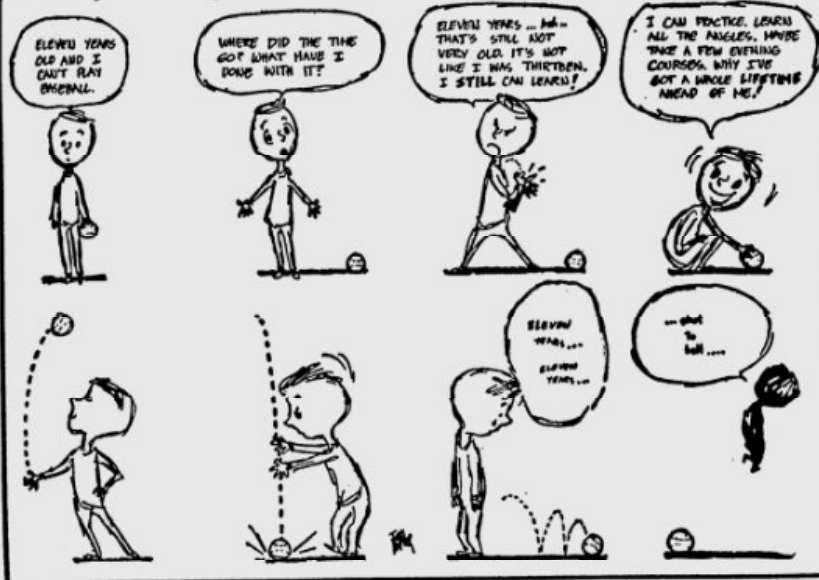


Sick, Sick, Sick by Jules Feiffer



letters to the editor

Continued from page 4

eral appreciation and specific scrutiny.

El Greco's large "Assumption of the Virgin," already less palatable for the cumbersome "altar" it has been placed in, is a perfect case in point. The glass facing permits, or rather creates, a merging of the mundane gallery scene with the miraculous event of the painting. One must pass it by quickly, disinterestedly, since it is an impossible situation to see, even to endure. Happily, close at hand, a smaller and more acid El Greco,

"The Feast in the House of Simon," reveals itself completely in its flashing, uncovered beauty.

Anything But Ideal

I do not wish to labor the point: all will agree that this is anything but an ideal situation. We are losing a part of art, the symphonic part, through a glass darkly. Let it be enough to say that Turner, suffers, and Renoir, and Degas—reversing the influence, one begins here to see Vuillard in Degas, particularly in the swift sketch-like oils—and Cézanne ("Mme. Cézanne in a Yellow Armchair," re-

markably lovely, almost sweet, especially her flame-like hands, astoundingly like Pragonard's, and her pursed mouth). Seurat's "Grand Jatte," also enshrined, is, in its big scale, somewhat lifeless; curious that it should compare unfavorably with the small reproductions.

I can only suppose that the reason for this destructive coat of glass is to keep the works from being dirtied. (It is said that seven tons of soot fall on the Loop each day.) Yet the logic in the thing is impossible to determine, since some works are covered and others, equally good, are left, like a blessing, nude.

—Robert Pincus Chicago

The Night People

by JEAN SHEPHERD

Protest

FOR a long time now I've threatened to put this damn-fool story down on paper. Actually the only threatening I've done has been to myself, since I've been a little afraid that the story is one of those things that is better in the telling than in the reading. But I figure that it should be put down somewhere, if only as a sort of small contribution to the volume of stuff that future historians will sift through in the battle of trying to know just how it was back in the twentieth century. One of the great problems of historians, by the way, is that there is always plenty of documentary material pertaining to the events of any time, but damn little about the people who lived on the periphery of those events. Who knows what the guy who sold the score cards outside the Acropolis thought about the barbarians? If anything at all. Did the bird who repaired Aristotle's sandals have a secret desire to attend the Academy, or did he really think his customer was a know-it-all? Who knows? Anyway, for what it's worth, here is my small straw in the wind.

