



7563 Lake City Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115

1.800.657.1100 | www.fantagraphics.com

Eric Reynolds • Official Skill & Paid Apologist • reynolds@fantagraphics.com

For Immediate Release, With Our Compliments. Digital Artwork Available Upon Request.

ANNOUNCING TWO NEW BOOKS FROM FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS AND BLAKE BELL

“BILL EVERETT: FIRE AND WATER” and “THE COMPLETE STEVE DITKO: 1953/54”

COMING IN JULY 2009 FROM FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

Fantagraphics Books is proud to announce that they will be extending their partnership with author Blake Bell (*Strange and Stranger: The World of Steve Ditko* – the first critical retrospective of Steve Ditko, the co-creator and original artist of the *Amazing Spider-Man*) to produce two exciting new books for release in July 2009.

Bill Everett: Fire and Water will be a part of the 70th anniversary celebration of the release of *Marvel Comics #1*, the first comic produced by Marvel Comics, which features the late Bill Everett's signature creation, the Sub-Mariner. Everett invented comics' first anti-hero; an angry half-breed (half-man, half sea-creature humanoid) that terrorized humankind until uniting with the Allied Forces to conquer fascism's march across Europe. The Sub-Mariner character has endured 70 years, having also been optioned as a major motion picture.

But the reasons to celebrate Bill Everett's monumental career don't stop with his water-based hero. Everett was a master of many comic genres, and was one of the pre-eminent horror comic-book artists in the 1950s (before government and societal pressures led the comics industry to censor itself with the imposition of the Comics Code Authority). Says author Blake Bell: “Had Everett worked for EC Comics in the 1950s, and not Marvel Comics, he would be recognized as the top horror artist of the decade, and this new book will prove that assertion.”

The book is being produced in cooperation with the Everett family and will feature a definitive biography of the artist's career, and how his personality informed his signature character, before his untimely passing at the age of 55 in 1973. Bill Everett's daughter, Wendy Everett, says about the project: “My brothers and I are grateful and delighted that our father's talent is being celebrated in this new work by Blake Bell. Bill Everett's life work, centered in the Golden Age of Comics, is a treasure that we're pleased can be shared with the rest of the art world.”

But the main focus will be the display of artwork that few artists can match in breadth and quality. Says Fantagraphics publisher Gary Groth: “Everett is highly respected among the cognoscenti but little known outside those circles. Everett was a stylistic virtuoso with a rich, textured, tactile inking technique, and we hope that Blake's *Fire and Water* will do for Everett what his book on Ditko did for that artist: Give the artist his critical due while spreading an appreciation to a larger audience.”

Everett's dedication to the industry also extended to his peers, and this book shall continue that legacy as well. Upon Everett's passing in 1973, the Academy of Comic Book Arts (ACBA) had an ACBA Welfare Fund that they renamed *The Bill Everett Fund* in his memory, used to assist "artists in need of temporary financial aid and for other personal needs." In 2008, The Hero Initiative (<http://www.actorcomicfund.org/>) continues this important work, and Blake Bell has committed to donating 10% of his royalties from the Everett book to The Hero Initiative in Everett's name. Notes Bell, "Wendy and I are proud to represent Bill's passion for comics in this regard, and we couldn't think of a more worthy vehicle than The Hero Initiative."

The Complete Steve Ditko: 1953/54 is the second Fantagraphics/Blake Bell project set for release in 2009. Following up on Bell's 2008 critical retrospective of Ditko's career, this new project will, for the first time, feature full-color reprints of every story from the first two years of Ditko's career. From Ditko's first story being flipped from one publisher to another, to Ditko's short stint in the Joe Simon/Jack Kirby studio, to Ditko's encampment at the Charlton Comics operation in 1954, readers will get to see the initial works of an artist already at a level of craftsmanship that exceeded most of his peers. Similar to Everett's work of the day, this is Ditko unfiltered, producing horror material that featured graphic bloodshed, dismemberment and blood-curdling acid baths as the ugly end to the lives of the dark and twisted inhabitants of Steve Ditko's imagination.

Fantagraphics publisher Gary Groth thinks this is some of Ditko's ripest work. "This is arguably his most interesting period, before the comics industry domesticated him to some extent, when his work at its most stylistically uninhibited. It will serve as a perfect companion to Blake's earlier book on Ditko."

In addition to updates to Bell's Bill Everett web site (www.ess.comics.org), the Yahoo discussion group Timely-Atlas-Comics (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Timely-Atlas-Comics/>) will be the place to join and participate in the selection of the imagery to be used in the book. Readers interested in the Steve Ditko reprint project will be able to view updates at Bell's Steve Ditko web site at www.ditko.comics.org. Facebook groups for both projects will also be available.

2009 will mark the year when the work of two comic-book greats is celebrated with these definitive volumes from Blake Bell and Fantagraphics Books.

A selection of images in a variety of formats is available for publication. For additional information, contact Eric Reynolds at the numbers above.

TITLE INFORMATION:

"Bill Everett: Fire and Water"

Written by Blake Bell

\$39.99 Hardcover

220 pages, full-color, 9" x 12"

PUBLICATION DATES: July 2009

"The Complete Steve Ditko: 1953/54"

Compiled and Edited By Blake Bell

\$39.99 Hardcover

220 pages, full-color, 9" x 12"

PUBLICATION DATES: July 2009