Notes on the Writings of E. E. Cummings

by Michael Webster

These notes are limited to elucidating allusions and / or quotations which might puzzle that elusive and very un-Cummings-like personage, the "general reader." I have tried—not always successfully—to avoid the temptation to interpret the poems. I have not annotated allusions that most literate readers should know, nor have I deciphered all of Cummings' dialect spellings. For some suggestions on interpreting Cummings' visual and syntactic deformations, see "Deciphering Cummings."

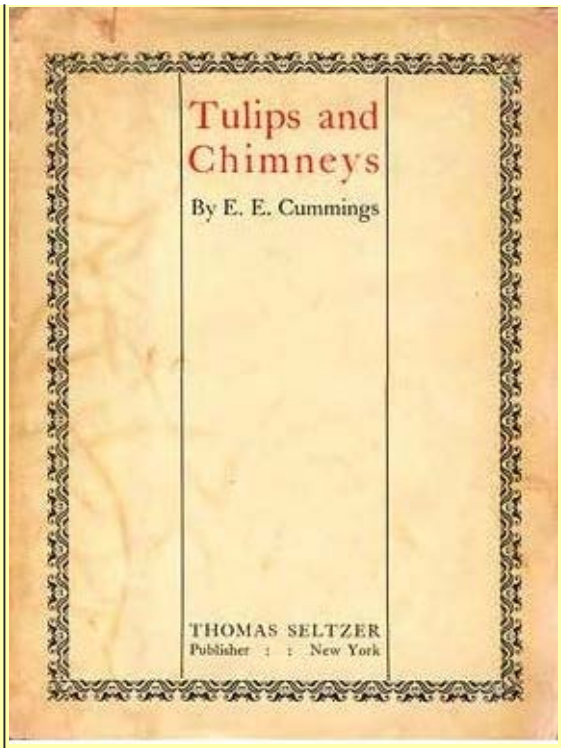
To find notes to specific poems, click on book titles below, or scroll down to individual first-line"titles" of poems, highlighted in green. Notes to the poems begin with the page number in Complete Poems (Liveright, 1994). [Page numbers to the new "revised, corrected, and expanded" edition of Cummings' *Complete Poems* (Liveright 2016) will be added after the first line (or "title") with the designation "CP2."]

Poetry	**Prose, Plays, etc.**
Tulips & Chimneys (1922 Manuscript) **& [AND]** (1925) **is 5** (1926) **W [ViVa]** (1931) **No Thanks** (1935 Manuscript) **New Poems** (1938) **50 Poems** (1940) **1 x 1 [One Times One]** (1944) **XAIPE** (1950) **95 Poems** (1958) **73 Poems** (1963) **Uncollected Poems** (1910-1962) **ETC.** (collected 1983) "Cummings' Titles" [*Spring* 9 (2000): 160-170] NEW **Cummings Archive** [A digital archive of some of Cummings' drafts]	***The Enormous Room*** [1922] An on-line text of *The Enormous Room* (Project Gutenberg) ***Him*** [1927] ***CIOPW*** [1931] ***EIMI*** [1933] ***Tom*** [1935] ***Santa Claus*** [1946] ***i: six nonlectures*** [1953] ***Adventures in Value*** [1962] ***A Miscellany Revised*** [1965] ***Fairy Tales*** [1965] ***Selected Letters*** [1969] ***Pound / Cummings: The Correspondence of Ezra Pound and E. E. Cummings*** [1996] ***A Works Cited List*** [Bibliography]

Tulips & Chimneys (1922 Manuscript)

The 1994 *Complete Poems* publishes Cummings' original 1922 manuscript of *Tulips & Chimneys* as established by Cummings' editor, George James Firmage. When first published in 1923, *Tulips and Chimneys* contained only 67 of the 104 poems in the 1922 manuscript. As Richard S. Kennedy wrote: "For *Tulips and Chimneys*, Thomas Seltzer had gingerly avoided the most experimental of the poems and passed over those whose subject matter might startle readers who were still shocked by a writer like Theodore Dreiser" (*Dreams* 252). Later, "Lincoln Mac Veagh of the Dial Press looked over the remaining poems and selected forty-one for a published volume" (Kennedy, *Dreams* 252). This book, titled *XLI Poems*, was published in 1925. Cummings gathered the remaining "most startling" poems from the original manuscript, adding to them some poems he had written recently. This group of poems was privately printed, also in 1925, to avoid censorship. These last naughty leftovers and their new cousins Cummings entitled *& [AND]*, using "the ampersand which Seltzer had denied him in *Tulips and Chimneys*" (Kennedy, *Dreams* 252-253).

3-7. "Epithalamion" [Thou aged unreluctant earth who dost"] (CP2: 3-7)



Dust jacket cover of Seltzer's truncated first edition of *Tulips and Chimneys* (1923)

This poem was commissioned by Cummings' friend, mentor, and patron, Scofield Thayer, to celebrate Thayer's marriage to Elaine Orr, June 21, 1916. Thayer paid Cummings the "extraordinary sum" of $1000 for the poem. (See Kennedy, *Dreams* 111-113.) Alison Rosenblitt discusses the classical heritage of this poem in her *E. E. Cummings' Modernism and the Classics* (136-137).

(3) *the god . . . whose cloven feet* = Pan, licentious woodland deity. A *dryad* is a wood nymph.
(3) *that delicious boy* = Adonis. *one goddess* = Aphrodite (Venus). *Chryselephantine Zeus* = statue of Zeus at Olympia, “a giant seated figure, about 13 m (43 ft) tall, made by the Greek sculptor Phidias around 435 BC.” The statue is called "chryselephantine" because was made of gold (*chrysós*) and ivory (*elephántinos*) panels molded over "a wooden substructure." Cummings may also be making a private reference to his own totem animal, the elephant.
(3) *Nike* = smaller sculpture of the winged goddess of Victory held in Zeus' right palm.
(3) *diadumenos* = "diadem-bearer" [Greek], a figural type of the sculptor Polykleitos (5th century BC) depicting "the winner of an athletic contest at a games, still nude after the contest and lifting his arms to knot the diadem, a ribbon-band that identifies the winner."
(4) *victorious Pantarkes* = local hero Pantarkes of Elis, who "won the boy's wrestling at Olympia in 436 BC," and who was a favorite of the sculptor Phidias and reportedly the model for the sculpture of "a triumphant athlete that stood at the base of the statue." Ancient sources also claim that Phidias carved the words "*Kalos Pantarkes*" ("Pantarkes is beautiful") on Zeus' little finger.
(4) *how fought the looser of the warlike zone* = Heracles, whose ninth labor required him to obtain the magic girdle (“zone,” or sash) of Hippolyta, queen of Amazons. Hippolyta was the only Amazon to marry: she was the first wife of the hero Theseus, and, as the next line says, mother of “tall Hippolytus.”

3-7. "Epithalamion" [continued]
(4) *Selene* = goddess of the moon, sister of the sun god *Helios*. *Selene's car* = her chariot. We see depicted on the

pedestal of the statue of Zeus the moon sinking in the ocean while the sun rises faintly in the east.
(4) *Danae* = mother of the Greek hero Perseus and daughter of King Acrisius of Argos. She was impregnated by Zeus, who visited her in the form of a shower of gold.
(6) *athanor* = furnace used in alchemy.
(6) *goddess* = Aphrodite, whose *crippled thunder-forging groom* is the blacksmith god Hephaistos.
the loud lord of skipping maenads = the wine god Dionysos.
Discordia's apple refers to Eris, goddess of Strife, who arrived uninvited at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, and offered a golden apple to the fairest goddess. "Three goddesses claimed the apple: Hera, Athena and Aphrodite. They asked Zeus to judge which of them was fairest, and eventually he, reluctant to favor any claim himself, declared that Paris, a Trojan mortal, would judge their cases." At the famous scene known as The Judgement of Paris, Aphrodite bribed Paris by offering him the most beautiful woman in the world, Helen. Of course, Paris chose Aphrodite as the winner of the beauty contest, thus setting into motion the events that led to the Trojan War. *the sacred shepherd* = Paris.
(7) *the tall boy god of everlasting war* = Ares, god of war, who had an affair with *Cytherea*, or Aphrodite.

8."Of Nicolette" ["dreaming in marble all the castle lay"] (CP2: 8)
Richard S. Kennedy notes that this poem is a "free translation of the sequence in *Aucassin et Nicolette* in which Nicolette descends from her prison tower." Kennedy further comments that the "obvious model for the style is [Keats'] 'The Eve of St. Agnes' " (*Dreams* 76). Cummings' poem romanticizes the prose description of the escape in the medieval French *chantefable*, which mentions (in Andrew Lang's translation) Nicolette's bruised and bleeding hands, her difficulties in climbing out of the moat, and her fear of "wild beasts, and beasts serpentine" (31-32).

9-19. SONGS (CP2: 9-20)
For an analysis of these nine poems as "songs of death," see J. Alison Rosenblitt's *E. E. Cummings' Modernism and the Classics* (137-165).

15. "All in green went my love riding" (CP2: 15)
First published in *The Harvard Monthly* [62.1 (March 1916): 8-9] with the title "Ballad." On April 5, 1916, the founder and editor of *Poetry Magazine*, Harriet Monroe, visited the New England Poetry Club. Also invited was the recently founded Harvard Poetry Society, whose members included S. Foster Damon, John Dos Passos, and E. E. Cummings, then in the last semester of his MA year at Harvard. In her account of the visit, Monroe says that though she couldn't remember the names of any of the students who attended, she vividly recalled several of the poems that they read at the meeting, among them "a ballad of really distinguished quality, showing a feeling for recurrent tragic rhythms, and a delicate use of a varied refrain" ("Down East" 89). This description sounds very much like "All in green went my love riding," and since Cummings had published the poem just the month before in the *Harvard Monthly*, it is very likely that he read it at the meeting. Monroe concludes her account by writing that she "could scarcely overpraise the work of these students, or the enthusiasm which has carried them so far in the one short year since their club was founded" (89).

Will C. Jumper argues that the persona (speaker) of the poem is a woman. Other scholars (William Davis, Cora Robey, Barry Sanders) see the speaker as male and the rider as female. In addition, they debate to what degree the rider in the poem may be equated with the goddess Artemis / Diana. Thomas R. Frosch asserts that "the critical debate about the gender of the speaker and 'my love' is unresolvable," while noting further that "the uncertainty of gender in the poem" extends to the deer, first described as " 'Four red roebuck,' then becoming 'Four fleet does,' and then becoming 'Four tall stags' " (67). In her blog post "E. E. Cummings' 'All in green went my love riding'," Alison Rosenblitt notes that in early drafts of the poem, "the rider is unambiguously male."

> ~~Forth went my lord to hunt~~
> Into the dawn my lord rode,
> In green
> And a merry deer ran before

Nevertheless, she concludes that "the poem as we have it, at least if considered outside of the 'Songs' context, is ambiguous as to the gender of speaker and beloved." Likewise, in her book *E. E. Cummings' Modernism and the Classics*, Rosenblitt sees the poem's "evocation" of Diana as deliberately "ambiguous" (155). She further notes in her blog post that this "rare exploration of gender ambiguity in Cummings coincides with a Swinburnian moment in his poetry." Both blog and book rather convincingly detail what Rosenblitt sees as verbal echoes in the poem of Swinburne's "Itylus" (*Modernism* 154). See also Gary Lane, *I Am* (59-63).

Links:

- Joan Baez sings Peter Schickele's setting of the poem.
- British folksinger and guitarist Martin Carthy sings his own setting of the poem (based on the minuet from Mozart's *Hunt Quartet*).

16. "Where's Madge then," (CP2: 17)
This poem echoes François Villon's "Ballade des dames du temps jadis" (1462), which asks: "Tell me where, in what country / Is Flora the beautiful Roman / Archiapiada or Thaïs" (Villon 47; trans. Galway Kinnell).

17. "Doll's boy 's asleep" (CP2: 18)
According to Richard S. Kennedy, this poem was composed in the fall of 1917, while Cummings was in detention in the Enormous Room at La Ferté Macé (*Dreams* 152). Alison Rosenblitt notes that this poem is something of a reversal of "a passage of desire from Walt Whitman's *Song of Myself* (11.199-201)." (*Modernism* 157). She quotes these lines from Whitman: "Twenty-eight young men bathe by the shore, / Twenty-eight young men and all so friendly; / Twenty-eight years of womanly life and all so lonesome."

19. "when god lets my body be" (CP2: 20)
According to Richard S. Kennedy, this poem was composed for Dean Briggs' class in English Versification in the spring of 1916 (*Dreams* 92). Along with "little tree" (CP 29), "the bigness of cannon" (CP 55), "Buffalo Bill 's" (CP 90), "when life is quite through with" (CP 11), and two others, "when god lets my body be" was among Cummings' first published poems in *The Dial* [68 (Jan. 1920): 24].

20-26. "Puella Mea" ["Harun Omar and Master Hafiz"] (CP2: 21-28)
The longest poem that Cummings ever published was written in praise of Elaine Orr Thayer in the summer and early fall of 1919 while Elaine was pregnant with Cummings' daughter Nancy. It is thus a kind of companion-piece to "Epithalamion" (CP 3-7), commissioned in 1916 to celebrate the marriage of Elaine and Scofield Thayer. Richard S. Kennnedy writes that by publishing "Puella Mea" in *The Dial* in January 1921 (48-54), Thayer seemed to be making "a public declaration" that Elaine and Estlin were a couple. "Shortly after," Kennedy relates, Thayer and Elaine "reached an agreement for a French divorce" (*Dreams* 215).
Harun Omar = Omar Khayyam (1048– 1131), Persian mathematician, astronomer, and poet.
Master Hafiz = Khwāja Shams-ud-Dīn Muhammad Hāfez-e Shīrāzī (1315-1390), Persian poet known by his pen name Hafez ("the memorizer; the [safe] keeper") and as "Hafiz."

27. "in Just-" (CP2: 29)
goat-footed refers to Pan, Greek woodland deity. In a blog post at Harry Ransom Center, Jennifer [Alison] Rosenblitt comments on "The goat-footed paganism of E. E. Cummings." For more commentary on this poem, see "On 'in Just-' " at the MAPS legacy site. See also Iain Landles' deconstructive take on the poem in "An Analysis of Two Poems by E. E.Cummings" [*Spring* 10 (2001): 31-43]. For responses to Landles, see R. A. Buck, "When Syntax Leads a Rondo with a Paintbrush: The Aesthetics of E. E. Cummings' 'in Just-' Revisited." [*Spring* 18 (2011): 134-159] and Etienne Terblanche, "Oscillating Center and Frame in E. E. Cummings's 'in Just-." [*The Explicator* 73.2 (2015): 105-108] For a consideration of the poem's paganism and its place in the five-poem sequence "Chansons Innocentes," see J. Alison Rosenblitt's *E. E. Cummings' Modernism and the Classics* (77-89).

Richard S. Kennedy reprints the first version of the poem (with capitals begining each line and standard spacing of the free-verse lines) in *Dreams in the Mirror* (97). He reproduces a photo of the typescript in *E. E. Cummings Revisited* (27). This first version of the poem, which was composed for Dean Briggs' class in English Versification in the spring of 1916, started out like this:

> In just-Spring
> When the world is mud-luscious
> The queer old balloon-man
> Whistles far and wee,
> And Bill and Eddy come pranking
>
> From marbles and from piracies,

And it's Springtime. (qtd. in Kennedy, *Dreams* 97)

In the summer and fall of 1916, while living at his parents' house at 104 Irving Street, Cummings began to restructure his free verse poems by eliminating punctuation, using capital letters mostly for emphasis, and creating radical line breaks and non-standard spacings. To see a photo of Cummings' first restructured draft of the poem, go to the *Tulips & Chimneys* page at the Cummings Archive. For a discussion of Cummings' revisions of "in Just-", see Michael Webster's overview of the poet's work in *A Companion to Modernist Poetry*, "E. E. Cummings" (494-496). Compare the rather tame free verse of the excerpt above with the revised version of "in Just-" published in *The Dial* [68 (May 1920): 580].

28. "hist whist" (CP2: 30)
Links:

- Jack Palance reads "hist whist".
- Text of "hist-whist" (Poetry Foundation)

29. "little tree" (CP2: 31)
Links:

- "little tree" [as published in *The Dial* 68 (Jan. 1920): 22]
- In 1960, Cummings and his wife Marion Morehouse reprinted "little tree" on their Christmas card.
- Steven Heitzeg's choral setting of "little tree" performed by The Dale Warland Singers.

31. "Tumbling-hair" (CP2: 33)
This poem was first published in *Eight Harvard Poets* (1917) under the title "Epitaph" (10). Richard S. Kennedy notes that the poem is "about innocence betrayed or the vulnerability of beautiful things, but it is expressed by means of a classical subject, the abduction of Persephone by Hades, and treated with the new technique he had developed . . . . It is an image in action, presented with elliptical brevity" (*Dreams* 108). Charles Norman notes the likely allusion to Milton's lines in *Paradise Lost*: "Not that fair field / Of Enna, where Proserpin gathering flowers, / Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis / Was gathered" (IV. 268-71; Norman, *Magic-Maker* 39-40). See also the discussion of the poem in J. Alison Rosenblitt's *E. E. Cummings' Modernism and the Classics* (83-85).

32. "i spoke to thee" [Orientale I] (CP2: 34)
First published as "Out of the Bengali" in *The Harvard Monthly* 59.3 (December 1914): 85.

41. "your little voice"
This poem was first published as "The Lover Speaks" in late 1917 in *Eight Harvard Poets* (9).

53. "Humanity i love you" (CP2: 58)
It is instructive to consider why Cummings placed this poem first in a section called "La Guerre," poems about World War I. The following passage from *i: six nonlectures* seems relevant to the context of the poem:

> Whereas—by the very act of becoming its improbably gigantic self—New York had reduced mankind to a tribe of pygmies, Paris (in each shape and gesture and avenue of her being) was continuously expressing the humanness of humanity. Everywhere I sensed a miraculous presence, not of mere children and women and men, but of living human beings; and the fact that I could scarcely understand their language seemed irrelevant, since the truth of our momentarily mutual aliveness created an imperishable communion. While (at the hating touch of some madness called La Guerre) a once rising and striving world toppled into withering hideously smithereens, love rose in my heart like a sun and beauty blossomed in my life like a star. Now, finally and first, I was myself: a temporal citizen of eternity; one with all human beings born and unborn. (53)

the old howard = The Old Howard Theatre, on Howard St. in Scollay Square, Boston. Long since demolished by "illustrious punks of Progress" (CP 438), Scollay Square and the Old Howard were for years "famous for supplementing the curricula of Harvard students. 'Always Something Doing, One to Eleven, at the Old Howard' read its ads in the *Boston Globe*, followed by the titillating phrase, '25 Beautiful Girls 25' " (Park).
Links:

- "A brief, pictorial history of Scollay Square"
- "Amanda Palmer Reads 'humanity i love you' " (brainpickings.org/)

54. "earth like a tipsy" (CP2: 59)
once the discobolus of / one // Myron = most likely a plaster cast of one of the surviving bronze copies of Myron's famous statue of a discus thrower.
Alison Rosenblitt suggests that the poem "depicts a drunken earth lurching around, breaking the artefacts of human civilization. This seems like earth under cannon bombardment" ("a twilight" 249). She further notes that both crucifix and discobolus are "two beautiful naked or nearly naked male bodies, smashed up by the drunk cleaning woman who is earth. These are not simply bodies, but specifically male bodies created through art. . . . Earth destroys, equally, a pinnacle of ancient art and an image which lies at the heart of Christian art" (252).

56. "little ladies more" (CP2: 61-62)
Even though all of its suggestive language is in French, this poem was not able to be published in the original 1923 *Tulips and Chimneys*. It first appeared in *&* [*AND*] (1925) and was later reprinted as poem TWO IX in the book *is 5* (1926).
Mimi à / la voix fragile / qui chatouille Des / Italiens = "Mimi with the fragile voice who tickles Des Italiens." EEC remembers two prostitutes, Mimi and (a few lines down) Marie Louise Lallemand, whom he and Slater Brown picked up in May, 1917 while waiting in Paris to be posted to their ambulance section (see Kennedy, *Dreams* 138-144). *Des Italiens* = the Boulevard Des Italiens, on the two women's regular beat "between the place de la République and the place de la Opéra" (Kennedy, *Dreams* 141). *putain* = prostitute.
n'est-ce pas que je suis belle / chéri? les anglais m'aiment / tous,les américains / aussi. . . . "bon dos,bon cul de Paris" = aren't I beautiful, dear? the English love me all of them, the Americans too. . . . "good back, nice Parisian ass"
Vierge / Priez / Pour / Nous) = Virgin Pray For Us.
se promènent / doucement le soir = walking slowly in the evening.
les anglais / sont gentils et les américains / aussi,ils payent bien les américains = the English are nice and the Americans too, they pay well the Americans.
voulez- / vous couchez avec / moi? Non? pourquoi? = do you want to sleep with me? No? why?
la / guerre j'm'appelle / Manon,cinq rue Henri Monnier / voulez-vous couchez avec moi? = the war I'm Manon, 5 rue Henri Monnier do you want to sleep with me?
te ferai Mimi / te ferai Minette = I will let you do Mimi I will let you do Minette. [Both Mimi and Minette are pet names for a cat--i.e., "pussy."]
si vous voulez / chatouiller / mon lézard = if you'd like to tickle my crack.
j'm'en fous des nègres = I'm crazy about black guys.
une boîte à joujoux = a box of toys. [Also *jouir* = to play.]
toutes les petites femmes exactes / qui dansent toujours = all the little exact ladies who dance always.
dis-donc,Paris // ta gorge mystérieuse / pourquoi se promène-t-elle,pourquoi / éclat ta voix / fragile couleur de pivoine? = tell me Paris, your mysterious throat why does she walk you, why does your fragile peony-colored voice burst?

63. "stinging" (CP 2: 68)
In "Modernist Poetry and the Plain Reader's Rights," Laura Riding and Robert Graves are probably correct in noticing an allusion to Rémy de Gourmont's *Litanies de la rose* (36) in the lines "silver // chants the litanies the / great bells are ringing with rose." In *The Enormous Room*, Cummings quotes from Gourmont's poems "Le Verger" (57) and "Chanson de l'automne" (219). (See Thierry Gillyboeuf 's "About Two French Verses in *The Enormous Room*.") In addition, Cummings could have read extensive quotations from *Litanies de la rose* in Amy Lowell's volume *Six French Poets* (1916). Riding and Graves seem put off by the "technical oddities" of "stinging"--the lack of capital letters and "spacing [which] does not suggest any verse form" (36). For them, the poem is so fragmentary and "sketchy" that it "might be made to mean anything" (36). They posit that any "precise meaning" that the poem may have had was "lost . . . while writing [it]." So they set out "to discover the original poem that was in the back of the poet's mind" (36), and do so by concocting a 15-line poem that begins: "White foam and vesper wind embrace. / The salt air stings my dazzled face" (37). They conclude, however, that their rhymed and conventionally-spaced version is "banal" because it introduces too "many superfluous words and images" (38). Writing this supposedly more formal version of the poem causes them to laud the "carefully devised dreaminess" (39) of Cummings' poem, admitting that it is "intensely formal," although they are uncertain whether the "plain reader" is capable of applying the "critical effort" necessary to appreciate "stinging" as a poem (40).

Richard S. Kennedy reproduces a draft of the poem in his biography *Dreams in the Mirror*, while reminding us that "stinging" is only one of a large group of poems in conventional free verse on a list that Cummings compiled in the summer of 1916 under the heading "D.S.N." (*Dreams* 97). (What the initials "D.S.N." might signify is unknown, but my guess is that they probably stand for "Do Something New.") Unlike Riding and Graves's alternate poem, the first version of "stinging" is written in the standard free verse format of 1916--without radical line breaks and with regular punctuation and initial capitals.

> Stinging gold
> Swarms upon the spires,
> Silver chants the litanies,
> The great bells are ringing with rose—
>
> The lewd fat bells.
>
> And a tall wind
> Is dragging the sea for a dream,
> For soon shall the formidable eyes
> Of the world be
> Entered
> With sleep. (qtd. in Kennedy, *Dreams* 98)

For the final version, Cummings cut the last four lines of the draft while making two crucial lexical alterations, substituting "with // dream // -S" for "for a dream." Cummings deletes all punctuation, along with the capital letters at the beginning of the lines, while radically rearranging the spacing of the words in lines 1-7 of the draft. To cite one example, the words "wind / Is dragging the sea for a dream" (lines 6-7) are lengthened into seven lines, five consisting of only one word and the last line with only the hook-and-wave-pattern of a hyphen and capital S. The sky-wind becomes taller and visually ripples the dream-waves.

67. "the hours rise up putting off stars and it is" (CP2: 72-73)
Richard S. Kennedy notes that Cummings wrote the first version of this poem "in November 1914, his senior year at Harvard" (*Dreams* 122). Kennedy reprints the first version, which is in long free-verse lines reminiscent of Walt Whitman. The poem may also have been influenced by Carl Sandburg's "Chicago," which first appeared in *Poetry Magazine* in March 1914. When he revised the poem in 1916, Cummings cut out some "sentimentalizing" and "social posturing" and added the lines in the middle about "a frail / man / dreaming / dreams / dreams in the mirror" (*Dreams* 123). Kennedy notes that by isolating the words "dawn," "wakes," "the world," "man," "dreaming," and "dreams" in lines of their own, Cummings emphasizes the "main theme" of the poem: his notion of "dream" as a "vision of some ultimate reality which is beclouded by the world" (*Dreams* 124).

68. "i will wade out" (CP2: 74)
This poem was first published in late 1917 as "Crepuscule" [French for "Twilight"] in *Eight Harvard Poets* (7). The compositor of the volume made a number of errors in setting the type for this poem, creating non-existent line breaks at "burn- / ing flowers" and "my / body." In addition, as Richard S. Kennedy notes, the typescript of the poem featured for the first time Cummings' lower-case "i"--but "this little startler was never published, for the copy editor apparently took it as a typing error and corrected it" (*Dreams* 109).

71. "as usual i did not find him in the cafés" (CP2: 77)
This poem "was originally entitled 'Arthur Wilson' after Cummings' roommate in New York in 1917" (Kidder 39). The first part of the poem depicts Cummings searching for Wilson at rush hour; the second part depicts their apartment, with its crimson (the Harvard color) quilt and EEC's "geometrical" paintings. (See Kennedy, *Dreams* 82, 139; *Letters* 13-14.) For more on Wilson, see https://winslowwilson.com/.

The syntax of the first sentence might be clarified by a comma after "peregrinations" and a parenthesis around "by inevitable tiredness of flanging shop-girls." Perhaps also the nouns and verbs are arranged in German fashion, so that it is "the street" that "furnished" and the twilight that "impersonally affords."

flanging = "to furnish with a flange, a protruding rim, edge, rib, or collar."
woolworthian pinnacle = the Woolworth building, tallest before 1931. (See also 111. "at the ferocious phenomenon of 5

o'clock" [CP1 201].)

73. [V] "Babylon slim" (CP2: 79)
"Pretty / Baby" = song written by Tony Jackson, Egbert Van Alstyne (music) and Gus Kahn (lyrics), published in 1916. The lyrics of the song push the baby metaphor too far, as one can see by the chorus:

> Everybody loves a baby that's why I'm in love with you,
> Pretty baby, pretty baby,
> And I'd like to be your sister, brother, dad and mother too,
> Pretty baby, pretty baby.
> Won't you come and let me rock you in my cradle of love
> And we'll cuddle all the time.
> Oh, I want a lovin' baby, and it might as well be you,
> Pretty baby of mine,
> Pretty baby of mine.

84. "one April dusk the" (CP 2: 91)
Ο ΠΑΡΘΕΝΩΝ = "O PARTHENON" or "The Parthenon," the name of the restaurant.
Under the pseudonym "Dorian Abbott," Cummings' friend and mentor S. Foster Damon (1893-1971) wrote in "Thirty Years of Harvard Aesthetes" that in "the years 1914-16 . . . nearly thirty [Harvard] students, all poets, painters, or something similar, . . . banded together informally to enjoy life. They steeped themselves in Debussy, Huysmans, Stravinsky, in Baudelaire, Beardsley, and Botticelli, and occasionally, it must be confessed, in Wilde and Louys. They wandered through the city in the evening seeking strange foods at unknown restaurants of all nationalities. The most celebrated of these was the 'Parthenon' on Kneeland Street, where, over the pilaf, the yiaorti [yogurt], or the paklova [baklava], they argued anything from Rabelais to Ravel" (39). The Parthenon restaurant is also depicted in "when i am in Boston,i do not speak" (CP 116) and "The awful darkness of the town" (CP 933) [*Etcetera* 33].

89. "spring omnipotent goddess thou dost" (CP 2: 97)
ragging the world --Robert Wegner writes, "I interpreted the words 'ragging the world' as meaning clothing the world, that is, urging the grass to grow, inducing leaves to emerge, buds to bloom. Cummings had no objection to this ancillary reading, but explicitly he wanted me to know that '*ragging*, when I wrote the poem meant turning to ragtime(music;)syncopating'" ("Visit" 68). See also EEC's poem "ta / ppin / g" (CP 78).

90. "Buffalo Bill 's" (CP 2: 98)
Buffalo Bill = William F. Cody (1846-1917). Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show enthralled audiences from 1883 to 1910. For criticism of the poem, see Thomas Dilworth's "Cummings's 'Buffalo Bill 's'," Rushworth M. Kidder's " 'Buffalo Bill 's'—an Early Cummings Manuscript" (*Harvard Library Bulletin* 24.4, Oct. 1976), and Etienne Terblanche's "Is There a Hero in this Poem? E. E. Cummings's 'Buffalo Bill 's / defunct'."

Links:

- "Buffalo Bill 's" [as published in *The Dial* 68 (Jan. 1920): 23]
- Rushworth M. Kidder's transcription of a draft manuscript of "Buffalo Bill 's"
- "on 'Buffalo Bill 's' " (on-line criticism of at the MAPS legacy site)
- "Buffalo Bill 's" (on-line criticism at the current MAPS site)
- "Buffalo bill shooting while riding" (Carl Henckel, 1891) [from Henckel's *Buffalo Bill and his Wild West: Drawings from Life* (Munich: 1891)
- Buffalo Bill shooting "pigeons" from horseback (1906). We can see a black and white version of the same photo at the Library of Congress site. This photo, as well as Cummings' adult and childhood views of Buffalo Bill are discussed in:
- "Estlin Cummings, 'Animal Emperor' and Wild West Impresario" (Michael Webster, EEC Society Blog)
- An excellent short biography of Buffalo Bill (PBS)
- *The adventures of Buffalo Bill* and *The Life of Buffalo Bill* (Gutenberg.org)
- "William Frederick Cody" (Paul Fees, Buffalo Bill Center of the West)
- Avant-jazz classical group Tin Hat's setting of "Buffalo Bill 's" (2012)

96. "conversation with my friend is particularly" (CP 2: 104)

Rushworth Kidder suggests that the friend is Scofield Thayer, editor of the *Dial* (39). For Thayer's views on Cummings' poetry, see James Dempsey's *The Tortured Life of Scofield Thayer* (65-67).

