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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

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The Best Comic Strip Of All Time

Shockingly, [one critic picks "For Better Or Worse,"](#) which has barely caught my eye over the years and never seemed more than not-awful. (Which is more than most comic strips accomplish.) I actually love comic strips: they're truly a bottom of the barrel, no respect art form. (Try going into a comic book store and see how even they treat comic strips with disdain. You'll find a few collections in a musty corner but everyone will look at you with pity or laughter for caring.) I can't speak to some of the legendary strips because I haven't been able to sample them properly. "Gasoline Alley" (which made waves by having its characters age in real time) is just starting to come out. "Pogo," "Lil Abner," "Terry and the Pirates" and "Dick Tracy" are either not available at all or only in flimsy cheapo paperback editions that don't properly present them from start to finish. Of the ones I can speak to, here are my favorites:

1. Doonesbury -- not only the best comic strip of all time, I believe it's one of the most remarkable works of art in any medium. Nothing --I mean nothing -- has captured the last forty years of our history in quite the same breadth and manner as "Doonesbury." It has a cast of characters that would make Dickens proud, political satire that would make Twain smile, a continuing storyline a la the best primetime soaps, a social history akin to Balzac, pointed pop culture commentary worthy of any critic. And it's funny. Very funny. It's a remarkably unique accomplishment. If you want to know what life was like in the Seventies, Eighties, Nineties and now, what better place to start? Surprisingly, even most comic strip fans either disdain "Doonesbury" or simply don't pay it much attention. I have no idea why.

2. Crazy Kat -- a spare haiku of a strip, with a cat in love with a mouse, a dog in love with a cat and a mouse that loves to bean the cat with a brick. That's about it, but the love of wordplay and the endless permutations this setup inspires is just delightful. Throw in the

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