STUDIES IN CONTEMPORARY SATIRE

Featuring Soviet Satiric Art

THE EATERS
by Marshall Toman

The door of Ernie's restaurant opened and two people came in. They sat down at a table. It felt good to sit there. "What do you want?" the man asked.
"You never should have brought me here, Jake," the woman said. "You'll make me fat." It did not feel good to feel fat.

A waiter came to their table. It felt good to be a waiter coming to a table where people felt good to sit and did not want to feel fat because it was not good. "Can I get you something to drink?" the waiter asked.
"Do you have absinthe here?" the man called Jake asked.
"No," the waiter said, "the help shows up on time."
"Absinthe," Jake said again.

The waiter called to the bartender. "Hey, Said," the waiter said, "do we have absinthe?"
"Yeth," Said said.

Twenty minutes past five, the clock said.

Jake said to the woman: "Have the Michigan Marinated Moose."
The woman did not look at the menu. She watched the waiter leave to get the drinks. "Do much yesterday?" she asked.
"I tried to write one good and true sentence. I spent the whole evening taking out a comma."
"We did have fun with those old commas once, didn't we Jake?" The woman was still watching the waiter. It felt good to watch the waiter.
"And then I spent the whole night trying to put it in."
"What?"
"Yes."
"No!"
"'Fraid so."
"'I say."
"'Yup."
"'No luck, eh?"
"Naw."

"Darling, what a swell chap you are."

Jake looked at the clock. It was almost half past five.
"Try the Kilimanjaro Kudu," he said.

The waiter set two drinks in front of them. "Ready?" he asked.
"Not ready," said the woman.

Jake tasted his drink. It tasted good. It was like old wine in new leather. The restaurant was beginning to fill up with people. People were not good. They were like sour grape juice in old ice-cream cartons.

At six-fifty-five Jake said: "Have the Trout With Canned Beans and Coffee."
"It comes with a half order of stuffed dik-dik tongues."

He pushed his empty glass away and took up another. "So?" Jake slugged it down. It was very good.

"The road to fatness is paved with half orders of stuffed dik-dik tongues."