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1963

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Recommended Citation
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The Poetry

OF E. E. CUMMINGS

Address by Associate Professor Elizabeth H. Oggel
on the occasion of the
Annual Century Club Dinner
held on May 14, 1963.
Miss Oggel had been chosen by the faculty
as recipient of the
Century Club Award for 1963.

ILLINOIS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY
Bloomington, Illinois

THE POETRY OF E. E. CUMMINGS

I am deeply grateful to President Bertholf for his generous expression of faith in me; to the Century Club members for their hospitality in making this dinner available to us all, as well as for their particular generosity to me; and to the faculty for their sacrifice of an evening in the hectic final weeks of the school year. Ever since the president asked me to accept this award, I have felt an unreality about it on the one hand; and on the other, a most pressing reality—much as Sir Gawain must have experienced when, after chopping off the head of the Green Knight in King Arthur's court, he was honor-bound to offer his own head in a return engagement a year later. When, finally, during spring vacation, I prepared for my own encounter, I was comforted by remembering Dr. Bertholf's suggestion. He said, "Don't be scholarly. What we want is a sample of classroom teaching." And so I chucked scholarship and settled down to enjoy the reading and collect my thoughts about it as I would for a class.

Early last September, about the time Wesleyan faculty and administration drove out to Lake Bloomington to launch a new school year, American poet E. E. Cummings, 67 years old, died in New Hampshire. Robert Frost, as you know, died in January at the age of 88. And in March we learned of the death of 89-year-old William Carlos Williams, who only last week was awarded, posthumously, the 1963 Pulitzer poetry prize. An era of American poetry is coming to an end, for, though Eliot, Pound, and Ransom are still with us, they, too, are aging. Theirs is a great generation, and it seems fitting to pay tribute to one of their number tonight.

I chose to discuss the poetry of Cummings—in part, I think, because he is a poet of joy, of spring (April is not for him, as for Eliot, the "cruellest month"); and after a long winter I felt that Cummings would be a tonic—for, Hollywood and Dr. George Crane notwithstanding, academic winters have their own severities. And I chose him also because he has been much misunderstood, although so was Frost, as most of the eulogies at the time of his death made evident. But whereas it has become fashionable in America to like Frost, far too many of even the professional critics have been annoyed with Cummings. Not that he hasn't enlisted admiration too; but the belittling has continued, despite his laurels—from the Dial prize for poetry in 1925 to the coveted Bollingen award in 1957.

Here are two such estimates that are fairly typical: R. P. Blackmur of Princeton, complaining that Cummings divorces words from their historical meanings, concludes "that the poems of Mr. Cummings are unintelligible, and that no amount of effort on the part of the reader can make them less so." And Louis Untermeyer in an early edition of MODERN AMERICAN AND BRITISH POETS says, "From the beginning Cummings seemed to be preoccupied with typographical dis-

arrangements. This is a pity, for much of his work suffers because of the distortion . . .; in middle age he resolutely continued the verve and brashness of adolescence." And I notice that Untermeyer permitted this early estimate to remain in his latest anthology, published in 1958.

What I should like to attempt tonight is a demonstration (1) that Cummings is not unintelligible, (2) that the typographical disarrangements are, at their best, meaningful, and (3) that he does say something worth saying—he gives us a fresh look at ourselves and our world. But since Cummings' poems need to be seen as well as heard, and especially since I'll have to read them "as well as I don't know how" (to borrow a Cummings phrase), I thought it wise to provide you with copies of the poems I'd like to have you examine with me a bit later. Unless you are already a Cummings enthusiast, you are probably saying of some of them, "And is *this* poetry?" I hope to indicate why I think it is.

Before we turn to the poems, however, I should like to generalize briefly. Cummings, more than most poets, saw two separate worlds—the world of clocks and organizations and assembly lines, a materialistic world in which *mankind* becomes *manunkind;* and individual human beings, beset by fears and frustrations, lose their essential humanity and are reduced to things. It is the world Cummings satirizes—the unworld, he calls it—an unworld of "Cambridge ladies who live in furnished souls," the "land of Abraham Lincoln and Lydia E. Pinkham,/land of above all Just Add Hot Water and Serve," the world of "momentous, supercolossal, hyperprodigious" progress, a world that sees "Jehovah buried, Satan dead,/and fearers worshipping 'Much and Quick' "—the world of the gimmick, the panacea, the factory-made blueprint for life that comes dangerously close to that of Orwell's NINETEEN EIGHTY FOUR and Huxley's BRAVE NEW WORLD.