98. "the waddling" (CP 2: 106-107)
bloo-moo-n = a blue moon, cocktail containing Tanqueray Malacca gin, Curacao liqueur, sweet and sour mix, and pineapple juice, shaken with ice.
sirkusrickey = a circus rickey, cocktail containing gin, lime juice, grenadine and club soda, over ice.
platzburg = though "Plattsburgh" is a town on Lake Champlain in upper state New York, Cummings probably refers to an alcoholic beverage.
hoppytoad = a hop toad, cocktail containing rum, apricot brandy, and lime juice.

106. "riverly is a flower" (CP 2: 115)
This poem apparently takes place in a graveyard, perhaps a "post-impression" of the same [?] experience briefly alluded to in *EIMI*: "And after Buffalo Bill(a graveyard 'New York' &)what fireflies among such gravestones" (430/411).

108. "into the strenuous briefness" (CP 2: 117)
In a May 1920 letter to his father, Cummings states that "into the strenuous briefness" is his favorite among a group of five poems recently published in *The Dial* [68 (May 1920): 577]. (See *Selected Letters*, page 71. The note by Dupee and Stade is in error.) He writes: "This poem is later in compositon than the other 4,and to my mind more perfectly organised. I am confident that its technique approaches uniqueness. After all, sans blague and Howells,it is a supreme pleasure to have done something FIRST -- and "roses & hello" also the comma after "and" ("and,ashes")are Firsts" (*Letters* 71).

The phrase *sans blague and Howells* means something like "no joke and [no William Dean] Howells." In his 1916 term paper "The Poetry of a New Era," written in his final semester at Harvard, Cummings quotes from a September 1915 column that William Dean Howells wrote on the New Poetry: "The best things in the new poets are of the oldest form, and where some of the second-best brave it in the fashions which are supposed new, after all it is only a reversion to the novelties of an earlier day" (634). Despite what Howells may say, Cummings asserts that he has done something "FIRST."

110. "i was sitting in mcsorley's. outside it was New York and beautifully snowing." (CP 2: 120-121).
McSorley's is an ale-house at 15 East 7th Street in the East Village, founded in 1854 and still in business. The bar used to be for men only—women were first admitted in 1971.

Links:

- John Sloan, *McSorley's Back Room* (1916; etching, Phillips Collection, Washington, DC)
- Joseph Mitchell, "The Old House at Home: McSorley's, the oldest Irish saloon in the city." *New Yorker* (14 April 1940), later collected in *McSorley's Wonderful Saloon*.

John Sloan, *McSorley's Bar* (1912, Detroit Institute of Arts)

111. "at the ferocious phenomenon of 5 o'clock" (CP 2: 122-123)

EEC goes to the top of the Woolworth building to view rush hour. Milton Cohen writes that "the poem's genius is . . . to find motion in matter, describe matter in motion. Thus, for all its towering verticality and perpendicular solidity, the Woolworth Building is a 'swooping,' 'squirming' 'kinesis'." While Cohen agrees at least partially with

Richard S. Kennedy that "Cubism is the poem's rightful source" [see *Dreams* 181-182], he also notes that its "images (and the speaker with them) swoop, rise, and squirm, they surge with a dynamism closer to [John] Marin's vibrant *Woolworth Building* watercolors than to Picasso's static *Houses at Horta*" (*PoetandPainter* 177). John Marin wrote of his *Woolworth Building* series:

> I see great forces at work; great movements; the large buildings and the small buildings, the warring of the great and small.… Feelings are aroused which give me the desire to express the reaction of these “pull forces” …. while these powers are at work pushing, pulling, sideways, downward, upward, I can hear the sound of their strife and there is great music being played.

For a particulary "swooping" wartercolor in Marin's series, see *Woolworth Building #32*. See also "as usual i did not find him in the cafés" (CP 71).

At left: Woolworth Building, 1913. Gelatin silver photograph. New-York Historical Society

Links:

- John Marin, *Woolworth Building* (The Dance) (1913; etching and drypoint, Metropolitan Museum of Art)
- Woolworth Building (Mary Ann Sullivan, Bluffton University)

Berenice Abbott photo of the Woolworth Building (scroll down) (Museum of the City of New York)
- PODCAST: The Woolworth Building (Bowery Boys NYC History)
- Woolworth Building (Wikipedia)
- The Woolworth Building under construction (Wikimedia Commons)
- Woolworth Building compared to an ocean liner (Hamburg-American Line postcard, 1913)

115. "the Cambridge ladies who live in furnished souls" (CP 2: 127)
Longfellow = Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882), popular American poet, author of inspirational poems like "A Psalm of Life" and patriotic poems like "Paul Revere's Ride."
Link: Text of "the Cambridge ladies who live in furnished souls" (Poetry Foundation)

116. "when i am in Boston,i do not speak" (CP 2: 128)
When / In Doubt Buy Of = an electric sign, the rest of whose message is obscured by rooftops.
Kneeland = street in downtown Boston where the Parthenon restaurant was located. See the note to "one April dusk the" (CP 84). See also "The awful darkness of the town" (CP 933) [*Etcetera* 33].
hellas = Greece;
paklavaah meeah = one baklava, a pastry described as "indigestible honeycake" in line eight.
ΜΕΓΆ ΈΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΝ ΞΕΝΟΔΟΧΕΙΟΝ ΎΠΝΟΥ = "MÉGA HELLENIKÓN XENODOCHEÍON HUPNOU" = "Grand Hellenic Hotel for Sleeping." No doubt a ("cindercoloured little") black and white tourist photo on the wall of the restaurant.

118. "ladies and gentlemen this little girl" (CP 2: 130)
the Frolic or the Century whirl--These seem to be dances, but The Frolic was also the name of a dance pavilion at Revere Beach north of Boston.

119. "by god i want above fourteenth" (CP 2: 131)
the singer = the Singer Building, finished in 1908, demolished in 1967. For approximately one year, it was the tallest building in the world.

121. "a fragrant sag of fruit distinctly grouped" (CP 2: 133)
swims to Strunsky's = "Strunksy Restaurants: 19 W. 8th Street (from 1917) three restaurants in one. On the first floor was Washington Square Restaurant, on the lower floor was Washington Square Cafeteria and Greenwich Village Cafeteria. (Also known as 'Three Steps Down')."

124. "when thou hast taken thy last applause,and when" (CP 2: 136)
This poem was titled "A Chorus Girl" when it was first published in late 1917 in *Eight Harvard Poets* (4). This poem made an impression on some contemporaries. In his memoir *Exile's Return* (1934, 1951), Malcolm Cowley emphasizes the literary decadence of the "Harvard Aesthetes of 1916" by quoting (without attribution) the last phrase in the sonnet:

> They had crucifixes in their bedrooms, and ticket stubs from last Saturday's burlesque show at the Old Howard. They wrote, too, dozens of them were prematurely decayed poets, each with his invocation to Antinoüs, his mournful descriptions of Venetian lagoons, his sonnets to a chorus girl in which he addressed her as “little painted poem of God.” In spite of these beginnings, a few of them became good writers. (35)

In addition, the short reader's report that the poet and writer Clement Wood prepared for the publisher of *Eight Harvard Poets* terms the last line of the sonnet "quite effective." And in his review of *Tulips and Chimneys*, Robert L. Wolf, a

classmate of Cummings at Harvard, quotes this sonnet entire, calling it "one of the finest poems in the book" (18).

125. "god pity me whom(god distinctly has)" (CP 2: 137)
fattish drone / of I Want a Doll = popular song from 1918 by composer Harry Von Tilzer (1872-1946), and lyricists Eddie Moran (b. 1871) and Vincent Bryan (1883-1937). The song's lyrics begin: "When I was just a little kid I had a million toys / But when I saw a doll I just went wild." The chorus begins: "I want a doll, I want a baby doll to play with me."

139. "Thou in whose swordgreat story shine the deeds" (CP 2: 151)
This poem was first published in late 1917 in *Eight Harvard Poets* (3).
Froissart = Jean Froissart (1338-1410?), French historian, author of The Chronicles (1369-1410).

144. "this is the garden:colours come and go" (CP 2: 156)
In her memoir, Hildegarde Watson reports that in the summer of 1915, Cummings and her husband "motored to Rochester [N.Y.] to the Watson house, where Estlin wrote the now famous sonnet. . . . Mrs. Watson placed it in her guest book where, later, I came across it. It is arranged—and punctuated—differently from the published version; there is no 'u' in 'color,' and there are capitals at the beginning of each line!" (87). Here is the first stanza of this sonnet as transcribed by Hildegarde Watson:

> This is the garden. Colors come and go:
> Frail azures fluttering from night's outer wing,
> Strong silent greens serenely lingering,
> Absolute lights like baths of golden snow.

The poem appears with the same punctuation and capitalization in *Eight Harvard Poets* (1917). When the sonnet was published in *Tulips and Chimneys* (1923), Cummings removed most capital letters, retaining only those in words that begin sentences, along with the two crucial capitals in the words "Death's" and "They." He also made two simple changes in punctuation in the first line--substituting a colon for the period after "garden" and a comma for the colon after "go"--adding more momentum to a line that nevertheless still lingers slightly.

146. "it may not always be so;and i say" (CP 2: 158)
This poem was first published in *Eight Harvard Poets* (6).

160. [SONNETS--ACTUALITIES VII] "yours is the music for no instrument" (CP 2: 172)
rathe = "quick in action, eager, vehement" or "early" (Heusser, *I Am* 175).
la bocca mia = "my mouth" [Italian]. Richard S. Kennedy points out that this passage alludes to Dante, *Inferno* V.136: "Francesca has told Dante that her love for Paolo began when they were reading the story of Launcelot and Guinivere together and suddenly 'la bocca mi bacio tutto tremonte' ([he], trembling all over, kissed my mouth)" (*Dreams* 237-238). According to Kennedy, like Paolo and Francesca, "the poet and his lady risk all eternity for love" (238). But Heusser sees death as the overwhelming threat in the poem.

169. "I have found what you are like" (CP 2: 181)
Link: William McClelland, William Appling Singers & Orchestra, *Five Sonnets for Men's Voices*: i have found what you are like [Albany Records]

170. "—GON splashes-sink" (CP 2: 182)
Three letters (G, O, and N) from a large illuminated sign flash on the sink. What are the other letters of the sign? Could it be CALGON?
j'en doute,) chérie = "I doubt it, dear" [French].

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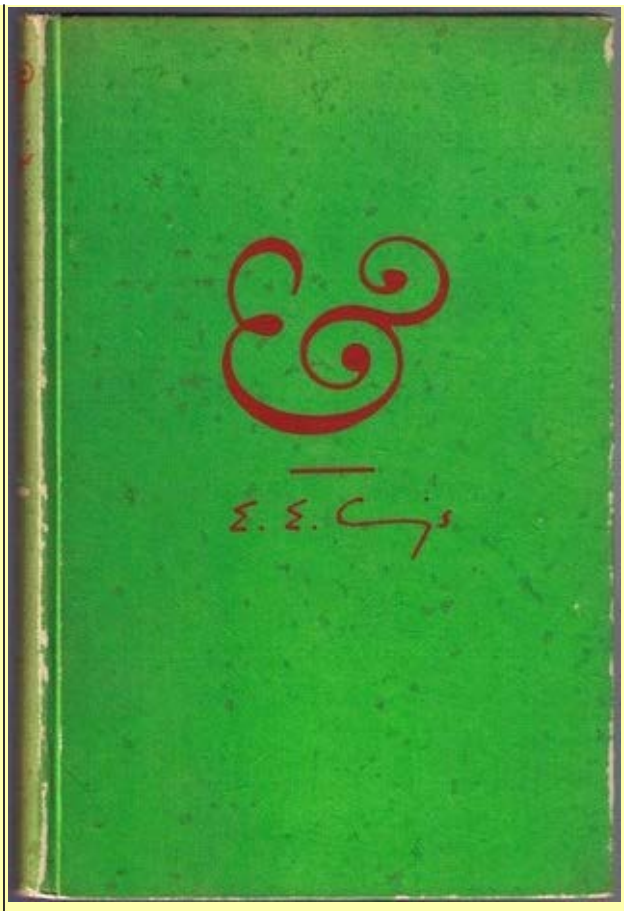
& [AND] (1925)

The 1994 *Complete Poems* publishes as & [*AND*] only those new poems that Cummings added to the poems left over from the original

1922 *Tulips & Chimneys* manuscript. Privately printed to avoid censorship, this group of poems Cummings titled *&* [*AND*], in honor of "the ampersand which Seltzer had denied him in *Tulips and Chimneys*" (Kennedy, *Dreams* 252-253). [See the headnote to *Tulips & Chimneys* above.] At right: cover of first edition of *&* [*AND*]. (Note capital letters in Cummings' signature.)



184. "I remark this beach has been used too. much Too. originally" (CP 2: 196)
flatchatte ringarom a .s = "flat chattering aromas."
c'est // l'heure // exquise = "it is the exquisite hour" [French]. Isabelle Alfandary notes that this phrase is the last line of poem 6 ("La lune blanche") in Paul Verlaine's collection *La Bonne chanson* (1870).
i remind Me of Her —Alfandary also notes that the English phrase is a literal translation of "je me la souviens," a common French phrase that is not found in Verlaine's poem. A more idiomatic translation would be: "I remember her." (See Alfandary, *E. E. Cummings* 63-64.)

189. "suppose / Life is an old man" (CP 2: 201)
Life speaks French, of course: *les* / *roses les bluets* = "roses, bachelor's buttons"; *Les belles bottes* = "pretty bunches"; *pas chères* = "not expensive."

192. "here is little Effie's head" (CP 2: 204-205)
In *Spring* 7, Alys Yablon notes that "Effie's name may perhaps be a play on the word 'ephermeral'" (51).
The six subjunctive crumbs may be derived from Gilbert and Sullivan's anti-feminist operetta *Princess Ida*. In the operetta, the princess of the title founds a college for women and vows that students and faculty will shut themselves off from all contact with men. Lady Blanche, the "Professor of Abstract Science" at the college, expresses her ambition to overthrow Princess Ida in the following way:

> Oh, weak Might Be!
> Oh, May, Might, Could, Would, Should!
> How powerless ye
> For evil or for good!
> In every sense
> Your moods I cheerless call,
> Whate'er your tense
> Ye are Imperfect, all!
> Ye have deceived the trust I've shown
> In ye!
> Away! The Mighty Must alone
> Shall be! (264-265)

At the conclusion of the play, when Princess Ida asks Lady Blanche whether she would take her place should she resign, Blanche responds:

> To answer this, it's meet that we consult
> The great Potential Mysteries; I mean

The five Subjunctive Possibilities--
The May, the Might, the Would, the Could, the Should.
Can you resign? The prince May claim you; if
He Might, you Could--and if you Should, I Would! (293-294)

For a discussion of *Princess Ida* in the context of its source (Tennyson's *The Princess*) and of attitudes towards women in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, see volume one of Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *No Man's Land: The War of the Words*, pp. 3-23. For another possible Cummings borrowing from Gilbert and Sullivan, see "mr u will not be missed" (CP 551).

195. "i will be" (CP 2: 207-208)
dea d tunes OR s-crap p-y lea Ves flut te rin g should read "dea d tunes OR s-cra p-y lea Ves flut te rin g"-- EEC is writing "scrapy" not "scrappy."

199. "gee i like to think of dead . . ." (CP 2: 212-213)
inti = intimate [adjective].

201. "(one!) // the wisti-twisti barber" (CP 2: 214)
See Louis C. Rus, "Cummings' '(one!)'." *Explicator* 15 (Jan. 1956), item 40. Rus notes how the grammatical ambiguities in the poem reinforce its message of oneness.

203. "O It's Nice To Get Up In,the slipshod mucous kiss" (CP 2: 217)
Richard S. Kennedy notes that the poem quotes from a popular song sung by Harry Lauder in the British music halls:

Oh, it's nice to get up in the morning
When the sun begins to shine,
At four or five or six o'clock
In the good old summer time.

But when the snow is snowing,
And it's murky overhead
Oh, it's nice to get up in the morning,
But it's nicer to lie in your bed!

Kennedy quotes a slightly different version of the first stanza in *Selected Poems* 73. Here's the complete performance (with spoken interlude) of "It's Nice to Get Up in the Morning But It's Nicer to Lie in Bed."

207. "the bed is not very big" (CP 2: 221)
et tout en face = "and right in front" [French];

poilu = "hairy, shaggy, furry" [French]. Milton Cohen suggests that the gaslight clothes the crucifix on the wall "in a sensuous, nappy fur" (*Poet* 131). But the word *poilu* was also a slang term for French foot-soldiers in World War I.

208. "the poem her belly marched through me as" (CP 2: 222)
a trick of syncopation Europe has refers to James Reese Europe (1880-1919), pioneer bandleader and jazz composer. Gilbert Seldes wrote in *The Seven Lively Arts* that Europe had "that interior response to syncopation . . . to the highest possible degree" (156). See 239. [ONE-XII] "(and i imagine"

216. "a blue woman with sticking out breasts hanging" (CP 2: 230)
Bishop Taylor = probably Mormon Bishop Thomas Taylor (1826-1900). D. Michael Quinn writes: "On 26 July 1886, his sixtieth birthday, the Salt Lake stake high council 'suspended' Thomas Taylor as bishop of the Salt Lake City Fourteenth Ward. . . . Three teenagers testified that while each was alone in bed with Bishop Taylor, the bishop has used the young man's hand to masturbate himself" (276-277). The polygamous Taylor further testified at the church trial that he had not "practiced" such acts since he was a teenager (presumably before he was married). Quinn notes that "in his autobiography, however, Taylor later described the charges as 'trumped up slander' " (277).

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is 5 (1926)

On March 1, 1926, E. E. Cummings wrote to tell his publisher that "after some weeks' work" his book *is 5* was "finally arranged. . . including . . . poems from my last book(AND)" (Firmage, "Afterword"). In the same letter, Cummings assures Horace Liveright that his personal typesetter Samuel Aiwaz Jacobs (1890–1971), would be in charge of setting up the book, since he

> understands my arrangement. . . which involves not merely complicated sequential relationships between groups of poems which constitute the whole,but definite numerical relationships—the total number of poems having its precise significance just as the number of poems in each subdivision has its precise significance. (quoted in Firmage, "Afterword")

While Cummings' editor George Firmage has remarked that the book seems to be structured in patterns of 4 and 5, he offers no further elucidation of this statement. (However, see dust jacket at right.) To the new poems in *is 5*, Cummings added ten previously published poems from & [*AND*]--eight were from the original 1922 *Tulips & Chimneys* manuscript, and are printed there in the *Complete Poems*. Two of the added poems are from the new poems printed in *&* [*AND*] (1925).

The poems in *is 5* are divided into five sections, numbered straightforwardly enough, ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, and FIVE. Since they are already printed in their original places in *Tulips & Chimneys* and *&* [*AND*], the ten added poems are not reprinted in the version of *is 5* given in the *Complete Poems*. Below is a chart listing the numbers of poems in the *Complete Poems* edition and the numbers in the 1926 edition of the book. (The "+ 4" in each count indicates that Cummings' poem number "ONE I" consists of 5 sonnets, which Firmage counted as separate poems.)

As published in *is 5* (1926)	**As printed in *Complete Poems* (1994)**
ONE 44 poems (40 + 4)	ONE 38 poems (34 + 4)
TWO 11	TWO 10

Dust jacket of *is 5*, designed by S. A. Jacobs

poems	poems
THREE 10 poems	THREE 7 poems
FOUR 18 poems	FOUR 18 poems
FIVE 5 poems	FIVE 5 poems
total: 84 + 4	total: 74 + 4

The following is a chart of the ten poems added to *is 5* (1926), with a corresponding column detailing their placement in the *Complete Poems* (1994):

Poems added to *is 5* (1926)	***Complete Poems* (1994)**
1. ONE, VII "the waddling" 2. ONE, XVI "it started when Bill's chip let on to" 3. ONE, XXI "i was sitting in mcsorley's." 4. ONE, XXIV "Dick Mid's large bluish face without eyebrows" 5. ONE, XXXIII "Babylon slim" 6. ONE, XXXVI "ta"	1. Tulips: "Portraits" XXVI (CP 98) 2. Chimneys: Sonnets—Realities XIII (CP127) 3. Tulips: Post Impressions VIII (CP 110) 4. Chimneys: Sonnets—Realities XX (CP 134) 5. Tulips: "Portraits" V (CP 73) 6. Tulips: "Portraits" IX (CP 78)
1. TWO, IX "little ladies more"	1. Tulips: "La guerre" IV (CP 56)
1. THREE, IV "impossibly" 2. THREE, V "inthe,exquisite;" 3. THREE, VII "Paris;this April sunset completely utters"	1. & A: Portraits II (CP 191) 2. Tulips: "Portraits" XVIII (CP 87) 3. & A: Post Impressions III (CP 183)

Cummings added two satirical sonnets to section ONE, bringing to four the number of sonnets between the five each that begin and end the volume. There was already one quasi-sonnet in section ONE, "poets yeggs and thirsties," and in section TWO, the famous " 'next to of course god america i" (CP 267). In the notes that follow, the Roman numeral after each capitalized section number corresponds to the numbers given in *Complete Poems*. As the charts above indicate, because no poems were added to sections FOUR and FIVE, these sections retain the numbering of the original volume.

225. [ONE I] III. GERT "joggle I think will do it although the glad"
a Beau Brummell = a cocktail consisting of 1 oz. bourbon, 1/2 oz. Prunella, 1 oz. orange juice, and 1/4 tsp. sugar.
"gimme a swell fite = give me a swell fight.
Rektuz,Toysday nite = Rector's, Thursday night. Rector's = restaurant in the theatre district frequented by the nouveau riche.
where uh guy gets gayn troze uh lobstersalad = where a guy gets gay and throws a lobster salad.

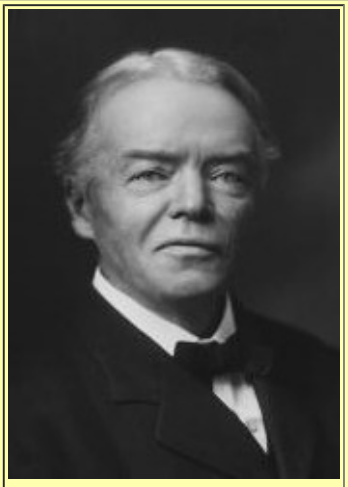
228. [ONE II] "Poem,Or Beauty Hurts Mr. Vinal" (SP 152).

These notes are greatly indebted to Lewis H. Miller's "Advertising in Poetry: A Reading of E. E. Cummings' 'Poem, or Beauty Hurts Mr. Vinal'," *Word & Image* 2 (1986): 349-362. Cummings' poem was first published in December 1922, in the little magazine *S4N* (Firmage, *Bibliography* 48). Cummings' title refers to a poem by Harold Vinal (1891-1965) called "Earth Lover," from his first book, *White April* (1922), published in the Yale Younger Poets Series:

> EARTH LOVER
>
> Old loveliness has such a way with me,
> That I am close to tears when petals fall
> And needs must hide my face against a wall,
> When autumn trees burn red with ecstasy.
> For I am haunted by a hundred things
> And more that I have seen on April days;
> I have held stars above my head in praise,
> I have worn beauty as two costly rings.
> Alas, how short a state does beauty keep,
> Then let me clasp it wildly to my heart
> And hurt myself until I am a part
> Of all its rapture, then turn back to sleep,
> Remembering through all the dusty years
> What sudden wonder brought me close to tears.
>
> —Harold Vinal

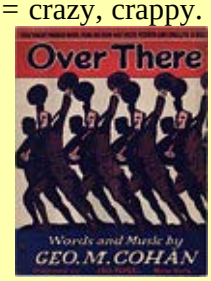
In the 1920's, Vinal was editor of *Voices*, a long-lived poetry quarterly that was "radically defunct" only in the sense that it did not publish modernist poetry--at least not in 1922. Cummings himself later published a poem in *Voices*: “after screamgroa” (CP 656) [*Voices* 137 (Spring 1949): 18] (cf. Firmage 58). In 1945, when the Poetry Society of America presented Cummings with its Shelley Memorial Award, the prize was announced by the Society's president, Mr. Harold Vinal (Kennedy, *Dreams* 405).
Boston Garter: In pre-elastic days, men used garters to keep their socks up.
Lydia E. Pinkham: Manufacturer of cure-all remedy for "women's" ailments. Her "Vegetable Compound" was a mixture of roots, seeds, and 18% alcohol.
Just Add Hot Water And Serve -- From a Campbell Soup ad.
merde = shit [French].
God's / In His andsoforth: "God's in his heaven -- / All's right with the world" (Robert Browning, *Pippa Passes*).
Turn Your Shirttails Into Drawers: Parody of ad for Imperial "Drop Seat" Union Suit, long underwear with a buttoned seat panel.
A- mer i ca,I love, You = "America, I Love You" (1915), popular song with words by Edgar Leslie and music by Archie Gottler. As one can hear from this recording of the song by Dan Levinson and His Canary Cottage Dance Orchestra, Cummings' punctuation and spacing of the words imitates the tune and rhythm of the chorus: "America, I love you! / You're like a sweetheart of mine! / From ocean to ocean, / For you my devotion, / Is touching each bound'ry line. / Just

like a little baby / Climbing its mother's knee, / America, I love you! / And there's a hundred million others like me!" In his essay on Gaston Lachaise (1920) Cummings wrote of a critic who could "comfort himself with the last line of that most popular wartime song, America I Love You which goes, 'And there're a hundred million others like me' " (*Miscellany* 23). See also " 'next to of course god america i" (CP 267) and "little joe gould has lost his teeth and doesn't know where" (CP 410).
littleliverpill- / hearted: Refers to ads for Carter's Little Liver Pills.
Nujolneeding- Nujol was a widely advertised laxative.
There's-A-Reason:" Slogan for Grape Nuts cereal and Instant Postum, a coffee substitute containing no caffeine.
Odor? / ono. Odo-ro-no was a "toilet water" sold to prevent "excessive perspiration."
comes out like a ribbon lies flat on the brush: Slogan for Colgate's Ribbon Dental Cream.



230. [ONE-III] "curtains part"
Kirkland Street in Cambridge, Mass., just down the street from Cummings' boyhood home at 104 Irving Street.
Professor Royce = Josiah Royce (1855–1916), Professor of Philosophy at Harvard College in Cummings' youth. In *six nonlectures*, EEC writes, "I myself experienced astonishment when first witnessing a spectacle which frequently thereafter repeated itself at professor Royce's gate. He came rolling peacefully forth, attained the sidewalk, and was about to turn right and wander up Irving, when Mrs Royce shot out of the house with a piercing cry 'Josie! Josie!' waving something stringlike in her dexter fist. Mr Royce politely paused, allowing his spouse to catch up with him; he then shut both his eyes, while she snapped around his collar a narrow necktie possessing a permanent bow; his eyes thereupon opened, he bowed, she smiled, he advanced, she retired, and the scene was over" (25). See also *six nonlectures* 29-30. Photo of Josiah Royce, with bow tie, at left.

231. [ONE-IV] "workingman with hand so hairy-sturdy" (CP 2: 245)
The poem was first published in *Secession* 2 (July 1922): 4.
but when will turn backward O backward Time in your no thy flight : The speaker remembers the first two lines of "Rock Me to Sleep" (1860) by Elizabeth Akers Allen (1832–1911): “Backward, turn backward, O Time, in your flight, / Make me a child again just for tonight!” The rest of the first stanza longs for the presence of an absent mother: “Mother, come back from the echoless shore, / Take me again to your heart as of yore; / Kiss from my forehead the furrows of care, / Smooth the few silver threads out of my hair; / Over my slumbers your loving watch keep;— / Rock me to sleep, mother, – rock me to sleep!”
en amérique on ne boit que de Jingyale = "in america they only drink Ginger ale" [French]. Cummings is probably remembering the final panel of a wartime Krazy Kat cartoon (09/29/1918) in which Ignatz Mouse introduces a temperance singer: "Brother Benjamin will now sing, "The rouge on father's beezer he now gets from Jingy Ale." Both Herriman and Cummings conflate the ginger ale of temperance (or prohibition) with the "Jingo ale" of excessive patriotism. [See the note below on "Over There" and " 'next to of course god america i" (CP 267).] *kaka* = crazy, crappy.
over there, over there = Part of refrain of George M. Cohan's popular song "Over There," praising American troops going to fight "over there" (in Europe) in World War I. Cummings' reference turns on its head the line from the song, "And we won't come back 'till it's over over there." For complete score and lyrics, click on image at right. For the complete lyrics and three audio versions of the song, see the "Over There" page at FirstWorldWar.com. "Over There" on You Tube: (versions sung by Nora Bayes and Arthur Fields).



all the glory that or which was Greece = garbling of E. A. Poe's lines from "To Helen"--"Thy Naiad airs have brought me home / To the glory that was Greece, / And the grandeur that was Rome."
grandja / that was dada? Dadaism was a nihilistic anti-art movement begun in Zürich, Switzerland during World War I. By 1926, when *Is 5* was published, the dada movement was a spent force. For the possible influence of the Dada movement on Cummings, see Tashjian, *Skyscraper Primitives* (165-187), Ruiz, "The Dadaist Prose of Williams and Cummings," and Abella, " 'I am that I am': The Dadist Anti-Fiction of E. E. Cummings." For doubts about Dada's influence on EEC, consult Cohen, *PoetandPainter* (48; 248) and Webster, *Reading Visual Poetry after Futurism* (115-134). For a view of *The Enormous Room* as depicting an instinctive Dadaist attitude, see Webster, "*The Enormous Room*: A Dada of One's Own." For a contemporary view of the death of Dada and its aftermath, see Matthew Josephson, "After

and Beyond Dada." [*Broom* 2.4 (July 1922): 346-350]. See also Peter Nicholls' article, "Life Among the Surrealists: *Broom* and *Secession* Revisited."

what's become of Maeterlinck refers to the symbolist poet and playwright Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949), author of the plays *Pelleas and Melisande* (1893) and *The Blue Bird* (1905). In 1922, Maeterlinck published a sequel to *The Blue Bird* called *Les Fiançailles*, but in later life his attention had turned increasingly away from drama towards scientific and occult topics. This line and the next also parody the first lines of Robert Browning's "Home Thoughts from Abroad": "Oh to be in England / Now that April's there." (See the note for "MEMORABILIA.")
ask the man who owns one = advertising slogan for Packard automobiles.
ask Dad,he knows = advertising slogan for Sweet Caporal cigarettes.

232. [ONE-V] "yonder deadfromtheneckup graduate of a"
nascitur = the third person singular present indicative of the verb *nascor*, meaning that "he / she / it is being born, arises, originates, begins, is produced, springs forth, proceeds, grows, is found" [Latin]. cf 262. "voices to voices,lip to lip" and *Him* III.vi (132 / 126).

233. [ONE-VI] "Jimmie's got a goil"

- Kristine Stott singing Stephen Scotti's setting of the poem
- For more on Stephen Scotti, see "Stephen Scotti and *ViVa Cummings!*" [EEC Society Blog].

234. [ONE-VII] "listen my children and you"
listen my children and you / shall hear = the first line of "The Landlord's Tale. Paul Revere's Ride" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882), popular American poet. The contrast between the intrepid hero Paul Revere and Mr. Do-nothing is evident.
(eheu / fu / -gaces Postu- / me boo // who refers to Horace, *Odes*, II.14:

> Eheu fugaces, Postume, Postume,
> labuntur anni nec pietas moram
> rugis et instanti senectae
> adferet indomitaeque morti:

"Ah, Postumus, Postumus, how fleeting / the swift years--prayer cannot delay / the furrows of imminent old-age / nor hold off unconquerable death."

