John Sloan was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on August 8, 1871, to James Sloan, a schoolteacher, and Henrietta Ireland, an English teacher. He falls, an unassuming houseman, struggled financially, and eventually the Sloan's lost their home and moved to Philadelphia. At sixteen, Sloan left high school to help support his parents and two younger brothers. He briefly worked as a bank clerk before joining a law firm as an office boy. He then joined Johnson & Stogdell in 1887, an insurance agency. In 1890, Sloan married Anna Maria Wall (known as Dolly), and the couple moved to New York City in 1904.

In 1890, he began to work at a stationery store, where he designed calendars and greeting cards, as well as visiting for sidewalk sales. He then worked at the stationery store and attended night classes at the Art Students League. Sloan also created illustrations, puzzles, and comic-strip riddles. This job would later serve as his main source of steady income as he tried to transition to a career as an artist.

Sloan married Anna Maria Wall (known as Dolly) in 1901, and the couple moved to New York City in 1904. They settled in Greenwich Village, where he began to paint scenes of street life. His interest in romanticized American art was changing, and he focused on portraying working class subjects and the gritty reality of the city. Many of Sloan's scenes had also been painted by Henri, their friend. By 1906, Sloan's paintings included a group of subjects known as “The Eight,” which was organized by Sloan and included Glackens, Henri, Luks, O'Hara, and Lake (1883–1915). In 1908, Sloan took part at the Philadelphia Press, where he created a series of illustrations, puzzles, and comic-strip riddles. This would later serve as his main source of income and art as he tried to transition to a career as an artist.

The Eight was a group of American Realist painters that emerged in the 1910s and 1920s, and they were known for their depictions of urban life and working-class subjects. The group was founded by Henri and included Sloan, George Luks, Everett Shinn, and John White. They settled in Greenwich Village, and he began to paint scenes of urban street life. In contrast to romanticized American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

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JOHN SLOAN
American, 1871–1951

SUNSET, WEST TWENTY-THIRD STREET (23RD STREET, ROOFS, SUNSET)
1906, oil on canvas, 25 1/8 x 45 1/8 in.

JOSLYN ART MUSEUM
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25th Anniversary Purchase, 1957.15