

The Instructional Tale of Pierre D'Artiste

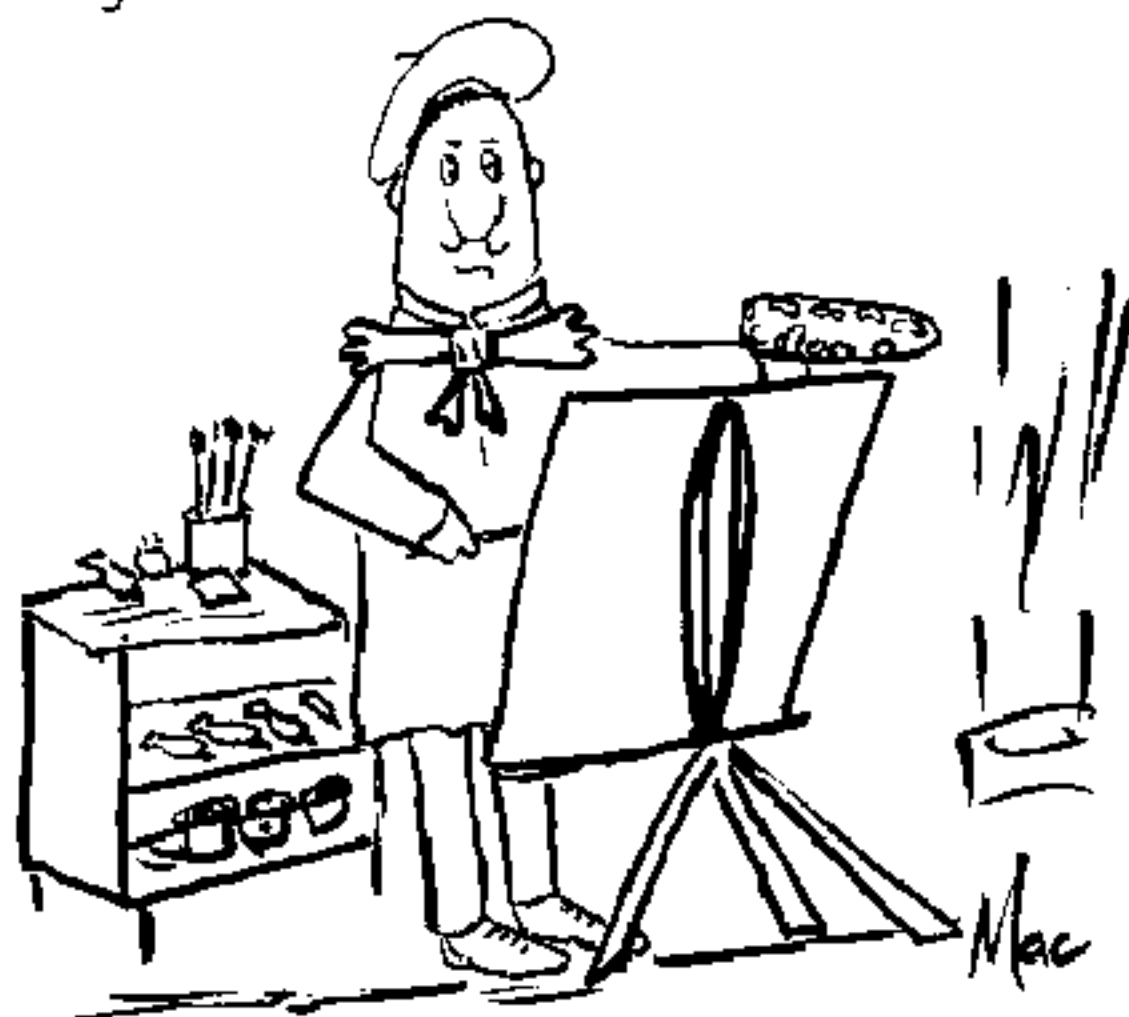


Max Penmen

You have all surely heard of Pierre D'Artiste, who set the world of art aflame some years back. His marvelous works, the deeply textured abstracts of paint, richly applied over bits and pieces of urban scenery. The rich and gaudy overlying abstractions drawing the eye while leaving odd views of buildings and streets to slowly fade into the background. These wonderful pictures are found everywhere. They are in Art Galleries too numerous to name and displayed proudly on the walls of the rich and famous throughout the world.



It is said that Pierre D'Artiste stands among the giants of graphic art and that like all great masters, his name will echo down the ages.