235. [ONE-VII] "even if all desires things moments be"
ou sont les neiges... part of the refrain from the "Ballade des dames du temps jadis" [Ballade of the Dead Ladies] by François Villon (1431-1464?): "*Mais ou sont les neiges d'antan?*" [But where are the snows of yesteryear?].
Satter Nailyuh = Saturnalia, Roman festival held at the winter solstice; a time of license. The holiday season, as seen by a denizen of New York during prohibition. (Viz.: "in dem daze kid Christmas / meant sumpn".)

237. [ONE X] "nobody loses all the time"
McCann He Was A Diver = Irish-American song with the following lyrics, as recorded by musicologist J. D. Robb (1892-1989). The recording is part of the John Donald Robb Archive at the University of New Mexico's Center for Southwest Research.

> McCann, he was a diver, and he worked beneath the sea,
> Off a Jersey pier, off a Jersey pier.
> O'Reilly worked the pump above, his hand upon the line,
> Pumping atmosphere, pumping atmosphere.
>
> One day McCann was walking on the bottom of the sea.
> He met a mermaid and she said, "McCann," she said, said she:
> "You look just like a devil-fish and will you marry me?"
>
> "Oh ho!" says McCann, says McCann, "Pull me up O'Reilly where it's dry,
> For I met a lady down below, and she has a fishy eye.

Oh, she's looking nice and neat
But bedad she has no feet—
Pull me up O'Reilly where it's dry."

Of course, this movement up from the sea bottom is the opposite of Uncle Sol's mechanical movement down into the earth.

239. [ONE-XII] "(and i imagine"
The poem was first published in *Secession* 2 (July 1922): 2.
As Norman Friedman notes in *Spring* 3 (1994): 124-125, this poem depicts a nativity scene. *angels with faces like Jim Europe* = James Reese Europe (1880-1919), jazz bandleader and composer who worked in Paris during World War I. Friedman writes: "Alan Rich, in *New York Magazine* for June 12, 1978, says James Europe was 'a promising black composer who was murdered (by the drummer in his band) in 1919' (81). . . James Lincoln Collier, in *The Making of Jazz* (Delta, 1978), says, 'James Reese Europe, the kingpin of the Clef Club,' was among 'the first American black musicians of this period to reach Europe...as military bandsmen accompanying the American Expeditionary Force in the First World War" (314). Collier, readers of this Journal may recall, is a nephew of William Slater Brown, Cummings' companion in *The Enormous Room*. The plot thickens! Marshall W. Stearns, in *The Story of Jazz* (NAL Mentor, 1956, 1958), praises Europe: 'The earlier minstrel-concert-vaudeville orchestras of Wilbur Sweatman, Will Marion Cook, and James Reese Europe (the favorite of dancers Vernon and Irene Castle) were gradually supplanted [and diluted] by Vincent Lopez, Ben Selvin, Earl Fuller (with Ted Lewis), and Paul Whiteman, who supplied the 'new' jazz music, polished up for dancing....Lt. James Reese Europe...might have been the Negro Paul Whiteman if he had lived...' (113, 117). Leonard Feather, in *The Encyclopedia of Jazz* (Crown Bonanza Books, 1960), has an entry on James Reese Europe: b. 1881, d. 1919, 'stabbed to death in a night club altercation' " (211).
Friedman further notes that the poem was first published "in 1922, in *Secession* (48). This nevertheless also dates the poem after Europe's death in 1919, which gives special poignancy to the reference, if indeed Cummings wrote it after Europe died. The effect remains, however, of the transcendent presence of the angels, in the midst of this coarse and mundane setting, being imaged via the epiphany of Jim Europe."
For more information on Jim Europe, click on the image and links at right, and / or consult Reid Badger's excellent *A Life in Ragtime: A Biography of James Reese Europe* (New York: Oxford UP, 1995).
Additional Links:

- James Reese Europe, 1881-1919 [biography] (Library of Congress)
- The 369th "Hellfighters" Jazz Band perform "How Ya Gonna Keep 'em Down on the Farm"
- James Reese Europe and the Hellfighters (from Ken Burns' *Jazz* series)
- The Harlem Hellfighters (History Channel)

Jim Europe's "Hellfighters" Band (with RealAudio clips)
Songs of James Europe
James Europe Biography
Military Music: Sousa and the Hellfighters
Europe Gravesite
Order *Jim Europe* CD from Inside Sounds / Memphis Archives
PO Box 171282
Memphis, TN 38187
Phone: 800-713-2150
Memphisarc@AOL.com

243. [ONE-XVI] "why are all these pipples taking their hets off?"
The first line imitates the diction of Krazy Kat, Cummings' favorite cartoon character. See Taimi Olsen's article, "'Krazies...of indescribable beauty': George Herriman's 'Krazy Kat' and E. E. Cummings."
the famous doctor who inserts / monkeyglands = Serge Voronoff (1866-1951). For all the interesting details, see Thierry Gillyboeuf, "The Famous Doctor Who Inserts Monkeyglands in Millionaires" *Spring* 9 (2000): 44-45.

246. [ONE-XIX] "she being Brand"
Consult Fred Schroeder's "Obscenity and Its Function in the Poetry of E. E. Cummings," as well as Barry Marks, *E. E. Cummings* (74-75), Karen Alkalay-Gut, "Sex and the Single Engine: E. E. Cummings' Experiment in Metaphoric Equation" [*Journal of Modern Literature* 20 (1996): 254-258], and especially Lewis H. Miller. Jr.'s "Sex on Wheels: A Reading of 'she being Brand / -new'," [*Spring* 6 (1997): 55-69].

thoroughly oiled the universal / joint --a necessary operation with early motor-cars. For a discussion and illustrations, see Miller 60-61.
slipped the / clutch --like flooding the carburetor and "somehow" getting into reverse, this is a beginner's mistake.
i touched the accelerator --Miller writes that "the reference to the accelerator is not to the foot pedal but to the button-tipped hand throttle," which beginners were advised to use "for the first few days until the other details of driving had been mastered" (62-63).

248. “oDE” [ONE-XXI]
toothless . . . bipeds . . . hairless--EEC may be referring here to a famous anecdote concerning the philosopher Diogenes the Cynic (412-323 BC): "Plato had defined Man as an animal, biped and featherless, and was applauded. Diogenes plucked a fowl and brought it into the lecture room with the words 'Here is Plato's man' " (Laertius 138). The chagrined Plato supposedly then added to his definition, "having broad flat nails."

249. "on the Madam's best april the" [ONE-XXII]
The poem was first published in *Secession* 2 (July 1922): 1.
According to Robert Wegner, ["A Visit with E. E. Cummings" *Spring* 5 (1996): 59-70] Cummings told him that this poem's "words are spoken by an illiterate Irish woman" (64). The woman is apparently a "cook."

252. "than(by yon sunset’s wintry glow" [ONE XXV]
by the fire's ruddy glow / united--Cummings may be referring to the sentimental Victorian poem "Sitting by the Fire" by Henry Kendall (1841-1882): "Gleesome children were we not? / Sitting by the fire, / Ruddy in its glow, / Sixty summers back— / Sixty years ago."
it isn't raining rain, you know = parody of the refrain of the popular song "April Showers" (1921), with music by Louis Silvers and lyrics by B. G. DeSylva: "Though April showers / May come your way, / They bring the flowers / That bloom in May; / And if it's raining, / Have no regrets; / Because, it isn't raining rain, you know, / It's raining violets." This song was one of Al Jolson's big hits. Gilbert Seldes wrote in *The Seven Lively Arts*:

> “I have heard him [Al Jolson] sing also the absurd song about "It isn't raining rain, It's raining violets" and remarked him modulating that from sentimentality into a conscious bathos, with his gloved fingers flittering together and his voice rising to absurd fortissimi and the general air of kidding the piece” (194-195).

254. "MEMORABILIA" [ONE-XXVII] (CP 2: 270-271)
These notes are indebted to three items in *The Explicator*, all entitled "Cummings' MEMORABILIA": Clyde S. Kilby, 12 (1953), item 15, Cynthia Barton, 22.4 (Dec. 1963), item 26, and H. Seth Finn, 29.5 (Jan. 1971), item 42. See also Curtis Faville's blog entry: "Believe You Me Crocodile—Eigner Cummings The Typewriter & A Poem." The title refers to Robert Browning's poem "Memorabilia," which begins, "Ah, did you once see Shelley plain?" This poem was written after Cummings toured Venice with his parents in late July, 1922 (Kennedy, *Dreams* 242).

stop look & / listen = slogan posted on railway platforms.
Venezia = Venice; *Murano* = town near Venice where glass objects d'art are made
nel / mezzo del cammin' = "midway in the road [of our life]" --Dante, *Inferno* I.1.
the Campanile = bell-tower in the Piazza San Marco, Venice.
cocodrillo-- = "a large stone crocodile which is part of a statue of St. Theodore on a tall column overlooking the Piazza San Marco" (Barton). *Baedekers* = travel guides.
de l'Europe // Grand and Royal = names of hotels in Venice.
their numbers / are like unto the stars of heaven --After Abraham showed his faith in the Lord by being willing to sacrifice his only son Isaac, an angel promised to multiply his "descendants as the stars of heaven" (Genesis 22: 17). See also Genesis 15: 1-6.
Ruskin = John Ruskin (1819-1900), author of *The Stones of Venice* (1851-53).
thos cook & son British travel bureau with offices throughout Europe: the company issued travelers' checks and organized tours.
(O to be a metope / now that triglyph's here) Parody of the first lines of Robert Browning's "Home Thoughts from Abroad": "Oh to be in England / Now that April's there." H. Seth Finn suggests that with this exclamation, the speaker longs for "a meaningfulness in life which would place him in the universe with the same comfortable precision with which a metope fits between two triglyphs in the Doric order."

Clyde Kilby writes that a metope and triglyph "are architectural terms and describe a portion of a Doric frieze, the metope being the decorated section between the triglyphs." They are usually placed horizontally in alternation on the lintels of Greek buildings like the Parthenon. (See this photo of metopes and triglyphs on the Parthenon.) The triglyph consists of three vertical lines contained within the two horizontal lines of the lintel. Lou Rus has suggested that the metopes should be seen as the open "space for creating a new art," which exactly corresponds with the etymology of the word. The Greek *metope* means "between or amidst the *opae* or tie-beams (rafters)." Vitruvius explains when that ancient carpenters "cut off the projecting ends of the beams" the butt ends flush with the wall "had an ugly look to them, [so] they fastened boards, shaped as triglyphs are now made, on the ends of the beams, where they had been cut off in front, and painted them with blue wax" (107). Vitruvius says further: "The Greeks call the seats of tie-beams and rafters ὀπαί [*opae*], while our people call these cavities columbaria (dovecotes). Hence, the space between the tie-beams, being the space between two 'opae,' was named by them μετόπη [*metope*]" (108). "Seat" must be where the beams cross another member, creating an opening or space between the beams. The Greek word *ope*, *opai* means just what it sounds like, "open, openings." These empty spaces were often filled with art--little bas-relief sculptures, for example. So "to be a metope" could mean to be in that space where new art is created, to be alive art and not dead (and misunderstood) history. It could also mean, simply, "to be art"--to be those little sculptures rather than a rigid and decorative triglyph (three stiff virgins?) at the end of a beam. The "marriageable nymph[s]" do seem to approach art as decoration or fashion, knick-knacks for their future homes in "Cincingondolanati": viz. the mention of the tourist-trade glassworks at Murano, and this prattle: "look / girls in the style of that's the / foliage what is it didn't Ruskin / says about you got the haven't Marjorie / isn't this well-curb simply darling" (255). On the other hand, what is a metope if not decoration on a building?

By once again referring to Browning at the end of the poem, Cummings conflates a reverence for past culture (Shelley) with nostalgia for one's homeland. In Browning's "Memorabilia," the unnamed person who once "saw Shelley plain" is moved to laughter at Browning's reverence for such casual contact with the great. Browning's poem ends with an account of the speaker finding a moulted eagle feather on the moor and then saying (perhaps self-deprecatingly or sheepishly), "Well, I forget the rest." As if to say that carrying on Shelley's spirit (the feather) is more important than waxing nostalgic over past greatness? And / or that one can emotionalize too much about items of "memorabilia" (the feather again)? Clearly, the "dollarbringing virgins" are nostalgic for a past that they experience incompletely, much as Browning lacked real experience of Shelley. Perhaps Cummings is saying that the virginal metopes have been penetrated only by useless half-baked knowledge (represented by the upright triglyphs, i. e., "Education," "thos. cook & son"), thus missing real experience and lacking ability to express what knowledge they do have.

256. "a man who had fallen among thieves" [ONE-XXVII] (CP 2: 272)
Refers to the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-42). [*leal* = "loyal"] Lou Rus (letter, July 22, 1998) suggests we read this poem in the light of a passage from Henry David Thoreau that occurs towards the end of the first chapter of *Walden* ("Economy"): "I never dreamed of any enormity greater than I have committed. I never knew, and never shall know, a worse man than myself."--a statement often quoted with approval by EEC. Cummings usually quotes this passage to Ezra Pound when EP is ranting about the necessity of knowing economics and changing the world (cf. *Pound/Cummings* 140-143; 145; 364-365 and *Selected Letters* 243). In a similar vein, Ann R. Morris has suggested that the subject of the poem "is not man's social responsibility but rather every man's potential divinity" (39). Other poems describing homeless people in various states of inebriation are: "a)glazed mind layed in a / urinal" (CP 388), "grEEn's d" (CP 534), "a gr // eyhaie" (CP 705), and "s.t:irst;hiso,nce;ma:n" (CP 710). This list is by no means exhaustive. EEC also wrote at least two poems about panhandlers: "but mr can you maybe listen there's" (CP 314) and "'right here the other night something / odd" (CP 800).

259. "poets yeggs and thirsties" [ONE-XXXI]
yegg = a beggar, lowlife ne'er-do-well, a thief.
See Robert Wegner's "Where are the Yeggs of Yesteryear?" in *Spring* 5 (1996): 55-58.

262. "voices to voices,lip to lip" [ONE XXXIII]
each dream nascitur,is not made = "each dream is born,is not made." *nascitur* = "to be born; to rise, begin, originate, be produced, spring forth, proceed, grow, be found" [Latin]. cf. 232. [ONE-V] "yonder deadfromtheneckup graduate of a" and *Him* III.vi (132 / 126).

263. "life hurl my" [ONE XXXIV]
The poem was first published in *Secession* 2 (July 1922): 3.

265. "the season 'tis,my lovely lambs," [TWO I]
Sumner may refer to William Graham Sumner (1840-1910), Yale Professor, Social Darwinist, and advocate of laissez-faire economics. More likely, Cummings refers to John S. Sumner (1876-1971), "executive secretary of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice" (Daniels 81). In 1922, fearing seizure and prosecution by Sumner, the publisher Horace Liveright had several phrases and words cut from Cummings' war memoir *The Enormous Room* without the poet's approval (see Gerber, "Season" 178-179). Sumner is satirized in Act II of Cummings' play *Him* as "John Rutter, President pro tem. of the Society for the Contraception of Vice" (54).

The *Volstead Act* was passed to enforce the 18th Amendment of the Constitution, the famous Prohibition of alcoholic beverages. The Act went "into effect on January 16, 1920" (Kennedy, *Dreams* 211).

Mann's righteousness "U. S. Rep. J. R. Mann gave his name to the White Slavery Act of 1910, popularly known as the Mann Act. It decreed fines and imprisonment for persons transporting 'any woman or girl' across state lines for the purpose of prostitution or 'any other immoral purpose.' Young men at Harvard, which Cummings entered in 1911, saw this law as an impediment to extracurricular romance" (Gerber, "Season" 177-178).

the Honourable Mr.(guess), probably Charles R. Forbes, one-time deserter and head of the Veterans' Bureau under President Harding. Forbes was in charge of the "Government's work for those disabled war heroes in whose behalf every public man considered it his duty to shed a public tear. Forbes held office for less than two years, and during that time it was estimated that over two hundred million dollars went astray in graft and flagrant waste on the part of his Bureau" (Allen 124). Forbes was sent to Leavenworth Prison in 1926, the same year which saw the publication of this poem in *Is 5*.

266. "opening of the chambers close" [TWO II]
opening of the chambers = "rentrée des Chambres" [French]. EEC is translating the common phrase for the (re)opening of the French parliament.
microscopic pithecoid President = Raymond Poincaré (1860-1934), in 1923 the "Président du Conseil" or Prime Minister, seen here as *pithecoid*, or apelike; monkeylike.
tribune = "a raised platform for a speaker; a dais, rostrum, or pulpit," but also in ancient Rome, "any of various administrative officers, esp. one of 10 officers elected to protect the interests and rights of the plebeians from the patricians."
Peacepeacepeace . . . pronounced // by the way Pay = an inter-lingual pun on *paix*, the French word for "peace." EEC refers to the Ruhr crisis of 1923, when France occupied the Ruhr region of Germany in order to force the Germans to make reparations payments demanded by the peace Treaty of Versailles. Jacques Demarcq notes that the word "Pay" may also be a "translation of the French '*ça paie!*' which means 'it's funny/a laugh'."
anthropoid = "belonging or pertaining to the primate suborder *Anthropoidea*, characterized by a relatively flat face, dry nose, small immobile ears, and forward-facing eyes, comprising humans, apes, Old World monkeys, and New World monkeys."
extremely artistic nevertobeextinguished fla / -me . . . souvenir of the in spite of himself fa / -mous solder minus his na- / me = the eternal flame at the French Tomb of the Unknown Soldier beneath the Arc de Triomphe. The tomb was dedicated on November 11, 1920. The flame was lit and dedicated on November 11, 1923.

	male and female / created He // them –from Genesis 5:2. [For "then" read "them." Though all editions of this poem read "then," EEC's source, the King James Bible, reads "them," which seems preferable.] *And every beast of the field* = Genesis 1:19: "And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof." Jacques Demarcq points out that through a pun on "Elysian Fields," or the *Champs Elysées*, EEC reduces to "beasts" those upper class men and women strolling along this grandest of boulevards leading to the Arc de Triomphe, site of the French tomb of the Unkown Soldier. (See *pithecoid* and *anthropoid* above.) Demarcq further comments that the mocking tone of the poem is quite similar to that of "French anarchist newspapers of the time." Many thanks are due to M. Demarcq for his help with this note. The comic rhyme line-breaks in the poem create several nonce words: "-me" and "me"

[EEC strolling among the beasts of the field?] and "-mous" [mouse—a smaller beast of the field] and "-nous" ["mind" (Greek)]. “Beast” [*bête*] and *nous* [mind] both seem to fit the cartoon, titled "*La Flamme*," from the French Communist paper *l’Humanité*, November 12, 1923. [Plutocrat (pointing to the eternal flame): "*Elle sera perpétuelle!*" ("It will be eternal!"). Worker to plutocrat: "*Oui . . . comme la Bêtise!*" ("Yes, like Stupidity!")]

267. " 'next to of course god america i" [TWO III]
america i / love you = a reference to "America, I Love You" (1915), popular song with words by Edgar Leslie and music by Archie Gottler. See also "Poem, Or Beauty Hurts Mr. Vinal" (CP 228) and "little joe gould has lost his teeth and doesn't know where" (CP 410). The chorus is as follows:

> America, I love you!
> You're like a sweetheart of mine!
> From ocean to ocean,
> For you my devotion,
> Is touching each bound'ry line.
> Just like a little baby
> Climbing its mother's knee,
> America, I love you!
> And there's a hundred million others like me!

oh / say can you see by the dawn's early = the first words to the U.S. national anthem, the "Star Spangled Banner."
land of the pilgrims' . . . my / country 'tis of = quotations from the patriotic song "My Country 'Tis of Thee" (also known as "America"), lyrics by Samuel Francis Smith (1808-1895):

> My country, 'tis of thee,
> Sweet land of liberty,
> Of thee I sing:
> Land where my fathers died,
> Land of the pilgrims' pride,
> From every mountain side
> Let freedom ring.

by jingo by gee by gosh by gum = near-verbatim quote of a line from the novelty song Oh By Jingo! (1919), with music by Albert Von Tilzer and lyrics by Lew Brown. The first two lines of the chorus are: "Oh! by Gee! by Gosh, by Gum, by Juv-- / Oh by Jingo, won’t you hear our love." **Links**: a performance of the song by Margaret Young and sheet music (IN Harmony). A *jingo* is also "a person who professes his or her patriotism loudly and excessively, favoring vigilant preparedness for war and an aggressive foreign policy."

Many have pointed out that *they did not stop to think they died instead* echoes Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade":

Their's not to make reply,
Their's not to reason why,
Their's but to do and die:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

Links: Cummings reads " 'next to of course god america i" (Poetry Archive; BBC). [Link has disappeard from the page] Online criticism of " 'next to of course god america i" (MAPS legacy)

272. "come,gaze with me upon this dome" [TWO-VIII]
this dome / of many coloured glass —Cummings wrote to D. Jon Grossman that this line is taken from Percy Shelley's elegy for John Keats, *Adonais*, stanza 52, line 3. The first part of the stanza reads:

The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments.—Die,
If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek!

Amy Lowell, a great admirer of John Keats, titled her first book of poetry *A Dome of Many-Coloured Glass* (1912).

unto whom duty whispers low = "So nigh is grandeur to our dust, / So near to God is man, / When Duty whispers low, *Thou must*, / The youth replies, *I can*." –Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Voluntaries" (1863), an elegy for Robert Gould Shaw and the regiment of African-American soldiers he commanded, the Massachusetts 54th.

273. "16 heures" [TWO IX]
Among Cummings' papers at the Houghton Library at Harvard University are conserved some clippings from the Parisian Communist newspaper *l'Humanité* (Saturday and Sunday, October 27 and 28, 1923) that describe a demonstration for the Catalan anarchists "[Lluís] Nicolau and [Pere] Matteu . . . condemned to death by the new Spanish government for their supposed participation in the assassination of [Eduardo] Dato." Saturday's paper appeals to workers to demonstrate at the Spanish Embassy at "16 HEURES" [4 p.m.], publishing a map showing the location of the Spanish Embassy on Ave. Kleber (near the Place de l'Etoile). Sunday's paper reports that a "veritable army of cops [*flics*] and municipal guards--around 5 to 6,000--were mobilized around the Spanish Embassy." Furthermore, from the Ave. Kleber the cops formed "*an uninterrupted chain*, all the way to the place du Trocadéro." Dressed "in their workclothes," some demonstrators "wore helmets [and] some were disabled veterans [*anciens combatants mutilés*]." The paper describes various police charges at the crowd, with many arrests, saying that "a large number of comrades were brutalized." Among the examples of police brutality recounted are: "A child of 13 was literally beaten and trampled to the point of death," and "a handicapped veteran was thrown to the ground and seriously wounded." The article ends with what it calls a "significant detail: not a single soldier among the police!"
16 heures / l'Etoile = 4 p.m. at the Place de l'Etoile in Paris, or "Star Plaza," where 12 streets converge upon a huge traffic circle with the Arc de Triomphe at the center.
flics = cops [French].
"allezcirculez" = "move on, move on" [French].


CONTRE LE FASCISME

Il faut sauver deux innocents

L'APPEL DES INTERNATIONALES ROUGES

L'Internationale Communiste et l'Internationale Syndicale Rouge demandent aux organisations ouvrières de tous les pays de faire l'impossible pour sauver Nicolau et Matteu condamnés à mort par le nouveau gouvernement espagnol pour une prétendue participation à l'assassinat de Dato.

POUR SE RENDRE A LA MANIFESTATION

CET APRÈS-MIDI, DEVANT L'AMBASSADE !

l'Humanité, 27 Oct. 1923 (from *Gallica*, the online repository of the French National Library)

275. "my sweet old etcetera" [TWO X]
wristers = a kind of fingerless mitten.
For an extensive comparison of this poem with more patriotic poems of the period, see Tim Dayton's " 'Wristers Etcetera': Cummings, the Great War, and Discursive Struggle" (*Spring* 17 2010).
Link: WWI propaganda poster: "Knit Your Bit" (Boston Athenaeum)

281. "will out of the kindness of their hearts a few philosophers tell me" [THREE V]
Apparently located in Portugal, the place called *Calchidas* is depicted in an ink drawing by Cummings. On the back of this sketch is a draft of this poem. (See "Travels Abroad" at Ken Lopez's *Paintings of E. E. Cummings* site.)

291. "since feeling is first" [FOUR VII]
And death i think is no parenthesis: John Lennard points out a possible allusion to these lines of Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress": "The grave's a fine and private place, / But none, I think, do there embrace" (233).

303. "after all white horses are in bed" [FIVE-I]
See "my sonnet is A light goes on in" (CP1 171) which depicts the poet living below a stable: "The horses sleep upstairs. / And you can see their ears. Ears win- // K,funny stable. In the morning they go out in pairs: / amazingly,one pair is white" (CP 171).

305. "along the brittle treacherous bright streets" [FIVE-III] (SP 66)
"*Ici?*" French--"Here?"—"Ah, no, my dear, it's too cold."
chevaux de bois = "wooden horses."

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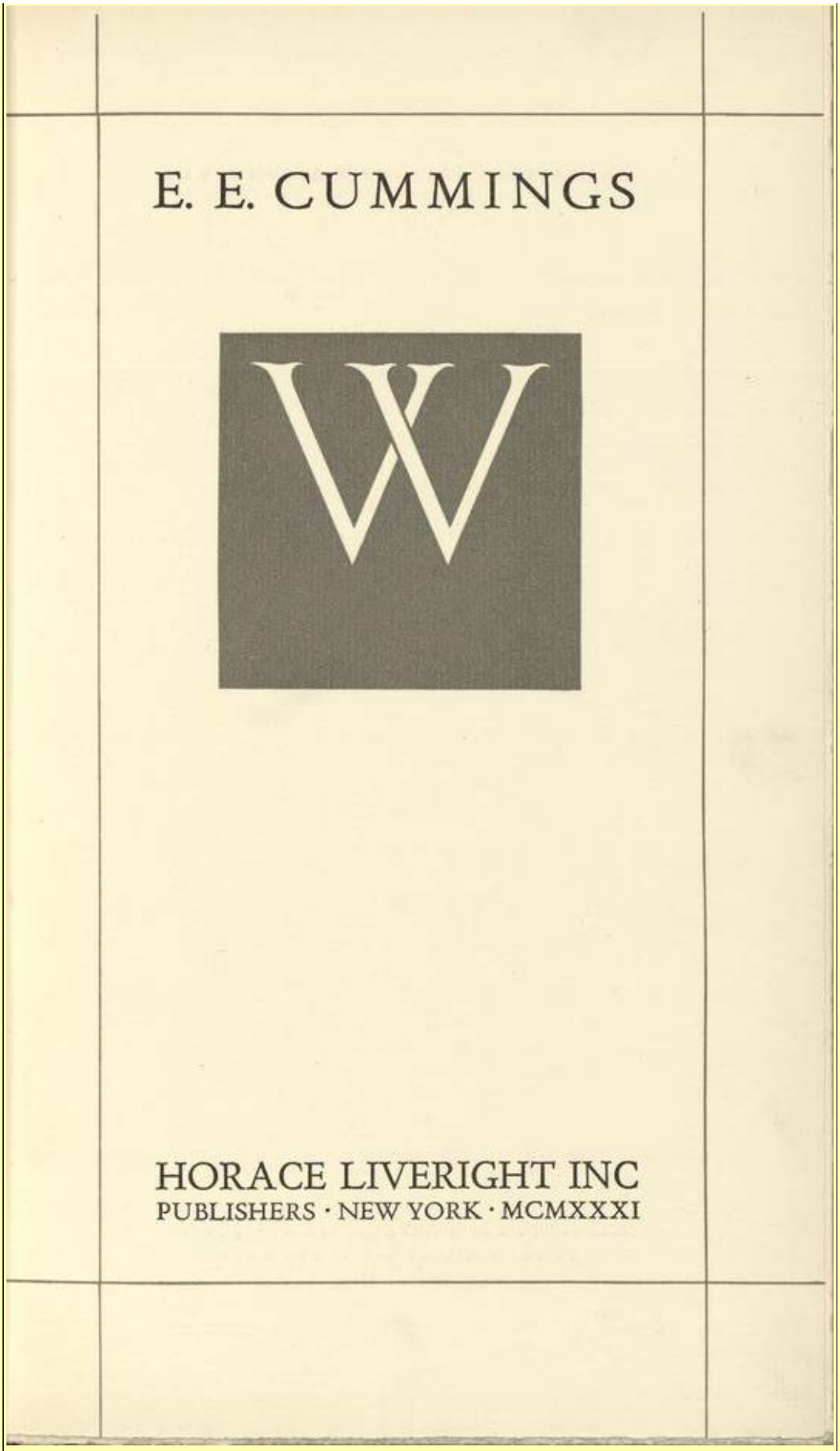
W [ViVa] (1931)

309. W [ViVa]
An online exhibit at the Harry Ransom Center Library in Austin, Texas, catalogues the signatures on a door that used to be in the Greenwich Village Bookshop, circa 1920-1924. The signature page of S. A. Jacobs (1890–1971), Cummings' personal typesetter, reproduces a July 16, 1931 letter from Jacobs to Cummings about printing the title page of *ViVa*. Those patient enough to figure out how the slide show on this page works will be rewarded with a photo of the letter from Jacobs to Cummings and with the photo of the title page of *W* [*ViVa*] reproduced here. Jacobs' letter complains bitterly of the difficulty in getting this title page to look right: "the photo engraver has failed me utterly: for three times in succession he made the reversed plate of VV wrong--not as ordered by you or me or [with] any sign of

intelligence in himself. . . . I am rejecting the work as not satisfactory." (The writing in pencil at the top of the letter is Cummings' draft of a telegram responding to Jacobs.)

The curious title of this collection of poems, *W*, represents two overlapping V's, which refer to "a graffito commonly found on southern European walls, meaning 'long live,' as in 'Viva Napoli' or 'Viva Presidente Wilson' " (Kennedy, *Revisited* 76). In critical and in ordinary discourse, the title is pronounced "Viva" and is written as "*ViVa*"--with two capital V's. When both titles are used, the pronounceable title is written in brackets: [*ViVa*]. In her article "The Modernist Sonnet and the Pre-Postmodern Consciousness," Gillian Huang-Tiller notes that the VV slogan "probably stems from 'Viva V.E.R.D.I.' or Viva Vittorio Emanuele Re D'Italia, [Long live Victor Emanuel, King of Italy],



Title page of *W* [*ViVa*], designed by Samuel Aiwaz Jacobs (1890–1971)

slogan for patriotic Italians of the nineteenth century" (170).

In *Dreams in the Mirror*, Richard S. Kennedy says that *ViVa* "contains seventy poems; every seventh poem is a sonnet, except that the last seven poems are all sonnets" (319). This description is in general quite correct, but, as Huang-Tiller points out, Kennedy then makes an interesting and perhaps productive error. He writes: "That makes a total of fourteen sonnets, corresponding to the fourteen-line stanza of the sonnet" (*Dreams* 319). Actually, as Huang-Tiller astutely notes, "the structure of the collection is not a neat 7 + 7—there are *nine* embedded sonnets, not seven." She further comments: "Kennedy apparently follows what his experience of the sonnet tells him *should* be in the text, rather than what is really in the text" (164). So the order of the poems in the text follows this mathematical pattern: 6 - 1 - 6 - 1 - 6 - 1 - 6 - 1 - 6 -1 - 6 - 1 - 6 - 1 - 6 - 1 - 6 - 1 - 7 = 70 poems. Or: 7 x 9 = 63 + 7 = 70.