Opposed to this *unworld* of *manunkind* is the ideal—the world of *mankind* and love and beauty and joy and honesty and vitality, the world of *being,* in which the verb *to be* is a verb of action, of aliveness, whereas in the unworld of *unbeing* there is only passivity and frustration. This is the world Cummings celebrates in his poems of love and praise—a world of affirmation, not of fear; of *being* rather than *having;* a world of "Just spring," wherein really human beings can sing "a grave gay brave/bright cry of alive" and know that "love is a deeper season than reason." It is a world of transcendence, achievable only if and when human beings allow themselves to be truly-human truly-beings. It is an Eden—lost, Cummings suggests, not through any aboriginal calamity, but through man's being untrue to himself in being less than human.

I suppose one thing that makes Cummings so attractive to his admirers is that he *was* true to himself; he *lived* his feelings and convictions. They are in his poetry and they are in his life. An ambulance driver for the French in World War I, he was, with his friend B, the victim of top-brass bungling that led to his trial on a charge of espionage. Finally even the interrogating officer was convinced that there was no valid charge against Cummings, and, preparatory to dismissing the case, asked, "Do you hate the Germans?" But Cummings, refusing to be trapped into a statement of hate, would reply only, "I love the French," whereupon

he was sent to prison—the experiences of which we have in his fascinating book of poetic prose, THE ENORMOUS ROOM. Love, not hate, is at the core of his being, as shown throughout both his poetry and his prose. Cummings really meant it when he wrote

> "I'd rather learn from one bird how to sing
> than teach ten thousand stars how not to dance."

Now I realize that there are Cummings poems that do not fit into these overly-neat categories of praise of the transcendent world and satire of the materialistic world. What, for instance, of the early poems of the demimonde—the world of the bum, the prostitute, and the down-and-outer? They can be explained, I believe, by Cummings' despairing regret for lost values in the materialistic world and thus his investigation of an environment below the level of respectability, feeling that perhaps here, apart from the mainstream of American life so frantically pursuing the synthetic, might be found the essential passions of the heart—the same reason, paradoxically, that sent Wordsworth to rural settings and rural characters. There are poems, too, of description—some in New Yorkese dialect to capture a person or situation; others in Cummings' own characteristic idiom to show us such things as grasshoppers, mice, Paris, and sunsets. But although Cummings' range is considerably greater than this, I am making no attempt to be definitive, but only to suggest his major themes.

At this point I want to turn to the poems themselves, for it is only with the poems before us that we can really know Cummings.

In TULIPS AND CHIMNEYS, his first volume of poetry, published in 1923, there are three poems listed under the title "Chansons Innocentes"—i.e., "Simple, childlike songs,"—of which this is the first. It is a child's world of wonder; the time is Just spring—not late spring bordering upon summer, but Just spring, when the first rains make the world mud-luscious and puddle-wonderful. This is not the world of an adult who cries "This rain will ruin my clothes"; it is the child's world of lovely oozing mud and magical puddles to jump over or into or see reflections in. It is a world of marbles and piracies for the boys and hopscotch and jump-rope for the girls. Into it comes from a distance a little lame balloon man—or, rather, what appears to be a man, for the blown-up balloons completely hide his face until, I assume, he's made sufficient sales to emerge a capitalized man in the last stanza as he limps away into the distance, his whistle again sounding far and (echoing) wee.

Chansons Innocentes , #1

in Just-
spring when the world is mud-
luscious the little
lame balloonman

whistles far and wee

and eddieandbill come
running from marbles and
piracies and it's
spring

when the world is puddle-wonderful

the queer
old balloonman whistles
far and wee
and bettyandisbel come dancing

from hop-scotch and jump-rope and
it's
spring
and
  the

  goat-footed

balloonMan whistles
far
and
wee

The poem is, I think, pure delight. Early as it is, it has touches of Cummings' style—first, in the novel spacing, as in "Just-/spring," giving "Just" at the end of the line the emphasis it needs, and in the "whistles far and wee," with "far" set off for distance and "wee" farther off for a barely audible sound; second, in the lower-case letters for all words except "Just" and "Man," forcing us to see emphasis where the poet wants it, not merely where convention stipulates; third, in running together words as one, as "eddieandbill" and "bettyandisbel"—again, to get the effect he wants—here, the child's speech; and fourth, in his dropping formal punctuation except for the two hyphens and the two apostrophes, which are all the marks necessary for clarity because the spacing indicates the position of pauses.

