

(which depicted the subject at work), and for a special reason: He wanted to capture the "heroism" of late 19th-century life. For Eakins, this heroism consisted of professional excellence in one's chosen field, whether it be sport ("Max Schmitt in a Single Scull"), medicine ("Portrait of Professor Cross"), or art ("The Concert Singer," "Walt Whitman"). Focusing on five major paintings, Johns reveals much about Eakins's technique, particularly about his dramatic use of lighting. And her passing notes on Philadelphia life (everything from schools to athletics), the practice of surgery, and 19th-century notions of good character and professionalism add a nice slice of social history.

PIPERS AT THE GATES OF DAWN: The Wisdom of Children's Literature
by Jonathan Cott
Random, 1983
327 pp. \$19.95



Many adults' notions of "good" children's literature run to Victorian specimens, books that teach manners or narrate trivial adventures of elves and cute animals. Cott, a poet and journalist, believes that children like fiction for much the same reasons that adults do: It provides consolation for, escape from, and criticism of our lives. Cott here weaves interviews with six authors of children's classics with samples (graphic and textual) from their work. Cott's subjects explain their work using the language of folklorists, literary critics, and, most frequently, such explorers of the psyche as Sigmund Freud, Karl Jung, and Wilhelm Reich. William Steig, known to adults for his *New Yorker* cartoons, and to children for *Abel's Island* (1976), works from Reich's theory that facial gestures and expressions are truer language than mere words; Maurice Sendak (*Where the Wild Things Are*, 1963; *Outside over There*, 1981) speaks of the influence of his feminine side (the Jungian anima) on his imagery and plots. These authors discuss the slow, painful death of wonder in childhood. But all find in the making of their books a means of recapturing that fresh view of the world. Says Astrid Lindgren, creator of Pippi Longstocking: "I don't write *for* children . . . I write books for the child I am myself."