

POEM TO LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

los angeles is the sexiest city
los angeles with its l's & s's is the longest town
it lingers on the tip of the tongue & rolls on the roof
of the mouth
uvular, tongue-trilling los angeles los angeles
los angeles is woman leggy
a great dancer is l.a. has a great laugh — la, la
i'm laughing los angeles at your teeth
your great flashing teeth in the sun
make me laugh, los angeles, laugh
(you have rather good eyes, l.a.)
i suppose you think i'm crazy about your face
(& i might be if i taste it i might be)
& you, los angeles, california, what is it about you
that makes me dance before i kiss your mouth is it
your name
or is it you're a gurl, los angeles, & it's december
with hot sun
on my head — is it you're a gurl & i see you whirling
in the christmas streets with no winter on your breath
your legs your eyes
your hair raw & flying lady, lady los angeles?

SHE SAID

she said she didn't have any others & if she'd had she
wouldn't
have said she'd had
she said she had what she had & what she didn't she didn't
& one hadn't better be englishing her about hads & hadn'ts
& oughtn'ts & oughts
life was a whole lot bigger than a bunch of paradoxical
punks
hunting marbles at the bottom of a fountain built by
an aristotelian nebb
this she said & more, much more
she said david brinkley was a whole bunch of dan rather
wrapped up in a barbara walters shower curtain
with walter cronkite cookies dressed like christmas trees
& she wasn't going to put up with any more of it
she was sitting there alone on the top step
in a silk gown that looked like her pajamas
she had on a pair of red pumps
& a raymond chandler book in her lap
& she was writing in a notebook with a green ballpoint pen
she had white teeth & a good-looking mug

(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,