The next poem, also from the first volume, is the fifth in the series entitled "Impressions."

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

with

dream

-S

This is an impression of a seaside church at sunset—gold lights swarming upon the silver spires, rose light flooding the great bells, and a tall wind dragging the sea with dreams. The appearance of the poem on the page is somewhat more unusual, perhaps, than that of "Just-spring." But I think it important to notice that neither in this nor in the later poems is the shape on the page a literal representation of the subject, as, for example, in George Herbert's poem "The Altar," which is shaped like an altar, or Dylan Thomas' "Vision and Prayer," in which Part I, the vision of Christ's birth, is shaped like an urn or womb, and Part II, the prayer, looks like a chalice. On the contrary, Cummings' poems are shaped suggestively. This one doesn't look like steeples on a church; a church this thin and with so lop-sided and heavy a superstructure would not stand long. But the shape *is* suggestive. The spiral position of the *s*'s in the first four lines suggests the moving, swarming light of the setting sun upon the spires. And although there is a touch of the literal in the wind's dragging the sea into vertical waves, the chief function of the spacing is to slow down the reading through pauses at the end of lines and, even more, through the double spacing between lines. Finally, the position and capitalization of the climactic S makes the dreams even more plural, even more magical—and validly so, because of the gold-red color of sunset upon sea. Whereas the telescoping of several words into one Cummings may have learned from James Joyce, this breaking up of one word to increase its meaning is really more typically Cummings.

I'd like to use one more poem from Cummings' first volume,—the sonnet on the Cambridge ladies. Perhaps at first glance this seems a very permissive handling of Italian sonnet form. But a second glance

reveals a closely structured octave, with each line rhyming with another, and a similarly structured sestette. Whereas "Just-/spring" and "Impression" belong to Cummings' transcendent world of delight, the Cambridge ladies are citizens of the unworld that Cummings treats ironically. The various Harvard University communities at Cambridge, Massachusetts, Cummings knew well, for he grew up in Cambridge in a neighborhood of Harvard professors, his father being for a time on the Harvard faculty, his father's most esteemed friend and neighbor being William James, and Cummings himself attending that university. This Cambridge was to Cummings a world of joy that he treats with affection in his autobiographical SIX NONLECTURES, originally given at Harvard in 1952-53 and later published in book form. But young Cummings saw another and co-existent Cambridge, inhabited by ladies whose souls and minds were filled with predigested, packaged food requiring on their part neither thinking nor feeling. These ladies are eminently respectable and dull, involved in causes they don't understand, giving lip service to Longfellow and Christ, both of whom they profess to admire because both are for them safely dead. Apparently the only activity of their so-called minds is the spreading of scandal. And if occasionally some ominous rumblings penetrate the sealed-off world of the complacent Cambridge ladies, they pay no heed.

> the Cambridge ladies who live in furnished souls
> are unbeautiful and have comfortable minds
> (also, with the church's protestant blessings
> daughters, unscented shapeless spirited)
> they believe in Christ and Longfellow, both dead,
> are invariably interested in so many things—
> at the present writing one still finds
> delighted fingers knitting for the is it Poles?
> perhaps. While permanent faces coyly bandy
> scandal of Mrs. N and Professor D
> . . . . the Cambridge ladies do not care, above
> Cambridge if sometimes in its box of
> sky lavender and cornerless, the
> moon rattles like a fragment of angry candy

You will notice that the next poem comes from the volume NO THANKS, published twelve years after TULIPS AND CHIMNEYS. Obviously Cummings has not gone on writing in the same idiom, but has continued to experiment with language, trying to discover what it is capable of doing. Let us examine the first of these poems. The words "Ernest," "death," and "afternoon" clearly show it to be a comment on Ernest Hemingway, whose DEATH IN THE AFTERNOON, a description of bulls and bull-fighting, appeared in 1923. By this time Hemingway had already earned a reputation as a writer with his short stories and his novel THE SUN ALSO RISES. Then came DEATH IN THE AFTERNOON, which Cummings satirizes here in a single quatrain. The first two lines are clear enough; then the poem seems to deteriorate into

gobbledygook. But notice how, after Hemingway is reduced in literary size by being called "little Ernest" and by having his book considered unworthy of conventional capitalization and italics, being, after all, mere crooning, the deflating continues by Cummings having the "literary criticism" spoken in the vernacular of the tough guy.

what does little Ernest croon
in his death at afternoon?
(kow dow r 2 bul retoinis
wus de woids uf lil Oinis

Translated into formal English, the last two lines read

Cow thou art to bull returnest
Were the words of little Ernest.

