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Correspondence

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CORRESPONDENCE

We reprint herein portions of letters and related materials received from our readers:

- Dana Gioia wrote us on March 8, 1998: "I thought you might enjoy seeing some semi-public criticism of Cummings I just published in the instructor's manual of the anthology I took over from X. J. Kennedy. Both Joe and I love Cummings—as do students. It's only the academic critics who don't." Included was a copy of the entry on "somewhere i have never travelled," "Instructor's Manual to Accompany" *An Introduction to Poetry*, 9th ed., NY: Longman, 1998, 137.

- David Forrest wrote to Friedman and Dick Kennedy on March 15, 1998, about a ballet scenario written by Lincoln Kirstein called "Memorial Day: Dances for Democracy in Crisis," about the Civil War, dating from around 1937 or 1938. David wondered whether Kirstein was attempting an end run around Cummings' *TOM*. Dick replied on March 18, "I do not think that Kirstein was trying to steal E.E.C.'s ideas. His ballet...is all about the Civil War and Kirstein was very interested in and very knowledgeable about the Civil War. He wrote a Civil War novel, entitled *Glory* that was eventually made into an excellent movie. I hope you saw it—it focused on Colonel Robert Shaw and the Massachusetts Black Regiment that stormed Fort Wagner."

- We received the following from John Gill, July 7, 1998: "I came across a reference to Cummings which you might want to use.... It occurs in Lawrence Block's 1997 mystery *Even the Wicked* on page 271 of the paperback (Avon) edition: 'Always the beautiful answer that asks the more beautiful question', she said, and laughed at my evident puzzlement. 'e.e.Cummings.' " John goes on: "That 'e.e.Cummings boggles my mind. One still sees, unfortunately, 'e.e.cummings' and, of course, 'E.E.Cummings,' but I have never seen the two combined...."

• Tony Quagliano wrote on July 14, 1998: "Just got SPRING #6 and am enjoying it a lot. I always start with the poems, then I esp. liked your account of your return to Silver Lake (after 36 and 34 years!), and the accompanying photos./In my letter of March 21, I mentioned the special issue of *Small Press Review* on Bukowski I edited [Vol. 4, No. 4, 1973].... If you are interested in a one line contributor's note, you might say: [my] article, 'Letter from Honolulu', is in *Harvard Review* #11, Fall 1996."

• John Gill wrote us again on January 11, 1999: "To be candid, Robert Wegner's 'Reflections' on your (*Re*)*Valuing Cummings* was the one disappointment I had with the issue [No. 7]. I thought he picked too many nits. He was too negative; at the very least, he did not stress enough the positive qualities of the book (some of which I tried to stress in my paper on 'anyone' at the San Diego Conference). I guess, as that piece of mine tried to attest, I just found your book more inspiring than he did, for example, in that 'you and i' matter. (And I am not at all sure that *determine* is plural as he insists on page 163.)"

• On January 24, Phil Gerber wrote us: "I must say that the material on the young Cummings—letters and drawings—was well worth the admission to the latest edition!...[It] came just about the time I was handling Cummings in my Modern American Poetry class, so I made copies for all the class members and we had a good time seeing the arch experimenter begin his tricks rather early in life."

• Cecilia Rego Pinheiro wrote us from Lisbon, Portugal, on February 17, 1999: "To begin with, my first contact with the poetry of E.E. Cummings was through Woody Allen's movie *Hannah and Her Sisters*, in which Michael Cain's character, in love with his wife's sister, recites to her, on the phone, at 1 a.m., 'somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond'. Never having heard of Cummings before, I kept the poem in my mind' for weeks, especially that last line – 'nobody, not even the rain, has such small hands'. My enthusiasm

grew when I found a small bilingual edition of Cummings' poems in a bookstore. Not only was 'somewhere...' included but also 'it may not always be so;and i say' and some other equally beautiful poems. By that time, I was in my second year in college, taking a degree in Portuguese and English literature. Cummings wasn't included in North American literature classes, nor were his books easily available at libraries. /When I took my degree, I decided to take a post-graduation in American literature. Cummings came up *naturally* as a subject for my thesis. First I intended to study the relationship between poetry and painting, focusing on the way Cummings, through his poems, sees other painters. The poem 'of my/soul a street is' [CP 69] seemed to give some answers but problems began when I realized that I couldn't gather a sufficient body of poetry to be handled that way. In fact, the final results of my search were very poor: I had less than ten poems to work with. /By that time, one of my post-graduation seminars was about Modernism and Tradition. Having to present a paper on that topic, I once more re-read *Complete Poems* and, with Emerson's *Essays* still fresh on my mind from the previous semester, I began to figure out the possibilities of a 'new' approach. That paper, in which I analysed 'in time of daffodils' enabled me to discover the relevance of the Growing metaphor in Cummings' poetry, which I later developed in my thesis. Words can't express how your [books]...helped me in clarifying my ideas and in pointing out ways of studying the poems."

We are very pleased by the way in which Cummings and *SPRING* are receiving more international attention.