What might this not-quite-sonnet pattern of sonnets tell us about Cummings' intentions? Huang-Tiller speculates that perhaps "Cummings has another design in mind, as the nine embedded sonnets (each the seventh poem) along with the final set of seven sonnets could signal a perfect ten: 9 sonnets + 1 set = 10" (164). In the afterword to his translation of *No Thanks*, Jacques Demarcq sees *ViVa* as having a structure of ten weeks, "six poèmes et le dimanche un sonnet" [six poems and the Sunday of a sonnet] ("Un tournant" 112). This would make the final seven sonnets of *ViVa* a week of Sundays. In *EIMI* (published two years after *ViVa*), Cummings tells us that he was born on a Sunday (91/89), and several commentators have noticed that *EIMI* begins and ends on a Sunday (May 10 and June 14).

Each chapter narrates one day, so the chapters follow a pattern similar to the one in *ViVa*, except that the implied days of the week metaphor is made explicit. *EIMI* has six Sundays with six days between each of them, making a total of five weeks and 36 days. [See *EIMI* note 91 / 89.] For more on Jacobs and Cummings, see Walker Rumble's short piece "Reclaiming S. A. Jacobs: Polytype, Golden Eagle, and Typographic Modernism" as well as Rumble's recent article from *Spring* "The Persian Typesetter: S. A. Jacobs, E. E. Cummings, and the Golden Eagle Press." A slightly expanded version of this note, titled "An Old Door, Cummings' Personal Printer, and *W* [*ViVa*]," has been posted on the EEC Society Blog. A comprehsive biography of Jacobs may be found online at the *Encyclopedia Iranica*: see the entry for "Jacobs, Samuel Aiwaz."	

311. [I] ",mean-" (CP 2: 329-330)
Robert Beloof and Barry Marks see this poem as portraying "the experiences during one evening and one morning of children and adults who live in an apartment hotel [a *pension*]" (Marks 49). The reader should look within the text for the fragmented words "humanity" and "putrescence." The word *credo* is better read as an English noun than as a Latin verb. The phrase *fais do do* is French baby-talk for "go to sleep." Perhaps also *fais do* can be taken to mean to "make dough" or "make money" (Marks 51).
Rather than a colon, the punctuation mark at the end of the last line should probably be a semicolon (as in the first edition, the typescript edition, and in *Poems 1954*).

312. [II] "oil tel duh woil doi sez" (CP 2: 331)
An American soldier in a French bar, sometime after World War I. For an excellent exposition and interpretation, see Larry Chott, "The Sight of Sound: Cummings' 'oil tel duh woil doi sez'," *Spring* 6 (1997): 45-48.

"oil tel duh woil doi sez," transliterated into more-or-less standard English:

> I'll tell the world I says
> do you understand me as he's pulling his moustache,I
> don't give a shit I says. Tom
> I don't want to do it, but I got to
> break youse,that's what he says to me. (Now I ask you
> wouldn't that make your arse turn
> green? I'll say so.)—Who'll
> spare a Lucky? Thanks kid. Merci.
> My jack's all gone. For Christ sake

ain'tnobody gotnothin'toplay?
HEY

yousewiththepermanentwave and theukeorsomethingorother
giveusatuneonthefuckin'thing

Notes:

- *I got to / break youse* = "I've got to demote you (or discharge you)." The narrator Tom is either discharged from the army or demoted all the way down to private (the lowest rank in the army).
- *a Lucky* = Lucky Strikes, an (American) brand of cigarette.
- *My jack's all gone* = "My money's all gone."
- *thepermanentwave* = refers to any sculpted female hairstyle, held in place by hair-spray.
- *theuke* = "the ukulele," a Hawaiian musical instrument that looks like a four-stringed very small guitar.

313. [III] "the surely // Cued" (CP 2: 332)
Richard S. Kennedy writes that in this poem, "Cummings describes one of his own Futuristic canvases, such as 'Noise Number 13' " (*Dreams* 319).

314. [IV] "there are 6 doors" (CP 2: 333)
smokes three / castles = British cigarette brand.

317. [VII] "Space being(don't forget to remember)Curved" (CP 2: 336)
Among other topics, the speaker of this poem discusses the curvature of space, one aspect of Einstein's theory of relativity. See Richard B. Vowles, "Cummings' 'Space being . . . Curved'." *Explicator* 9.1 (1950), item 3. At the end of *The Explicator* 9.5 (March, 1951), after item 37, the editors print this interesting response from Cummings:

Dear Sir--

please let your readers know that the author of
"Space being(don't forget to remember)Curved"
considers it a parody-portrait of one scienceworshipping
supersubmoron in the very act of reading(with
difficulties)aloud,to another sw ssm,some wouldbe
explication of A.Stone&Co's unpoem

--thank you

E. E. Cummings
December 11 1950

earth's most terrific / quadruped = the elephant, Cummings' favorite animal, his "totem." See the cover of *Spring* 4 for a characteristic Cummings sketch of an elephant. Also reproduced on the Cummings Images page. [See also "pity this busy monster,manunkind," (CP 554) and "noone and a star stand,am to am" (CP 721).] For **on-line criticism** of this poem see "On 'Space being(don't forget to remember)Curved' " at the MAPS legacy site.

318. [VIII] "(one fine day)" (CP 2: 337)
In a letter to Norman Friedman dated June 25, 1955, Cummings wrote of this poem: "carnalized metaphysics;or,abstractions raised to the power of the concrete;or,Not For Grownups(children would find no difficulty here)alias what John Finley nicely describes as the 'stainless steel mind' " ("Letter to Norman Friedman" 148).
In this poem, a male voice ("again") asks a female named "never" to take a train for "because," which implies some sort of logic, but also implies that he's asking (forcing) her to have sex with him for no particular reason--just "because." [They "make sense" instead of making love.]
we muthn't pleathe / don't = "we mustn't please / don't."
pop weird = a penis seen as a "weird" incestuous father? The word *weird* may also function as a verb here.
tho nithe = "so nice."
fore'er = "forever." Perhaps the word puns on "fore" / "before" and "e'er / "ere" [before], so "forever" becomes "before."

Lust seems forever, but always happens in "when's haymow"--before death.
sis breath . . . brud breathe = sister breath and brother breathe.
aunt death // did always teethe = "aunt death // did always tease." Death always teases the living and breathing? See the next poem, where the murder-suicide of "2 boston / Dolls" takes place in the "*hoe tell days are // teased*." Also, aunt death is just getting her first teeth--or perhaps she's chewing on the living. If death is "always" teething, she would be a toddler forever and never grow up--or old. Human "breath" rhymes with "death," but ends when death begins. Death teases humans in more ways than one--certainly no one knows what happens after we die.

319. [IX] "y is a WELL KNOWN ATHLETE'S BRIDE" (CP 2: 338)
The protagonists of this poem, y and z, (the "2 boston / Dolls") are Josephine Rotch (Mrs. Albert Bigelow) and Harry Crosby, a minor poet and patron of the arts who spent much of the 20s in Paris. On December 10, 1929, after meeting Mrs. Bigelow at the New York apartment of a friend, Crosby shot her and then himself. See Geoffrey Wolff's biography of Crosby, *Black Sun* (1976) and chapter VIII of Malcolm Cowley's *Exile's Return*. William Carlos Williams also wrote a poem, "The Death of See," about this sensational murder-suicide (see *Collected Poems Vol I*, 416-417). **Links:** "Harry Crosby" page at the MAPS site, including Edward Brunner's biographical essay, "Harry Crosby's 'Brief Transit'." (MAPS Legacy)

hoe tell days are // teased = the Hotel des Artistes on West 67th Street, site of the murder-suicide.

322. [XII] "poor But TerFLY" (CP 2: 343)
This poem presents a satiric, fictionalized account of the career of EEC's first wife Elaine Orr (also from Troy, New York), leaving out her involvement with the poet. (See Kidder, *Introduction* 88-89).

poor But TerFLY = popular song, with music by Raymond Hubbell and lyrics by John Golden. The song was first performed on Broadway in the musical revue *The Big Show*, August 31, 1916. William Slater Brown (who is "B" in *The Enormous Room*) remembered meeting Cummings in 1917 on a boat to France where both were going to serve in the Norton-Harjes Ambulance Corps: "Cummings found a piano somewhere and sat down and played "Poor Butterfly" with all sorts of trills in a rather satiric way" (quoted in Collier 128). This song seems to have been a staple of Cummings' repertoire in those years. Richard S. Kennedy reports on a late night outing in 1916: "At one point, [S. Foster] Damon went to the piano and rolled out a polonaise and Cummings followed the act with "Poor Butterfly" (*Dreams* 89). The lyrics of the song tell of a Japanese woman (the "Butterfly") who learns from a visiting sailor to "how to love in the 'Merican way." The sailor leaves her, but she waits faithfully for him, for "once Butterfly gives her heart away, / She can never love again; she is his for aye." To view a reproduction of the sheet music and complete lyrics of "Poor Butterfly," click on the image at left.

(flesh is grass) = Isaiah 40:6: "All flesh is grass / and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. / The grass withers, the flower fades, / when the breath of the Lord blows upon it."

the way of(all / flesh is grass) refers to satirical novel *The Way of All Flesh* (1903) by Samuel Butler. See 390. [7] "sonnet entitled how to run the world)" (SP 104).

eloping to Ire(land = EEC's first wife Elaine, who announced that she wanted a divorce after meeting the Irishman Frank MacDermot on board ship to France. See Kennedy, *Dreams* 249-265.

grass widow / er A "grass widow" is a woman who is divorced or separated from her husband, or a woman whose husband is temporarily absent. The phrase was also used for the mother of an illegitimate child. In its earliest sense of "unwed mother," the phrase may allude to the site of illicit liaisons: a bed of straw or grass. Here, however, the "grass widow / er" is male--Frank MacDermot (cf. Cohen, "The Lily Maid" 144).

my // MotH . . . (Er / camef / romth / AIR —The end of the poem quotes from another popular song of 1916, "Ireland Must Be Heaven, for My Mother Came from There" (Fred Fisher, music; Joe McCarthy, Howard Johnson, lyrics). The chorus (as sung by Charles Harrison in this recording from the Library of Congress) is as follows:

> Ireland must be Heaven,

For an angel came from there,
I never knew a living soul
One half as sweet or fair,

For her eyes are like the starlight,
And the white clouds match her hair,
Sure, Ireland must be Heaven,
For my mother came from there.

323. [XIII] "remarked Robinson Jefferson" (CP 2: 344)
These notes are indebted to Donald R. Read, "E. E. Cummings: The Lay of the Duckbilled Platitude," *Satire Newsletter* 3 (1965): 30-33. Read contends that Cummings' poem "is consistent with the thought" of the first lines of Robinson Jeffers' poem, "Shine, Perishing Republic" (pub. 1918 and 1924): "While this America settles in the mould of vulgarity, heavily thickening to empire, / And protest, only a bubble in the molten mass, pops, sighs out, and the mass hardens."

Injustice Taughed = Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and former President William Howard Taft, appointed to the court in 1921 by Warren G. Harding.
Wouldwoe = President Woodrow Wilson.
Lydia E. McKinley = conflation of Lydia E. Pinkham, marketer of patent medicine for women, and President William McKinley.
Buch = James Buchanan, President who preceded Abraham Lincoln.
C.O.D. abbreviation for "cash on delivery" or "collect on delivery." Formerly, the term "cod" meant "bag," and by extension, "scrotum" (cf. "codpiece"). It is also British schoolboy slang for "joke."
inley = "in [Robert E.] Lee."
Clever Rusefelt = conflation of Grover Cleveland and Theodore Roosevelt.
Theodore Odysseus Graren't = "Theodore Roosevelt and Ulysses S. Grant are not Odysseus."
he ant = "he is an ant" or "he ain't" --has no rights, is not considered human.
Sitting Bull's T.P. = "teepee and toilet paper" (Read 32). *Sitting Bull* (1831-1890) was a noted native American (Lakota) chief, holy man, and war leader.
duckbilled platitude refers to the duckbilled platypus, a semiaquatic, egg-laying mammal.
Lays aytash unee = "les États-Unis" [French] or the United States. As Read points out, "lays" no doubt has a sexual connotation here. Perhaps *unee* = "un-E. E.," or "not E. E. Cummings"?

326. [XVI] "tell me not how electricity or" (CP 2: 347)
ludendorff = Erich Ludendorff (1865-1937), German general in World War I, later a Nazi party member and fervent anti-communist. In 1925, he was dumped by Hitler as candidate for President in favor of an even more illustrious general, Paul von Hindenburg. See also http://spartacus-educational.com/FWWludendorff.htm.
Krassin probably refers to Leonid Borisovich Krassin (spelled also *Krasin*, 1870-1926), early Bolshevik, revolutionist, bomb-maker, counterfeiter, engineer, and later diplomat for the nascent USSR. His wife published his papers posthumously in English as *Leonid Krassin, His Life and Work* (London, 1929). See Timothy Edward O'Connor, *The Engineer of Revolution: L. B. Krasin and the Bolsheviks, 1870-1926* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992). Both Krassin and Ludendorff were sidelined by their respective parties, but perhaps the bomb-maker is seen more sympathetically here than the general.

327. [XVII] "FULL SPEED ASTERN)" (CP 2: 348)
m // usil(age)ini = Mussolini + musilage [a kind of glue] + age.
hutchinson says = Whoever he is, Hutchinson is quoting some additional lyrics to Cole Porter's 1928 hit tune, "Let's Do It (Let's Fall in Love)":

Sloths who hang down from the twigs do it
Though the effort is great
Sweet guinea pigs do it
Buy a couple and wait

"religion is the opium of the people"
"Marx OKs J. P. Morgan rumor."
"Je(what)hovah ([Herbert] Hoover) in big combine with Babbitt."
Babbitt = philistine title character of 1922 novel by Sinclair Lewis.
UNCOMMONWEALTH OF HUMANUSETTS = deformation of "Commonwealth of Massachusetts."
HUMANUSETTS = Human essence? Human uses? Human nuisance?

328. [XVIII] " 'Gay' is the captivating cognomen of a Young Woman of cambridge,mass." (CP 2: 349)
paper sailors—argonauta argo = a cephalopod mollusc of the genus *Argonauta*. Wikipedia notes: "The female of the species, like all argonauts, creates a paper-thin eggcase that coils around the octopus much like the way a nautilus lives in its shell, hence the name paper nautilus." The argonaut was formerly thought to use its shell as a sail.
out of Briggs = LeBaron Russell Briggs (1855-1934), Dean of Men at Harvard, as well as President of Radcliffe College from 1903 to 1923. In his senior year (1914-1915), Cummings took Briggs' Advanced Composition course. Richard S. Kennedy writes that "Briggs was no doubt the best-loved professor in the Harvard yard. He was a very kind, gentle, gracious human being," who, like Cummings, was "slight of build, very boyish in appearance," and who, also like Cummings, "had attended Cambridge Latin School and went on to study Greek at Harvard" (*Dreams* 69).
by Kitty): most likely George Lyman Kittredge (1860-1941), an imposing Harvard professor and Chaucer and Shakespeare scholar. Cummings took Kittredge's course that intensively studied six Shakespeare plays. Kennedy writes: "most student recollections depict him in the classroom as playing a well-rehearsed role of omniscient scholar: an imperious eagle-eyed old man hurling penetrating questions or answering queries with authoritative scorn as he lifted his well-trimmed white beard in the air" (*Dreams* 63).
the nearest l = the nearest "el," i.e., the nearest elevated train station.
helen moller / dancers: See Moller, Helen C. *Dancing with Helen Moller: Her Own Statement of Her Philosophy, and Practice, and Teaching Formed Upon the Classic Greek Model, and Adapted to Meet the Aesthetic and Hygienic Needs of To-day*. Ed. Curtis Dunham. Intro. Ivan Narodny. New York: John Lane, 1918.

330. [XX] "but granted that it's nothing paradoxically enough beyond mere personal" (CP 2: 352)
believing science=(2b)-n = believing in science is equal to “to be” to the power of the minus nth degree.

331. [XXI] helves surling out of eakspeasies per(reel)hapsingly (CP 2: 353)
stuck thumblike into pie: cf. "Little Jack Horner":

Little Jack Horner
Sat in the corner,
Eating a Christmas pie;
He put in his thumb,
And pulled out a plum,
And said, "What a good boy am I!"

332. [XXII] "Lord John Unalive(having a fortune of fifteengrand" (CP 2: 354)
Lord John Unalive remains (as yet) unidentified. Any suggestions?
keltyer = "culture."

333. [XXIII] "buncha hardboil guys from duh A.C. fulla" (CP 2: 355)
hardboil-- In *EIMI*, while translating the phrase "spare nothing" from Louis Aragon's poem "The Red Front," Cummings comments: "Nyet. Hardboiledness is dull" (146/143).
A.C. Rushworth Kidder writes that the poem depicts "a bunch of rowdies from the Athletic Club beating up a sentimental drunk" (*Introduction* 91). However, Larry Chott once mentioned in conversation that "A. C." stands not for "Athletic Club," but "Ambulance Corps." Certainly “A. C.” seems a more usual abbreviation for the former. The speaker's mention of a "busted harmonica" may remind readers of another scapegoat who is tormented by thugs, Surplice, who in *The*

Enormous Room is able to play a harmonica that no one else can (194-195). However, the speaker of this poem glories in war in a way in which Surplice surely would not.

334. [XXIV] "from the cognoscenti" (CP 2: 356)
In a letter to Norman Friedman, dated "June 25 1955" and published in *Spring* 14-15 (2006), Cummings notes that the last two words of the poem are an anagram for "charles darwin" ("Letter" 148). Combining the first and last lines forms the statement "from the cognoscenti of charles darwin," thus making the poem some sort of comment on evolution. What sort of comment is up to the reader to decide.
cognoscenti = "those in the know" [Italian].
whitermuch [line 9] A typescript draft at the Houghton Library has "whithermuch." [MS Am 1823.5 (110) from the cognoscenti TS. (autograph corrections) 1s. (1p.)]
pseudo . . . podia [line 24]= Literally, "fake foot" [Greek]. In his *Critique of Love* (1929) psychiatrist Fritz Wittells observes:

> Freud compares the libido with the pseudopodia of unicellular animals, which attempt to encircle a particle, and imbibe it as food. They strike out boldly to seize the objects, but if they meet with resistance they withdraw within themselves and encyst. When we suffer defeats we withdraw into our shell. In the beginning we are narcissistic, later we extend the libido to objects, and still later our narcissism may be intensified by bitterness or discouragement. (141-142)

Wittels was Cummings' psychoanalyst, and EEC owned and annotated a copy of this book.
radarw leschin = anagram for "charles darwin."

335. [XXV] "murderfully in midmost o.c.an" (CP 2: 357)
(See Wegner, *Poetry and Prose* 13-14 and Kidder, *Introduction* 91-92.) EEC skewers the mystery writer S. S. Van Dine, who, under his real name, Willard Huntington Wright, had written *Modern Painting: Its Tendency and Meaning* (1915), a book much-cherished and well-annotated by the young Cummings. Van Dine's sleuth was named Philo Vance, hence *philophilic,* or "Philo-loving."
o.c.an--Wegner ingeniously suggests that Cummings indirectly associates Van Dine "with that eighteenth-century faker, James Macpherson, through the phonetic allusion to Ossian ('o.c.an')" (13).
write = right, Wright. *dine* = Van Dine, dying.
Kidder points out that EEC "must have been offended by the fall of an idol" (92). For Wright's influence on EEC, consult Kennedy, *Dreams* 80; 94-95 and Cohen, *PoetandPainter* 120-122.

336. [XXVI] "ohld song" (CP 2: 358)
In a letter to Norman Friedman, dated "June 25 1955" and published in *Spring* 14-15 (2006), Cummings says the poem presents "the 'problem of' human 'identity' via one housefly. Compare *Him* Act I Scene 4(mirror speech)" ("Letter" 148).

337. [XXVII] "the first president to be loved by his" (CP 2: 359)
them Yapanese Craps-- On his way back from a trip to Alaska, President Warren G. Harding fell ill "from eating crab meat on the presidential boat" (Allen 112). Further stricken at San Francisco, the president "died suddenly--on August 2, 1923--of what his physicians took to be a stroke of apoplexy" (Allen 111). After Harding's death, numerous members of his administration were revealed to have engaged in graft and corruption. (see notes for 265 "the season 'tis,my lovely lambs,"). Knowledge of these impending scandals probably hastened the president's death. A journalist later quoted Harding as having said, "My God this is a hell of a job! I have no trouble with my enemies. . . . But my damn friends, my God-damned friends . . . they're the ones that keep me walking the floors nights" (quoted in Daniels 102).

Cummings' criticism of presidential solecism was not limited to Harding. In 1927, EEC told a man on the street interviewer from the New York *Daily News* that "The most wonderful thing that President Coolidge did was to confuse the whole country about the true meaning of a simple English sentence. 'I do not choose to run' sounds simple, but nobody in the country except the President knows what it means" (quoted in Norman 230).

345. [XXXV] "what is strictly fiercely and wholly dies"
This poem is a portrait of Scofield Thayer, former owner and editor of the *Dial* and Cummings' patron, mentor and friend, who suffered a mental breakdown in 1926. The sonnet was probably written shortly after Cummings' October 1930 visit to Thayer in Worcester, MA (cf. Sawyer-Lauçanno 308). Cummings often drew pencil portraits of Thayer, and like his drawings, the poem emphasizes Thayer's "tiny, bow mouth" (Cohen, *Poet* 41). [See for example, this pencil

portrait or this oil portrait now at SUNY Brockport.] Cummings writes that Thayer's mouth "reacts . . . to dreamings more than truth untrue" while the "illustrious unknown" hovers at his "lean lips" as Thayer's spirit stoops and examines "fearingly and tenderly // a recent footprint in the sand of was)".

Moving from "is" to "was," from head to foot, from Thayer's parrot-like "preening solemnity" to his effort as Crusoe to connect with another's or his own humanity, the poem sees the death of Thayer's (or someone's or anyone's) "IS" or "i" as isolating and lonely, like Crusoe on his island.

Compare to an earlier Cummings poem about Thayer (also a portrait, also mentioning his aesthetic mouth): "conversation with my friend is particularly" (CP 96). [For Thayer's views on Cummings' poetry, see James Dempsey's *The Tortured Life of Scofield Thayer* (65-67).]

346. [XXXVI] "sunset)edges become swiftly"
inverno = "winter" [Italian]. The word may also suggest *inferno*, "hell" or "fire."

349. [XXXIX] "An(fragrance)Of"
An opening flower seen as music or perhaps music seen as a flower. The words inside the parentheses refer to "fragrance," while the words outside the parentheses stress the visual rather than the olfactory aspect of the flower.
un deux trois = "one, two, three" [French].
der / die = masculine and feminine definite articles in German--also puns in English: "there" and "die."
Given the phrases "one, two, three" and the "quickly Not," perhaps the music stops briefly. Perhaps also the repeated "An" refers to Cummings' wife at the time, Anne Barton Cummings. (Contrast the lower case definite German articles with the uppercase indefinite English article "An.")

356. [XLVI] "i met a man under the moon"
the pincian = hill in the northeast section of Rome. The Pincio Gardens were designed in 1809-1814 by Giuseppe Valadier. Perhaps *this / wall* refers to the Aurelian wall (270-273 AD).

360. [L] "when hair falls off and eyes blur And"
Instant . . . Pills for Ills: EEC is probably echoing advertisements in general rather than any one in particular. He may have seen something like this article from *Popular Science*, published in July 1931, three months before *ViVa* was published: "Thousands of Pills for Human Ills Turned Out Each Minute by Whirling Machines" [*Popular Science* (July 1931): 62.]

367. [LVII] "somewhere i have never travelled,gladly beyond"
For an analysis of the poem using "temporal poetics," see Richard D. Cureton's "Cummings and Temporality."

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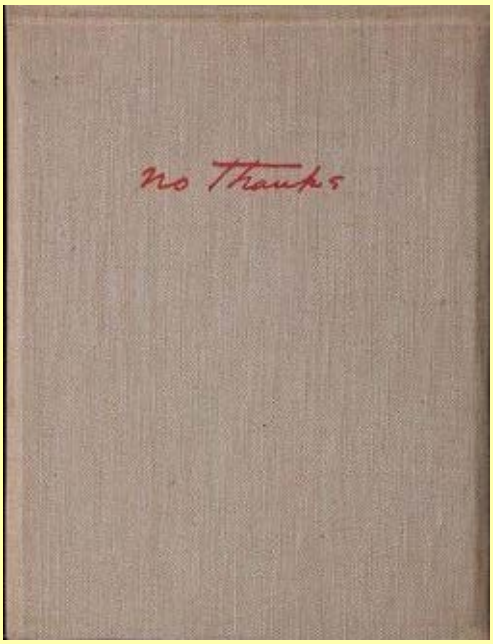
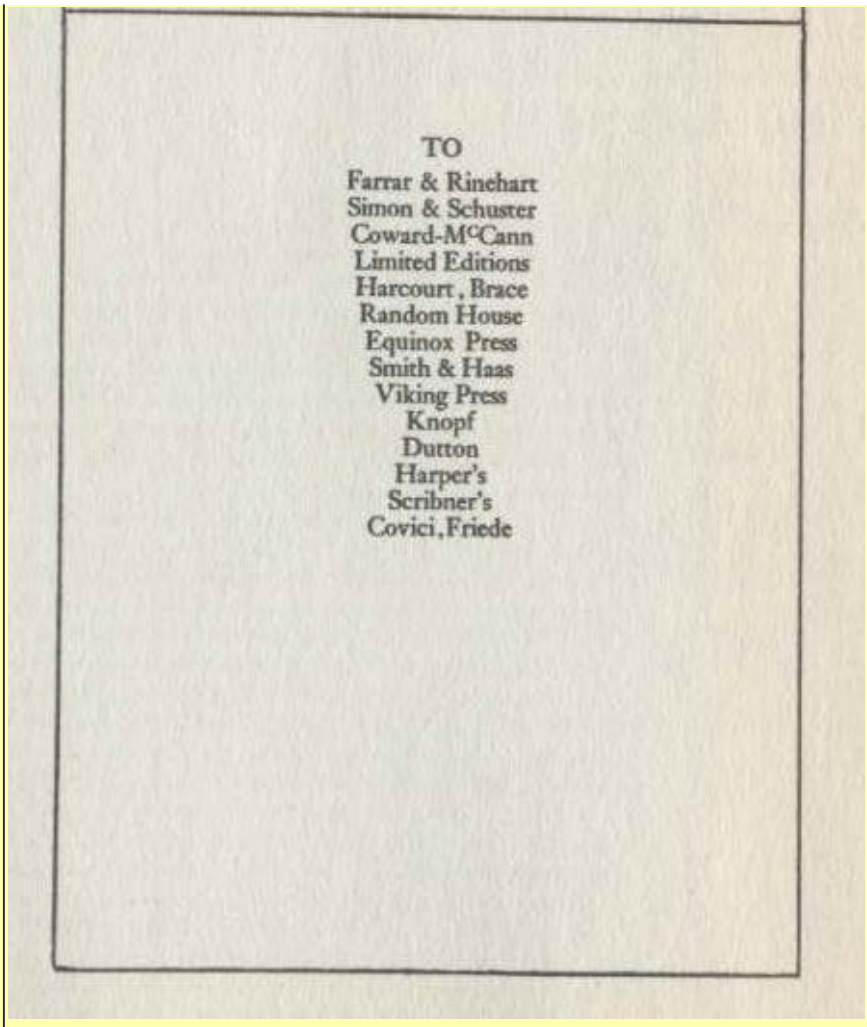
No Thanks (1935 Manuscript)	



No Thanks is dedicated to the 13 publishers who rejected the volume. The names of the publishers are arranged on the page so that they form the shape of a loving cup--or perhaps a funeral urn. The book was privately published by Cummings' personal printer S. A. Jacobs, with Cummings' mother Rebecca Haswell Cummings providing the funds for publication. Cummings acknowledges her help with this notice at the end of the book: "AND THANKS TO R. H. C."


TO
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Simon & Schuster
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Random House
Equinox Press
Smith & Haas
Viking Press
Knopf
Dutton
Harper's
Scribner's
Covici, Friede

384. [2] "moon over gai" (CP 2: 410-411)
gai = *Ge* = “Earth” [Greek]. See *Him*, Act III., scene 5 (129 / 123): *Gay may change* = “*Ge* (Earth) may change” [Greek].
gai / té = "gaieté" or "gaîté," French for frivolity or gaiety. The poem depicts the moon rising over the Paris neighborhood of Montparnasse. The Rue de la Gaîté, long the site of theatres and variety shows, runs just to the west of the Cimetière de Montparnasse, between the Avenue du Maine and the Boulevard Edgar Quinet.
the moon over death over edgar = the moon over the cemetery and the Boulevard Edgar Quinet. To the east, at *denfert*, or the Place Denfert-Rochereau, is an entrance to the catacombs, where the bones of millions of dead Parisians were relocated when the cemeteries became too crowded. The square is commonly referred to as *Place Denfert*, a pun on its old name, the *Place D’Enfer* (Hell Square).
the liontamer nearby hieroglyphs / soar dip / dip: Jacques Demarcq notes that until 1939 the Place Denfert-Rochereau hosted a Festival of the Lion de Belfort, with horse-riding, lion-taming, and other animal acts. The "Lion of Belfort" refers to a statue in the square, honoring Pierre Denfert-Rochereau, the French general who led the defense of the town of Belfort during the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871). Perhaps Cummings indicates that the changing now of Parisian sub-lunar life tames memories of war and death?

387. [4] "i / (meet)t(touch)" (CP 2: 413-414)
The "jeff dick / son" mentioned at the end of this poem was a boxing promoter in Paris. Unscrambled, the last lines read "jeff dickson fecit mcmxxxii" or "Jeff Dickson made [promoted this fight in] 1932." See Kidder, *Introduction* 107. A misprint appears in the newest *Complete Poems* (1994): lines 3-4 of stanza nine should read: "iS ar(ise)wi / lt(wit(hprettyw)ith)mr." (Cummings is writing "wi / lt"--not "wi / it.")

388. [5] "a)glazed mind layed in a / urinal" (CP 2: 415)

Notice the parentheses around the first and last letters of the poem.
stetti = "steady."

390. [7] "sonnet entitled how to run the world)" (CP 2: 417)
Here is Cummings' "paraphrase" of lines 6-8:

> G . . . never be guilty of self-pity;if you once had a little but now have least,forget the earlier time gladly;& when you have least,remember gladly the time when you had most
> H . . . treat your true(highest)self as something sacred--never flaunt it in public,like a flag,for everyone to see (*Letters* 271).

grass is flesh --inversion of Isaiah 40:6: "All flesh is grass / and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. / The grass withers, the flower fades, / when the breath of the Lord blows upon it." Cummings writes:

> lines 9 10 11 say that the subject of the sonnet's 2nd part is not "flesh is grass"(i.e. living is dying)as the Bible tells you, but dying is living("grass is flesh") (*Letters* 271).