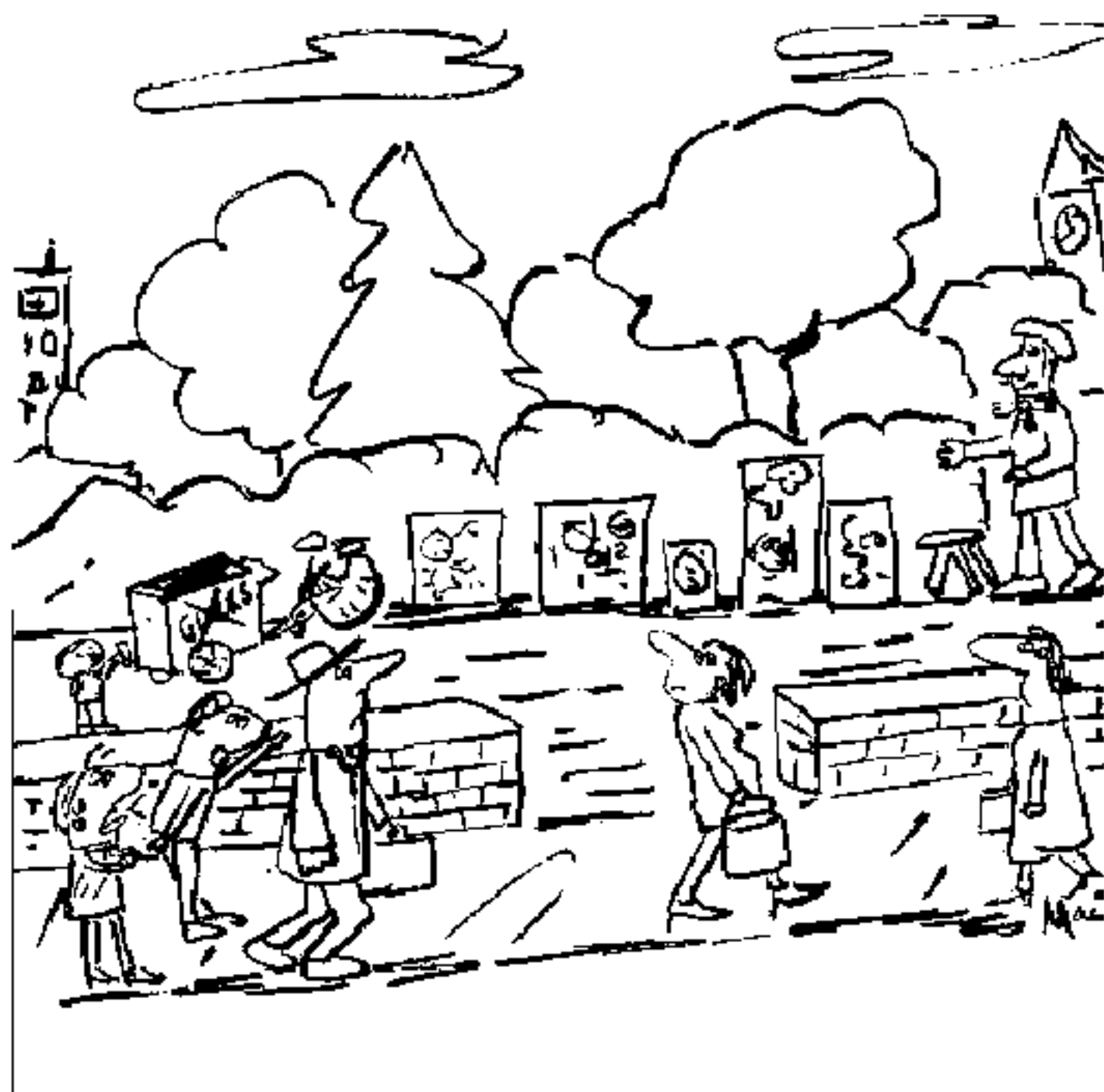


This was not always the case for in his early years Pierre was struggling to find his place in the world of art. It was a struggle that seemed beyond him, but he was not one to give up. Day after day he stood before the easel in his tiny garret meticulously applying dabs of different hues on rectangles of canvas. He drew fine lines, made sweeping strokes, blending, extending and drawing out scenes of his neighborhood. He painted the streets, the parks, the sad little cafes and even sadder bars that lined the nearby streets or poured out onto the parks. He would work steadily through the day and sometimes late into the night to complete a rendering.

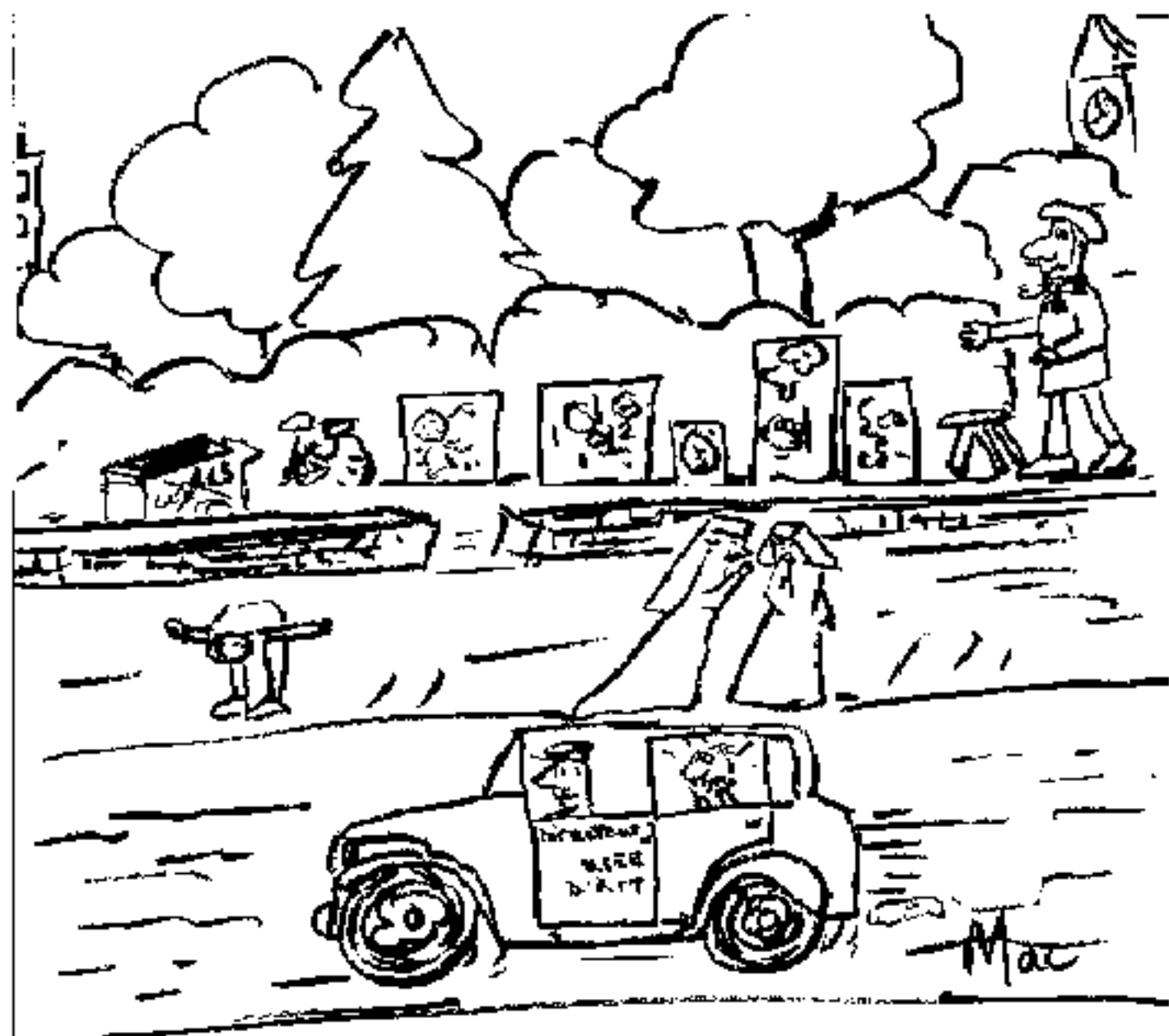
Every Sunday he would pack his works into the ancient cooler box of a converted ice cream cart and make his way the several miles to a distant park where, with numerous others, he would find a space against a long stone wall to set up the fruits of his arduous labor. There he would wait for some passer by to rush over, ask how much he wanted for this or that painting, and press bills into Pierre's hand while picking up his new found treasure, tucking it under his arm and joyfully setting off to hang it above a fireplace or in a fancy dining room.

