



Mary Fleener

Artist's name: Mary Fleener

Style: High-contrast, geometric impressionism
Continuing themes: Black magic, interpretations of song lyrics, real life situations

Publications include: Chicken Slacks, HooDoo, Slutburger Stories

How long have you been a cartoonist?

In my mind, all my life, but I guess a more accurate answer would be when I sold my first piece to Robert Armstrong for *The Tubor's Voice* (The Couch Potato Newsletter). The pay was \$10, but it felt like \$1,000; I was hooked immediately. That was 1986.

What artists or strips have influenced you?

Egyptian art, Aztec, Mexican folk art, the surrealists, the Sunday L.A. Times comic section of the late '50s, Robert Crumb, Robert Armstrong, Rock 'n Roll posters and flyers, Aline Kominsky, Mad Magazine, Los Bros Hernandez, and the Rocky and Bullwinkle Show.

What motivates you?

Anger and fear.

Are there any messages you're trying to get across through your strips?

No. I just try to make no bullshit yet compassionate statements on what I'm exposed to.

What are some of your other occupations and/or hobbies?

If I had to work tomorrow, I'd do custom picture framing. I can grow food and herbs and play music with the best of 'em; electric bass guitar and rhythm guitar. I can, on occasion, belt out a tune. My political sympathies run into animal rights and the pro-choice abortion issue.

What sparked your interest in black magic?

In music, especially R&B, there are lotsa references to sympathetic magic, or HooDoo. That the power of the mind could be channeled into rituals is fascinating but *we* conjure up the wrong forces for power and a price must always be paid. I don't mess with it myself, and never have. All cultures have some sort of HooDoo.

What are some of your favorite characters and/or strips that you've done?

I like drawing hussies. My favorite stories are: 1) The Hawk and the Buzzard (from HooDoo), 2) Trauma Mama (from Slutburger Stories), and 3) The Long Way Home (also from Slutburger Stories).

In your opinion, what is wrong with the world?

Overpopulation.

What projects are you currently working on?

I just finished a full color page for *Drawn and Quarterly* (from Toronto, Canada) and am doing a two-pager for *Rip Off Comics*' "Dream Issue" (edited by George Parsons) and a five-pager written by Dennis Eichhorn that will be in a collection of his stories, published by Fantagraphics. Then, in October, another full color two-page story for *Drawn and Quarterly*. I hope *Rip Off* wants me to do *Slutburger #2*.

What are your goals in your work? What do you hope to accomplish?

I just wanna be part of the gang of current cartoonists that are respected. Since I plan on doing paintings that use my comic images, I hope to sell lots of 'em and eventually feel like I'm actually earning a living, something few cartoonists are currently able to do. I want to do an animated film someday with me composing the music, and I want to help my husband so he can retire early and/or we can both work at home, through the mail. When people think of me, I hope they will say "original."



KITTY STEW

A REAL CAT-TALE
by M. PLENER '83



FRANCY FISH SALMON SUPPERS HORSE FEETBACKS TURKEY & GONJY FOUNTAIN FRODOONA OCEAN PEAS

HEEF LIVER LIVER CHEESE CHEESE SANDWICHES CHEESE SANDWICHES

GRRRR... I'M SICK OF PAYING THIS MUCH FOR CAT FOOD! WHAT'S IN THIS STUFF ANYWAY? GRAIN... PEAS... PEAS?! CARROTS... HELL! I CAN MAKE THIS!

THAT NIGHT

I'LL MAKE IT WITH LOTS A VEGETABLES AND CHICKEN AND LIGHT ON THE HERBS AND SPICES...

WHAT'S THIS? DINNER? IT SURE SMELLS GOOD!

GETAWAY!! THAT'S MY KITTY STEW!! I'M MAKIN' IT FOR TH' CATS! DO YOU THINK THEY'LL LIKE IT?

AW, SCREW TH' CATS!

NO WAY! WE'RE GOING OUT FOR DINNER!

THEY LIKED IT!

TWO WEEKS LATER

I NEED TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT FOR OUR CAT, HARVEY. YES, HE'S THE ONE THAT'S, WELL...UH...HE'S A LITTLE NERVOUS... AND HE NEEDS HIS SHOTS AND A CHECK-UP, OK, BE RIGHT THERE.

MIAARR?

HE KNOWS

WORAWWOOOOO

I'LL BET THAT GUY'S THINKING "THAT POOR CAT..."

THAT POOR CAT...

A TOWEL WRAPPED AROUND YOUR CAT HELPS THE CLINGS AT BATH AND ACTS AS A DIAPER FOR THOSE "LITTLE ACCIDENTS."

SO HOW IS OUR LITTLE TROUBLE MAKER DOIN' AS USUAL, AT LEAST TODAY? "HERE, THERE, A LITTLE SKITTISH AS USUAL; AT LEAST HE'S NOT POOPIN' & ALL OVER THE PLACE!" RA-RA-NA...

OH, INDEED! I KNOW HARVEY... LET'S TAKE HIS TEMPERATURE.

RORROW!

OH, HAR-VEY!

OH... I THINK I KNOW!

IT'S GETTING LONGER!

IT'S AN ONION.

OPPS! LOOKS LIKE HE'S UPSET... UH... THAT'S STRANGE... WHAT IS THIS THING? IT'S STUCK!

WHAT'S AN ONION DOING IN A CAT? SHEESH!

I MADE MY OWN CAT FOOD... A CHICKEN STEW, REALLY, AND I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE GOOD FOR 'EM. THEY LIKED IT...

WON! LOOK HOW LONG IT IS! HA! HA! OH... UH... ANNN!

AAARRGHH!

YOU CERTAINLY SHOULD'VE CHOPPED THE VEGETABLES A LOT FINER. 'CAT CAN'T DIGEST A 6" ONION PIECE! JUST GIVE YOUR CATS CHICKEN AND RICE IF YOU DON'T WANT TO USE COMMERCIAL FOOD AND BIAH... BIAH... BIAH...

OK! OK!!

THAT NIGHT

WHAT'S FOR DINNER?

I'M TRAINING OUT THAT STEW...

WE'RE EATING THAT CAT FOOD?! YECCHHH!!! WE'RE GOIN' OUT!

I'M GONNA GET A LOT OF USE OUT OF THIS STEW!

THE END

JUST IN TIME!

PANT PANT PANT

AWRITE! TIME FOR THE NEW MADONNA VIDEO!