



The Comics Journal Library 6: The Writers

Tom Spurgeon

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Celebrating the great comic book writers, culled from the pages of America's most respected comics magazine.

From the cool passion of sci-fi and occasional comics writer Harlan Ellison to the soap opera explorations and genre twisting of *X-Men* writer Chris Claremont and *Howard the Duck* creator Steve Gerber, between 1966 and 1985 a generation of writers emerged that changed the face of American comic books forever. Many were fans every bit as much as they were professionals, creative artists working from an understanding of what felt right on the comics page forged by years of close scrutiny above and beyond the final sales figures. Some were tempered by exposure to new waves in cinema, new voices in writing, and new comics from Europe and Japan. Coming to comics at a time when the financial awards were poor and the chance for ownership of what one created was even poorer, these writers breathed new life into the dying icons of the past. Writers like Len Wein, Steve Englehart, Gerry Conway, Harlan Ellison, Marv Wolfman, Denny O'Neil, Mark Evanier, Mike Baron and Alan Moore infused comics like *X-Men*, *Captain America*, and *Swamp Thing* with a progressive social outlook that ran directly in the face of decades of simplistic might-makes-right pseudo-moralizing. Some made their careers in other writing fields but toiled in comics out of a sense of loyalty and passion; others became comic book writers just out of their teens and never left. They were America's comic book children come home.

The Comics Journal Library: The Writers celebrates the ascendancy of writer-driven mainstream comic books with a series of revealing, in-depth interviews, many conducted at the height of their influence. Black-and-white illustrations throughout

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