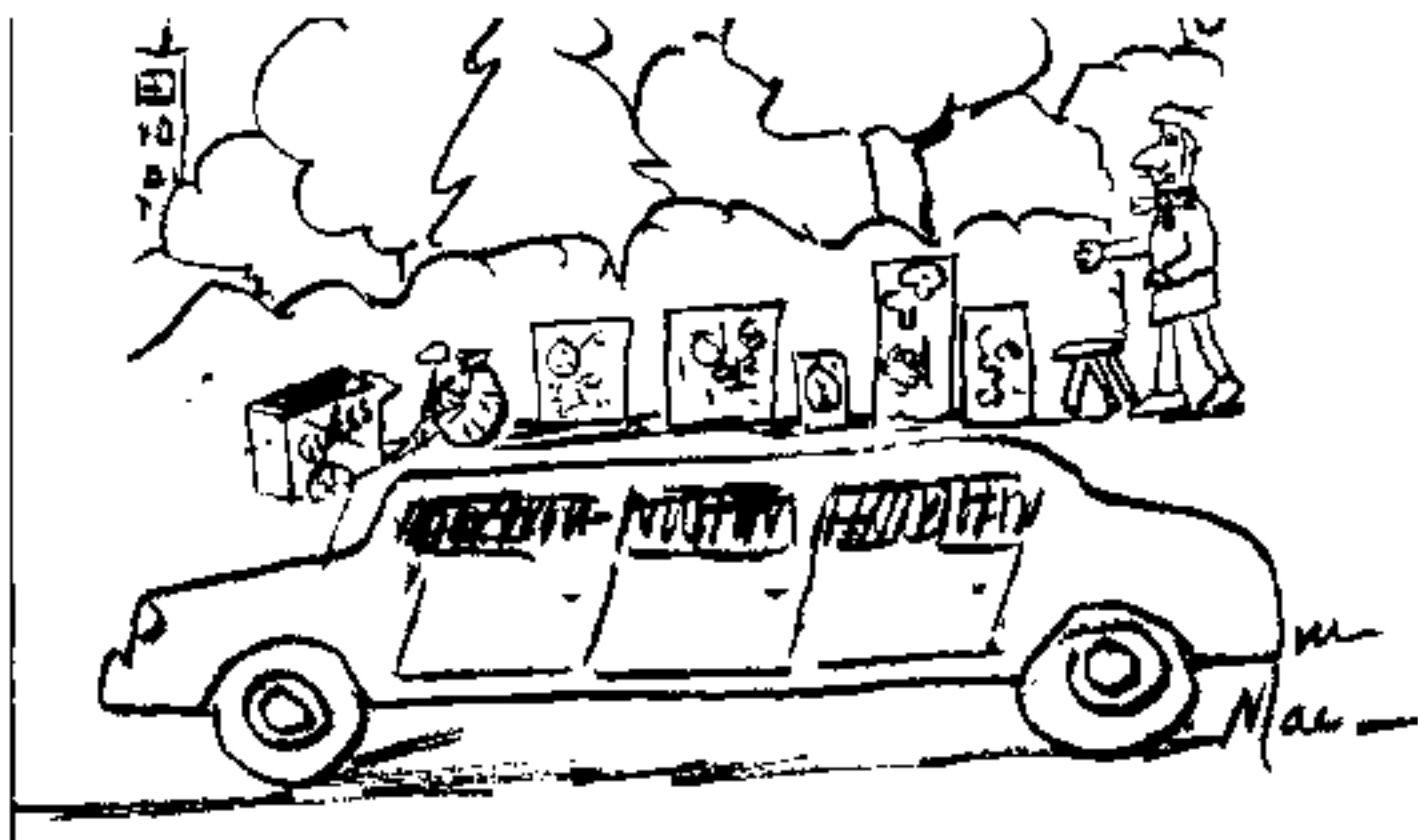


Alas, no passer by came near his paintings; in fact, the sisters from the nearby convent would pass by in pairs giggling as they averted their eyes from Pierre's display. To Pierre this seemed strange as his renderings were of urban landscapes, most of which contained no human forms, and those that did, portrayed them as dark and distant.



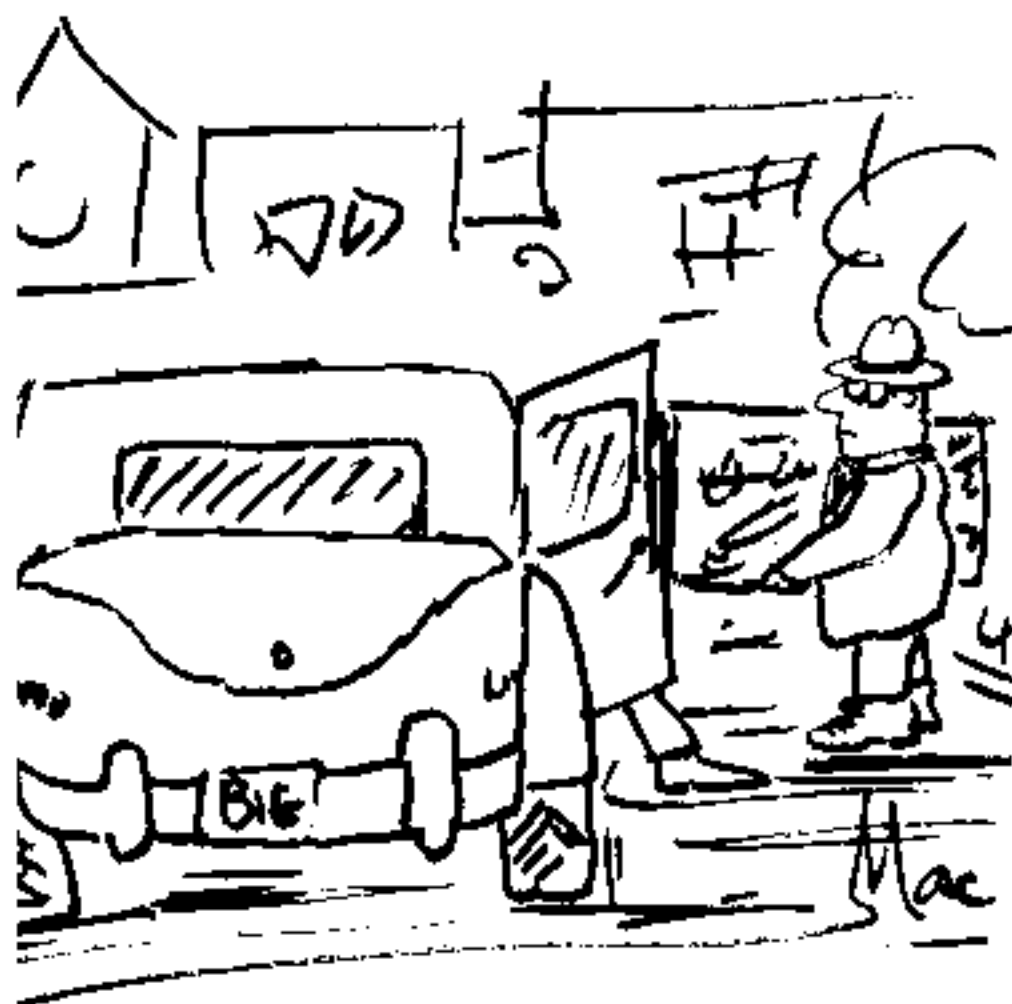
Pierre felt no particular appreciation for the young man who, with a wide grin on his face bent over to view Pierre's work through his legs while making rude noises. He barely noticed the van with the words *Musee d'Art* on its side panels that slowly passed down the street, its passengers taking a careful look at all the lined up paintings. Reaching Pierre's offering it squealed its tires and raced off. He ignored the many passers by who looked only briefly at the fruits of his toil, grimaced, and hastily walked on.





