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Far removed from the satirical reimagining some might expect from the father of underground comix, Crumb's long-awaited take on the first book of the Bible presents the artist's own sensitive, visually intense reflections. Where most visual adaptations edit down their prose sources, Crumb has, strikingly, included every word of the Book of Genesis within his first major book-length work. His humanistic visual response to this religious text imbues even briefly mentioned biblical characters with unique faces and attitudes, and his renderings of the book's more storied personalities draw out momentous emotions inspired by the book's inherent drama. Throughout, Genesis is a virtual portfolio of Crumb's career-long effort to instill fluid cartoon drawing with carefully rendered lifelike detail. Some might miss Crumb's full stylistic and tonal range, but the source's narrative sweep includes moments of sex and scandal that recall the artist's more notorious comics. Indeed, this monumental visual adaptation's basic strategy may subvert simply by demanding a reconsideration of its source, one that continues to motivate the complex cultural struggles that have, for decades, preoccupied this master cartoonist's landmark work. (Oct.)

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