Interested readers will want to consult Cummings' entire commentary on this poem (*Selected Letters* 270-271). (See also 322. [XII] "poor But TerFLY")

392. [9] "o pr" (CP 2: 419)
unde negant redire quemquam = "whence, they say, no one returns" [Latin]. Catullus, poem 3, in which the poet mourns the death of his mistress' pet sparrow, who has gone to the underworld, never to return. Sheridan Baker notes that the missing "o" refers not only the baseball but also very probably to "the little white ball that used to bounce along from word to word of the songs flashed-on at the lower edge of moving picture screens, a line at a time, marking the beat for the audience to join in the chorus" (232). See Sheridan Baker, "Cummings and Catullus" *Modern Language Notes* 74 (1959): 231-234. See also Richard D. Cureton's "Visual Form in E. E. Cummings' *No Thanks*" and Cummings's discussion in *i: six nonlectures* (50).
Links:

- President Herbert Hoover throws out the first pitch, April 17, 1929.
- Florine Stettheimer's painting, *Cathedrals of Broadway* (1929) [Note her depiction of a newsreel showing Jimmy Walker (Mayor of New York City, 1926-1932) throwing out the first pitch.]
- Right at the beginning of the following newsreel clip, you will see Roosevelt throwing out the first pitch in 1936, one year after "o pr" was published in *No Thanks*.
- Here is the complete newsreel, "1936 Baseball Season Opens" (try to ignore the annoying logo at the upper left).

393. [10] "little man" (CP 2: 420)
For a reading of this poem, see Etienne Terblanche, " 'The plum survives its poems:' Meditative Space in the Poetry of E. E. Cummings and Wallace Stevens" (163-164).

394. [11] "ci-gît 1 Foetus(unborn to not die" (CP 2: 421)
ci-gît = "here lies" [French].
Jacques Demarcq suggests that the "Foetus" is Elaine's second husband Frank Mac Dermot, and the "Ghost" (despite being referred to as "himself") is Elaine--or perhaps Love--("come summer puts on fur"), and the "Man" is Cummings, who gave his consent to an annulment of his first marriage--another failure, but he has nothing else to give these undead people. (For the story of the break-up of Cummings' first marriage, see Kennedy, *Dreams* 249-280.)

395. [12] "why why" (CP 2: 422)
Martin Heusser sees this poem and "one's not half two. It's two are halves of one:" (CP 556) as alluding "to Aristophanes' myth of the split sexes" (*I Am* 61--cf. Plato's *Symposium* 189a-193e). In a letter to Norman Friedman, dated "June 25 1955" and published in *Spring* 14-15 (2006),Cummings writes:

> this poem says(if I remember my zoology)that nothing is more,or less,significant than if I pick up the You of an angleworm from the ground where he-she squirms(instead of e.g. stepping on him). Vide dictionary "metameric","homonomous","heteronomous" ("Letter" 149)

who's myself's Antimere = "a term used in biology to designate 'a part or division corresponding to an opposite or similar part in an organism characterized by bilateral or radial symmetry.' An antimere forms, in other words, a natural correspondence or complementary part to a given body or part of a body; a natural opposition or half. In the context of Cummings' question, the term is synonymous with the 'soul-mate' or 'other' which the self needs in order to achieve its potential completeness" (Heusser, *I Am* 62). Heusser further comments: "The issue of the relation self-other as an enactment of the myth of Aristophanes is taken up again in lines thirteen and sixteen in 'metameric me' and 'metameric You.' The term 'metameric,' like 'antimere' is culled from biology. A metamere is defined as 'one of s a series of homologous body segments' . . . . In variation and elaboration of the notion of the other as a natural correspondence, self and other are here treated as inherently identical elements of the same body. In addition, however, the self is characterized as 'heteronomous,' the other (the 'You') as 'homonomous.' Both these terms are also biological *termini technici*. In a strictly etymological sense, the latter means 'subject to the same or a constant law,' the former the opposite, i.e., 'governed by a different law'" (62-63).

396. [13] "r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r" (CP 2: 423)
For Cummings' comments on the poem's construction, see the Page proof for "r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r". See more drafts and page proofs of "r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r" on the "Drafts from *No Thanks*" page (scroll down) at the Cummings Archive. This poem has occasioned quite a bit of comment over the years. For commentary on the poem, see Richard D. Cureton's "Visual Form in E. E. Cummings' *No Thanks*," Max Nänny's "Iconic Dimensions in Poetry," Etienne Terblanche's *E. E. Cummings: Poetry and Ecology* (49-54), and Aaron Moe's *Zoopoetics: Animals and the Making of Poetry* (77-82).

Links:

- Moe, Aaron M. "Drafts from *No Thanks*." *Cummings Archive*. Web.
- Max Nänny's imaginative view of "r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r" as a pattern poem.
- **On-line criticism** of the poem (including an excerpt from Nänny's "Iconic Dimensions in Poetry"): "On 'r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r'" (MAPS legacy site).
- Huang-Tiller, Gillian. "One Art: Intuition and Typography in E. E. Cummings' Original Analysis of 'r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r' (1935)." *Spring: The Journal of the E. E. Cummings Society* 20 (2013): 110-115.
- Kilyovski, Vakrilen. "The Nude, the Grasshopper, and the Poet-Painter: A Reading of E. E. Cummings' 'r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r'." *Spring: The Journal of the E. E. Cummings Society* 20 (2013): 99-109.
- Webster, Michael. "Plotting the Evolution of a r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r." *Spring: The Journal of the E. E. Cummings Society* 20 (2013): 116-143.

397. [14] "mouse)Won" (CP 2: 424)
This poem is in many ways the opposite of "r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r," which "is about unaccountable life and uncontainable movement, while ["mouse)Won"] is about a motionless, dead mouse who is wholly contained, wrapped in a leaf and placed in the earth" (Webster, "The New Nature Poetry and the Old" 114).

398. [15] "one nonsufficiently inunderstood" (CP 2: 425)
Norman Friedman translates the last lines as "I want to say right here and now that my jack [money] rides with you—Very Sincerely, I" (*Art* 77).

401. [18] "this little / pair" (CP 2: 428)
This poem is a modern Mother Goose rhyme, complete with magical transformations. It parodies two nursery rhymes:

a) There was a little man,
Who wooed a little maid,
And he said, "Little maid, will you wed, wed, wed?
I have little more to say,
So will you, yea or nay,
For least said is soonest mended, -ded, -ded, -ded."

The little maid replied,
"Should I be your little bride,
Pray what must we have for to eat, eat, eat?

Will the flame that you're so rich in
Light a fire in the kitchen?
Or the little god of love turn the spit, spit, spit?"

b) Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
With silver bells and cockleshells,
And pretty maids all in a row.

where / flesh is heiry montparnasse = combination of "the thousand natural shocks / that flesh is heir to" (*Hamlet* III, i, 62-63) and "flesh is [hairy] grass" (Isaiah 40:6). See 322 [XII] "poor But TerFLY" (CP 2: 343) and 390 [7] "sonnet entitled how to run the world)" (CP 2: 417).
is goosed by raspail = the boulevards Montparnasse and Raspail cross in the 6th arrondissement in Paris. Americans in the Twenties congregated "in a cluster of sidewalk cafés along the Boulevard Montparnasse" (Wickes 151). In 1925, Sinclair Lewis wrote of one of these cafés, the Dôme: "It is, in fact, the perfectly standardized place to which standardized rebels flee from the crushing standardization of America" (quoted in Wickes 152).
she turned into a fair-y could mean that "she turned into a fair—there" (*y* = "there") [French]).

403. [20] "go(perpe)go" (CP 2: 430)
Norman Friedman, Nat Henry, and Rushworth M. Kidder have all pointed out that this poem parodies Proverbs 6: 6, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise." See Friedman, *Art* 117-121, Kidder, *Introduction* 110 and Nat Henry, *The Explicator* 20 (1963), item 63. The reader might also note the incremental build-up of the phrase from Proverbs and the bi-lateral symmetries in the letters and spacings of many individual lines. These symmetries are least partially explained by the root meanings of the words "sinister dexterity," which both stem from Latin and mean, respectively, "left" and "right."

Randy Maitland pointed out to me that the phrase appears in a passage towards the end of chapter 1 of Herman Melville's *Billy Budd*. After being drafted ("impressed") into the British Navy, Billy has just waved goodbye to his old shipmates and to his ship, the allegorically-named *Rights-of-Man*. Billy says, "And good-bye to you too, old *Rights-of-Man*." Then the lieutenant yells for Billy to sit down. Melville comments:

> To be sure, Billy's action was a terrible breach of naval decorum. But in that decorum he had never been instructed; in consideration of which the lieutenant would hardly have been so energetic in reproof were it not for the concluding farewell to the ship. This he rather took as meant to convey a covert sally on the new recruit's part, a sly slur at impressment in general, and that of himself in especial. And yet, more likely, if satire it was in effect, it was hardly so by intention, for Billy, though happily endowed with a gaiety of high health, youth, and a free heart, was yet by no means of a satirical turn. The will to it and the sinister dexterity were alike wanting. To deal in double meanings and insinuations of any sort was quite foreign to him.

The idea of the loss of rights when entering into a collective and the use of the term "sinister dexterity" makes me believe that EEC must be referring to this Melville passage in his poem. Or if it's a coincidence, it's a rather astonishing one.

A quick search on Google revealed that Cummings may have also seen the phrase in draft versions of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, published in Paris in the journal *transition*. In the final published version of the *Wake*, the phrase occurs in chapter 12 (or II, 4), on page 384: "the hero, of Gaelic champion, the onliest of her choice, her bleaueyedeal of a girl's friend, neither bigugly nor smallnice, meaning pretty much everything to her then, with his sinister dexterity, light and rufthandling, vicemversem her ragbags et assaucyetiams, fore and aft, on and offsides, ..."

409. [26] "what does little Ernest croon" (CP 2: 436)
The poem satirizes Ernest Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon* (1932) by parodying lines from two Victorian poets. The first line, *what does little Ernest croon*, is a send-up of Alfred, Lord Tennyson's "Cradle Song": "What does little birdie say / In her nest at peep of day?" Line three, *(kow dow r 2 bul retoinis*, echoes the second stanza of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's "A Psalm of Life":

Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,

Was not spoken of the soul.

In a his article "Cummings' Cradle Song for Ernest Hemingway" in the old series of *Spring*, Richard S. Kennedy notes that Cummings was probably "set off" by reading this passage in Hemingway's book:

> Someone with English blood has written: "Life is real; life is earnest, and the grave is not its goal." And where did they bury him? and what became of the reality and earnestness? The people of Castille have great common sense. They could not produce a poet who would write a line like that. They know that death is the unescapable reality, the one thing any man may be sure of; the only security. . . . They think a great deal about death and when they have a religion they have one which believes that life is much shorter than death. Having this feeling they take an intelligent interest in death and when they can see it being given, avoided, refused, and accepted in the afternoon for a nominal price of admission they pay their money and go to the bullring . . . . (266) [qtd. in "Cradle Song" 6-7]

In addition, the last two lines, "cow thou art to bull returnest / was the words of little Ernest," echo the tone of a negative review of Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon* written by Cummings' friend Max Eastman and titled "Bull in the Afternoon." See also Richard S. Kennedy's *E. E. Cummings Revisited*, pp. 100-01 and also Kennedy's note in *Selected Poems* 137-138).

410. [27] "little joe gould has lost his teeth and doesn't know where" (CP 2: 437)
Joe Gould (1888-1957) was a Harvard graduate who hung out on the streets of Greenwich Village, depending on handouts for sustenance. Though he was supposedly writing / compiling *An Oral History of Our Time*, according to Rushworth M. Kidder, Gould was actually "doing nothing of the kind, but cadging drinks" (Kidder 112). An obituary, titled "Joe Gould, Bohemian," appeared in the *Village Voice*, August 21, 1957. An account of Gould's funeral, "Last Rites for a Bohemian," appeared in the same publication August 28, 1957. Joseph Mitchell's 1965 book *Joe Gould's Secret* explores Gould's life and the secret of his non-existent *Oral History*. (Mitchell's book was first published in September, 1964 in two consecutive issues of *The New Yorker* as "Joe Gould's Secret--I" and "Joe Gould's Secret--II.") Kidder says that the line "a myth is as good as a smile" indicates that Cummings may have guessed at Gould's secret. However, it is undeniable that Gould did a lot of scribbling in many notebooks. In April 2000, the *Village Voice* reported on the re-discovery of eleven of Gould's notebooks in the archives at NYU. Charles Hutchinson and Peter Miller's article, "Joe Gould's Secret History: The Diary of a Legendary Village Bohemian Surfaces at NYU," shows that Gould was writing *something*, if not exactly an oral history. For more on Joe Gould, see Kennedy 269 and Norman 133-138, 174-175. See also Sewell Chan's "Revisiting Joe Gould's Secret," Joshua Prager's article in *Vanity Fair*, "The Patron and the Panhandler" (on Gould and his mysterious patron), and Jill Lepore's *New Yorker* piece "Joe Gould's Teeth: The Long-lost Story of the Longest Book Ever Written," which re-examines Joe Gould's life and argues for the possible existence of his *Oral History*. Lepore consults many letters and archival documents that were unavailable to Mitchell. For an interpretation of "little joe gould has lost his teeth and doesn't know where" (with a short consideration of Gould's published writings), see Michael Webster's "Notes for Cummings: A Resource for Students and Teachers." A site called *Kooks Museum* (now preserved at archive.org) reprinted many of the writings that Gould published in modernist little magazines and journals. For the movie that was made based on Mitchell's book, see the IMDB page for *Joe Gould's Secret*. Gould probably appears in more Cummings poems than any other person. EEC's poem "no time ago" (CP 648) is about Gould. And Cummings quotes Gould's misogynist views in "as joe gould says in" (CP 700). The posthumously published "April'/ this letter's dated/ '23" (CP 1019) also mentions Gould.
The first line and a half of "little joe gould has lost his teeth and doesn't know where" is a pastiche of the nursery rhyme "Little Bo-Peep":

> Little Bo-Peep has lost her sheep,
> And doesn't know where to find them;
> Leave them alone, and they'll come home,
> Wagging their tails behind them.

nude eel = "New Deal."
Harvard Brevis Est = "Harvard Is Brief" [Latin]. Cummings plays off the Latin tag *Ars longa, vita brevis* ["Art is long, life is short"], a translation of the first two lines of an aphorism by the Greek physician Hippocrates. EEC adds the “Est” [Is], which is understood in the Latin.
a myth is as good as a smile: EEC plays on the proverb "a miss is as good as a mile" (and perhaps by extension, "a nod is

as good as a wink").
a wraith's / progress refers to *A Rake's Progress*, a series of eight paintings and (later) engravings by English artist William Hogarth (1697-1764).
Amérique Je T'Aime = "America I Love You" [French]. Cummings refers to "America, I Love You" (1915), popular song with words by Edgar Leslie and music by Archie Gottler. The chorus is as follows:

> America, I love you!
> You're like a sweetheart of mine!
> From ocean to ocean,
> For you my devotion,
> Is touching each bound'ry line.
> Just like a little baby
> Climbing its mother's knee,
> America, I love you!
> And there's a hundred million others like me!

In his essay on Gaston Lachaise (1920) Cummings wrote of a critic who could "comfort himself with the last line of that most popular wartime song, America I Love You which goes, 'And there're a hundred million others like me' " (*Miscellany* 23). In 1940, the song was revived in the movie *Tin Pan Alley*. See also "Poem, Or Beauty Hurts Mr. Vinal" (CP 228) and " 'next to of course god america i" (CP 267).
it may be fun to be fooled: In a 1960 article on the tobacco industry, "TOBACCO: The Controversial Princess," *Time* magazine reported on the tobacco advertising wars of the 1930s: "George Washington Hill . . . dreamed up the slogan 'It's toasted' for Lucky Strike—even though all tobacco went through the same toasting process. Reynolds struck back with 'I'd walk a mile for a Camel,' [and] scoffed at Luckies' 'toasted' claim with ads showing a magician sawing a girl in half and captioned, 'It's fun to be fooled; it's more fun to know.' " **Links** [1933 advertisements for Camel cigarettes]:

> "Girl Disappears in Thin Air"
> "Dancing on Glass"
> "Live Dog from an Empty Kennel"

Writings of Joe Gould in Modernist Periodicals and on the Web

Gould, Joseph. "Art." *The Exile* 2 (Autumn 1927): 112-116.
---. "Excerpts from Joe Gould's Oral History of the Contemporary World." Ed. O. Nenslo. *Kooks Museum* (n.d., before 2005). Rpt. Internet Archive. Web. [Reprints "Social Position," "Insanity," "Freedom," "Marriage," and "Civilization."]
---. "From Joe Gould's Oral History: Marriage. Civilization." *The Dial* (April 1929): 319-321.
---. "ME TEMPORE: A Selection from Joe Gould's Oral History: 'Insanity' and 'Freedom'." *Pagany* 2.2 (April-June 1931): 96-98. Rpt. *A Return to* PAGANY*: The History, Correspondence, and Selections from a Little Magazine 1929-1932*. Ed. Stephen Halpert and Richard Johns. Boston: Beacon Press, 1969. 299-301.
---. "Social Position." *Broom* 5.3 (October 1923): 147-150.

413.[30] "kumrads die because they're told)" (SP)
kumrads = "comrades," or communists.

414. [31] "does yesterday's perfection seem not quite"
The capital letters in the last line spell "IS," a key Cummings term. In his essay on Gaston Lachaise, Cummings writes, "to appreciate child art we are compelled to undress one by one the soggy nouns whose agglomeration constitutes the mechanism of normality, and finally to liberate the actual crisp organic squirm--the IS" (*Miscellany* 19). For an interpretation of this poem, see Kidder 113-114.

415. [32] "numb(and"
A very obscure poem that depicts how snow and ice cling, hang, and droop from a large iron structure (possibly the Eiffel Tower). The snow and ice look like "w / ar / pin / g dre // ams whichful sarcasms / papery deathfuls"—but under its winter coating this structure is an "alive secretly i" that "awaits / yes" (spring). Cummings' consistent satire of the pomposity of public statues (CP 408 and CP 636) makes unlikely Kidder's suggestion that the poem describes snow sliding off the statue "of a nineteenth century industrialist . . . in Washington Square Park" (112).

423. [40] "as if as"

This poem depicts how the rising sun gradually reveals the world.

425. [42] "out of a supermetamathical subpreincestures"
croons canned / à la vallee refers to Rudy Vallee, the most popular pre-Bing Crosby crooner.

preserved goldfishian gestures in films produced by Samuel Goldwyn (originally Goldfish), founder of Goldwyn Pictures, which later became MGM Studios.

sally rand = fan-dancer of the 30s, whose motto was "the fan is quicker than the eye" (Daniels 244). Photo: Sally Rand and her feathered fans (from Daniels fig. 21).

fand = hand, rand, fan. No doubt the word "fly" has multiple meanings also.

χαίρετε = "chairete" = "rejoice!" or "greetings" in Greek [pronounced "ki - ray - tay"— Cummings rhymes it with “entirety.”]. Root-word for English "charity." A variation of this word is the title for Cummings' 1950 book of poems, *XAIPE*.

recent world's fair celebrating "A Century of Progress" in Chicago in 1933-1934.

b.o.fully speaking: "b.o." = "body odor" and/or “box office.”

Links:

- Fan Dancer Sally Rand at the 1934 Chicago World's Fair
- Sally Rand's fan dance in the movie *Bolero* (1934)

430. [47] "ondumonde'"
In his book *Americans in Paris* (1969), George Wickes writes: "The subject of this poem is a Negro [bantamweight] boxer named Panama Al Brown who was a familiar figure in the Paris ring between 1926 and 1938" (117). Wickes continues: "The most astonishing part of Al Brown's career came years later when he lost his title, and [Jean] Cocteau--of all people--managed his comeback campaign. 'Al Brown was a poem in black ink,' wrote Cocteau, unwittingly describing the poem Cummings had written. The composition not only outlines the boxer in action but reports the whole scene through scraps of conversation and incidental details" (117-118). According to Tyler Stovall's *Paris Noir*, Brown was managed in Paris by the promoter Jeff Dickson, who is mentioned in "i / (meet)t(touch)" (CP 387). Brown was known for his "grace of movement" in the ring, and after his brief Cocteau-inspired comeback in 1938, he was featured at the *Cirque Médrano* "in a shadow-boxing dance act to a jazz accompaniement" (Steegmuller 433). Stovall offers a brief account of Al Brown's life in Paris on pp. 67-68 of *Paris Noir*. **Links**: Panama Al Brown's record and a brief biography (with photo).

ondumonde" = "[champi]on du monde" = "champion of the world" [French].
"(first than carefully poised now then why sprig slinkily strolling (precisely) dynamite yearns swoons & is dense killing whip alert floats corruptingly)"
ça y est = "that's it" [French].
qu'est-ce que tu veux = "what do you want" [French].
il est trop fort le nègre = "he's too strong, the Negro" [French]. 5, 7, 8,
"dropped writhes nothingish sprawl, TO 9 & (musically-who? // pivoting) / SmileS"
c'est fini . . . allons "it's over . . . let's go" [French].
"ahlbrhoon = "Al Brown"

431. [48] "floatfloafloflf"
A poem about the dancer Paul Draper (1909-1996). See Richard Crowder, *The Explicator* 16 (Jan. 1957), item 41. A misprint appears in the newest *Complete Poems* (1994): line 11 should read “irlErec” instead of “irlEric”. Both the typescript edition of *No Thanks* and the HBJ *Complete Poems* of 1980 read “irlErec”. (Cummings is writing the word “Erec / , / t,” not the name “Eric.”)

cupidoergosum = "cupido ergo sum" = "I desire therefore I am" [Latin]. See 494. [8] "the Noster was a ship of swank"
omiepsicronlonO-- / megaeta? = scrambled Greek letters: omicron [O, o], epsilon [E, ε], omega [Ω, ω], eta [H, η]. In Greek, these four letters represent the vowels O and E, two long (omega and eta) and two short (omicron and epsilon).

438 [51] "Jehovah buried,Satan dead,"
a Five Year Plan = The Soviet Union began implementing economic five year plans in 1928.
to kiss the mike . . . “kiss the microphone (or Irishman) if Jews become objects of / creations of prejudice.”
Cummings wrote: “argument:man fancies himself god but has become base;what's needed is a(god who dares to be a)man” Houghton Library, Harvard University, call number bMS Am 1823.5 (165).

440. [56] "this mind made war"
This poem is most likely a portrait of Ezra Pound. After receiving a copy of *No Thanks*, Pound wrote to Cummings: "damn it all, 56 worth more than the prix nobel, from 17 non conformist parsons" (P/C 65). (The word "parsons" refers to the Swedish Nobel Committee.) The next line of the letter tells Cummings not to talk about Pound valuing the poem higher than the prize, since Pound's daughter might have need of any future Nobel money for schooling.

444. [59] "sh estiffl" (CP2 473)
In the 1994 *Complete Poems*, delete the extra "g" in line 5: for "epouting(gWh.ono:w" read "epoutin(gWh.ono:w" (Cummings is writing "the pouting who now"). Also, line 15 is out of place and should be moved flush left with the other lines. The line should also have three question marks, thus:

ununununun?
butbutbut??
tonton???
ing????

In addition, for line 19, both the typescript edition (1978) and a fair copy at the Houghton Library [bMS Am 1892.5 (477)] read ".grIns"—while the 1935 edition of *No Thanks* and the 1954 and 1994 *Complete Poems* read ".grins". The former reading seems preferable. These errors have been corrected in the 2016 "revised, corrected, and expanded" edition of *Complete Poems*. (CP2 473).

445. "(b/ eLl/ s?/ bE"
The poem emphasizes the *bE* of the bells as well as their sounds: *sob, bang, reel, crash, shout, boom, cry*. One way to read the middle of the poem would be to see the people in the "(dark- / ly)" churches as “whirling in // . . . to sun" while the bells in stanza five whirl and "crash" simultaneously. At the end of the poem, perhaps *(sbells)* = "spells"?

446. [61] "love's function is to fabricate unknownness"
Rushworth M. Kidder finds echoes of Shakespeare’s sonnet 116 in this sonnet (*Introduction* 121):

Shakespeare, sonnet 116	Cummings (CP 436)
Love’s not time’s fool	love may not care / if time totters
Nor bends with the remover to remove	all measures bend
[love] bears it out even to the edge of doom	--dreads dying least;and less,that death should end)

fish boast of fishing // and men are caught by worms--Jacques Demarcq notes that this image of the worm and fish recalls this remark of Hamlet: “A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm” (*Hamlet*, Act IV, scene 3).
See also Gerald Levin's "Cummings' Poem (Love's function. . .)." *Explicator* 17 (1958/1959), item 18.

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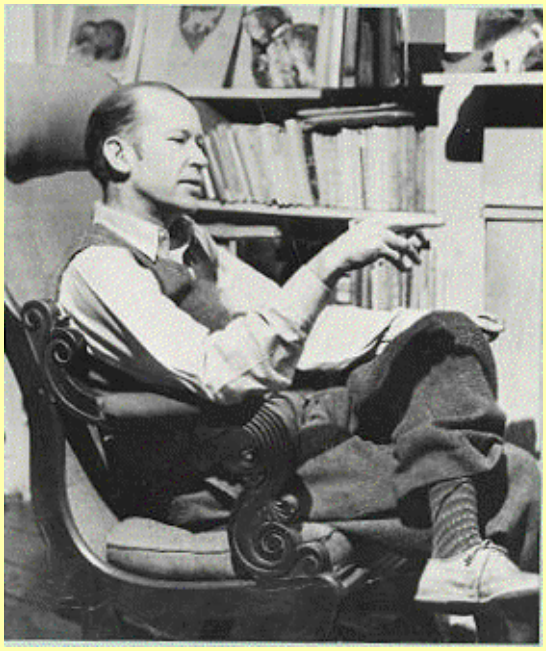
New Poems (1938) [At right: EEC at 4 Patchin Place, 1937]



The *New Poems* are a group of 22 new poems published at the end of the *Collected Poems* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1938), which, despite its title, is actually a volume of selected poems. For a review of *Collected Poems*, see S. I. Hayakawa, "Is Indeed 5" [*Poetry* 52.5 (Aug. 1938): 284-292].

464. [2] "kind)"
YM&WC conflates YMCA, YWCA and W.C., "water-closet" or toilet [chiefly British].

professor . . . shapley = Harlow Shapley, celebrated Harvard astronomer who actually compared the universe to neither a biscuit nor a cookie, but to a watch. In his popular science text *The Universe of Stars* (1929), Shapley wrote, "the whole [Milky Way] is disk-shaped like a watch" (168). Manuscripts at the Houghton Library at Harvard University [bMS Am 1892.7 (108), folder 4] indicate that Cummings read Shapley and knew of the watch comparison, so the distortion here is deliberate ridicule. See also Paul O. Williams, "Cummings' 'kind)'," *Explicator* 23 (1964) item 4 and Guy Rotella, "Cummings' 'kind)' and Whitman's Astronomer," *Concerning Poetry* 18 (1985): 39-46.

466. [4] "(of Ever-Ever Land i speak" (SP 149)
Barry Marks writes that the last two lines of the poem are a pastiche of a line from Rudyard Kipling: "A woman is only a woman, but a good Cigar is a Smoke" (57). The line comes from Kipling's poem "The Betrothed," first published in *Departmental Ditties and Barrack Room Ballads* (1886). **Link**: Stephen Scotti singing his own setting of "(of Ever-Ever Land i speak" For more on Stephen Scotti, see "Stephen Scotti and *ViVa Cummings!*" [EEC Society Blog].

471. [9] "so little he is"
A poem about Jimmy Savo (1896-1960), vaudeville entertainer "whose fluttering hands strewed the stage with bits of paper in gestures extremely birdlike" (Norman 146). John T. Ordeman's "Two Portraits by E. E. Cummings: Jimmy Savo in Poem and Painting," *Spring* 6 (1997): 49-54, unearths more information about Savo and reproduces an EEC oil painting of the comic actor. Lloyd Frankenberg's comments on this poem are quite perceptive: "The interrelationships are so deftly numerous that only a few can be pointed out. 'So' begins and concludes the poem. The latter 'so' encloses 'AV' (a root form for 'bird'), thus confirming in Savo's name the bird-like quality expressed in the poem. Savo's 'pert' expertness consists in expanding littleness, but not by blowing up its dimensions. He grOws in a series of circular elations, as the miracle ('L . . . O') of a 'wi?ng' causes a bird to grow through space. They grow by what their motion encloses. Savo is a 'childlost'; yet like a poet recovers original impulses of living: the child, lost to most of us, is found in poet and clown. 'AV' may also allude to another of Savo's expansions, when he suddenly releases a torrent of song in 'River, Stay Away from My Door.' The trailing punctuation at the end recalls the floating particles of paper Savo can incredibly cause to flutter off from his fingers, with infinite lassitude. And of course Savo began as a juggler; a precisionist at balance" (157-58).
Links:

- Photos of Jimmy Savo performing by Gene Smith (1947) and Gjon Mili (1942)
- Jimmy Savo Blog https://jimmysavo.it/ (in Italian); with "Jimmy e il poeta" ["Jimmy and the Poet"] (in Italian)
- Adolf Dehn, *Jimmy Savo and Rope* (watercolor on paper, 1944)
- Adolf Dehn, Jimmy Savo (or Jimmy Savo and His Piece of String) (lithograph, 1945)
- Loren MacIver, Portrait of Jimmy Savo (1944)
- Gilbert Seldes, "The Vagaries of Jimmy Savo" (*Esquire* 1944):
- Atkinson, Brooks. "Jimmy Savo and 'Parade' Introduce the Theatre Guild to Revelry." *New York Times* (21 May 1935): 22
- Atkinson, Brooks. "Jimmy Savo Puts on a One-Man Pantomimic Show Entitled 'Mum's the Word in Ten Numbers

at the Belmont Theatre." *New York Times* (6 December 1940): 31. ["Since no one appears to be able to use Jimmy Savo properly on the revue stage, Jimmy is joyfully taking things into his own hands, eyes and feet."]

472. [10] "nor woman"
Nat Henry suggests that the poem depicts "the body of a young girl violated and left dead in a park." See Henry's "Cummings' 303 (nor woman)," *The Explicator* 22 (1963), item #2. Rushworth Kidder offers a less lurid interpretation: "the 'he' is a bum and the propped-up bundle is his drunken companion" (*Introduction* 129). However, it is more likely that this is simply a poem about a homeless man who died in the snow and cold. He himself is the "bundle." Note the subject of the next poem, "my speciality is living said" (CP 473).

474. [12] "The Mind's("
The poem depicts a Hollywood sound-stage. (Cummings visited Hollywood in 1935.) Lines 10-15 translate to: "And you can tell Finklestein it stinks. / You ready? All right, let's go. Action! / Camera. They're tur- / ning." See Kennedy, *Dreams* 363-369, Kidder, *Introduction* 129, and Nat Henry's "Cummings' 305.["The Mind's("] *Explicator* 20:6 (Feb. 1962), item 49.

484. [22] "you shall above all things be glad and young."
that you should ever think —Kidder says this line echoes Peter Quince's confused recitation of the Prologue in the Pyramus and Thisbe interlude in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: "That you should think, / we come not to offend / But with goodwill" (V, i, 109-110).
that way knowledge lies —echoes King Lear's "that way madness lies" (*Lear* III, iv, 21; Kidder 131-132).