At first he didn't notice the large black limousine that screeched to a halt on the street in front of him. Only when the big, bulky man wearing a fedora climbed from the vehicle and began to walk towards him did Pierre notice. The heavyset man walked over to the largest painting of the display and said, "De Boss Wants Dis one." He pushed a wad of bills into Pierre's hand and asked, "is dat enough?"





Stunned, Pierre could barely indicate his satisfaction at receiving more cash than he would usually see in a month. He was beside himself with delight as he watched the burly man carry the painting to the back door of the limousine. The back door opened and Pierre could see a shadowed figure through the opening door. Finally someone of significance

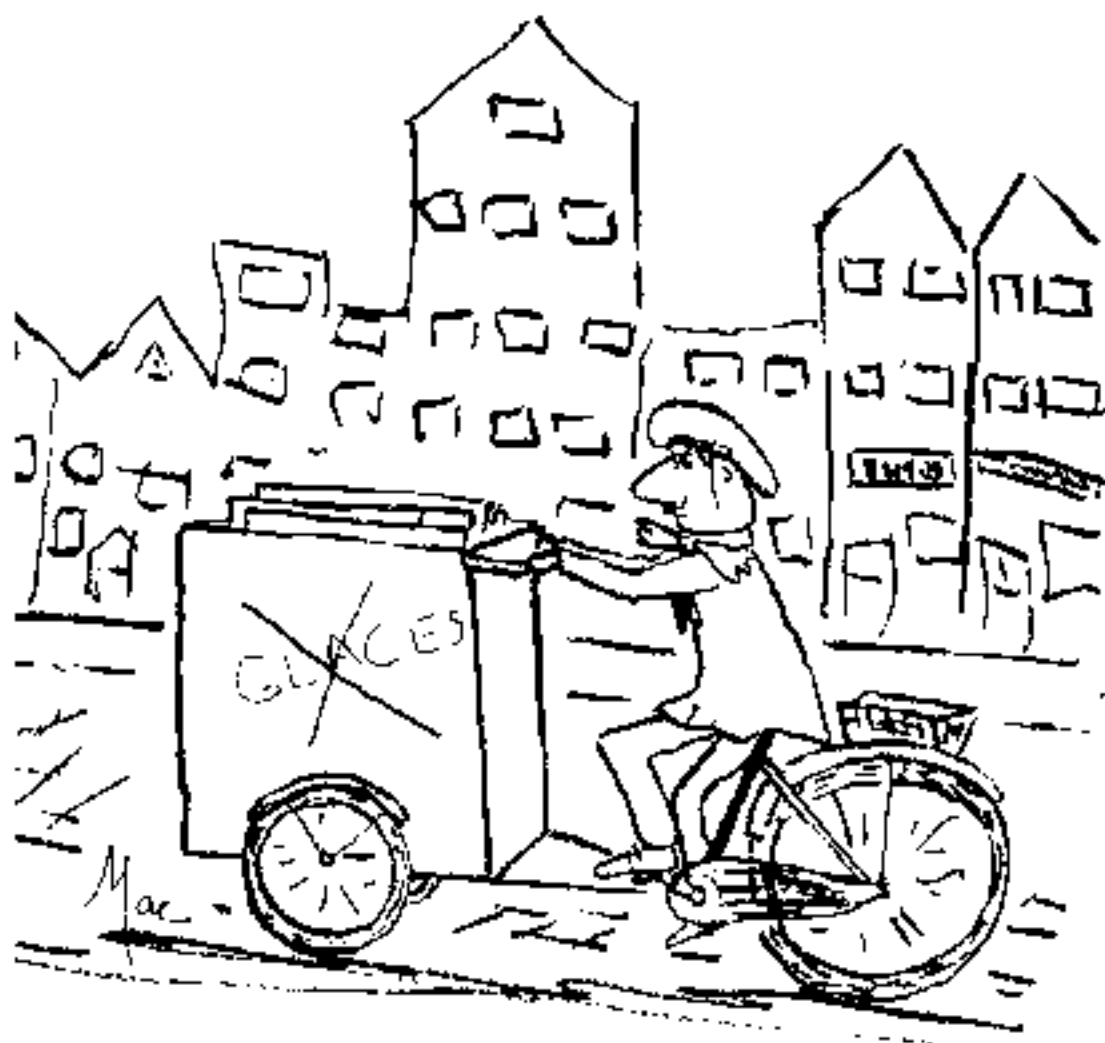
had seen the true value of his work. He could barely believe it when an elegantly attired white haired gentleman stepped from the car to view the newly purchased painting. Had he not been so lost in the feeling of satisfaction derived from his first ever sale, he would have heard that elegantly dressed man say, "No thanks, Asp, this is something I have to do myself."



What followed filled Pierre with horror and dismay. The elegantly attired gentleman grabbed the painting and began kicking and stomping on it until it was broken into a heap of wood shards and strips of torn canvas. Then the elegant gentleman, putting one hand up to stop his assistant from helping, picked up the remains of Pierre's painting, carried it to a nearby waste container and plunked it in. Wiping his hands, he returned to the car and climbed in. The burly man closed the door and took his place in the front and the limousine drove off. Pierre was left speechless.



Devastated, Pierre didn't even notice the ambulance stopping and the two laughing paramedics rush out and pretend to give one of his paintings first aid.



