

**A REVIEW OF D. HARLAN WILSON'S *PECKINPAH***  
**(Shroud Publishing, 2009)**  
by Garrett Cook

People have gotta stop writing the best damn bizarro book I've ever read. I'm going to look like some kind of asshole. First one that did it was D. Harlan Wilson. Maybe it was the first bizarro book I ever read, but it was the best for awhile. Then came Andersen Prunty's *Zerostrata* and Eckhard Gerdes' *My Landlady the Lobotomist*. Best damn bizarro books I ever read.

So here I am looking over a PDF of D. Harlan Wilson's *Peckinpah*. I heard him read from it a couple months ago when we read together in Chicago and I thought it was really something. Might be cool to read the whole thing. First chance I get, I read the whole thing.

Alan Moore says it's a "bludgeoning celluloid rush of language, etc., etc." Damn good blurb from the man who reinvented comics. Makes the review seem like a waste of time. Made me perversely hope this wasn't the best damn bizarro book I'd ever read. What would be the point?

The book begins by making banality into poetry. Tumbleweeds roll past his sentences. Smells like gas stations, barbecue, and old people. *Last Picture Show*. *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. Yet he doesn't make that mistake John Gardner tells everyone to avoid: describing boring things by being boring. Wilson's writing is animated by energy. Negative energy, but energy nonetheless.

Then a stranger comes to town, in the tradition of the eponymous director, in the tradition of grit and gunpowder and sawdust from which this book is born. It is wry, it is loving, it is gory, it is archetypal, it is fun, it is sad. It is Peckinpah, it is Hooper, it is Lansdale, it is Texas, it is magic. Then it is Joycean, metafictional madness, deep explorations of violence. It's a meditation on perception like a Wallace Stevens poem, but it's thirteen ways of looking not at a blackbird, but at the vultures that peck out your fucking eyeballs.

It is the best damn bizarro book I've ever read. Might be the best one you've read. God damn you, D. Harlan Wilson, damn your sawdust, grit, and genius. I tip my dusty po-mo cowboy hat to you.