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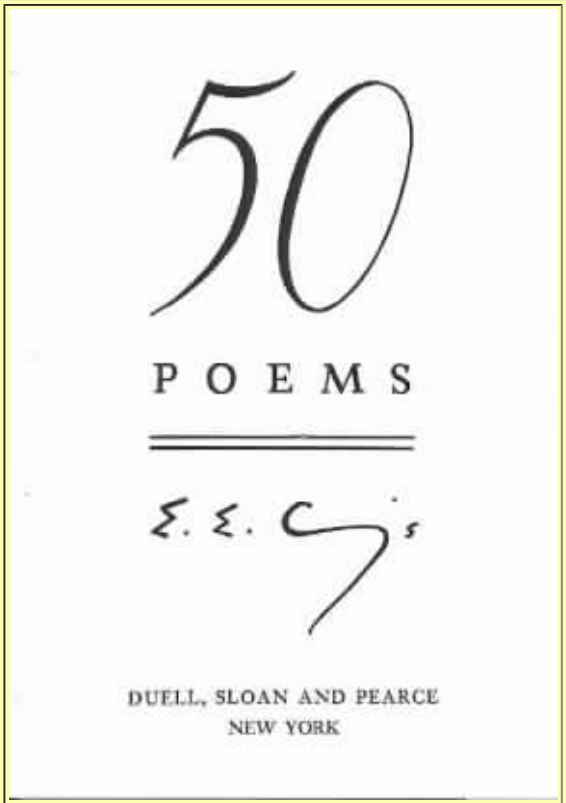
50 Poems (1940)
488. [2] "fl // a / tt / ene"
This poem depicts coughing men standing "more o / n than in" their shadows. The doubled letters in the lines depict the men and their shadows. The men are probably homeless denizens of the Bowery.
esse = "to be" [Latin].

489. [3] "If you can't eat you got to"
Text of the poem as first published in *Poetry* [56.5 (August 1940): 239]. https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/browse?volume=56&issue=5&page=7

490. [4] "nobody loved this"
A poem about the Cyclops. See Homer's *Odyssey*, book nine.

492. [6] "flotsam and jetsam" (SP 154)

gentlemen poeds = W. H. Auden (1907-1973), British-American poet, and Christopher Isherwood (1904-1986), British-American novelist, who arrived together in New York in January 1939. On April 6, 1939, Cummings may have attended Auden and Isherwood's reading at the League of American Writers, a group described by a biographer of Auden as "one of those left-wing organizations that were popular in the thirties" (Farnan 18). Ironically, both Auden and Isherwood were moving away from left-wing politics and towards more personal forms of belief--Anglicanism and pacifism. And though they were, as Cummings says, "thoroughly bretish," both became American citizens in 1946. Carl Van Vechten photographed Isherwood and Auden on February 6, 1939.
coeds = male and female students. In a 1941 letter to Ezra Pound, Cummings refers to William Carlos Williams as "your excoed Billy the



Title page of *50 Poems*
(Note capital letters in Cummings' signature)

Medico" (P/C 159).
(neck and senecktie refers to Horace, *Odes*, II.14:

> Eheu fugaces, Postume, Postume,
> labuntur anni *nec* pietas moram
> rugis et instanti *senectae*
> adferet indomitaeque morti:

"Ah, Postumus, Postumus, how fleeting / the swift years--prayer cannot delay / the furrows of imminent old-age / nor hold off unconquerable death." As far as I know, Norman Friedman was the first to point out the reference to Horace (*Art* 52). For an interpretation of this poem, see Michael Webster's "'hatred bounces'" in *Spring* 7 (1998).

494. [8] "the Noster was a ship of swank" (SP 110; see Kennedy's note SP 108)
See Luther S. Luedtke, "Cummings' 'the Noster was a ship of swank'." *The Explicator* 26 (1968), item #59.

Noster = "Our" [Latin].
mine = besides an explosive device, the possessive pronoun; also, "mind."
Sum = "I am" [Latin]; also, "some" and "sum," the result of mathematical calculations.
Ergo = "Therefore" (as in philosopher René Descartes' famous maxim, "Cogito ergo sum" or "I think, therefore I am").
Pater = "Father" (i.e., God the Father). *Pater* may also refer to English aesthete Walter Pater (1839-1894). In addition, "when joined to *Noster* [*Pater*] becomes *Pater Noster*, not only 'our [Walter] Pater,' 'our [literary] Father,' but also the Lord's Prayer" (Luedtke).

497. [11] "red-rag and pink-flag "
red-rag and pink-flag = Communists.
blackshirt and brown = Fascist paramilitary troops, guards, and thugs.
Blackshirts, were an all-volunteer militia in Fascist Italy, "distinguished by their black uniforms (modelled on those of the *Arditi*, Italy's elite troops of World War I) and their loyalty to Benito Mussolini, the Duce (leader) of Fascism, to whom they swore an oath."
The *brownshirts* or *Sturmabteilung* ("Storm Detachment"), known as the SA, were the Nazi Party's paramilitary organization. In 1934, when the SA leadership was purged, the SS, or *Schutzstaffel* ("Protection Squadron") became "the foremost agency of security, surveillance, and terror within Germany and German-occupied Europe." Originally, "the SS wore the same brown uniform as the SA, with the addition of a black tie and a black cap with a *Totenkopf* (death's head) skull and bones symbol, moving to an all-black uniform in 1932."

Norman Friedman (*Art* 81) points out that each stanza of the poem parodies a different nursery rhyme:
Stanza 1:

> Hark! Hark! The dogs do bark,
> The beggars are coming to town.
> Some in rags,
> And some in tags,
> And one in a velvet gown!

Stanza 2:

> Pease porridge hot,
> Pease porridge cold,
> Pease porridge in the pot
> Nine days old.
>
> Some like it hot,
> Some like it cold,
> Some like it in the pot

Nine days old.

502. ")when what hugs stopping earth than silent is"
Text of the poem as first published in *Poetry* [53.4 (Jan. 1939): 172] (scroll down).

504. [18] "ecco a letter starting'dearest we'"
ecco = "behold" [Italian]
chauvesouris = "bat" [French]
princess selene = the moon.

508. [22] "nouns to nouns"
Text of the poem as first published in *Poetry* [53.4 (Jan. 1939): 171-172] (scroll down). (Note that the poem is on two pages.)

509. [23] "a pretty a day"

Possibly this song was influenced by Shakespeare's

> The master, the swabber, the boatswain, and I,
> The gunner and his mate,
> Loved Mall, Meg, and Marian, and Margerey,
> But none of us cared for Kate.
>
> For she had a tongue with a tang,
> Would cry to a sailor "Go hang!"
> She loved not the savor of tar nor of pitch;
> Yet a tailor might scratch her where e'er she did itch
> Then to sea, boys, and let her go hang!
>
> (*The Tempest*, Act II, scene 2)

Link: Text of the poem as first published in *Poetry* [56.5 (August 1940): 236].

511. [25] "as freedom is a breakfastfood"
The Poetry Foundation's podcast "E. E. Cummings: Essential American Poets" presents Cummings reading "as freedom is a breakfastfood." This track is from Cummings' reading at the 92nd Street Y, recorded in New York City, October 20, 1949. (The "1959" note on the podcast page is in error.) This same reading is also available in a You Tube version.

514. [28] "there are possibly 2 ½ or impossibly 3"
This poem was first published in *Furioso* (New Year 1940): 18 (Firmage, *Bibliography* 55 entry B123).

515. [29] "anyone lived in a pretty how town"

Links:

- Text of "anyone-lived-in-a-pretty-how-town" (Poetry Foundation)
- Cummings reads "anyone lived in a pretty how town" (Poetry Archive; BBC)
- The Poetry Foundation's podcast "E. E. Cummings: Essential American Poets" presents Cummings reading "anyone lived in a pretty how town." This track is from Cummings' reading at the 92nd Street Y, recorded in New York City, October 20, 1949. (The "1959" note on the podcast page is in error.) This same reading is also available in a You Tube version.
- In 1967, George Lucas, who was to become the creator of *Star Wars*, made a short (6 minute) film visualization of this poem. For some stills from the film and a short clip, see "anyone lived in a pretty (how) town" (University of Southern California).
- On-line criticism of "anyone" (MAPS site)
- Kris Delmhorst sings her seting of the poem: "Pretty How Town"

522. [35] "you which could grin three smiles into a dead"
Text of the poem as first published in *Poetry* [56.5 (August 1940): 235].

523. [36] "i say no world"
Text of the poem as first published in *Poetry* [56.5 (August 1940): 237-238].

525. [37] "these children singing in sotne a"
Text of the poem as first published in *Poetry* [53.4 (Jan. 1939): 170-171] (scroll down). (Note that the poem is on two pages.)

529. [41] up into the silence the green"
Text of the poem as first published in *Poetry* [53.4 (Jan. 1939): 173] (scroll down).

530. [42] "love is more thicker than forget"
The Poetry Foundation's podcast "E. E. Cummings: Essential American Poets" presents Cummings reading "love is more thicker than forget." This track is from Cummings' reading at the 92nd Street Y, recorded in New York City, October 20, 1949. (The "1959" note on the podcast page is in error.) This same reading is also available in a You Tube version.
Link: Text of "love is more thicker than forget" as first published in *Poetry* [53.4 (Jan. 1939): 175].

531. [43] "hate blows a bubble of despair into" (SP 70)
The second stanza was probably influenced by these lines from stanza 12 of Emerson's "The Sphinx":

> Eterne alternation
> Now follows, now flies;
> And under pain, pleasure,--
> Under pleasure, pain lies.
> Love works at the centre

532. [44] "air,"
For interpretations of this poem, see Terblanche and Webster, "Eco-Iconicity in the Poetry and Poem-groups of E. E. Cummings" (160-164) and Etienne Terblanche, *E. E. Cummings: Poetry and Ecology* (72-75) .

534. [46] "grEEn's d"
This poem is apparently about a drunk ("hollow was / young") who, after rolling or lying in the grass or bushes, gets "Up" in lines 4-6. His old clothes are covered over "with // sprouts" as he lurches forward, smiling out of "crumb / ling eye / -holes." However, in a letter to Norman Friedman, dated June 25, 1955" and published in *Spring* 14-15 (2006), EEC says that the poem is about "The coming of Spring:Nature's immortality contrasted with Man's birth-to-death existence (symbolized by a human skull)" ("Letter" 150).

536. [48] "mortals)"
Cummings wrote of the acrobats depicted in this poem that they are "transformed from 'mortals' to 'im'mortals because they risked their lives to create something beautiful. Finally they disappear into the place from which they appeared;just as the last syllable '(im' of the my poem goes back to the first word 'mortals)'" (*Letters* 259; see also *Letters* 221).
Link: The poem "mortals)" as first published in *Poetry* [53.4 (Jan. 1939): 169-170]. (Note that the poem is on two pages.)

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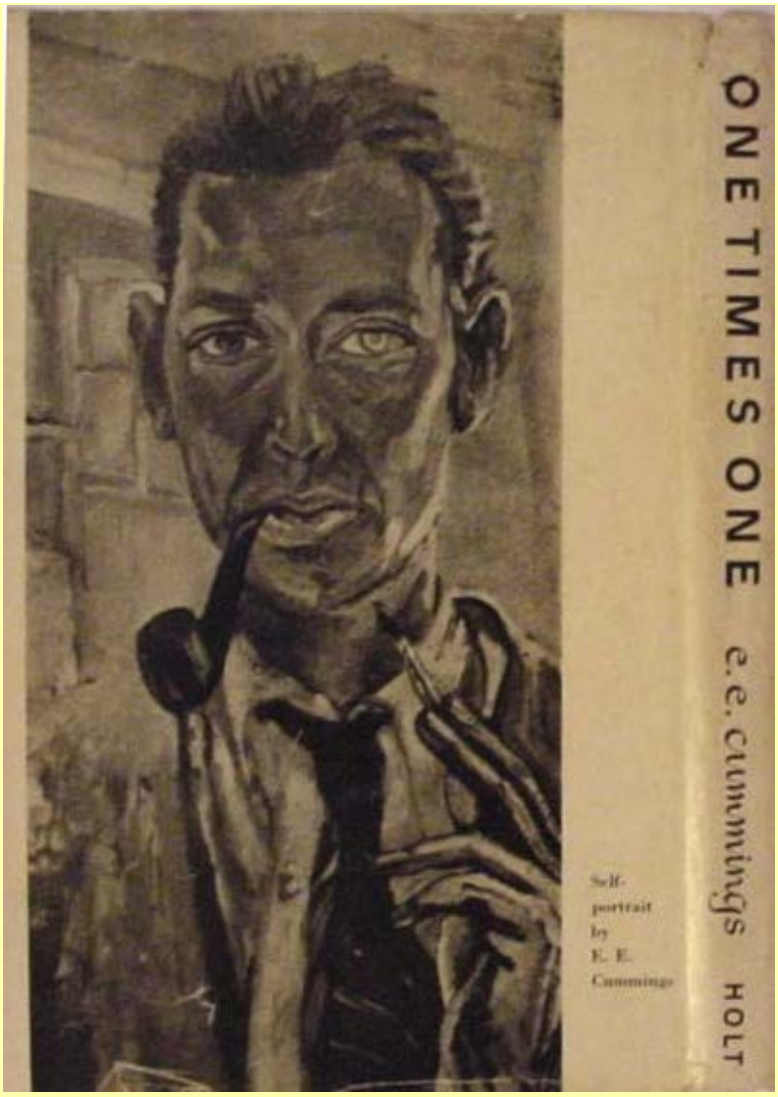
1 x 1 [One Times One] (1944) At right: "Self-portrait by E. E. Cummings" (back of dust jacket to the 1944 edition of *1 x 1*) 543. [III] "it's over a(see just" (SP 118-119) Compare and contrast with the Adam and Eve story. Why do you suppose the poet chose "gravensteins" as	

the apple variety rather than, say, "red delicious"?

544. [IV] "of all the blessings which to man"
its hoi in its polloi "hoi polloi" = "the people" or "the inhabitants of the polis [city-state]" [Greek]. The basic meaning here appears to be that the individual, represented by the definite article *hoi*, disappears into the masses (*polloi*). The reference is somewhat complex, however, since the Greeks contrasted the people of the polis, *hoi polloi*, with the barbarians, *hoi barbaroi*. So in that sense *hoi polloi* may mean all the members of the political ethnocentric in-crowd. As a further irony, we might note that in Greek the definite article is forced to be plural because it modifies *polloi*. The *hoi* can only "preexist" within its own multiplicity (*polloi*).

545. [V] "squints a blond"
blond / job = dyed hair of a blonde woman (cf. "a dye job" and the slang expression "nut job" for a mentally disturbed person).
Perhaps the woman is squinting because she is not wearing her glasses or because her *diamond / solitaire* (engagement or wedding ring) is not so big.
guesswho = her husband or fiancé, who is nibbling (understatement) a gigantic steak ("ton of torse"--overstatement).
pool / of pink fat / screams = most likely the screaming face of a child, perhaps the offspring of the couple in the first two stanzas.
"g / w" = George Washington, probably the equestrian statue in Union Square--complete with wig.



551. [XI] "mr u will not be missed"
mr u = Louis Untermeyer (1885-1977). Charles Norman quotes a contributor's note from *Secession* 2 (July, 1922): "E. E. Cummings. Candidate for the mayoralty of Paris, the present literary capital of America. Indorses *Secession* campaign against Louis Untermeyer, an anthologist best known for the omission of William Carlos Williams and Marianne Moore from his *Modern American Poetry*." Norman notes that Untermeyer's third edition (1925) did include poems by Williams, Moore, and Cummings (179). According to Kennedy, Jean Starr Untermeyer "was more amused than offended by Cummings' little rhyme about her husband" (*Dreams* 405).

In his article "missing mr u (not)" [*Spring* 10], Philip Gerber notes that the basis for Cummings' comic poem was probably the song of the Lord High Executioner Ko-Ko from Gilbert and Sullivan's *Mikado*:

> Ko-Ko: As some day it may happen that a victim must be found,
> I've got a little list--I've got a little list
> Of society offenders who might well be underground,
> And who never would be missed--who never would be missed!
> There's the pestilential nuisances who write for autographs?

All people who have flabby hands and irritating laughs--
They'd none of ‘em be missed--they'd none of 'em be missed!

Here the cast joins in with its refrain of general commendation:

Chorus: He's got 'em on the list—he's got 'em on the list;
And they'll none of 'em be missed—they'd none of 'em be missed!

Ko-Ko's "little list" is a lengthy one. It continues:

Then the idiot who praises, with enthusiastic tone,
All centuries but this, and every country but his own;
And the lady from the provinces, who dresses like a guy,
And "who doesn't think she dances, but would rather like to try";
And that singular anomaly, the lady novelist—
I don't think she'd be missed—I'm sure she'd not be missed! (Gilbert, *Librettos* 10)

To all of which the cast assents. No, they'd not be missed. None of these natural enough targets, those on the remainder of the list, or even those yet to come, none of them would be missed, not even a little bit.
—And if the lady novelist, why not the great anthologist? Indeed, why not? ("missing" 44).

Gerber notes that an avid theatre-goer like Cummings would have had ample opportunity to see *The Mikado*: "in 1938 a jazz production opened on Broadway, and in 1939 audiences enjoyed a Hollywood moving-picture Mikado in which the popular crooner Kenny Baker sang the role of its wandering-minstrel hero" ("missing" 40). For another possible Cummings borrowing from Gilbert and Sullivan, see "here is little effie's head" (CP 192).

552. [XII] "it was a goodly co"
The company in question is the Ex-Lax corporation.
bishop budge from kew--An undated note by Cummings reads as follows:
"No man ever has suffered, or ever will suffer, from living cleanly; all arguments to the contrary are a mere pretext to cover immorality" – THE BISHOP OF LONDON [Houghton Library, Harvard University, call number bMS Am 1823.7 (23), sheet 221]
The bishop in question is Arthur Winnington-Ingram (1858-1946; Bishop of London from 1901 to 1939). The journal *Social Hygiene* [1.3 (Jan. 1917)], which Cummings' father the social reformer probably owned, quotes Bishop Ingram:

"There is unfortunately in England a tendency to regard vice and licentiousness as a necessary evil. I have heard men who lead perfectly moral lives say they suppose these things are inevitable. In other words, public opinion has countenanced prostitution. Men with so-called advanced views declared that morality and health did not go hand-in-hand. What utter nonsense! No man ever has suffered or ever will suffer, from living cleanly; all arguments to the contrary are merely a pretext to cover immorality." (137)

Social Hygiene quotes the Bishop's speech from the November 4, 1916 issue of *Literary Digest*.
fresh complexions being oke / with him)one william shakespeare broke / the silence of the tomb = probably alluding to some advertisement for face cream that referred to Morocco's lines from Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*: "Mislike me not for my complexion, / The shadowed livery of the burnished sun" (Act II, scene i).
the god of things like they err = most likely Cummings is remembering a quote from Rudyard Kipling’s "L'Envoi" to his collection of poems *The Seven Seas* (1896). Sometimes called, after its first half-line, "When Earth's last picture is painted," the poem imagines an afterlife for artists. Its third and last stanza reads:

And only the Master shall praise us, and only the Master shall blame;
And no one shall work for money, and no one shall work for fame,
But each for the joy of the working, and each, in his separate star,
Shall draw the Thing as he sees It for the God of Things as They Are!

Cummings may also be referring to a passage from James Joyce's *Ulysses* that comes at the end of Stephen's lecture on Shakespeare:

"We walk through ourselves, meeting robbers ghosts, giants, old men, young men, wives, widows, brothers-in-love. But always meeting ourselves. The playwright who wrote the folio of the world and wrote it badly (He gave us light first and the sun two days later), the lord of things as they are whom the most Roman of Catholics call *dio boia*, hangman god, is doubtless all in all in all of us . . ." (U 210/213/175).

553. [XII] "plato told" (CP 2: 589)

lao tsze = legendary founder of Taoism, a Chinese philosophy.
general . . . sherman = Civil War General William Tecumseh Sherman (1820-1891), famous for his devastating march to the sea in 1864. At his graduation address at the Michigan Military Academy in 1879, he is reported to have said: "War is at best barbarism . . . Its glory is all moonshine. It is only those who have neither fired a shot nor heard the shrieks and groans of the wounded who cry aloud for blood, more vengeance, more desolation. War is hell."
nipponized = "japanized" and refers to the sale of scrap metal to Japan before World War II. The *el* refers to an elevated train or subway line.

554. [XIV] "pity this busy monster,manunkind," (CP 2: 590)
The "electrons" are those of an electron microscope, and *curving wherewhen* refers to Einstein's theory of curved space-time. *LIFE* magazine of June 1, 1942 shows three photos of a razor blade, the first actual size, the second as magnified by a light microscope, and the third as magnified by an electron microscope. The captions for the first and third photos read:

> **These three pictures** of the same razor-blade edge clearly illustrate relative powers of the human eye (*top*), light microscope (*middle*), and electron microscope (*bottom*) (*LIFE* 11, first picture caption).
> **Enlarged 8,500 times** by electron microscope, great peaks and valleys are revealed in blade edge. Black wedge in central picture indicates the width of section shown here (*LIFE* 11, third picture caption).

An undated Cummings landscape painting, "mountains silhouetted in sky" bears a remarkable resemblance to the electron microscope photo of the razor blade. No fewer than three *Explicator* articles deal with this poem. They are by John Britton 18 (1959) item 5, James W. Gargano 20 (1961) item 21, and Nat Henry 27 (1968) item 68. [See also "Space being(don't forget to remember)Curved" (CP 317; CP 2: 336) and "noone and a star stand,am to am" (CP 721).]

556. [XVI] "one's not half two. It's two are halves of one:" (CP 2: 592)
Link: Text of the poem as it first appeared in *Poetry* 62.4 (July 1943): 179.

560. [XX] "what if a much of a which of a wind" (CP 2: 596)
Link: Text of the poem as it first appeared in *Poetry* 62.4 (July 1943): 180.

567. [XXVII] "old mr ly" (CP 2: 603)
mr ly . . . man = Frank Lyman, farmer in Silver Lake, New Hampshire. He reappears with his son Reg and daughter-in-law Lena in "now comes the good rain farmers pray for(and" (CP 754).

568. [XXVIII] "rain or hail" (CP 2: 604)
sam = Sam Ward, handyman and caretaker of EEC's Joy Farm, in Silver Lake, New Hampshire. See Margaret Foerster, "A Note on Cummings and My Family at Silver Lake," *Spring* 6 (1997): 22-24. Ward's letters to the Cummings family (particularly his use of the lower case "i") may have influenced EEC. Charles Norman quotes EEC: "I remember once he wrote: 'we had a Big snow' . . . He'd write 'i'—not 'I'—because 'I' wasn't important to him. Sam Ward's way is the only way. Instead of being artificial and affected, it's the conventional way that is artificial and affected" (309). Kennedy quotes part of a letter from Sam Ward on page 110 of *Dreams in the Mirror*. For more on Cummings at Silver Lake and Joy Farm, see Michael Webster's "Silver Lake Revisited" [*EEC Society Blog* (24 Aug. 2016)].
Link: Text of the poem as it first appeared in *Poetry* 62.4 (July 1943): 181-182. (Note that the poem is on two pages.)

570. [XXX] "Hello is what a mirror says" (CP 2: 606)
Cummings comments: "true wars are never won;since they are inward, not outward, and necessitate facing oneself" (*Letters* 247). EEC's other comments (in the same letter) on this poem are equally illuminating. This poem may refer to these lines in Marianne Moore's "In Distrust of Merits": "There never was a war that was / not inward; I must / fight till I have conquered in myself what / causes war, but I would not believe it. / I inwardly did nothing. / O Iscariot-like crime!" (*Complete Poems* 138). Both poems were written during World War II. According to Firmage (56), Cummings' "Hello is what a mirror says" (CP 570) was first published in *Accent* 3.4 (Summer 1943), while Marianne Moore's "In Distrust of Merits" was first published in *The Nation* 156 (May 1, 1943): 636.

577. [XXXVII] "we love each other very dearly" (CP 2: 614)
synbeams = a typo for "sunbeams."

In his "Dante and E. E. Cummings," Allan Metcalf contends that the line "before God wished Himself into a rose" refers to Dante, *Paradiso* 23.73-74: "Quivi è la rosa in che 'l verbo divino / carne si fece" ("There is the rose [Mary] in which the divine word / became flesh"). Cummings quotes a similar passage (*Paradiso* 33.7-9) in nonlecture five (97).

582. [XLII] "might these be thrushes climbing through almost(do they"
Link: Text of the poem as it first appeared in *Poetry* 62.4 (July 1943): 182-183 (scroll down). (Note that the poem is on two pages.)

585. [XLV] "i think you like' "
Narrating a typical Cummings walk around Greenwich Village, Charles Norman writes: "Turning left on Tenth Street, and headed for Sixth Avenue . . . [Cummings] passes the florist shop on the corner where he and the proprietor, Mr. S. Psomas, have often bowed to each other among the blossoms; for flowers are a necessity to him, and he thinks his friends--and sometimes strangers who have been charming or kind--should have them, too" (*Magic-Maker* 4).

593. [LIII] "o by the by"
The last stanza of this poem surely refers (whether consciously or unconsciously) to the end of the 1932 song "I've Got the World on a String" (music by Harold Arlen, lyrics by Ted Koehler):

> Life is a beautiful thing,
> As long as I hold the string,
> I'd be a silly so-and-so,
> If I should ever let go...
>
> I've got the world on a string,
> Sittin' on a rainbow,
> Got the string around my finger,
> What a world, what a life,
> I'm in love!

594. [LIV] "if everything happens that can't be done"
Link: Text of the poem as it first appeared in *Poetry* 62.4 (July 1943): 183-184 (scroll down). (Note that the poem is on two pages.)

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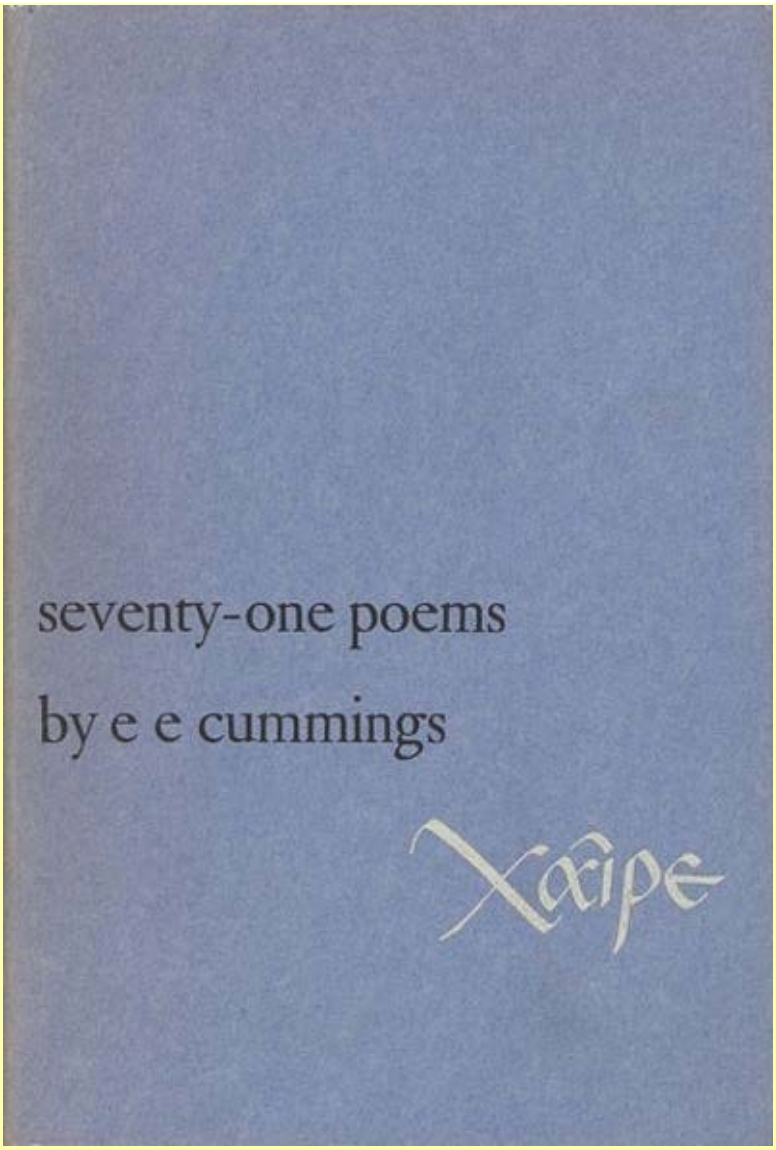
XAIPE (1950)

The title: χαίρε = "chaire" = "rejoice!" or "greetings" in Greek [pronounced "chi - ra" with an aspirated "h"]. Root-word for English "charity."

605. [7] "we miss you,jack--tactfully you(with one cocked"
jack = Peter Monro Jack (1896-1944), book reviewer for the *New York Times*. See *Pound / Cummings* 160-162.
"fert / ig" = "ready" [German].
wallendas = "The Flying Wallendas," a family of trapeze artists.

606. [8] "o // the round"
the round / little man = Paul Rosenfeld (1890-1946), music and literary critic who wrote several articles on EEC. In his fine portrait of Rosenfeld, Edmund Wilson



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wrote: "his affectionate and generous nature had to spend itself mainly in the sympathy that he brought to the troubles of his friends, and in the tireless encouragement of talent" (113).

611. [13] "chas sing does(who"
Cummings comments: "'chas sing' . . . is the name of a Chinese laundryman on Minetta Lane(maybe Street). This poem tells you that,in spite of his name, he doesn't sing(instead,he smiles always a trifle while ironing nobody knows whose shirt. I can't believe you've never done any ironing:but,if you have,how on earth can you possibly fail to enjoy the very distinct pictures of that remarkable process given to you by the poet's manipulating of those words which occur in the poem's parenthesis?!" (*Letters* 162). Despite EEC's claims to the contrary, Michael Webster maintains that Mr. Sing *does* sing, if only silently through his ironing, imitated visually in the poem. See his "'singing is silence': Being and Nothing in the Visual Poetry of E. E. Cummings."

616. [18] "a(ncient)a"
inani = besides its English meaning, the line may refer to the Latin word *inani*, meaning "empty" or "vain." It's also possible that Cummings, the former classics major, refers here to a famous line in Virgil's *Aeneid*: "*sic ait atque animum pictura pascit inani*" (I, 464), translated by Robert Fitzgerald as "He broke off [speaking] / To feast his eyes and mind on a mere image" (20). The empty "image" or "*pictura*" that Aeneas looks at is a Carthaginian painting or bas-relief depicting the fall of Troy. This artwork moves Aeneas to tears and convinces him that the Carthaginians understand the *lacrimae rerum*, the "tears inherent in things." Perhaps the vain or empty "picture" of a drunk staggering down "conway / 's // unstreet" reminded EEC of the Roman view of the vanity of art? William Levitan, professor of Classics at GVSU, writes, "I think you're right that Cummings is

	pointing to this line: remember the situation is that Aeneas, invisible at the moment, is in a sense yielding his substance to a visible (but insubstantial) image." The drunk is visible, but gripped by the invisible Fist of Fate, smiling while Aeneas is crying, old while Aeneas is middle-aged, floating and "weigh / tless" while Aeneas is carrying the weight of the fall of Troy, his ancestral gods, and his mission to found Rome. Both, however, may be said to be "treadwatering." Aeneas is in a new city, on a new street, while the old drunk is in Conway, New Hampshire, a rural place with no art or even what one could call a street. The old man is already an ancestor, an ancient "puppet" in the grip of drink, fate, and old age, while Aeneas is a sort of puppet of the gods and the ancestors, and of the Roman imperium.

