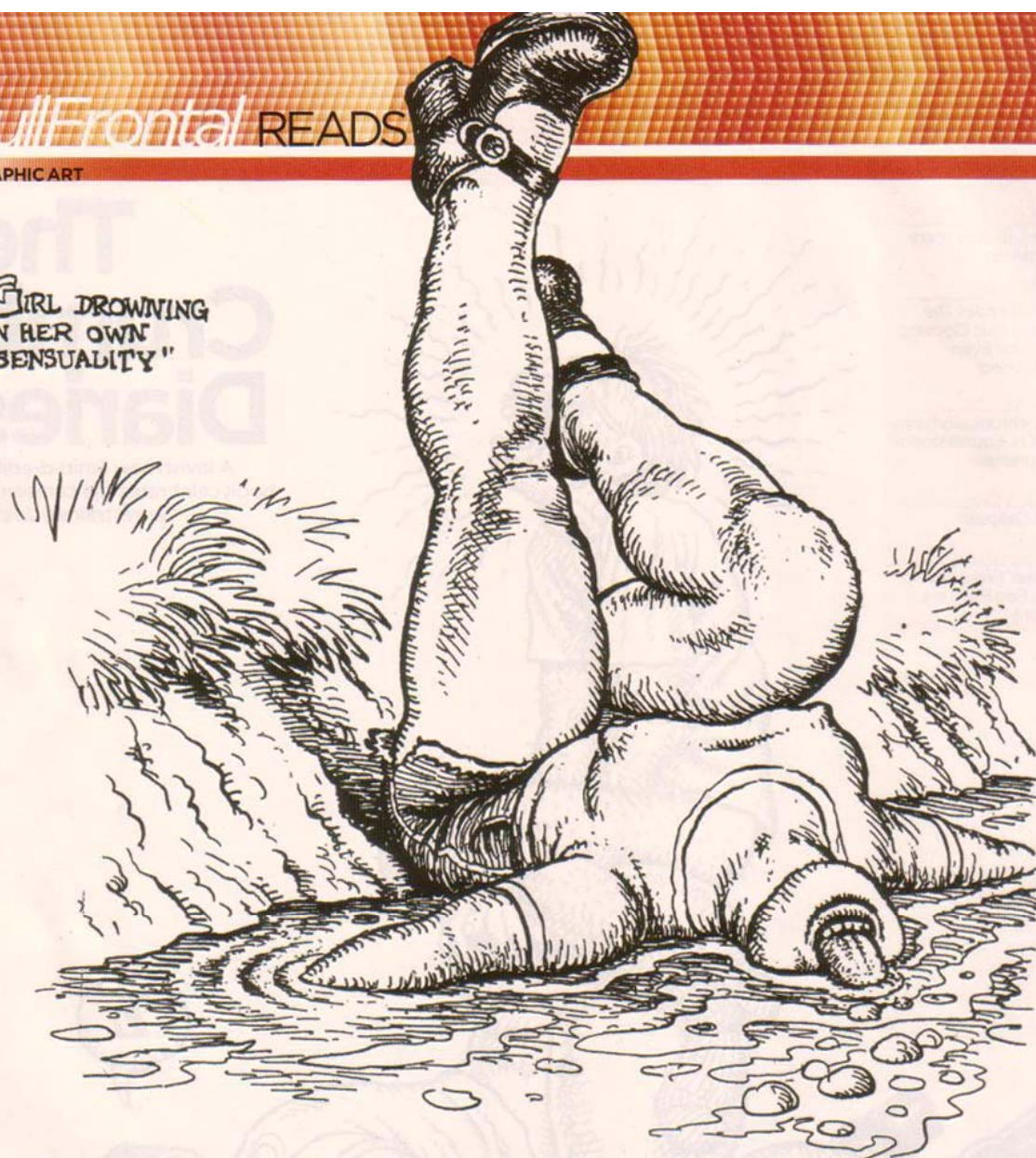


FullFrontal READS

GRAPHIC ART

GIRL DROWNING
IN HER OWN
"SENSUALITY"



Master of His Domain

Robert Crumb has a long history of creating warts-and-all confessional comics—particularly about his taste for raunchy, exhilarating sex. By Calvin Reid

Five hundred dollars can buy plenty of decent things: a 1989 Toyota Corolla, dinner for two at Nobu, and a date with a mid-shelf Vegas call girl are but a few examples. Save your dough for *R. Crumb's Sex Obsessions*, a gorgeous, extravagant new book featuring the famously dirty-minded work of cartoonist Robert Crumb.

Crumb began what has turned into an incredibly influential career with Zap Comix and the underground comics movement of the 1960s. Later, he focused on inventive, highly autobiographical work, as chronicled in the 1994 documentary *Crumb*. Crumb's super-confessional

storytelling—a style he credits to the influence of his wife Aline's early comics—captures a memorable aspect of the sixties culture of hedonism: a compulsion to express taboos of all kinds.

Indeed, an image early in the book, "Girl Drowning in Her Own Sensuality," (above) pretty much reveals all you need to know about Crumb's masturbatory fantasies. The illustrator likes his girls meaty,

Crumb likes his girls meaty, horny, and positioned for pleasure.

horny, and positioned for pleasure. This preference fuels the creative and intellectual tension around much of Crumb's confessional work—men drool at his lexicon of shamelessness while women often fume.

But it's hard to resist the cartoonist's virtuoso drawing skills and his talent for translating his obsessions into vivid pornographic hilarity. He renders fantasies of plaid-skirted schoolgirls "trapped" in windows, their rear ends (skirts up, panties revealed!) conveniently exposed to the viewer, Crumb, who just happens to be passing by.

Crumb says he makes "raucous vulgar comedy" out of his own personal quirks. That's a nice way of saying his work is both comically disgusting and sexually exhilarating. His stories don't necessarily foster masturbation, but they do celebrate it.