

(she had eyes, jack)
& she kept right on writing in her notebook
as i gave her a long sassy stare
& the cat nuzzled against her ankles with its soft
poised back

— Robert L. Greenfield

Goleta CA

THE FRONTIER OF HINDSIGHT

I was a world-weary 10 when Lubitsch showed me that Coop was a brilliant light comedian, a member of some screwball alien race, and I recall that I immediately re-examined the rest of my tired universe, namely, my Uncle Morris, a few dead-on-their-feet teachers, and, of course, John Wayne, who seemed sorely miscast on a horse, whose toughness and bravado made me laugh so hard I once got thrown out of the old Franklin Theater.

For a long time after that I thought Rio Bravo one of the funniest movies ever made, light years ahead of the competition. No one agreed with me, least of all Uncle Morris. And searching the heavens, after middle age had cast its long, vindictive shadow, I still wondered if anyone could have gotten the Duke off his high horse and into a smart dinner jacket, preferably white, with instructions to win Katherine Hepburn before she married Cary Grant.

Probably no one, I eventually concluded. Not Lubitsch, great star that he was, or Hawks or Chaplin. Not even Hitch, whose dim view of actors made him a natural for the part. No help appeared on the horizon. Not even from Uncle Morris, who had died with a straight face. Condemned to seriousness, like the rest of us, Wayne bluffed his way from sunset to sunset, always heading west, though, just ahead of the darkness.

OLD WAYS AND FORMER GODS

I said money wasn't important.
Having heard this in Freshman Comp,
I passed along the good news. We
were eating dinner in a fancy restaurant,