The mockery is intensified by the fact that it is really a pun on "Dust thou art, to dust returnest." I do not know of any other four lines more devastating. Obviously I am using this quatrain not to belittle Hemingway, whose works I admire, but to demonstrate that Cummings does not irresponsibly distort language; rather, his use of distortions, vernacular, and unconventionalities in general serves a useful purpose—forcing the reader to give the lines the questioning attention all serious art deserves. Here the vernacular in phonetic spelling certainly intensifies the satire.

The next poem, with the unpronounceable first word, requires just such careful scrutiny.

```
 1.                                r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r
 2.                          who
 3.   a)sw(e loo)k
 4.   upnowgath
 5.                PPEGORHRASS
 6.                                eringint(o-
 7.   aThe):1
 8.          eA
 9.             !p:
10.   S                                          a
11.                  (r
12.   rIvInG                    .gRrEaPsPhOs)
13.                                          to
14.   rea(be)rran(com)gi(e)ngly
15.   ,grasshopper;
```

Please notice that I have numbered the lines at the left. Then notice that the first word has eleven letters; that line five is made up of another, now capitalized word, also of eleven letters; that line twelve ends with a word introduced by a period and made up of another hodge-podge of eleven letters; and, finally, that the last line shows us the same eleven letters used in lines 1, 5, and 12, now reassembled to spell *grasshopper*.

This stretched-out creature of line 1, as we look (line 3) is upnow-gathering (lines 4 and 6)—i.e., now gathering himself up. In the process we see him again (line 5), his body less elongated, more compact, as shown in the capital letters without the dividing hyphens. He is up-gathering himself into a leap—in fact, THE leap, and, at the same time, the verb *leaps*, for *leap* with its victorious S becomes the spectacular action, meriting the capital A at its zenith and the exclamation point as he completes his arc. Then arriving (lines 10, 11, and 12)—i.e., landing —he is a third spectacle of a bug, not yet recognizable, but landing to become (in the parentheses) rearrangingly—the *rearrangingly* and the *becoming* a simultaneous process indicated by Cummings' simultaneous use of the two words—to become *grasshopper*. NOW we recognize him. We have seen him in action as he elongates, upgathers, leaps, arrives, and rearranges himself. And then, for the poem ends with a semicolon, the mark that separates equals, he repeats the process. Frankly I am delighted with this creature who jumps out at me from the printed page. In comparison, I find Robert Burns' wee mousie and his crawling louse pretty thin poetic fare.

The next poem on the list is a rather well-known one, for it is frequently anthologized. But I am using it anyhow, not only because I like it, but also because, as a later poem than "Grasshopper," it incorporates new techniques that contribute to the poetic magic as well as to Cummings' developing philosophy. But perhaps it would be well to pause here to notice one of these techniques—a vocabulary typically Cummings' own. Norman Friedman has made out a convenient little chart that the reader can build on. Here it is. Friedman says that in Cummings' world of transcendence "forever and when are now, whereas in the unworld they are never and until; the place is here, whereas in the unworld it is where. The verb is am, while in the unworld it is made. It is the world of end, begin, and return, vs. the unworld of must, shall, and can't; of new and young vs. same; of yes vs. if, un, non, unless, ahnost, and since; of who vs. which; of give vs. keep and have; of sing and see vs. say and stare; of immeasurable vs. measurable, etc."

And now we are ready to turn to the poem. Here, you will notice, I have numbered the stanzas. "anyone lived in a pretty how town" is a little drama enacted against the backdrop of Nature. The earth moves along its diurnal course under "sun, moon, stars, rain"; the seasons advance to "spring, summer, autumn, winter."

1. anyone lived in a pretty how town
(with up so floating many bells down)
spring summer autumn winter
he sang his didn't he danced his did.