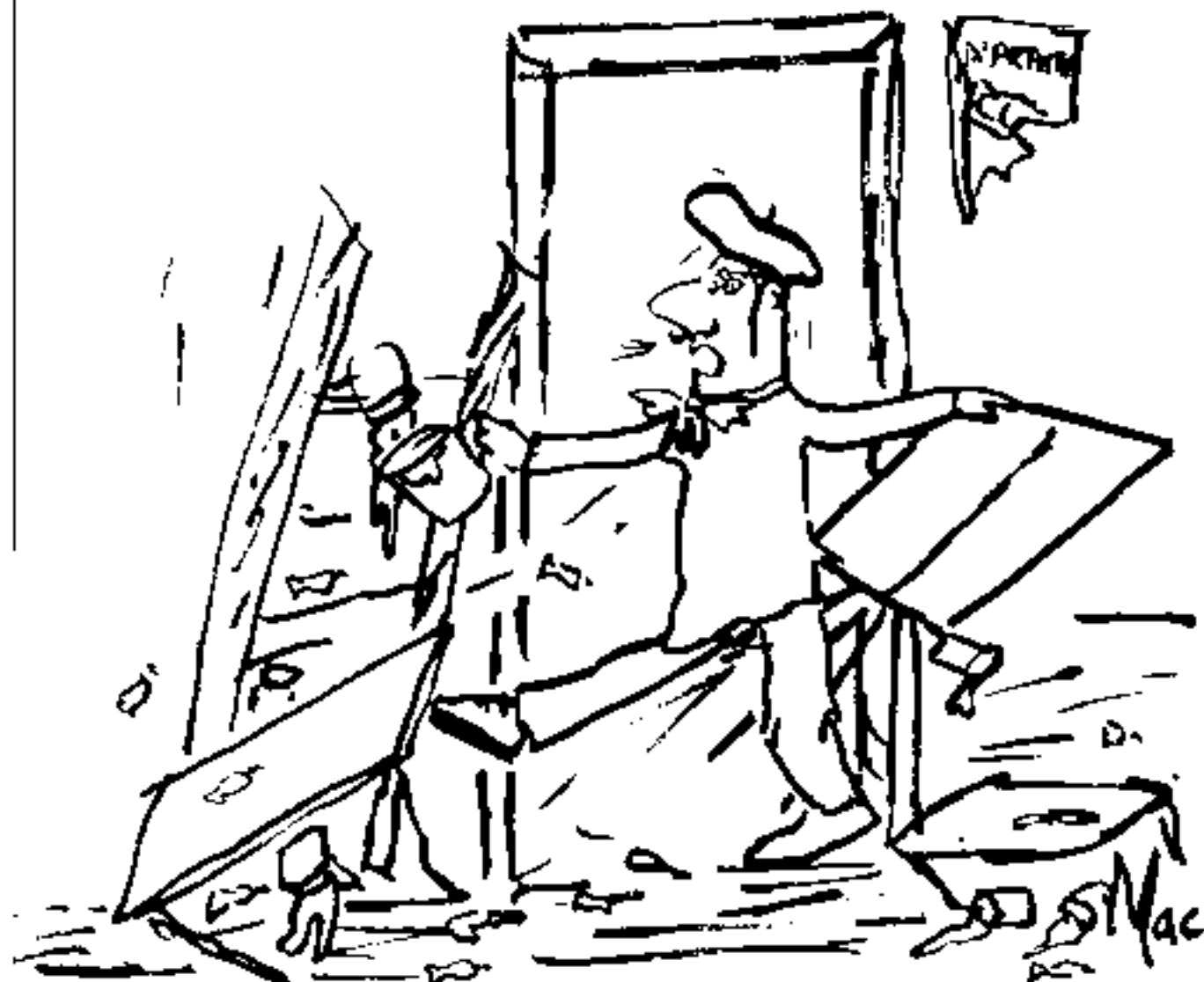
It was a sad and defeated Pierre who gathered up his canvases, placed them in the freezer box of his converted ice cream cart, climbed aboard and sadly peddled away.

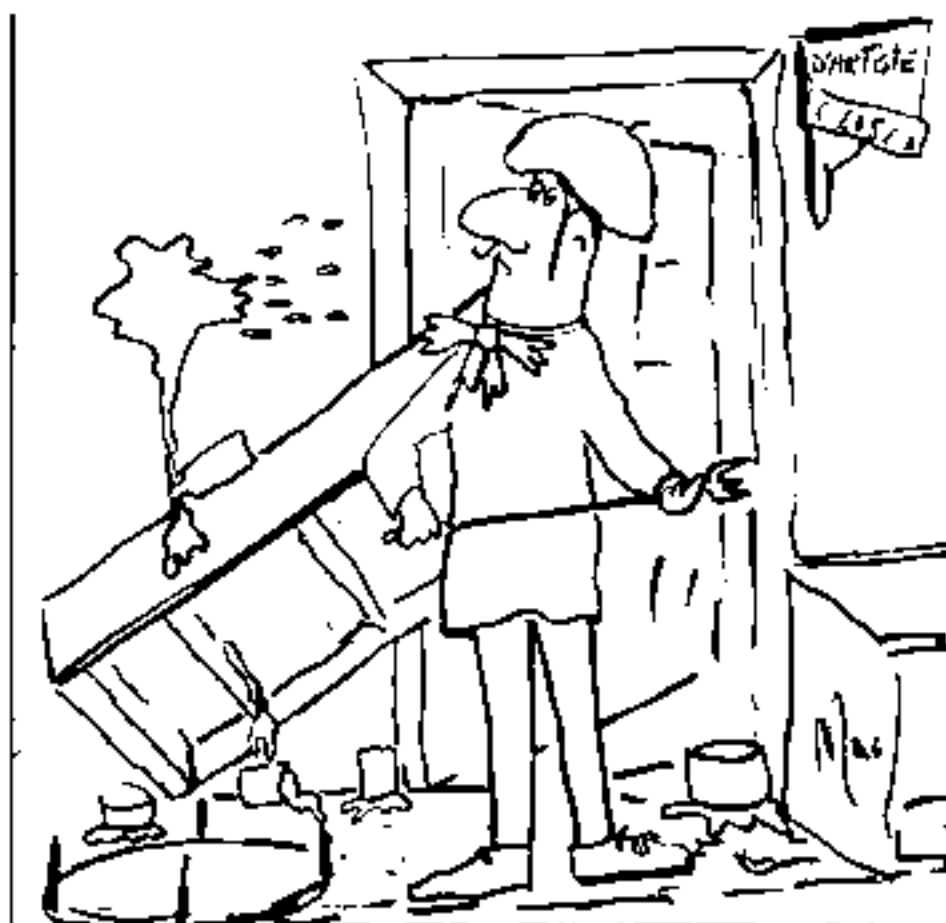
Parking his cart at his garret, he withdrew his paintings from the cooler, dropped them unceremoniously on the ground and turned away.



Climbing the narrow stairs to his studio garret, Pierre could not raise his eyes from the ground. He ignored the pleasant greeting of an elderly neighbor and stepped through the doorway to what served as both his home and his studio. Inside, he stopped and gazed scornfully at the unfinished work on his easel then slowly turned to view several more paintings that leaned against the wall.

He pushed past a table knocking it over and sending tubes and tins of paint scattering across the floor. In his frustration he began kicking the cans and tubes of paint that lay around him sending gouts of paint to fly across the floor splattering indiscriminately over walls and paintings alike. "Failure," he shouted, "I am a failure and a fool to think I could be a success as a painter," and again he shouted, "failure!"





"Aw, don't take it so hard," he heard a small voice say, "we all have bad days." Pierre turned his head quickly to look for the source of the voice, but there was no one there. The tiny voice spoke again, "Hey, brighten up guy. I know you got something. I can make you a star."

