice League of sorts). On the surface, *Irredeemable* is an over-the-top testosterone-fueled action comic. Beneath the apocalyptic explosions and spandexed fistfights lies a challenging exploration of the vices of the Internet age—trolling, gossip, information saturation and pornography.

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