In the first stanza the hero is introduced; but not being an important person by the prosperous unworld's standards, not a capitalized success, he is at first hard to find. He is there, however; he is the only possible antecedent for the pronoun *he*: he is *anyone* of line one.

2. Women and men (both little and small)
cared for anyone not at all
they sowed their isn't they reaped their same
sun moon stars rain

3. children guessed (but only a few
and down they forgot as up they grew
autumn winter spring summer)
that noone loved him more by more

4. when by now and tree by leaf
she laughed his joy she cried his grief
bird by snow and stir by still
anyone's any was all to her

Now we have the heroine, who, like the hero, is another obscure person whom the successful world ignores. She is the noone (no one) in the last line of stanza three. The children (some of them), before their perception of human qualities became dulled by sophistication, recognized anyone and noone for what they were; recognized, too, this couple's love for each other. But as the children grew up, "down they forgot" and became like the women and men of stanza 2—"both little and small," scarcely-human scarcely-beings.

5. someones married their everyones
laughed their cryings and did their dance
(sleep wake hope and then) they
said their nevers they slept their dream

The someones and everyones of the practical world sleep their dream. Dreams and imagination belong to the world of transcendence; mere sleep to the unworld of hibernation. The somebodies in this world marry their everyones—all very plural, so that they are recognizable only in the lump, not as individuals. These mass-men sleep their dreams; i.e., their dreams lie dormant. Conversely, no one and everyone dream their sleep. So we see by now that the poem is one of praise of a man and a woman in love, surrounded by a materialistic, loveless society.

6. stars rain sun moon
(and only the snow can begin to explain
how children are apt to forget to remember
with up so floating many bells down)

7. one day anyone died i guess
(and noone stooped to kiss his face)
busy folk buried them side by side
little by little and was by was

8. all by all and deep by deep
and more by more they dream their sleep
noone and anyone earth by april
wish by spirit and if by yes.

9. Women and men (both dong and ding)
summer autumn winter spring
reaped their sowing and went their came
sun moon stars rain

I said earlier that in this poem Cummings develops new techniques. Not only are the hero and heroine of the transcendent world and the men and women of the unworld designated by pronouns, not nouns, but the pronouns explode into double meanings. In the eyes of the big, materialistic unworld, the hero is merely anyone—i.e., nobody in particular; and so Cummings introduces him. But soon it becomes evident that an anyone who can still live in what is to him a pretty how town (in which questioning has not been stifled) and still respond to the floating sound of the bells is not a person whom Cummings considers a mere nobody. Throughout the poem these two meanings appear simultaneously. The pronouns are what they are literally, and they are their opposites. The effectiveness of this method is especially marked in stanza 3 in the line "that noone loved him more by more" and (after anyone's death) in stanza 7 in the line "(and noone stooped to kiss his face)."

Furthermore, parts of speech are juggled in the poem—verbs, conjunctions, and adjectives, all on occasion becoming nouns: "they sowed their isn't they reaped their same." But once this device is accepted, it becomes not an impediment but an enrichment. In the transcendent world, you remember, *is* is a verb of action, of aliveness; thus in Cummings' unworld, the men and women sow their *isn't*—non-existence—and reap just that. And by the end, this poem, that begins in a poetic version of "Once upon a time," soars to lyric affirmation. As life seems to Cummings a natural thing that the unworld ignores, so death is equally natural and not to be feared. Thus, remembering the last line of stanza 4, that "anyone's any was all to her," when in stanza 7 we read that "busy folk buried them side by side," we are ready for "all by all and deep by deep"—his *all* is the lady *noone;* her *all* is her lover *anyone.* So here they are, more by more, still dreaming their sleep.

"noone and anyone earth by april
wish by spirit and if by yes."

This is truly a poem of triumphant affirmation, of joy. Many of Cummings' poems end on this note. For example, the poem beginning "life is more true than reason will deceive" ends with these lines:

"death, as men call him, ends what they call men
—but beauty is more now than dying's when."

The next poem I have included in part for comic relief, in part because it is an example of one kind of Cummings poem not yet treated.

when your honest redskin toma
hawked and scalped his victim ,
not to save a world for stalin
was he aiming ;

spare the child and spoil the rod
quoth the palmist .