Where was that voice coming from. "Down here," it said, "right down here."

"I must be going off my stick," moaned Pierre, "Now I'm hearing voices."

"Hey buddy, get over it. Stick with me and the world will be your oyster."

"I'm allergic to shellfish," moaned Pierre.

"Ok," said the voice with a slightly aggravated tone, "your palace, and your pleasure dome, your whatever you want."

The voice changed again becoming more upbeat, "So, buddy are you in? Are we partners or what?"

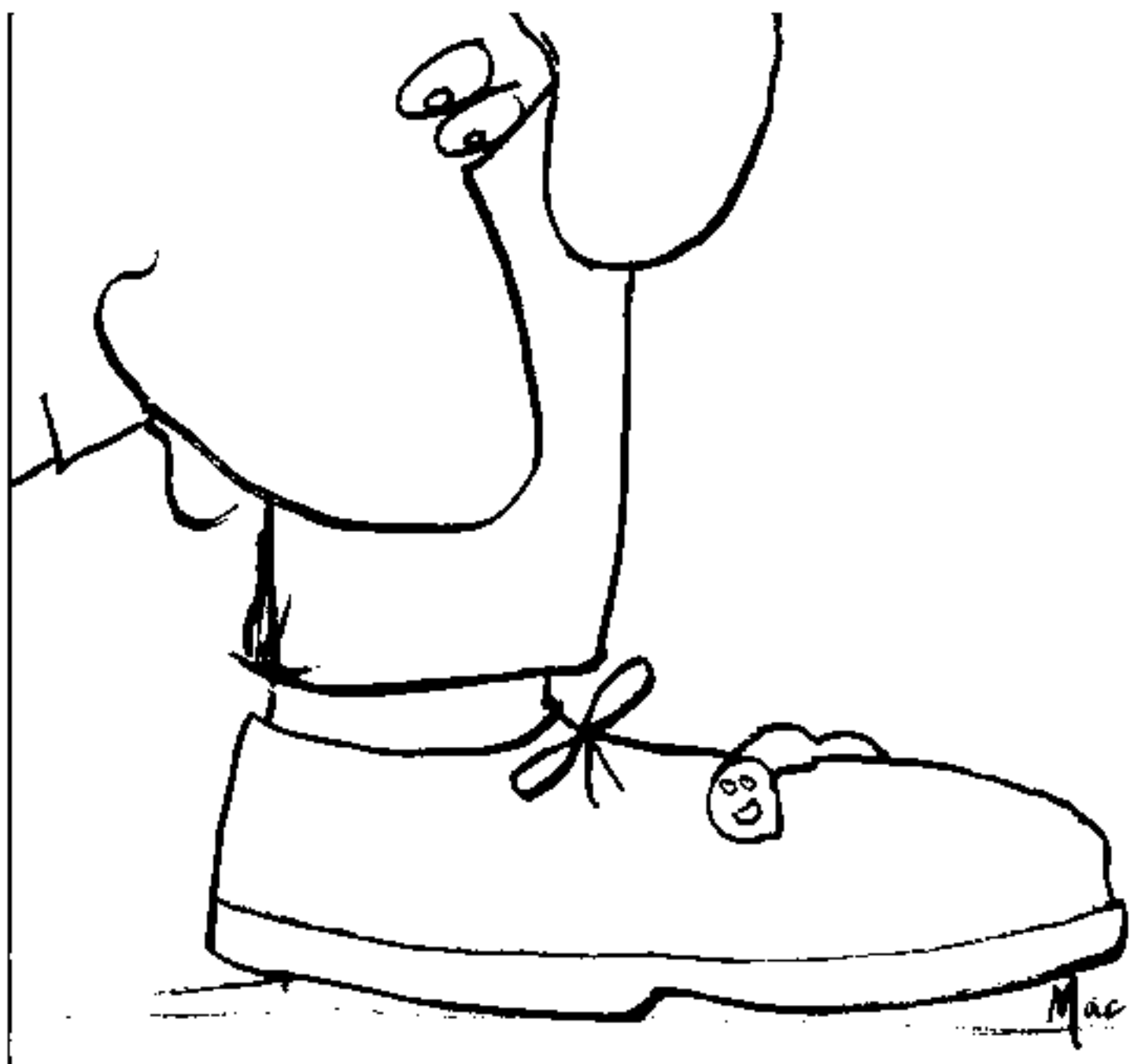
"Oooh," moaned Pierre.

"Hey guy, I'm right here. Look at your shoe."

Bending down, Pierre saw nothing on his shoe except a tiny glob of green paint. Oddly, it did seem to be looking at him with tiny eyes. The tiny voice came again, clearly emanating from that slug of paint. "So," it said in a questioning tone, "Are we doing this or not?"

Then it added in a more expansive tone, "I can make you rich. I guarantee it. You and me together, we got it made."

"Oh, man," groaned Pierre as he began to gather up the paintings around the room, I really am going crazy."



"I'm telling you guy," came the voice of the little green glob, "today's your lucky day and I'm your luck."

"I'm going nuts," said Pierre, "I'm nuts, nuts, nuts" and he dumped the dripping, paint splattered paintings unceremoniously out the window.



He sat down on the floor gazing sadly at the little green gob of paint on his shoe. He was about to reach over and brush it off when he heard something from outside his window. "Oh my gosh," he heard, "who would throw out these beautiful paintings. Look at them."

Someone else spoke adding a tone of delight and agreement. Then he heard another voice and another and soon there was something of a crowd gathering outside his window. Curiosity getting the better of him he got up and went to the window.





Looking out, he saw a goodly number of people gathering around his tossed canvases. They were talking excitedly, clapping their hands. One of young woman looked up and saw Pierre looking out his window. "Are these yours?" she said, "They're wonderful. I must have one."