617. [19] "out of the mountain of his soul comes"
aristide maillols = sculptures by Aristide Maillol, French sculptor, 1861-1944.

624. [26] "who sharpens every dull"
Norman Friedman notes that this poem is about a neighborhood scissors and knife grinder, a common site in New York at the time (*Art* 89-90). (See the *New York Times* article, "Bells Clanging, a Tradesman Comes Home." See also Don Freeman's sketch of a knife grinder.)

631 [33] "if a cheerfulest Elephantangel-child should sit"
This poem is among a group of winter / snow / Christmas poems in *XAIPE* (numbers 29-34).
Link: Text of the poem as first published in *Poetry* [74.4 (July 1949): 187-188] (scroll down). (Note that the poem is on two pages.)

632. [34] "a thrown a"
Text of "a thrown a" as first published in *Poetry* [74.4 (July 1949): 188-189] (scroll down). (Note that the poem is on two pages.)
X = mystery, unknown, X-factor, something perceived but not yet labeled.
X = also the Greek letter *chi*, the first letter in *XAIPE* (title of the book), whose meaning is something like "Greetings!" "Cheers!" and/or "Joy!" and/or "Welcome!"
X = first letter in Greek ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ or χριστος = Christ = "anointed."
I, X, A = capitals in stanzas 2, 4, 6.
way / X = Perhaps the Tao is an unknown (master)?
X / -mas)ter- // i = ex-Christmas tree, X [Christ] mystery?
X / -mas)ter = unknown master; former master?
X / -mas)ter // i = (ex-) Christmas master-y (via i? of i?)
i = poet's lower-case i persona; the Christmas tree (*ter // i*) is a mysterious i [individual, not an "It," as the capital i in that word also indicates].
glo- = glow. Normalized phrase: "A mysterious wisp of prettily clinging glory."
ry.pr = symmetry: rx dot xr.
cl(tr)in(ee)gi- = tinsel interlaced in tree branches. (Note symmetry.)
(tr)in(ee) = E. E. in tree. Also: "i" in tree.
Normalized phrases: "a thrown away It something silvery; bright, &: A mysterious wisp of prettily clinging glory." And in parentheses: "(a thrown away Xmas tree)."

635. [37] "F is for foetus(a"
Many have commented that the capital letters in this poem spell "FDR," the initials of Franklin Delano Roosevelt.
it's / freedom from freedom / the common man wants —a reference to Franklin Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms," first enunciated in the State of the Union address, January 6, 1941. They are: 1) freedom of speech, 2) freedom of worship, 3)

freedom from want, and 4) freedom from fear. Norman Rockwell painted a popular series of posters illustrating the freedoms. Cummings may also be referring to Vice President Henry A. Wallace's famous "common man speech" (1942), whose actual title is "The Price of Free World Victory." In the speech, Wallace warned that the "demagogue is the curse of the modern world," and that in countries "where the people have had no long experience in governing themselves on the basis of their own thinking, it is easy for demagogues to arise and prostitute the mind of the common man to their own base ends."
honey swoRkey mollypants = "*Honi soit qui mal y pense*" [French] = "Shame to whomever thinks evil of it." The motto of the order of the Garter, also known as St. George's motto. William Harmon notes that quite a few "writers in the 1930s and 1940s played variations" on this motto. Harmon also thinks he remembers some criticism being leveled at Roosevelt for having one of one of his sons working at the White House during World War II--to which someone responded, "Honi soit qui mal y pense" (71). Can anyone confirm or deny Harmon's memory? See his "Cummings' Caprice in 'F'," *Spring* 7 (1998): 68-72.

636. [38] "why must itself up every of a park"
"Nothing" . . . "can stand against the argument of mil / itary necessity" = sentence quoted from a statement issued by General Dwight D. Eisenhower on December 29, 1943 but not made public until February 15, 1944:

> Today we are fighting in a country [Italy] which has contributed a great deal to our cultural inheritance, a country rich in monuments which by their creation helped and now in their old age illustrate the growth of the civilization which is ours. We are bound to respect those monuments so far as war allows.
> If we have to choose between destroying a famous building and sacrificing our own men, then our men's lives count infinitely more and the buildings must go. But the choice is not always so clear-cut as that. In many cases the monuments can be spared without any detriment to operational needs.
> Nothing can stand against the argument of military necessity. That is an accepted principle. But the phrase "military necessity" is sometimes used when it would be more truthful to speak of military convenience or even personal convenience. I do not want to cloak slackness or indifference. (qtd. in Crider 1, 3)

President Franklin Roosevelt first made Eisenhower's statement public in order to defend the Allied shelling of the Abbey of Monte Cassino. In a front page article in the February 16, 1944 *New York Times*, John H. Crider reported that "President Roosevelt explained this afternoon that the shelling of the historic shrine of Mount Cassino by American forces was made necessary because the Nazis were using the monastery not only as an observation post but also to house artillery" (1). History later proved Roosevelt's statements to be at least somewhat in error: there was no German artillery in the abbey and the Germans were actually dug in below the monastery. Moreover, the Germans had been instrumental in saving many of the monastery's priceless treasures before the battle.
generalissimo e = General Dwight D. Eisenhower.
"there is no appeal / from reason"(freud) = a quote from Sigmund Freud's *The Future of an Illusion* (1927): ". . . the '*Credo quia absurdum*' of the early Father of the Church . . . maintains that religious doctrines are outside the jurisdiction of reason--are above reason. Their truth must be felt inwardly, and they need not be comprehended. But this *Credo* is only of interest as a self-confession. As an authoritative statement it has no binding force. Am I obliged to believe *every* absurdity? There is no appeal to a court above that of reason. If the truth of religious doctrines is dependent on an inner experience which bears witness to that truth, what is one to do about the many people who do not have this rare experience?" (35).
"Credo quia absurdum [est]" = "I believe because it is absurd" [Latin]--phrase attributed to Tertullian (ca. 160-ca.220 A.D.), but he never wrote it.

639. "whose are these(wraith clinging with a wraith)"
Link: Text of the poem as first published in *Poetry* [70.6 (Sept. 1947): 297].

643. [45] "when your honest redskin toma"
Norman Friedman notes that the punctuation marks in this poem are meant to be pronounced out loud (*Art* 115).

647. [49] "this is a rubbish of a human rind"
In a letter to Norman Friedman, dated "June 25 1955" and published in *Spring* 14-15 (2006), Cummings writes this précis of the poem:

> war. (1)a soldier's mangled corpse;still clutching in half of one hand a photograph of his girl inscribed,by

her,"love". (2)a girl(perhaps the same girl)goes mad with grief;while the "gadgets" of the war machine "purr" & the "gangsters"(officers)eat & drink contentedly. (3)a(Christian)church ruined by(Christian)shell-fire. (4)somebody's lost dog looking for the(killed?)master he can't find anywhere (152)

Links:

- Text of the poem as first published in *Poetry* [70.6 (Sept. 1947): 298].
- Avant-jazz classical group Tin Hat's setting of "this is a rubbish of a human rind" (2012)

648. "no time ago"
According to Charles Norman, Cummings wrote this poem after a late night walk in Greenwich Village. EEC recalled encountering "a little person who now is dead and who lived by begging." The "person" was Joe Gould (Norman, *Magic-Maker* 174-75).

655. [57] "(im)c-a-t(mo)"
Cummings writes that this poem "tells me in its own vivid way that an immobile cat suddenly puts on an acrobatic act:& fall-leaps,becoming drift-whirlfullyfloat-tumblish;& the wanders away,exactly as if nothing had ever happened" (*Letters* 268). See also *Letters*, p. 231. For disscussions of this poem, see: Michael Webster's "E. E. Cummings and the Reader: Technique as Critique" (1997), Milton Cohen's "Disparate Twins: Spontaneity in E. E. Cummings' Poetry and Painting," *Spring* 4 (1995), John Pollock's "Appreciating Cummings' '(im)c-a-t(mo)'." *Spring*10 (2001), Aaron Moe's "Autopoiesis and Cummings' Cat" [*Rupkatha Journal* 3.1 (2011)] and pages 124-125 of his Two Converging Motifs: E. E. Cummings' l!ook. See also "Drafts of '(im)c-a-t(mo)' (CP 655)" on the *EEC Society Blog*.
Link: Text of "(im)c-a-t(mo)" as first published in *Poetry* [74.4 (July 1949): 191].

656. [58] "after screamgroa"
Cummings notes that this poem is about "a farmer sharpening a bush-scythe on a grindstone" (*Letters* 232).
"pud-dih-gud" = "pretty good."

663. [65] "i thank You God for most this amazing"
Links:

- Stephen Scotti singing his own setting of "i thank You God for most this amazing" [For more on Stephen Scotti, see "Stephen Scotti and *ViVa Cummings!*" (EEC Society Blog).]
- M. D. Dunn singing his setting of "i thank You God for most this amazing"

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95 Poems (1958)
673 [1] "l(a"
Known as "the leaf poem," this text has occasioned much commentary over the years. In his "Haiku Sensibilities of E. E. Cummings," Michael Dylan Welch discusses how the poem renews and remakes Japanese haiku tradition (114-118). Gudrun Grabher's excellent "I paint (my poems), therefore i am" [*Spring* 10 (2001): (48-57)] expands upon Welch's insights, as does Etienne Terblanche's groundbreaking "Cummings' 'l(a': Solitude, Solidarity, Wholeness" [*Spring* 11 (2002): 52-65]. See also Terblanche's *E. E. Cummings: Poetry and Ecology* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012. 171-179). In addition, consult Thomas Dilworth's "Cummings's '1(a'." [*Explicator* 54.3 (1996): 171-173], Iain Landles' "An Analysis of Two Poems by E. E. Cummings" (37-43),

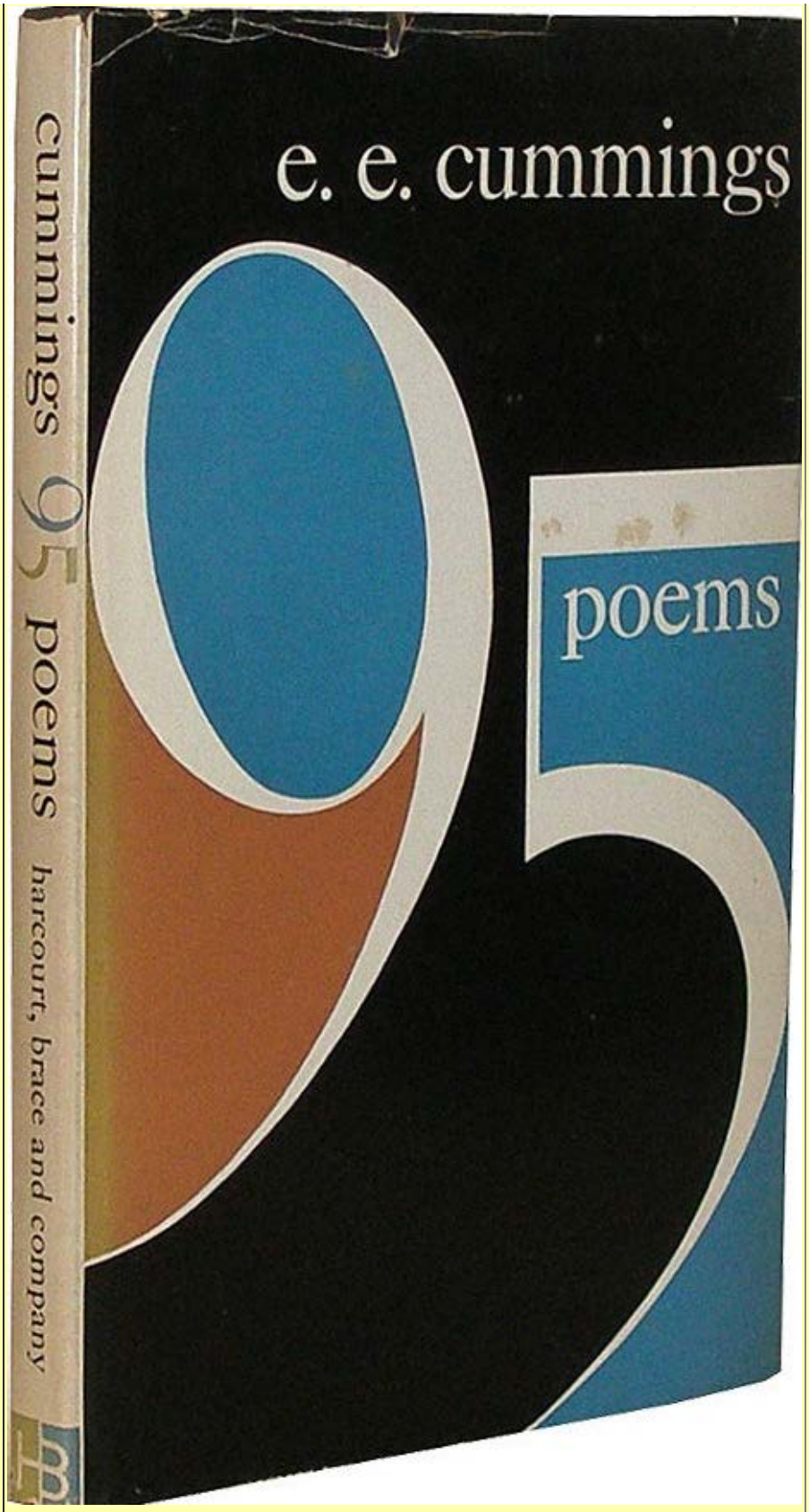
and Martin Heusser's *I Am My Writing: The Poetry of E. E. Cummings* [Tübingen: Stauffenburg Verlag, 1997]. Heusser considers the leaf poem in chapter 13, "The Poempicture" (265-290). The sections on the leaf poem are called "Space: the Poem and the Page" (269-272) and "Visual Meaning" (272-277). Heusser's chapter 2, "Man, Leaf and Tree: The Self as Multiple Identity" (36-50), considers how the leaf imagery in other poems (and manuscripts) relates to EEC's notion of multiple selves.

677. [5] "crazy jay blue)"
crazy jay blue = the blue jay.
Link: Text of "crazy jay blue)" [*Poetry* 76.4 (July 1950): 191-192] (scroll down). (Note that the poem is on two pages.)

678. [6] "spirit colossal"
Charles Norman writes that this poem is about the black-capped chickadee: "Both the chickadee and phoebe say 'phoebe,' hence the play on alter ego. But here all comparisons end, for the phoebe is gross, the chickadee crisp and bright-eyed; and 'darling' is the correct word" (*Magic-Maker* 322).
phoebeing alter = the other bird whose song sounds like "phoebe," or the alter-ego of the phoebe. (Also: a pun on "being.")
Link: Text of "spirit colossal" [*Poetry* 76.4 (July 1950): 188] (scroll down).

682. "maggie and millie and mollie and may"
Links:

- Natalie Merchant performing her setting



Dust jacket of *95 Poems*

of the poem. A studio recording of the song is one of the tracks on Merchant's 2010 double CD *Leave Your Sleep* (Nonesuch), which contains her musical adaptations of children's poems, some famous and some quite obscure.
- Kristine Stott singing Stephen Scotti's setting of the poem [For more on Stephen Scotti, see "Stephen Scotti and *ViVa Cummings!*" (EEC Society Blog).]
- Susanne Abbuehl's version of "maggie and millie and mollie and may"

685. [13] "So shy shy shy(and with a"
Allan A. Metcalf makes a persuasive case that this poem was "inspired in important ways" (381) by Dante's sonnet, "Tanto gentile e tanto onesta pare" (*Vita Nuova*, chapter 26), a poem which Cummings recited in his third nonlecture. See Metcalf's "Dante and E. E. Cummings."

688. [16] "in time of daffodils(who know"
This poem may have been influenced by Christina Rossetti's "Song":

When I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me;
Plant thou no roses at my head,
Nor shady cypress tree:
Be the green grass above me
With showers and dewdrops wet:
And if thou wilt, remember;
And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,
I shall not feel the rain;
I shall not hear the nightingale
Sing on as if in pain:
And dreaming through the twilight
That doth not rise nor set,
Haply I may remember;
And haply may forget.

Link: The vocal group Chanticleer performing Steven Sametz's choral setting of the poem: "in time of" (from the CD *Colors of Love*, 1999).

696. "dim"
Michael Dylan Welch discusses this poem as a haiku in "The Haiku Sensibilities of E. E. Cummings" (111-112). In "The 'small eye poet' from Imagism to 'not numerable whom'," Michael Webster notes how the isolated lower-case "i" in the first stanza and the four lower-case "e"s in the second stanza are emblematic of the poet (112-113).
Link: Text of "dim" [*Poetry* 76.4 (July 1950): 187-188] (scroll down). (Note that the poem is on two pages.)

697. [25] "that melancholy"

"paw?lee" = Polly or Paulie, name of the organ-grinder's cockatoo. See John Logan's "The Organ Grinder and the Cockatoo," *Modern American Poetry: Essays in Criticism*. Ed. Jerome Mazzaro (New York: David McKay, 1970), pp. 249-271.
Link: Cummings reading "that melancholy" (UBU web Cummings sound page).

699. [27] "jack's white horse(up"

jack's white horse —Possibly an illuminated advertisement for White Horse Scotch Whisky, visible at the end of West Fourth Street. Or perhaps EEC refers to theWhite Horse Tavern, 567 Hudson Street.
jack may be Peter Monro Jack, a book reviewer, friend of Cummings, and lover of whiskey. He is the subject of the sonnet-elegy "we miss you,jack—tactfully you(with one cocked" (CP 605).

706. [34] "ADHUC SUB JUDICE LIS"
The title quotes line 78 of Horace's *Ars Poetica*: "Grammatici certant et adhuc sub judice lis est" which Kidder translates: "Grammarians dispute, and the case is still before the courts" (*Introduction* 206).

707. [35] "so you're hunting for ann well i'm looking for will"
Two parents dispute about a couple of wayward teenagers, who may possibly be Ann Hathaway and Will Shakespeare. In line 23, for "rasberrypatch" read "raspberrypatch"

714. [42] "from spiralling ecstatically this"
When this poem appeared first in the *Atlantic Monthly* 198.6 (Dec. 1956), it was titled "CHRISTMAS POEM" (Firmage 62).

721.[49] "noone and a star stand,am to am"
millionary wherewhens distant = many light years apart. [*wherewhens* = "space-time units." See also "Space being(don't forget to remember)Curved" (CP 317) and "pity this busy monster,manunkind," (CP 554).]
Though this poem concerns a lone man standing "am to am" with a star, Cummings made quite a few paintings of a lone figure "worshiping" the moon. For example, compare this poem to "Man in Landscape with Moon" or "Surrealistic Landscape" (both at SUNY Brockport). The latter is similar to "blue trees."

722. [50] "!/o(rounD)moon,how"
For an account of how Cummings developed this poem through 29 drafts, followed by thirteen suggestions for reading this poem, see Aaron Moe's "Thirteen Ways of Reading EEC's R-O-U-N-D MoOn" [*Spring* 21-22].
Link: Text of "!/o(rounD)moon,how" [*Poetry* 76.4 (July 1950): 190] (scroll down).

725. [53] "n // ot eth"
Note also the arithmetic pattern formed by counting letters and spaces in each line. See John Logan's "The Organ Grinder and the Cockatoo," pp. 268-269.

726. [54] "ardensteil-henarub-izabeth)"
The first word of the poem combines Helena Rubenstein's and Elizabeth Arden's beauty treatments with hens, henna, rubs and style (Kidder 208).

732. [60] "dive for dreams"
Link: Text of "dive for dreams" [*Poetry* 80.3 (June 1952): 125-126] (Note that the poem is on two pages.)

740. [68] "the(oo)is"
Cummings sees the eyes of a child "who is(reminds me of)myself" (*Letters* 268). Interested readers should consult Cummings' complete explication of this poem in the *Selected Letters*.

745. [73] "let's,from some loud unworld's most rightful wrong"
Link: Cummings reading "let's,from some loud unworld's most rightful wrong" (UBU web Cummings sound page).

750. [78] "all nearness pauses,while a star can grow"
Link: Text of "all nearness pauses" [*Poetry* 80.3 (June 1952): 126-127] (scroll down). (Note that the poem is on two

pages.)

754. [82] "now comes the good rain farmers pray for(and"
old frank = Frank Lyman, farmer in Silver Lake, New Hampshire, whose wisdom is voiced in "old mr ly" (CP 567).
rej and lena = Frank Lyman's son Reg and daughter-in-law Lena.
For more on Cummings at Silver Lake and Joy Farm, see Michael Webster's "Silver Lake Revisited" [*EEC Society Blog* (24 Aug. 2016)].
Link: A drawing of the Frank Lyman's house and barn: "Frank Lyman's place."

765. [91] "unlove's the heavenless hell and homeless home"
An earlier version of this poem (said by the editors to be from the 1920s) was published in *Etcetera*. See "love's absence is illusion,alias time" (CP 1006).
Link: Text of "unlove's the heavenless hell and homeless home" [*Poetry* 80.3 (June 1952): 127] (scroll down).

766. [92] "i carry your heart with me(i carry it in"
Links:

- Michael Hedges sings his setting of "i carry your heart" from the album *Taproot* (1991)
- Live performance: Michael Hedges singing his setting of "i carry your heart" (1990)
- Text of "i carry your heart" (Poetry Foundation) [*Poetry* 80.3 (June 1952): 128]

767. Spring!may—
Text of "Spring!may--" [*Poetry* 80.3 (June 1952): 128-129] (scroll down). (Note that the poem is on two pages.)

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73 Poems (1963)

Rushworth M. Kidder notes: "Unlike earlier volumes, the contents were not arranged by Cummings but by his bibliographer, George Firmage. 'In early December 1962,' Firmage recalls, 'Marion handed me a folder containing typescripts for 28 hitherto unpublished poems and asked me to make fair copies of these as well as any other poems I knew of that had been published but had not, as yet, been collected in one of Estlin's books. . . . I made no attempt to imitate Estlin's previously published volumes in arranging the . . . poems; I merely tried, as best I could, to find a pleasing reading order' " (219).

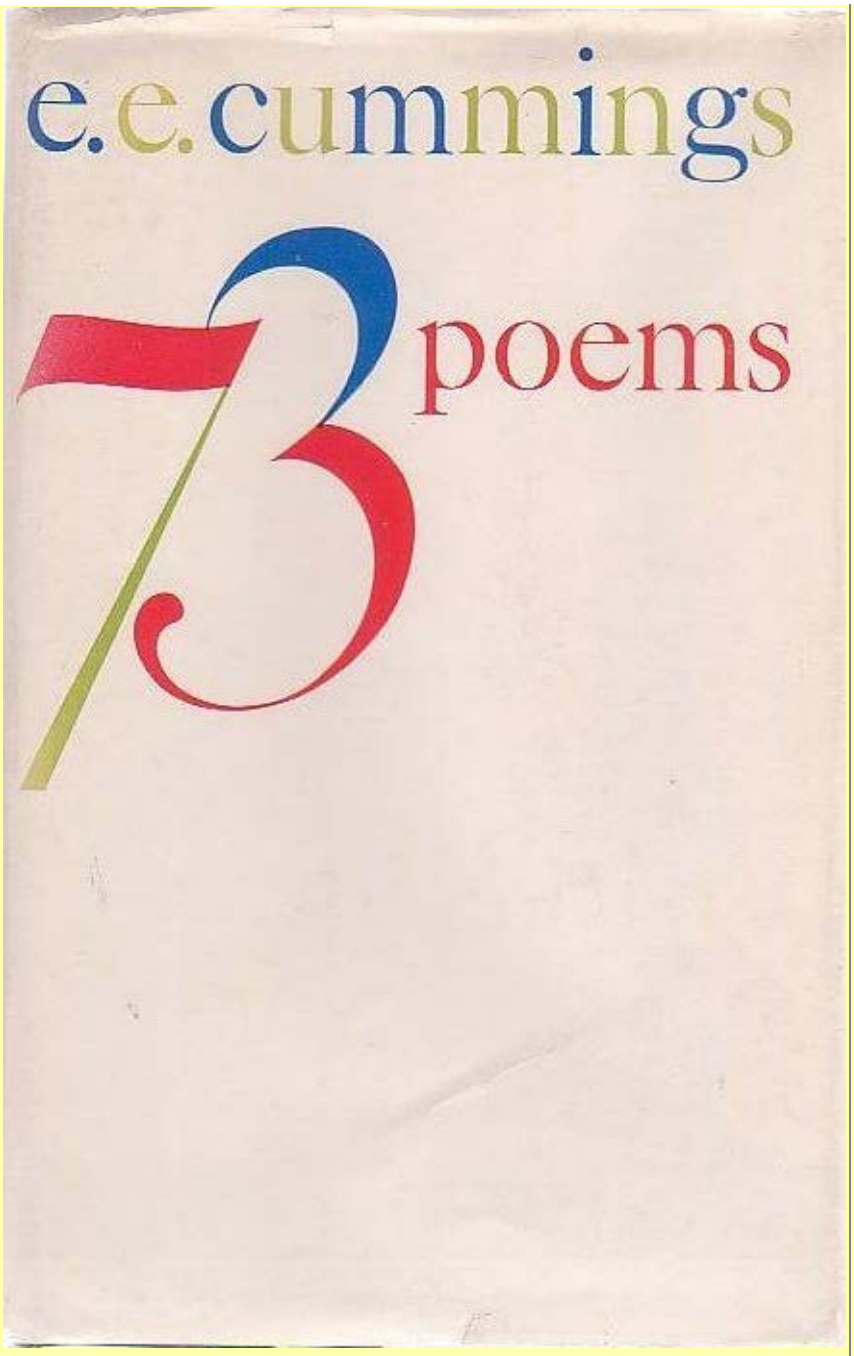
Charles Norman states that in April of 1963, Marion asked him "to edit the poems Cummings had been putting together before he died" (*Poets* 304-305). Norman suggested the title *Last Poems* and Marion agreed. Norman writes: "I worked on the manuscript from April 19 to April 24. It was arranged in a manner Cummings himself might have followed: three sections comprising 'Portraits,' 'Impressions,' and 'Sonnets.' Mrs. Cummings sent the manuscript to Harcourt, Brace & World" (*Poets* 305). However, after Marion disapproved of a new last chapter for Norman's biography of Cummings, *The Magic Maker*, she sent Norman a letter saying that the publisher "had

found it 'too difficult' to set up" the text in Norman's arrangement, and the book appeared with its present title and format (*Poets* 306). According to Norman, Marion especially objected to a remark Cummings whispered to him in May, 1961 when Marion was out of the room: "All I ask is one more year" (*Poets* 301). (See also Kennedy, *Dreams* 512, note 15.)

773. [1] "O the sun comes up-up-up in the opening"
Link: Stephen Scotti singing his own setting of "O the sun comes up-up-up in the opening" [For more on Stephen Scotti, see "Stephen Scotti and *ViVa Cummings!*" (EEC Society Blog).]

774. [2] "for any ruffian of the sky"
your kingbird = the eastern kingbird, a "large dark flycatcher" with the scientific name *Tyrannus tyrannus*.

784. [12] "Me up at does"
Etienne Terblanche has pointed out if we read only the capital letters of this poem--"Me Stare What You"--the observer (referred to as "Me" and "You") becomes one with the mouse, asking in



Dust jacket cover of *73 Poems*

effect, "what are you looking at?" Notice also how the lower-case "i" here denotes the mouse, not the usual Cummings poetic persona—another conflation of mouse and observer. See Michael Webster's "The New Nature Poetry and the Old" (115-117).

790. [18] "nobody could / in superhuman flights"
wut ektyouelly metus = "what actually matters." The last line can be translated: "if momma hadn't just knocked it endwise."

791. [19] "everybody happy?"
everybody happy?-- Gary Lane suggests that this phrase refers to a bandleader and comedian from the 1920s: " 'Is *ev*-erybody *hap*-py?' top-hatted Ted Lewis used to ask--his trademark--and the vaudeville audiences would respond with a chorused 'yeah!' " (90).

WE-WE-WE echoes the counting-toes nursery rhyme "This little piggy":

> This little piggy went to market.
> This little piggy stayed home.
> This little piggy had roast beef,
> This little piggy had none.
> And this little piggy cried
> "Wee! Wee! Wee!" all the way home.

Gary Lane writes that "when we remember that Carlyle spoke of [Jeremy] Bentham's doctrine as 'pig philosophy,' the second line's full measure of satire becomes apparent" (91). Kidder points out that the line "also suggests agreement (*oui-oui-oui*)" (226).
(if you can't dentham = play on the cliché "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em." Cummings' version is "if you can't dent them, bent [bend] them."
bentham = Jeremy Bentham (1772-1832), Utilitarian philosopher who "claimed that the greatest happiness of the greatest number was the proper measure of right and wrong" (Lane 91).
1 law for the lions & / oxen is science) = revision of a sentence from William Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*: "One Law for the Lion & Ox is Oppression" (plate 24).

796. “insu nli gh t” [24]
insu = unknown, without [one's] knowledge [French].

799. [27] "in the heavenly realms of hellas dwelt"
Cummings retells Homer's story of the affair between the goddess of love, Aphrodite, and the god of war, Ares. Aphrodite's husband was Hephaistos, the lame god of fire and the forge. For Homer's version, see the *Odyssey*, 8.266-369. For an extensive reading of the poem as a reaction to and reworking of the classical tradition and the epic pretensions of John Milton and William Blake, see Alison Rosenblitt's *E. E. Cummings' Modernism and the Classics* (231-244).

800. [28] " 'right here the other night something"
Charles Norman reports that this poem is a combination of three incidents that occurred to him over a span of 25 years. In the first, Norman was about to enter an apartment in Greenwich Village to survey it as a possible living place when a man in "a rustling dressing gown" began speaking to him. Thrilled when Norman mentioned that he wrote poetry, the man exclaimed, "Just think! . . . a real poet!" and knelt down and kissed the palm of Norman's hand. Norman fled.
In the second incident, Norman was approached on 9th Street by a man who asked him, not for money, but for an overcoat. Norman took off his own coat and gave it to the man. The third incident occurred "on Seventh Avenue near 13th Street" when "a well-dressed man asked me for a quarter. It was bitter cold. I said I did not have any change and

handed him a dollar. He stared at me in the light of the street lamp; then tears filled his eyes, and I hurried on" (*Poets* 307).

803. "POEM(or 'the divine right of majorities, that illegitimate offspring of the divine right of kings' Homer Lea)"
Homer Lea (1876-1912) wrote two books, *The Valor of Ignorance* (1909) and *The Day of the Saxon* (1912), in which he expounded a social Darwinist vision of the future of the global military powers, arguing in the former book, for example, that the United States was vulnerable to a Japanese invasion of the west coast. The quote about the "divine right of majorities" comes from a section of *The Valor of Ignorance* that maintains that immigrants who came the United States after the Civil War would soon be a majority of the population, yet were too foreign to be "imbued with the true spirit of American institutions" and thus would lack the morality and fervor to defend "those primitive rights upon which the great but fragile edifice of this Republic was builded" (132). The full sentence reads: "Republics, governed by the divine right of majorities, that illegitimate offspring of the divine right of kings, are controlled, not by rural districts nor sparsely settled states, but by centres of population, where radiate not alone political predominance, but the moral and social tendencies of the nation" (132-133).

