

PICASSO: WOMAN WITH A BLUE VEIL, 1923

painters' models have it easier
than fashion models: they get to eat more.

and to drink a bit. in paris, in the '20s,
everybody drank a bit, and all the drinks
had european names — pernod, cognac,
calvados, côtes du rhone — which made
them taste considerably better.

certainly the murphys, gerald and
sara, were not teetotalers, and william
rubin says that pablo may have been
in love with sara. but this woman
could have been an ancient greek,
or a madonna. really, though, it
is the veil this picture is about,
graceful, diaphanous, and giving more
than it receives: it would
be beautiful on any woman,
delineates the eyelids, eyebrows, lips.
picasso may have painted women that
he loved, but he loved painting more
than he loved any woman.

the women all grew stale,
but not the blue veil.

EDWARD HOPPER: DRUG STORE, 1927

my mother used to take
her only child for "mexican" sundaes.
we would sit on the counter stools
at conner's drug store, corner
of hawley street and genesee
and spoon from silvered cups
vanilla ice cream topped with
hershey's chocolate sauce
(was there any other brand?),
crushed peanuts, and a maraschino
cherry. it was a treat for her
as much as for me. she always
had a sweet tooth, but nobody
had much money during world
war two, not in our irish neighborhood,
at least, not with the men away
at war, and there wasn't much to
buy with what we had. people had
been toughened by the ten years
of depression.

hopper's corner store is
silber's pharmacy. are those
blue smudges gift-wrapped
candy boxes? whitman's? a
red globe and a green hang like the
scales of justice, still in
balance, or like those of a
pawnbroker. the awning
advertises, redundantly,
prescriptions, drugs, and
"ex-lax." this was still the
long dark age before penicillin,
though, and i recall the nauseating
sulfa drugs still prevalent
throughout the 1940s.
the dependency to be feared
was only laxatives. i imagine that
most remedies relied rather heavily
on the placebo effect.

a happier time?
i suppose so.
the jazz age.
expatriates. the roaring twenties.
the eve of the great crash.

still, none of that in
evidence here.
this store is open at night.
drapes, blue and turquoise,
mask what's going on inside.

the prohibition era.
the one, that is, that
preceded our own.

ARE THEY REPLACED AS SOON AS THEY ACQUIRE A NEW
YORK ACCENT?

what most impresses me
about the irish bars of new york city
is that every single one has an
authentic irish bartender.

OUR ANNUAL ART CALENDAR

we are discussing this year's possibilities
and i say, "the only good ones seem
to be of monet's works, and i like ones
that i can write about. how much can you