Where All Uncles Lived

I had this uncle named Carl. He was a Swede who lived on the North Side of Chicago, where all Swedish uncles lived in Chicago. I also had at least 10 cousins who lived in the same neighborhood. All of them, including me, thought Uncle Carl was the greatest guy we knew. He played the banjo and could sing. He played a pretty good third base and was a Cub fan. He loved to go on picnics out at the Forest Preserve on the West Side. He made beer in the basement, and was always smiling a kind of blond toothy smile. He also was the only uncle who had a car, although he was always broke.

since he didn't work much. We thought he was great, but we didn't know just how great he really was. This was during the Depression, when all cars were old. In fact, I must have been 10 years old before I saw a new one, and when I did, it struck me as a kind of cosmic discovery, like seeing a new mountain or a new lake.

Uncle Carl's car was an Essex Super Six. It was a terrible car. I know that now, but then it was wonderful, because Carl took us to the beach in it and once we went to Milwaukee. He really en-

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The Night People

Continued from page 6

joyed the car when he could afford the gas to make the thing go. I can't remember a time when he wasn't On Relief, as they called it in Chicago. Every week when the relief truck delivered the week's groceries to his place, Carl would throw a party and invite

everyone enjoyed having Carl around, and they really got a boot out of his parties, too. Most all the other families were ON Relief, too, so it didn't really matter much whose food they ate, since it all came from the same truck. "I'm putting this all down to



all the relatives in to eat up the whole week's supply in one happy binge. The rest of the week Carl and his wife and kids would eat at everybody else's house. This was OK on all sides, because

give you an idea as to how things were. Incidentally, it wasn't as grim as it sounds, since everybody seemed to be always having a good time, one way or another. At least I had a happy time as

a kid then, so I guess other people around me were enjoying it too.

ONE DAY, though, a big thing happened. The family still talks about it. It was in the winter, and winter in Chicago is tough. It gets cold, but that isn't what really makes it bad. Everything is always grey, with dirty patches of old snow around the curbs. The sun never shines, and it gets on a man's nerves after what seems like 10 years of dark skies. On this dark winter's day Uncle Carl went out to the back yard of his tenement, where he used to park the Essex. He got in and tried to start it. It wouldn't make a sound. He sat in the front seat for about five minutes without doing a thing. All of a sudden he got out and went into the basement. He came back out carrying a huge axe. He started to chop up the Essex. It made a terrific racket. Within five minutes every window for a block around had a head in it, watching Carl kill the Essex. He chopped

STORIES FOR CHILDREN

"The Hungry Old Witch," "The Pumpkin Giant," and "The Tinker and the Ghost" are among the stories to be told to children this holiday season by Elizabeth Culbert of the Jackson Square Branch of the New York Public Library, 251 West 13th Street. First story-telling session is this afternoon (Wednesday) at 4, in the library's recently reopened children's room.

on that car for about an hour, until there wasn't much left. Everyone was afraid to come out of the houses, so they just watched from inside. Carl was a kind of Ahab who had found his whale. When he finished he just came in the house and never said a word about the whole thing. No one ever mentioned it to him either. Like I said, we didn't really realize how great Carl was at the time; we just liked his parties and the beer he made. He was a great guy.

TWO PRESIDENTS, TWO SUFFRAGETTES AT MUSEUM

Suffragettes Emmeline Pankhurst and Harriet Blatchford and Presidents Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt are the "stars" of two special films to be shown at the Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Avenue and 103rd Street, this Saturday at 1 p. m. The movies are "What 80 Million Women Want" and "The Old Way and the New," two politically minded documentaries of the year 1912.

Regular children's movies at the museum, at the usual hours on Saturday of 11 a. m. and 3 p. m., are "The Little Red Lighthouse" and "Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel." Janet Pinney, supervisor of the museum's educational department, will tell stories and show the children some antique toys after each screening.

On Sunday afternoon at 3 the museum inaugurates a new concert series with a piano recital by Walter Chodak.

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