

(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,

and my father immediately fell silent.  
I thought I had done him a favor,  
since he had worked all those dark,  
meaningless years as an accountant,  
computing other people's worth,  
and probably wanted to get himself  
straightened out before it was too late.

I spoke to my mother for a while  
about how the veal marsala was slightly  
overcooked and the Bordeaux lacked character  
and about my philosophy professor who said  
nothing was real, least of all religion,  
and how he laughed in class at anyone  
who wanted to become a lawyer.

When the bill came, my father checked  
the addition and paid up, \$28.75 including  
a generous tip, big money then, and he  
drove us back in silence along the canal  
and finally across it at Montagu's Ferry  
and then cut through the hills where  
the trees huddled without comment and,  
once in town, used his road map to find  
a shortcut to my dorm — its proud spires  
unbelievably transcendent in the twilight.

— Jay A. Blumenthal

Chatham NJ

## DOGS

Chesapeake Bay Retrievers and Airedale Terriers  
Throwing a party at the Ocean Beach surf.  
They got so far out that all you could see was  
Bobbing heads in deep white water, throwing  
Sticks in their jaws.

## AN EVEN SCORE

A cat sleeping on a dog's back.

— Bill E. Bad

San Francisco CA