In his pacifist essay "The Moral Equivalent of War" (1910), William James briefly discusses Lea's theories, finding the scenario of a Japanese invasion "not unplausible," at least to a militarist mind. But James concludes that however great "Fear" may be, "it is not, as our military enthusiasts believe and try to make us believe, the only stimulus known for awakening the higher ranges of men's spiritual energy" (295).

Cummings' poem shows no awareness of the context of this quote, and so far research has turned up no evidence that EEC owned copies of Lea's book or of James' essay. (Cummings was certainly no militarist and no social Darwinist.) Most likely EEC simply saw the quote somewhere and applied it to his own individualist concerns.

816. [44] "Now i lay(with everywhere around)"
EEC refers to the nursery rhyme, "Now I lay me down to sleep; / I pray the Lord my soul to keep, / And if I die before I wake, / I pray the Lord my soul to take."

820. [48] "t,h;r:u;s,h;e:s"
Robert Wegner sees the punctuation marks in the first line as "thrushes on the branch of a tree, clustered perhaps, but at any rate spaced as separate little beings" (*Poetry and Prose* 44). Martin Heusser adds that the punctuation marks may also represent the "distinctively spotted breast" of the American wood thrush (258-259). See also Martin Heusser's *I Am My Writing* (256-259).

826. [54] "timeless"
In chapter 2 of *I Am My Writing*, "Man, Leaf and Tree: The Self as Multiple Identity" (36-50), Martin Heusser examines the drafts of the poem to consider how its tree and leaf imagery relates to EEC's notion of multiple selves.
Link: Text of "timeless" [*Poetry* 99.2 (Nov. 1961): 71-72] (scroll down). (Note that the poem is on two pages.)

827. [55] "i / never"
This shape-poem depicts not the nest, but the head of a ruby-throated hummingbird, seen from above. For discussions of this poem, see Gudrun Grabher's "I paint (my poems), therefore i am: The Visibility of Language and Its Epistemological Implications for the 'i' in E. E. Cummings' Poetry," Etienne Terblanche's "The Osmotic Mandala: On the Nature of Boundaries in E. E. Cummings' Poetry," and Michael Webster's "Magic Iconism: Defamiliarization, Sympathetic Magic, and Visual Poetry (Apollinaire and Cummings)."

833. [61] "one"
Martin Heusser notes that his poem is shaped like one half of a snowflake. See *I Am My Writing*, pp. 247-248.

839. [67] "enter no(silence is the blood whose flesh"
o come,terrible anonymity--Milton Cohen suggests that "the speaker grimly welcomes deathly winter in a distinct echo of the Lutheran hymn (and Bach chorale) 'Komm, süsser Todt' ('Come, sweet death')." A partial translation of the German text is available here.

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Uncollected Poems (1910-1962)

855. "Mist" ["Earth is become the seat of a new sea"]
First published in *The Harvard Monthly*, (Feb. 1913): 170.

856. "Water-Lilies" ["Behold—a mere like a madonna's head"]
First published in *The Harvard Monthly*, 55.6 (Feb. 1913): 170.
a mere = a lake or pond [chiefly British].
Link: Text of "Mist" and Water-Lilies" as first published.

858. "Summer Silence (Spenserian Stanza)" ["Eruptive lightnings flutter to and fro"]
First published in *The Harvard Advocate*, 95 (7 March 1913). See also Michael Webster's blog entry, "Cummings Centennials (1913)."
See Sarah Hopkinson, "The Early *Advocate*: e. e cummings."

859. "Sunset" ["Great carnal mountains crouching in the cloud"]
First published in *The Harvard Advocate*, 95 (21 March 1913). See also Michael Webster's blog entry, "Cummings Centennials (1913)."
See Sarah Hopkinson, "The Early *Advocate*: e. e cummings."

861. "Sonnet" ["A rain-drop on the eyelids of the earth,"]
First published in *The Harvard Monthly*, 56.3 (May 1913): 97.

862. "Sonnet" ["Long since, the flicker brushed with shameless wing"]
First published in *The Harvard Monthly*, 56.3 (May 1913): 97.
Link: Text of this sonnet (and 861 above) as first published

863. "Do you remember when the fluttering dusk,"
First published in *The Harvard Monthly* (June 1913): 128. See Michael Webster's blog entry, "Cummings Centennials (1913)."
Link: Text of the poem as first published (scroll down).

864-65. "Nocturne" ["When the lithe moonlight silently"]
First published in *The Harvard Monthly* 58.1 (March 1914): 18-20.
Link: Text of the poem as first published.

866. "Sonnet" ["For that I have forgot the world these days,"]
First published in *The Harvard Monthly* 58.3 (May 1914): 79.
Link: Text of the poem as first published.

867. "Night" ["Night, with sunset hauntings;"]
This poem was first published under the heading "Fancies" in *The Harvard Monthly* 59.2 (November 1914): 69-70.

872. "Ballade of Soul" ["Not for the naked make I this my prayer,"]
First published in *The Harvard Monthly* 60.5 (July 1915): 141-142.
Link: Text of the poem as first published.

874. "Sonnet." ["I dreamed I was among the conquerors"]
Together with the justly more celebrated "All in green went my love riding" (CP 15), this poem was first published in *The Harvard Monthly* 62.1 (March 1916): 8-9. Alison Rosenblitt writes that this poem written during World War I combines "a classically inspired militarism with a literary aesthetic that characterized what Cummings later referred to as his 'Keats period' " (*Modernism* 115). The sonnet's aesthetic medievalism shows that, as Rosenblitt says (paraphrasing John Dos Passos), "for the Harvard set, the literary tradition seemed more alive than the war" (115). (See Dos Passos' *The Best Times*, page 23.) The "white echo" appears to be the gleam of the gold lintel on the (probably) marble walls. (Perhaps it also refers to a bugle's call, the echo of "Fame.") Two of the colors pair synesthetic adjectives with sounds: "green thunder" and "white echo," while the colors of "lintel's gold" and "purple lords" are more descriptive of the

objects they modify. Perhaps the "green thunder" refers to green porphyry (an igneous stone that is usually purple) that clads the columns or walls that support the lintel. The lords are "purple" because as nobles, they wear the purple—and also because they have shed blood.
Roland = hero of the French medieval epic *The Song of Roland* (c. 1040-1115).
Richard = Richard the Lionheart (1157–1199), King of England, Duke of Aquitaine, and miltary crusader.
Leonidas = Leonidas I, Spartan king who, with his force of 300 men, held off the massive Persian army at the battle of Thermopylae (480 BC).
Albert = maybe Albert, first Duke of Prussia (1490–1568)?
Link: French text (with English translation) of *La Chanson de Roland*.

875. "Hokku" ["I care not greatly"]
First published in *The Harvard Monthly* 62.2 (April 1916): 55. As Michael Dylan Welch notes in "The Haiku Sensibilities of E. E. Cummings," the word "hokku" is "a now-obsolete synonym for haiku" (108). This poem may be read as three separate haiku or as three related stanzas on three aspects of being a poet. Each of the three stanzas of this poem exhibits the 5-7-5 syllable count of classic haiku, but, as Welch states, "they all lack strong images, are too subjective, and do not offer implication, juxtaposition, childlike wonder, or [the] sharply focused now-moments" that characterize the haiku tradition (108-109). Since Cummings' 1915 paper "The Poetry of Silence" [Houghton Library, Harvard University, MS Am 1892.6 (94) 6s. (6p.)] shows that he had read Yone Noguchi's book *The Spirit of Japanese Poetry*, he was well aware that haiku emphasize strong images and now-moments. Perhaps with this poem / these poems, he was exploring ways to adapt the Japanese tradition to Western poetry? See "The Poetry of Silence" *Spring* 23 (2020): 131-139 and Webster, "Afterword to 'The Poetry of Silence (1915).' "

876. "Belgium"
Published in the *New York Post* (16 May 1916), making it Cummings' first publication outside of high school and college literary magazines. Not listed in Firmage's *Bibliography*. For more on this poem, see Kennedy, *Dreams* 134-135.

877. "W. H. W., Jr. In Memory of 'A House of Pomegranates'."
This poem was first published in *The Harvard Monthly* 62.4 (June 1916): 123. Richard S. Kennedy says this sonnet is about Scofield Thayer, whom Cummings sometimes called "Willard Huntington Wright, Jr." *A House of Pomegranates* is a book of four fairy tales by Oscar Wilde (Kennedy, *Dreams* 80). Thayer gave Cummings a copy of Willard Huntington Wright's book *Modern Painting* (1915), which the early Cummings considered a kind of oracle on modern art, especially on Cézanne. (See Cohen, *PoetandPainter* 43, 120-121.) For a satirical poem on Wright, see CP 335. [XXV] "murderfully in midmost o.c.an." [For more on Thayer, see James Dempsey's *The Tortured Life of Scofield Thayer*.]

878. "Over silent waters"
This poem was first published as "Finis" in late 1917 in *Eight Harvard Poets* (8), the only one of the eight in that volume that Cummings did not republish elsewhere.

880-897. FRONT ROUGE / THE RED FRONT
Cummings translated this poem as a favor to Louis Aragon for helping him with a visa and introductions for his trip to the Soviet Union, chronicled in *EIMI* (1933). Charles Norman quotes Cummings as saying that the translation was undertaken "as a friendly gesture of farewell" (256). EEC's translation was published in *Literature of the World Revolution*, the journal of the Revolutionary Literature Bureau. In *EIMI*, Cummings comments on translating Aragon's poem:

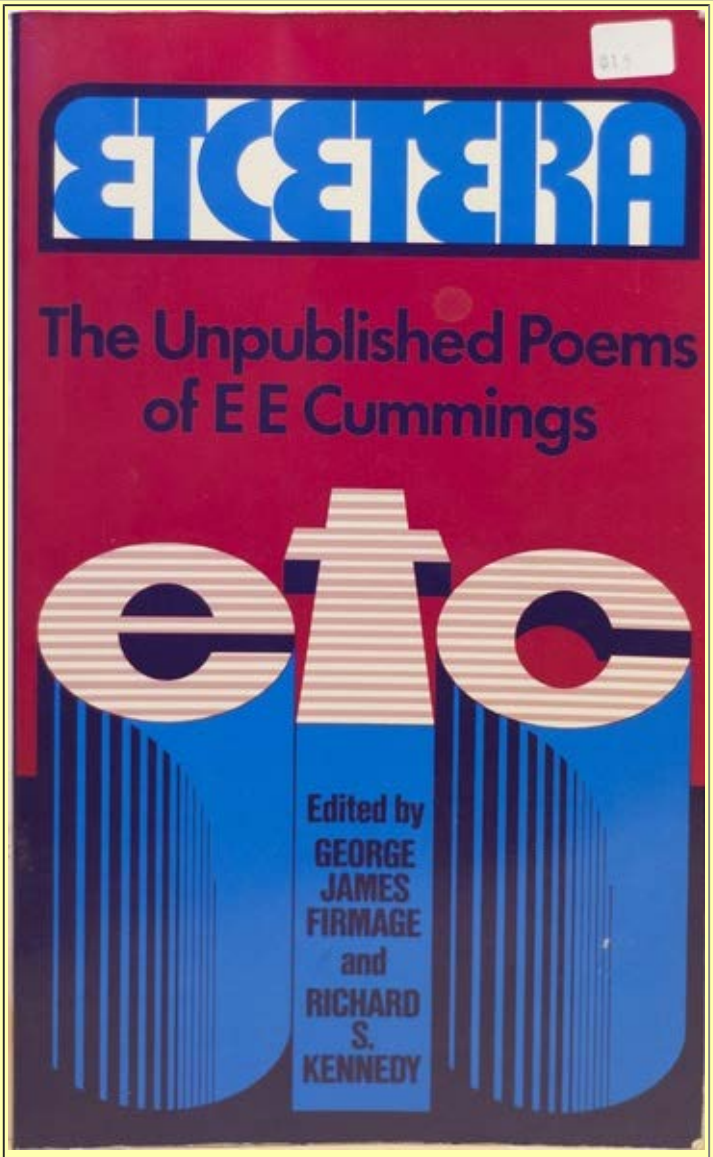
> Now I am(whose implacably negative definition of poetry equals: whatever cannot be translated!)trying less to "translate" an occasionally not poemless "poem"(mostly a hyper2fisted supergogetting ultraredblooded certificate of Mme. P.'s soeur's mari's conversion And How)than to possibly salve my New England conscience,re Revolutionary Literature Bureau (140/137)

884. "Front Rouge"--For "previère classe" read "première classe"
891. "The Red Front"--For "the stop—there people" read "the stop-there people" [use a hyphen, not a dash].
893. "The Red Front"--For "thousands of canons" read "thousands of cannons"

899. "BALLAD OF AN INTELLECTUAL" (SP 155-157; *Miscellany* 277-279)
This poem parodies the transition that many American intellectuals made from being supporters of the new modernist art

in the 1920s to being supporters of social revolution and communism in the 1930s. Some references:
Jerse = James Joyce (1882-1941), author of *Ulysses*;
Prused = Marcel Proust (1871-1922), French author of *Remembrance of Things Past* [*A la recherche du temps perdu*];
the es of a be = S.O.B.;
Gay Pay Oo = G.P.U., Soviet secret police;
Eddie Gest = Edgar A. Guest (1881-1959), popular poet;
Mike Gold (1894-1967), editor of radical newspaper, *The New Masses*. Wikipedia notes that "Gold said of Marcel Proust: 'The worst example and the best of what we do not want to do is the spectacle of Proust, master-masturbator of the bourgeois literature'."

904. DOVEGLION
This poem first appeared in *Adventures in Value* (1962), opposite Marion Morehouse's photo of José Garcia Villa. A poet and friend of Cummings, Villa was largely responsible for the special Cummings issue of *Harvard Wake* (1946). "Doveglion" was a pseudomyn of Villa's, combining "dove," "eagle" and "lion." See John Edwin Cowen's article "Doveglion—The E. E. Cummings and José Garcia Villa Connection" in *Spring* 10. Villa's poems have been collected and edited by John Edwin Cowen in the volume *Doveglion* (Penguin, 2008).



Etcetera (First collected in Firmage, George James and Richard S. Kennedy, eds. *Etcetera: The Unpublished Poems of E. E. Cummings*. New York: Liveright, 1983. At left: cover of the first paperback edition.)

908. "THE PAPER PALACE" [*Etcetera* 4]
In line six, for "either" read "ether"

912. "FAME SPEAKS" [*Etcetera* 9]
In line 12, for “more” read "nor" [So the sentence reads: "The sweets / Of earth I know not,nor the pains . . ."] (See Kennedy, *Dreams* 76.)

913. "HELEN" [*Etcetera* 10]
from some sty // Leers even now—After quoting the ending of "come,gaze with me upon this dome" (CP 272) ["the son of man goes forth to war / with trumpets clap and syphilis"], Alison Rosenblitt comments: "Cummings' early Harvard poetry does not have this same sarcastic bite, but the realism about sex in warfare is already anticipated in Helen's leer" ("a twilight" 247).

925. "T.A.M. Sailed July, 1914" [*Etcetera* 23]
T.A.M. = "Theodore A. Miller, Cummings' Greek teacher and his closest friend during the first two years of college; the occasion was his departure on a trip to Europe" (Firmage and Kennedy 1). (See also Kennedy, *Dreams* 54-55.)

926. "S.F.D. In Memory of Claude o'Dreams" [*Etcetera* 24]
S.F.D. = friend and mentor S. Foster Damon (1893-1971).Cummings told Charles Norman: "Practically everything I know about painting and poetry came to me though Damon" (*Magic-Maker* 38).
Claude o'Dreams = Claude Debussy (1862–1918), French composer. (See Kennedy, *Dreams* 78-79.)

928. "S. T." ["O friend who hast attained thyself in her"]

	[*Etcetera* 26] *S. T.* = friend, mentor, and patron, Scofield Thayer. The poem was sent to Thayer and Elaine Orr during their honeymoon (Kennedy 190). On September 13, 1916, Thayer wrote to Cummings: "The poem is really corking . . . and Elaine and I thank you from the bottom of our heart. It is not to have lived in vain, to have occasioned beauty" (qtd. in Kennedy 191). Thayer singled out for special praise the lines "Whose smiling is the swiftly singular / Adventure of one inadvertent star, / (With angels previously a loiterer,)." See Cummings' wedding poem for the couple, "Epithalamion" (CP 3-7). See also "conversation with my friend is particularly" (CP 96), "what is strictly fiercely and wholly dies" (CP 345), and "W. H. W., Jr. In Memory of 'A House of Pomegranates' " (CP 877). For more on Thayer's views of Cummings' poetry, see James Dempsey's *The Tortured Life of Scofield Thayer* (65-67).

933. "The awful darkness of the town" [*Etcetera* 33]
In line 26, for "in to see Nichol,and devour" read "in to see Nicho',and devour" [based on the name "Nicho' " which appears in lines 11, 29, and 36 of "one April dusk the" (CP 84)]. See also "when i am in Boston,i do not speak" (CP 116). All three of these poems depict visits to the Parthenon restaurant in Boston, circa 1915-1916.

944. Reflections 1918: Richard S. Kennedy's headnote to this section in the volume *Etcetera* reads in part: "A few of the poems chosen for this section may be better understood if we know that in Paris Cummings had become acquainted with a number of French prostitutes—indeed, had become quite attached to one named Marie Louise Lallemand before he went to the battle front—but he had maintained his virginity until the night before he sailed home to the United States. After his release from the French concentration camp, he had been unable to find Marie Louise in Paris and turned then to a woman named Berthe, a waitress at his favorite restaurant, Sultana Cherque's Oasis. At least two of the poems included here refer specifically to that experience" (*Etcetera* 43).

945. II "through the tasteless minute efficient room" [*Etcetera* 46]
Gillian Huang-Tiller writes in an e-mail that this sonnet could be read as referring to "Dante's Virgil," hinting "at a night quest through the Moulin Rouge as a vision of the modern inferno." And indeed, though EEC is less gloomy than Dante, the line "furious Paris flutters up the hill" reminds one of Paolo and Francesca in the *Inferno*, Canto V. Shortly after the beginning of the canto, some lines describe the souls dipping and veering and "Foundering in the wind's rough buffetings // Upward or downward, driven here and there" (lines 38-40--Pinsky's translation).
huggering rags –Alison Rosenblitt notes that "To hugger (OED: 'to conceal, keep secret; to wrap up') comes across today as a somewhat outré flourish of vocabulary. It may not have seemed quite so archaic to Cummings, whose circle was steeped in the literature of the late nineteenth century, when the word enjoyed a minor vogue" ("twilight" 254-55). See also Rosenblitt's *E. E. Cummings' Modernism and the Classics* (125-128) and *The Beauty of Living* (113-115).
upward,beautifully,forces crazily rhyme Manuscript evidence indicates that the line probably should read "upward,beautifully,*faces* crazily rhyme," which sounds more like Cummings and makes more sense in the context of the poem. The faces that "float / upward" and "crazily rhyme" are probably kissing as they walk up the hill towards Montmartre. The manuscript may be viewed at Alison Rosenblitt's Cummings "Photo Gallery" (the third photo in "Gallery 2, E. E. Cummings — Sketches, Paintings, and Poetry").
[*Rosenblitt's note*: 2(c) 'through the tasteless minute efficient room', on Camp Devens notepaper. E. E. Cummings Additional Papers, 1870-1969 (Houghton Library, Harvard), MS Am 1892.5 (704).]
taxis: In The *Beauty of Living*, Alison Rosenblitt sees a pun on "the Greek word *taxis*," which is a "broad word for form or order, encompassing everything from the order of ancient battle formations to literary form. It is the root of the English word "syntax." A taxi has a long *i*, but the Greek *taxis* is a short *i*, and rhymes with "kiss" (115). See also Rosenblitt's " 'a twilight smelling of Vergil' ": "Taxis as a method of transportation, if the word merely elaborates on 'cabs', is doing little for the poem. But *taxis* (rhyming with 'kiss') puns on the Greek and evokes both battle lines and syntax" ("twilight" 255).

949. VI "The moon-lit snow is falling like strange candy in the big eyes of the" [*Etcetera* 50]

This is the first poem in the section that names Berthe. See Kennedy's note (*Etcetera* 43; also quoted above). Richard S. Kennedy also discusses this poem in *Dreams in the Mirror* (157-158).
Faubourg Mon / martre = the Rue Faubourg Montmartre in the ninth arrondissement. Both *Etcetera* and *Complete Poems* have the same typo, leaving off the first "t" in "Montmartre."

950. VII "Perhaps it was Myself sits down in this chair." [*Etcetera* 51]
"Je m'occuperai tout particulierment de vos colis" = I will take special care with your packages.
"vous n'avez trop chaud avec la pelisse?" = you are not too warm in that fur coat? [Cummings took a fur coat to France. See Kennedy, *Dreams* 156 and *The Enormous Room* 240.]
The Zulu = one of Cummings' friends in *The Enormous Room*. See chapter nine, "Zoo-loo" (168-184).
"vous partez—?demain matin?" "le train part a huit heures un quart" = "you leave—? tomorrow morning?" "the train leaves at eight fifteen"
"alors:il faut bien dormir" = "then:you need to sleep"

958. sometime,perhaps in Paris we will" [*Etcetera* 62]
Royce's hair: refers to Josiah Royce (1855–1916), Professor of Philosophy at Harvard College, who taught the young Estlin Cummings to appreciate the love sonnets of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (see Kennedy, *Dreams* 68 and *six* 29-30). See also "curtains part" (CP 230).
Old Man Emerson = Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), poet and sage. See Emerson's advice against travelling in "Self-Reliance": "Travelling is a fool's paradise. Our first journeys discover to us the indifference of places. At home I dream that at Naples, at Rome, I can be intoxicated with beauty, and lose my sadness. I pack my trunk, embrace my friends, embark on the sea, and at last wake up in Naples, and there beside me is the stern fact, the sad self, unrelenting, identical, that I fled from" (288).
Frank Harris (1856-1931), writer and editor who privately published his memoirs, *My Life and Loves*, in four volumes between 1922 and 1927.

959. "chérie/ the very,picturesque,last Day" [*Etcetera* 63] (SP 65-6)
Paolo —an allusion to Dante, *Inferno* V.74-142. Paolo fell in love with Francesca, his sister-in-law. Both were murdered by Francesca's husband, who caught them in the act.

966. "the comedian stands on a corner,the sky is" [*Etcetera* 73]
,letergo/ Professor! = instruction given by a vaudeville or burlesque performer to the piano player or conductor, who was often called "professor." See *Him*, Act I, scene iv (20) as well as the end of Act II, scene xiii (74).

986. " 'out of the pants which cover me" [*Etcetera* 95]
The first four lines parody the first stanza of William Ernest Henley's "Invictus" (1888):

> Out of the night that covers me,
> Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
> I thank whatever gods may be
> For my unconquerable soul.

A little Porter = recalls T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, lines 196-98:

> But at my back from time to time I hear
> The sound of horns and motors, which shall bring
> Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the spring.

the University of Pennsylvania = Ezra Pound's alma mater.
"I grow old,I grow old // I shall tell the tailor what he should be told." = parody of lines 120-121 of T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1915): "I grow old ... I grow old ... / I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled."
Lars Porcelain = probably refers to Thomas Babington Macaulay's "Horatius":

> Lars Porsena of Closium
> By the Nine Gods he swore
> That the great house of Tarquin

Should suffer wrong no more.

(See also *Selected Letters*, page 93.)
Eheu fugaces Postume —refers to Horace, *Odes*, II.14:

Eheu fugaces, Postume, Postume,
labuntur anni *nec* pietas moram
rugis et instanti *senectae*
adferet indomitaeque morti:

"Ah, Postumus, Postumus, how fleeting / the swift years—prayer cannot delay / the furrows of imminent old-age / nor hold off unconquerable death." (See notes to CP 234 and CP 492.)
what daisy knew = conflates two Henry James titles, *Daisy Miller* and *What Maisie Knew*. Another James title follows shortly: *The Turn of the Screw*.
all men kill —from the last stanza of Oscar Wilde's *Ballad of Reading Gaol*: https://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/content/ballad-reading-gaol

And all men kill the thing they love,
By all let this be heard,
Some do it with a bitter look,
Some with a flattering word,
The coward does it with a kiss,
The brave man with a sword.

987. "pound pound pound" [*Etcetera* 96]
This poem refers to or parodies at least five other poems: Alfred, Lord Tennyson's "Break, Break, Break" (1842) and "Tears, Idle Tears" (1847), Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's "The Skeleton in Armor" (1840), T. S. Eliot's "Sweeney Among the Nightingales" (1919), and John Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale" (1819). For another version of stanza one, see *Pound / Cummings* 329.
pound . . . oh P = the poet Ezra Pound.
grey corona = Pound's typewriter.
I would that my tongue could utter = from the first stanza of "Break, Break, Break":

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

Alfred Noise = Alfred Noyes (1880-1958), British poet, author of "Barrel Organ" and "The Highwayman."
Speak, speak . . . From the first stanza of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's "The Skeleton in Armor" (1840):

Speak! speak! thou fearful guest!
Who, with thy hollow breast
Still in rude armor drest,
Comest to daunt me!
Wrapt not in Eastern balms,
But with thy fleshless palms
Stretched, as if asking alms,
Why dost thou haunt me?”

Perhaps also these lines are a conflation of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, lines 69-73 and 111-114:

There I saw one I knew, and stopped him, crying 'Stetson!
'You who were with me in the ships at Mylae!
'That corpse you planted last year in your garden,
'Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?
'Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?

'My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad. Stay with me.
'Speak to me. Why do you never speak? Speak.
'What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?
'I never know what you are thinking. Think.'

child of Homer —Pound's father was named Homer. Of course, Cummings also refers to the author of the *Odyssey*. The opening portion of book 11 of the *Odyssey* is translated in Pound's Canto I.
The Dial Cantos —According to Nicholas Joost, Pound contributed versions of Cantos 4 (June, 1920), 5, 6, and 7 (August, 1921), 8 (May, 1922), 22 (February, 1928), and part of Canto 27 (January, 1928) to *The Dial* (Joost 172).
Tears,idle Tears! = a reference to Tennyson's poem, but also to T. S. Eliot, since Cummings was in the habit of calling him "Tears Eliot."
the stiff dishonoured nightingales = parody of the last lines of T. S. Eliot's "Sweeney Among the Nightingales" (1919):

The nightingales are singing near
The Convent of the Sacred Heart,

And sang within the bloody wood
When Agamemnon cried aloud,
And let their liquid siftings fall
To stain the stiff dishonored shroud.

fled is that music = part of the last line of John Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale" (1819):

Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

990. "When parsing warmths of dusk construe" [*Etcetera* 98]
In line 7, for "Ellided" read "Elided."

996. "taxis toot whirl . . ." [*Etcetera* 104]
In line 5, for "web" read "wet"—[So the line reads: "bowls or somethings by the wet curb and carefully spring is"]

1006. "love's absence is illusion,alias time" [*Etcetera* 113]
Cummings revised the first two lines of this poem and published it as poem 91 of *95 Poems*, "unlove's the heavenless hell and homeless home" (CP 765).

1007. "Float" [*Etcetera* 114]
Khoury's—the editors of *Etcetera* note that this poem gives us "a glimpse of the Syrian restaurant Khoury's, on Washington Street, where Cummings delighted in the baba gahnouj and stuffed vine leaves" (91). (See Kennedy, *Dreams* 164.)

1013. "lively and loathsome moe's respectably dead" [*Etcetera* 122]
Although the editors of *Etcetera* say that this poem is "an elegy for [Cummings'] friend, Henry Allen Moe, head of the Guggenheim foundation" (117), this identification is most likely in error, since Moe died in 1975, long after the poem was written. In addition, Henry Allen Moe was from Minnesota, so his accent would not correspond to the New York patois that Cummings renders in dialect spelling. And we can hardly imagine the head of the Guggenheim Foundation being as ruthless as the person described in line 11: "nobody doublecrossed him and lived."
"this-iz-un a chuf-tran-zish n" = "this is in a tough transition."
"meye sel-veye-wuz poor" = "myself, I was poor."
"sew-lawn-gooi eyel bih-seen-gyoo" = "so long, good[bye], I'll be seeing you."

1016. "the phonograph may(if it likes)be prophe" [*Etcetera* 125]
Sapphics quite dissimilar unto A.Swin / burne's--"Sapphics" are poems written in the sapphic meter, first used extensively by the Greek poet Sappho (c. 615-570 BC). Cummings quotes the first line of Sappho's "Hymn to Aphrodite" in *i: six nonlectures* (51): "On the throne of many hues, deathless Aphrodite" (Rayor 51). For a short discussion of sapphic meter, see also Elizabeth Vandiver's translation: "Hymn to Aphrodite." Nineteenth century British poet Algernon Charles

Swinburne (1837-1909) imitated Sappho's meter in his poem "Sapphics."

Citing articles by Sebastian Knowles and Thomas Rice, Alison Rosenblitt points out that "the image used by the Victor Talking Machine Company would have been widely readable to an earlier audience as the image of a dog listening to the voice – not just of his master – but specifically of his dead master, drawing on the sentimental Victorian genre of the pet mourning his master at the graveside" ("Pretentious" 184). For a detailed interpretation of this poem, its classical and popular sources, and its commentary on Ezra Pound, see Rosenblitt's "Pretentious Scansion, Fascist Aesthetics, and a Father-complex for Joyce: E. E. Cummings on Sapphics and Ezra Pound." For images and very detailed information on the Victor-Victrola see http://www.victor-victrola.com/.

1019. April"/ this letter's dated/ "23, [*Etcetera* 128]
Joe . . . Gould = Greenwich Village bohemian, subject of the poems "little joe gould has lost his teeth and doesn't know where" (CP 410) and "no time ago" (CP 648). Joe Gould offers his views on a different topic in "as joe gould says in" (CP 700). For more on Joe Gould, see Sewell Chan's "Revisiting Joe Gould's Secret" and Joshua Prager's article in *Vanity Fair*, "The Patron and the Panhandler" (on Gould and his mysterious patron), and Jill Lepore's *New Yorker* piece "Joe Gould's Teeth: The Long-lost Story of the Longest Book Ever Written," which re-examines Joe Gould's life and *Oral History* in the light of letters and other archival documents.

1040. "G/ ra/ D/ ua" [*Etcetera* 148]
The last four lines appear differently in the 1983 *Etcetera*:

N
o

W
.

This arrangement is preferable because it mirrors the stairstep arrangement of the first four lines and because it is more consistent with Cummings' usual practice.

1048. BALLADE "does something lie who'd rather stand" [*Etcetera* 156]
august sixth = the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945.
a greengrocer = President Harry S. Truman (1884-1972).
See also "quick i the death of thing" (CP 634).

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LINKS:

- **Notes and Links for E. E. Cummings' *Enormous Room*** [1922]
- An on-line text of *The Enormous Room* (Project Gutenberg)
- **Notes for Cummings' *Him*** [1927]
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- ***A Miscellany Revised*** [1965]
- ***Fairy Tales*** [1965]
- ***Selected Letters*** [1969]
- ***A Works Cited List*** [Bibliography]
- "Cummings' Titles" [from *Spring* 9]

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