

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Comics not only for kids

★ **Paul Has a Summer Job** by Michel Rabagliati (*Drawn & Quarterly*, 160 pages, \$26.95)

Paul Has a Summer Job is the delightful followup to Michel Rabagliati's *Paul in the Country* — winner of a Harvey Award, one of the comic world's most prestigious honours. A Quebec designer and illustrator, Rabagliati writes and draws stories that exude a gentle, unself-conscious charm.

Presumably autobiographically inspired, Paul is an artistic high-school dropout who spends a formative summer during the 1970s as a kid's camp counselor in the woods of Northern Quebec.

The story is neatly told. A sentimental journey to be sure, Rabagliati is careful not to drop the storytelling ball in favour of self-indulgence. Paul confronts his fear of the forest, meets his first love and learns a thing or two about life's real adversities from the underprivileged kids he supervises. Strong and sensitive, *Paul Has a Summer Job* is a coming-of-age gem.

IAN DOIG

FOR THE CALGARY HERALD

Waiting For Food: Number 3 by Robert Crumb (*Drawn & Quarterly*, 120 pages, \$41.95)

As noted in his introduction to the book, fine art patrons are really into Robert Crumb's comic work. So much so that they'll pay crazy sums of cash for even his doodled-on restaurant place mats. This is the third published collection of such masterpieces exhibited and sold in art galleries over the years.

Crumb is the most famous of the 1960s underground comic artists. He got off to a psychedelic start with very adult stories of sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll starring characters like Mr. Natural and Fritz the Cat. A few years ago, filmmaker Terry Zwigoff introduced Crumb to a broader audience with his biopic film, *Crumb*. The artist proved a wry and happily tormented cultural commentator, whose brilliance shows even in his sketched throwaways. The drawings in *Waiting For Food* mix portraits and conversations with the stream-of-consciousness imagery of a busy, thoughtful mind. What's more, Crumb can simply draw circles around most of the comic art world.

IAN DOIG

FOR THE CALGARY HERALD