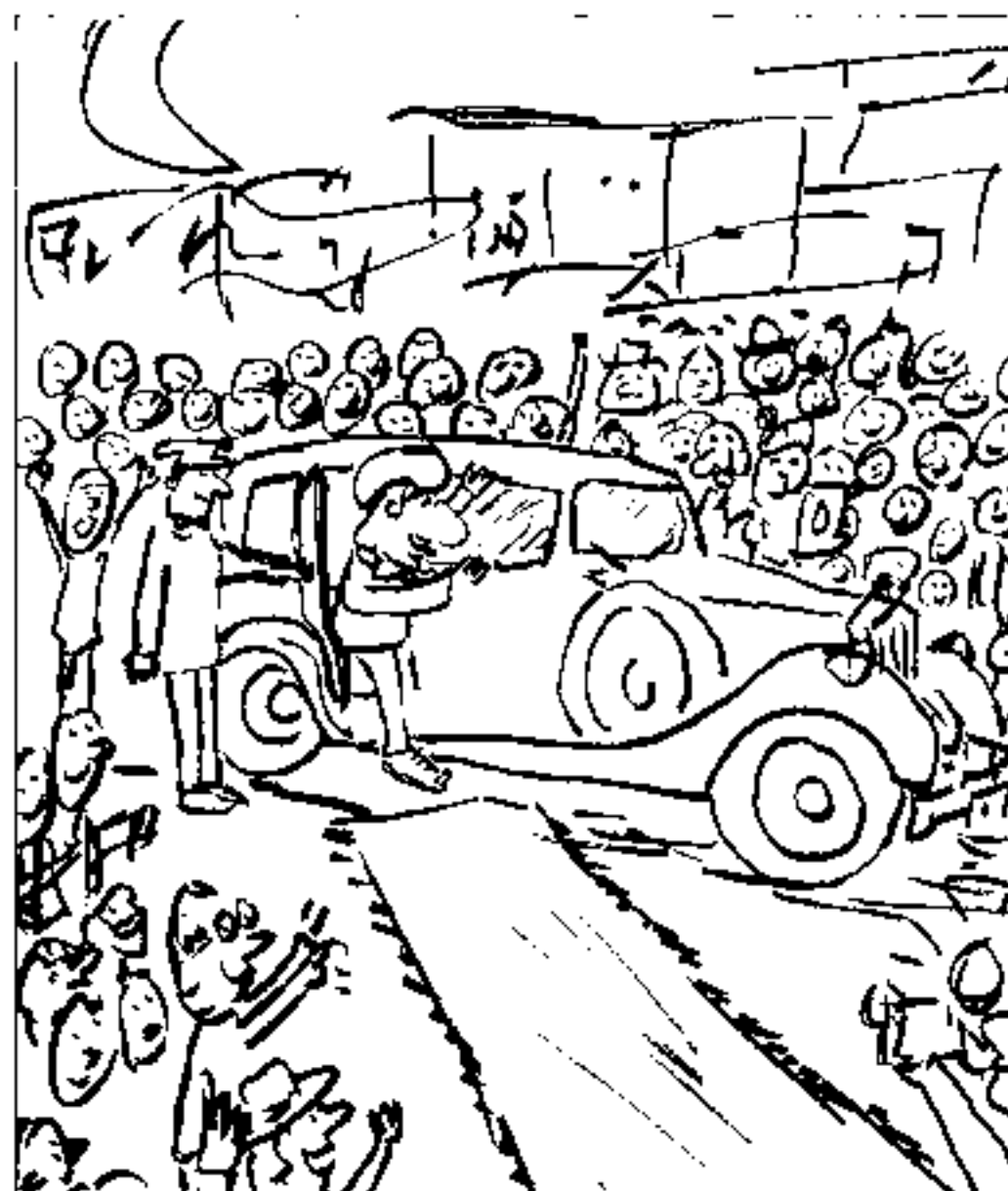
Now all the others were looking up at him, too. A flurry

of words came at him from which he was able to discern, "I want one, too." and "Are they for sale?"

"See," said the green glob. It's starting already. I'm telling you, stick with me and you'll cash in on your luck, because, I'm your lucky charm."

Looking from the garrulous green glob to the excited crowd outside, Pierre smiled. "Perhaps this is my lucky day after all."

Well as you know the rest is history. From a stone wall in a local park to the largest Galleries and exhibition houses in the world, Pierre D'Artiste's paintings were admired by everyone. So it was, every morning Pierre would paint his bland landscapes and every afternoon he and the shoe on which the green glob sat kicked a variety of cans of oil paint to splatter across those self same paintings.



Pierre became a celebrity from Paris, to St. Petersburg, from Manhattan to Dubai and beyond. People gathered to catch a glimpse of him as he walked from his limousine to the Gallery. He would wave and smile dutifully.

He no longer lived in a garret but had found himself a lovely mansion on the edge of town. To this he added several villas in the world's most exotic places. Aristocracy, presidents and countless beautiful women gathered around him to hear his words. It didn't seem to matter that much of what he said didn't make any sense, they hung on every word as if it flowed from the mouth of divinity.

One afternoon several years later, arm in arm with two of the most beautiful women in the world, Pierre walked



happily along a street in a high end shopping district. In front of one of the stores both women turned to Pierre at once.

"Pierre, you need a better wardrobe," said one.

