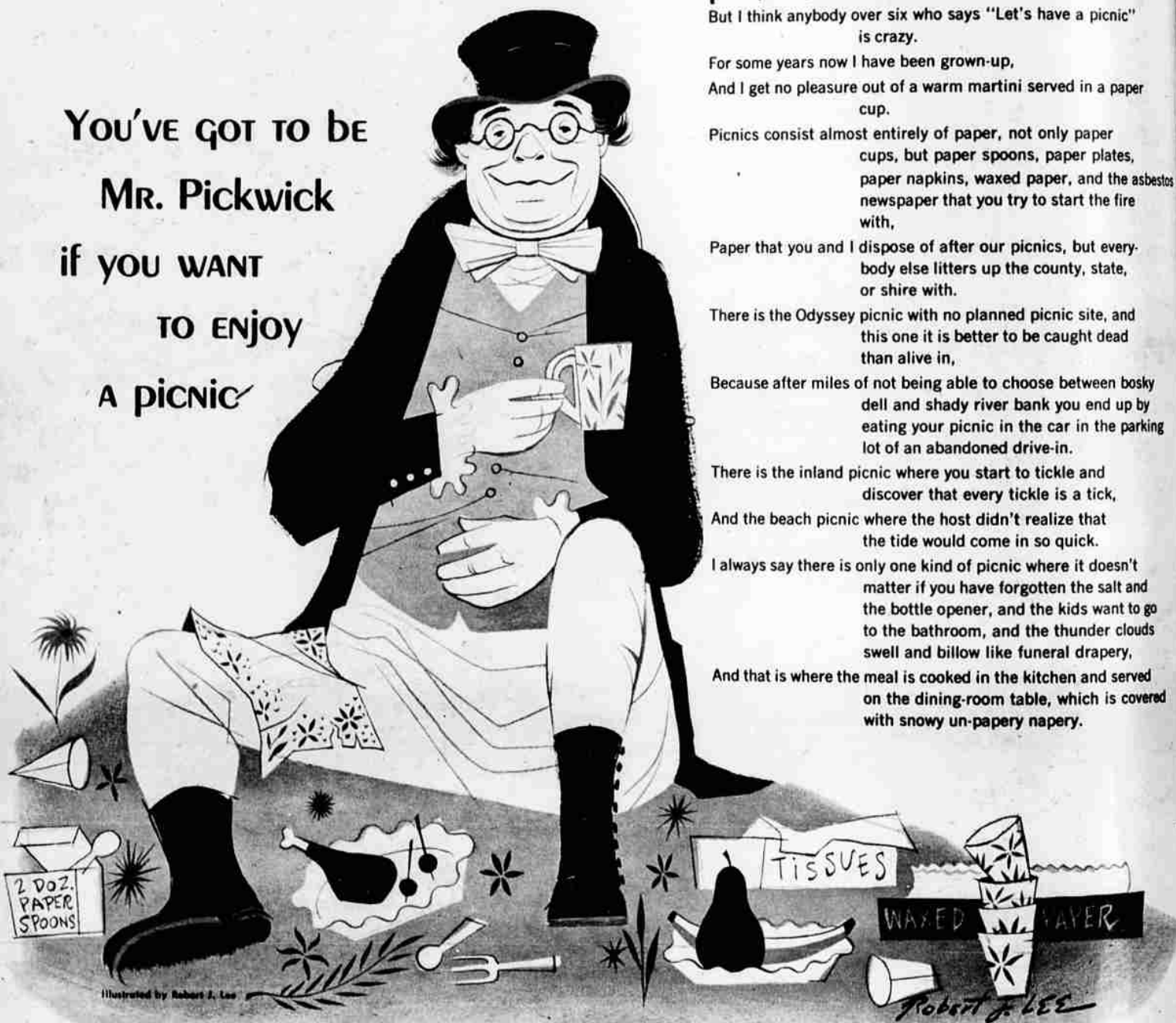


Something different and refreshing—a summer verse by America's leading poet-humorist



by OGDEN NASH

YOU'VE GOT TO BE
MR. PICKWICK
if YOU WANT
TO ENJOY
A PICNIC



Perhaps it's just that I'm lazy,
But I think anybody over six who says "Let's have a picnic"
is crazy.

For some years now I have been grown-up,
And I get no pleasure out of a warm martini served in a paper
cup.

Picnics consist almost entirely of paper, not only paper
cups, but paper spoons, paper plates,
paper napkins, waxed paper, and the asbestos
newspaper that you try to start the fire
with,

Paper that you and I dispose of after our picnics, but every-
body else litters up the county, state,
or shire with.

There is the Odyssey picnic with no planned picnic site, and
this one it is better to be caught dead
than alive in,

Because after miles of not being able to choose between bosky
dell and shady river bank you end up by
eating your picnic in the car in the parking
lot of an abandoned drive-in.

There is the inland picnic where you start to tickle and
discover that every tickle is a tick,
And the beach picnic where the host didn't realize that
the tide would come in so quick.

I always say there is only one kind of picnic where it doesn't
matter if you have forgotten the salt and
the bottle opener, and the kids want to go
to the bathroom, and the thunder clouds
swell and billow like funeral drapery,

And that is where the meal is cooked in the kitchen and served
on the dining-room table, which is covered
with snowy un-papery napery.

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