



**YEAST HOIST** Ron Regé, Jr.

(HIGHWATER) To the uninitiated, there is no such thing as a graphic novel, only varying degrees of comic books. That being said, the series of vignettes that comprise *Yeast Hoist* make for a simple and earnest work in a medium that seems, more often than not, to be an orgy of eye candy paired with lukewarm dialogue. Regé doesn't reach for the moon thematically; instead, he creates an entertaining travelogue that is equal parts introspection and recollection. One section in particular, entitled "Family Story," may be one of the sweetest two pages ever drawn/written. So go pick up *Yeast Hoist*, especially if you don't care for comic books. **LEVI GORFINE**

**STYX TAXI** Steve Goldman

(FWD) As a first attempt by writer Steve Goldman and artist Jeremy Arambulo, the slim volume of *Styx Taxi* is an exercise in form and style. The premise: That hooded skeletal figure who punted the recently departed to the nether regions of the afterlife has been updated since his Greek invention; he is now a cab driver working in New York, giving the dead a two hour ride to do whatever they want before being sent off to eternal afterlife. With such a complex premise, this comic could thrive in a seri-

alized form; instead, the creators seem to have come up with a great idea but overreached. There is simply too much packed into such a small comic book—we are introduced to this nebulous world, and we just scratch the surface of the characters' personalities within. It's intriguing enough for a second read-through, sending the curious reader spinning into a Dante's circle by questioning one's existential angst.

**SARAH HENG**

**DAME DARCY'S MEAT CAKE COMPILATION** Dame Darcy

(FANTAGRAPHICS) There's no explanation in the world of *Meat Cake*. People die, magic happens, people live. There are adventures. There are questions. There are statements. Explanations? No, but if that's what you're looking for, you've come to the wrong place. Dame Darcy renders her tales with the heart of a precocious child and produces a world in which everything, be it fantastic or mundane, is worthy of wonder. Fractured Victorian-era Gothicism provides the stories' look, and her characters careen inexplicably from passion to passion, exhibiting a manic zest one rarely sees in the modern world. Yeah, you could get serious and analyze the creepy sexual undertones or try to

figure out just what death *means* in this context, but to do so would be to miss all the fun. Darcy's telling you to look at the world and see possibility. **JAMES BARNES**

**BLANKETS** Craig Thompson

(TOP SHELF) This amazing graphic novel is, in a word, lyrical. Written and illustrated by comic world newbie Craig Thompson, *Blankets* defines the term "graphic novel"—a beautifully illustrated epic that spans a lifetime filled with warmth, depth, and the full gamut of emotions. "Art does not reproduce the visible; rather, it makes visible," said artist Paul Klee, and Thompson's work is evidence to the validity of his statement. An autobiography, *Blankets* tells the story of young Craig growing up as a devout Christian in small town Wisconsin. He is introspective and timid, a loner at school and church youth groups. When he meets Raina at a youth group retreat, she gives him a new perspective on life. The soul of the story lies here, in Thompson's struggle with love for God through faith, or love of a more tangible (and less holy) sort with Raina. This is one comic book worth owning, as each reading of it is like adding another layer on a wintry morning. **SARAH HENG**