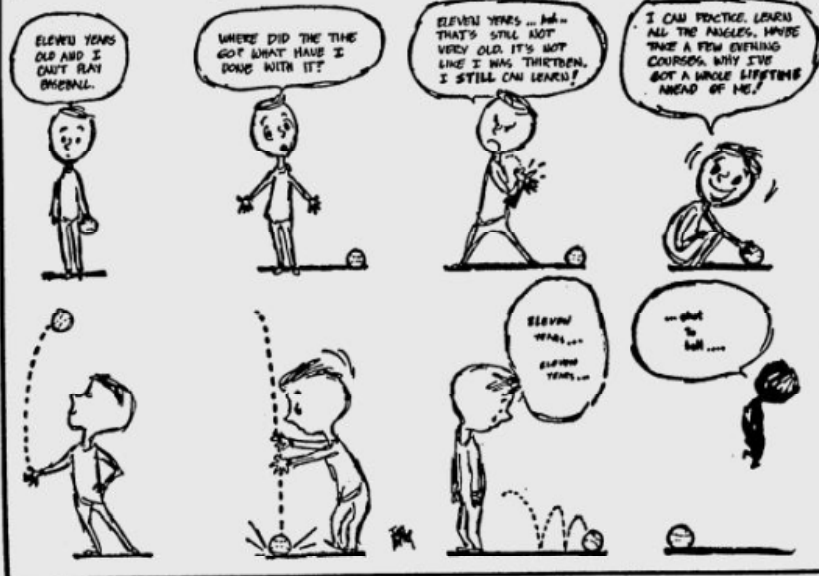


Sick, Sick, Sick by Jules Feiffer



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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