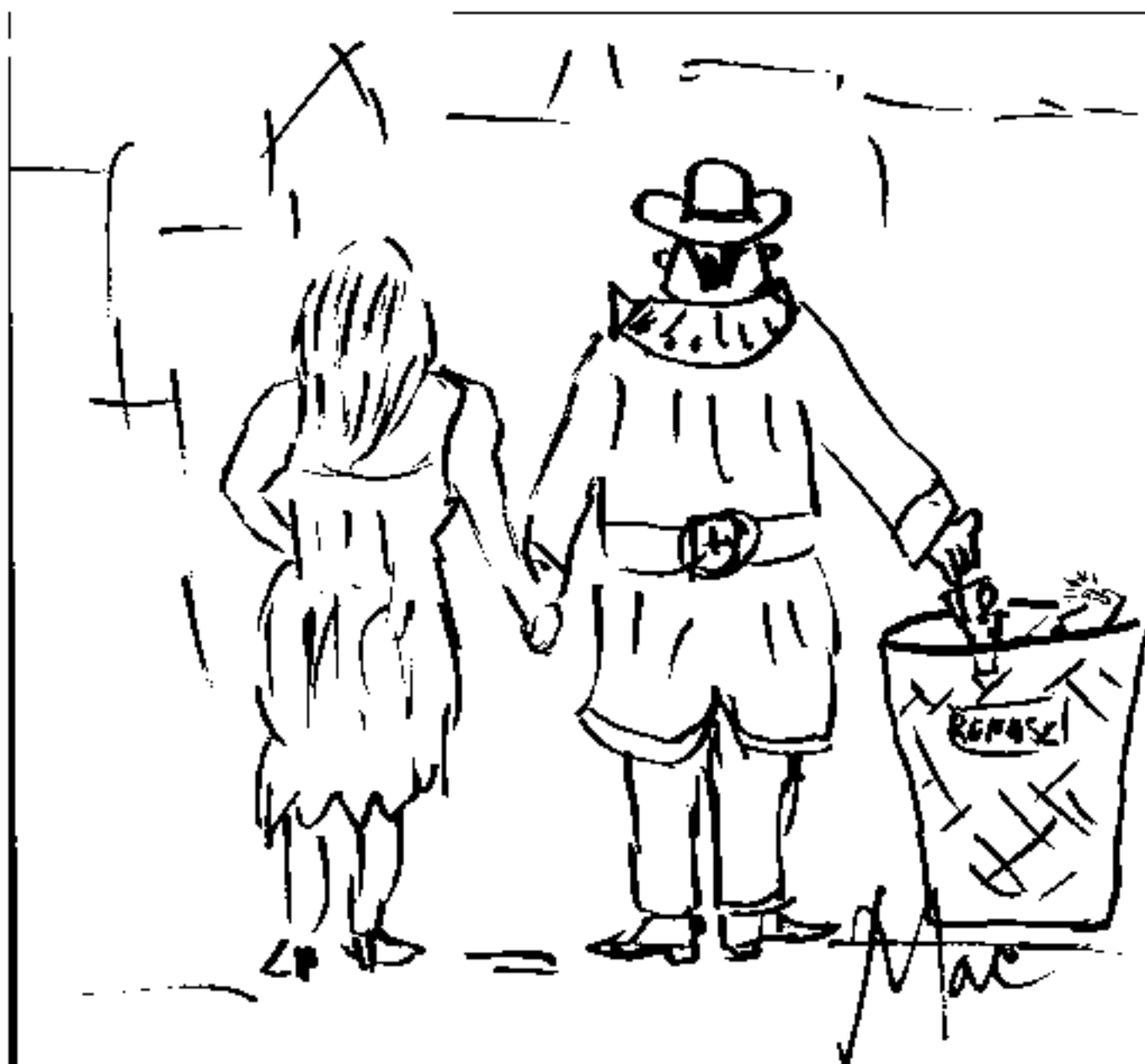
"Indeed," said the other



And before you could say "Picasso" they had him inside trying on dinner jackets and blazers, smoking jackets and a variety of glamorous outfits.

Fittingly attired for one of his celebrity and position, Pierre was about to step out onto the street to show off his newly acquired habiliments when one of his fair companions groaned, "Oh, Pierre, you can't possibly wear those tawdry old shoes with that elegant outfit."

Only Pierre heard the tiny dismayed voice saying, "Hey, This doesn't sound like a good Idea."



the ladies were insistent and soon had Pierre strutting in a fashionable pair of brogues. As they left the store, Pierre was holding his old shoes, the tiny green glob of paint uttering his complaints to no avail. Without another thought, Pierre having made his choice, dropped them in a nearby waste bin. A small flustered voice could be heard crying, "Hey, what's going on? I thought we were partners. I'm the one who got you here. You can't just drop me in the trash like yesterday's moldy leftovers." Nobody was listening.

Art historians will tell you that Pierre's later works never received quite the adulation of his earlier ones, but his name was made and any work from so famous an artist would eventually be purchased for a great deal of money. It didn't really matter, Pierre's fame and fortune were made. He had wealth to last him for several lifetimes of high living. He married one of those beautiful women and today, as you well know, there are several little Pierres and Pierrettes flinging paint around their stately home.



Sometime after Pierre had thrown away those shoes, the toe of one festooned with a tiny, talkative green glob, a hobo, while searching the trash for lunch, came upon them. He pulled them out of the trash, , tossed his own tattered shoes into

the street, and put Pierre's thrown offs on his feet. As he did so, he heard a small voice saying, "Hey buddy, you and me, come on. I can make you a star."

The Hobo, more interested in survival than the grand scheme's of a small chatty glob of paint, could only take the endless chatter for a few days. One afternoon, he sat down on the edge of the sidewalk and took off the shoe with the green glob of paint on it. "Hey," said the glob, "Finally, you've seen the light. Come with me, I'll make you a Millionaire."



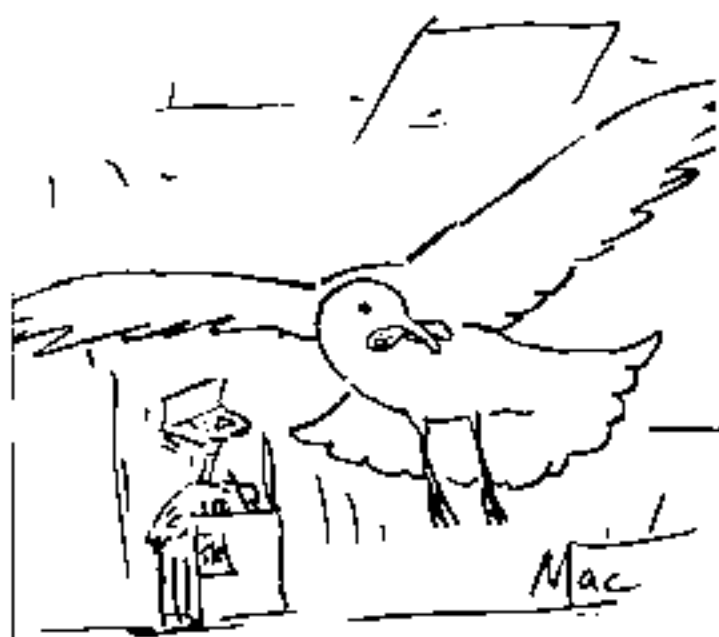
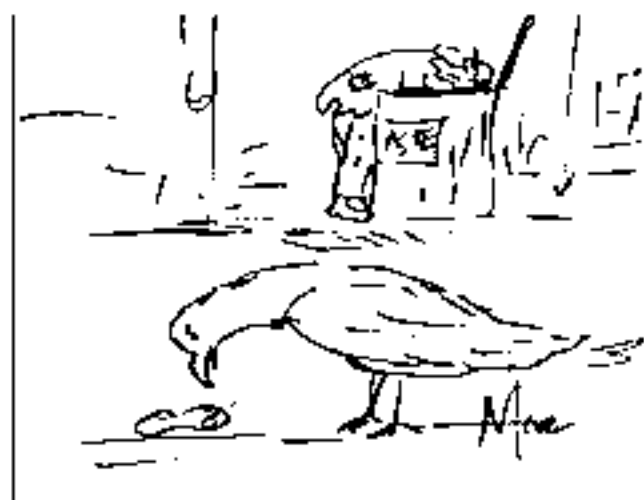
At that point the hobo put his finger against his thumb and flicked the shoes including the green glob onto the road.

"You'll regret this," called the glob of paint as it soared towards the gutter.

"Damn noisy thing, never shut up," muttered the hobo as he got up from the sidewalk and headed for a leftover lunch in a dumpster beside a small restaurant.



Meanwhile, a nearby bird wandered over to check out the shoes. Mistaking the green glob for some exotic worm it grabbed the noisy green glob in its beak and flew off. That was the last that was every heard of the little green glob of paint. The green glob that had been the architect of Pierre D'Artiste's great success.



Although the green glob was never seen again, there is, it is rumored, on a serene, tree lined country lane a rather elegant, many tiered birdhouse with its very own bird bath attached and a truck that comes by on a regular basis to drop the finest suet and seeds in the bird feeder that stands before that awe inspiring birdhouse. But it is a rumor. I'm just saying.