Read conventionally, the serious idea comes through: When the American Indian took to the warpath, he did not intend the result that came,—namely, the white man's taking over the country, only to have the intellectuals of the nineteen-thirties willing to turn it over to Stalin. (Cummings himself went to Russia in the early thirties and found striking evidence that the USSR was a land of the dead and the damned, not the world's salvation.) Nor (in the last two lines of this poem) will the practice of permissive child-rearing prove a panacea, says the palmist—who is, I assume, both fortune-teller and one who uses the palm of his hand to spank, ironically, the rod itself.

But listen to the poem read this way:

when your honest redskin toma
hawked and scalped his victim comma
not to save a world for stalin
was he aiming semicolon

spare the child and spoil the rod
quoth the palmist period

This is pure comedy. And by this time we know that Cummings intends such simultaneous meanings. If anyone thinks the second rendering isn't valid, let him notice that when one pronounces the punctuation marks (set off by spacing, as are words), the lines are perfectly regular —eight syllables each—and rhyme in couplets. And if anyone thinks that a poem can't be serious and comic at the same time, I remind him of one of John Donne's holy sonnets in which the poet, in asking God to forgive his sins, puns on his own name.

And finally, the last poem, "i thank You God."

i thank You God for most this amazing
day:for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky;and for everything
which is natural which is infinite which is yes

(i who have died am alive again today,
and this is the sun's birthday;this is the birth
day of life and love and wings:and of the gay
great happening illimitably earth)

how should tasting touching hearing seeing
breathing any—lifted from the no
of all nothing—human merely being
doubt unimaginable You?

(now the ears of my ears awake and
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)

Here a dislocated word order may cause momentary puzzlement—e.g., in line 1, "most this amazing" instead of "this most amazing." The shifted order emphasizes the uniqueness of *this* amazing day while at the same time putting greater emphasis on *most.* In line 2 the "leaping greenly spirits of trees" means, I think, that the trees' spirits leap greenly—i.e., the greenly leaping spirits of trees. Also the last line of the second quatrain—"great happening illimitably earth"—may briefly perplex. The earth is not stagnant, quiescent; it is a great *happening* earth whose aliveness, whose happening cannot be limited—a great illimitably happening earth, and at the same time an illimitable earth, the seeming adverb really doing double duty as adverb and adjective. But in the third quatrain, if we assume that the poet is doing the same thing with the phrase "human merely being," we miss the meaning. Here he means exactly what the word order suggests—for a more usual phrasing, "mere human being," would permit us to read it carelessly. *Being* means *aliveness*; it doesn't need to be dressed up by an important modifier. Merely *being* is the essence of a human being. Cummings always forces our attention on his meaning.

Now for a final appraisal of Cummings as a poet. I hope that at this point you agree with me that he is not unintelligible, that his distortions are meaningful, and that he does give us a fresh look at ourselves and our world. But is he, as some have charged, an adolescent who wouldn't grow up? Well, if to respond with song to this earth's glories—youth and love and grasshoppers and sunsets—is adolescent, then yes. But I agree with Professor David Burns when he says: "his poetry is evergreen, spangled with images which forever delight us. It is an impertinence to ask such a poet to 'grow up.'" And let me quote John Ciardi, in his obituary article in THE SATURDAY REVIEW: "Perhaps, after all, it is not that Cummings' mind was over simple, but that our minds have grown overcomplicated and thereby lost the sense of first things." Is Cummings, as some have charged, an escapist from the world of reality? If by escapism one means a refusal to look at such world, the answer is an emphatic No. If by escapism one means an insistence upon remaining a free person in the Emersonian sense, a refusal to become a piece of anonymity in a complex society, then yes. And finally, have we in America today any real choice of whether we will live in Cummings'

world of transcendence or his unworld dominated by that assembly-line product, manunkind? Cummings, to a surprising degree, ordered his life so as to remain a free individual. But most of us, as Mr. Sydney Harris reminded us on this campus a few weeks ago, find that adulthood forces upon us the realities of crabgrass and taxes and jobs in a mechanized society, whether we like it or not; but, as he said, it is the role of education to help the individual preserve, as far as possible, his ideals, so that man does not lose his mind, his spirit, his very humanity to the machine, to a stifling togetherness. Here Cummings may help us, through his lyric, wide-eyed wonder, to really see and preserve in our hearts the

"gay/great happening illimitably earth."