

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,