

**Classic Poetry Series**

# **Edward Estlin Cummings**

**- poems -**

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**1(a... (a leaf falls on loneliness)**

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Edward Estlin Cummings

## **all in green**

All in green went my love riding  
on a great horse of gold  
into the silver dawn.

Four lean hounds crouched low and smiling  
the merry deer ran before.

Fleeter be they than dappled dreams  
the swift red deer  
the red rare deer.

Four red roebuck at a white water  
the cruel bugle sang before.

Horn at hip went my love riding  
riding the echo down  
into the silver dawn.

Four lean hounds crouched low and smiling  
the level meadows ran before.

Softer be they than slippered sleep  
the lean lithe deer  
the fleet flown deer.

Four fleet does at a gold valley  
the famished arrow sang before.

Bow at belt went my love riding  
riding the mountain down  
into the silver dawn.

Four lean hounds crouched low and smiling  
the sheer peaks ran before.

Paler be they than daunting death  
the sleek slim deer  
the tall tense deer.

Four tall stags at the green mountain  
the lucky hunter sang before.

All in green went my love riding  
on a great horse of gold  
into the silver dawn.

Four lean hounds crouched low and smiling  
my heart fell dead before.

Edward Estlin Cummings

## **anyone lived in a pretty how town**

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.

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

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

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

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

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)

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

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

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

Edward Estlin Cummings

## Ballad of the Scholar's Lament

When I have struggled through three hundred years  
of Roman history, and hastened o'er  
Some French play-(though I have my private fears  
Of flunking sorely when I take the floor  
In class),-when I have steeped my soul in gore  
And Greek, and figured over half a ream  
With Algebra, which I do (not) adore,  
How shall I manage to compose a theme?

It's well enough to talk of poor and peers,  
And munch the golden apples' shiny core,  
And lay a lot of heroes on their biers;-  
While the great Alec, knocking down a score,  
Takes out his handkerchief, boohoo-ing, "More!"-  
But harshly I awaken from my dream,  
To find a new,-er,-privilege,-in store:  
How shall I manage to compose a theme?

After I've swallowed prophecies of seers,  
And trailed Aeneas from the Trojan shore,  
Learned how Achilles, after many jeers,  
On piggy Agamemnon got to sore,  
And heard how Hercules, Esq., tore  
Around, and swept and dusted with a stream,  
There's one last duty,-let's not call it bore,-  
How shall I manage to compose a theme?

Envoi

Of what avail is all my mighty lore?  
I beat my breast, I tear my hair, I scream:  
"Behold, I have a Herculean chore.  
How shall I manage to compose a theme?"

Edward Estlin Cummings



## **Fame Speaks**

Stand forth, John Keats! On earth thou knew'st me not;  
Steadfast through all the storms of passion, thou,  
True to thy muse, and virgin to thy vow;  
Resigned, if name with ashes were forgot,  
So thou one arrow in the gold had'st shot!  
I never placed my laurel on thy brow,  
But on thy name I come to lay it now,  
When thy bones wither in the earthly plot.  
Fame is my name. I dwell among the clouds,  
Being immortal, and the wreath I bring  
Itself is Immortality. The sweets  
Of earth I know not, more the pains, but wing  
In mine own ether, with the crownéd crowds  
Born of the centuries. - Stand forth, John Keats!

Edward Estlin Cummings

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Edward Estlin Cummings



## **I Am A Beggar Always**

i am a beggar always  
who begs in your mind

(slightly smiling, patient, unspeaking  
with a sign on his  
chest  
BLIND)yes i

am this person of whom somehow  
you are never wholly rid(and who

does not ask for more than  
just enough dreams to  
live on)  
after all, kid

you might as well  
toss him a few thoughts

a little love preferably,  
anything which you can't  
pass off on other people: for  
instance a  
plugged promise-

the he will maybe (hearing something  
fall into his hat)go wandering  
after it with fingers;till having

found  
what was thrown away                    himself  
taptaptaps out of your brain, hopes, life  
to(carefully turning a  
corner)never bother you any more

Anonymous submission.

Edward Estlin Cummings

## **i carry your heart with me**

i carry your heart with me(i carry it in  
my heart)i am never without it(anywhere  
i go you go,my dear; and whatever is done  
by only me is your doing,my darling)  
i fear

no fate(for you are my fate,my sweet)i want  
no world(for beautiful you are my world,my true)  
and it's you are whatever a moon has always meant  
and whatever a sun will always sing is you

here is the deepest secret nobody knows  
(here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud  
and the sky of the sky of a tree called life;which grows  
higher than the soul can hope or mind can hide)  
and this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart

i carry your heart(i carry it in my heart)

Edward Estlin Cummings

## **i have found what you are like**

i have found what you are like  
the rain

(Who feathers frightened fields  
with the superior dust-of-sleep. wields

easily the pale club of the wind  
and swirled justly souls of flower strike

the air in utterable coolness

deeds of green thrilling light  
newfragile yellows with thinned

--in the woods lurch and press

which

stutter

and

sing

And the coolness of your smile is  
stirringofbirds between my arms;but  
i should rather than anything  
have(almost when hugeness will shut  
quietly)almost,  
your kiss

Edward Estlin Cummings

## **i like my body when it is with your**

i like my body when it is with your  
body. It is so quite new a thing.  
Muscles better and nerves more.  
i like your body. i like what it does,  
i like its hows. i like to feel the spine  
of your body and its bones, and the trembling  
-firm-smooth ness and which i will  
again and again and again  
kiss, i like kissing this and that of you,  
i like, slowly stroking the, shocking fuzz  
of your electric fur, and what-is-it comes  
over parting flesh ... And eyes big love-crumbs,

and possibly i like the thrill

of under me you so quite new

Edward Estlin Cummings

## **i sing of Olaf glad and big**

i sing of Olaf glad and big  
whose warmest heart recoiled at war:  
a conscientious object-or

his wellbelovéd colonel (trig  
westpointer most succinctly bred)  
took erring Olaf soon in hand;  
but-though an host of overjoyed  
noncoms (first knocking on the head  
him) do through icy waters roll  
that helplessness which others stroke  
with brushes recently employed  
anent this muddy toiletbowl,  
while kindred intellects evoke  
allegiance per blunt instruments-  
Olaf (being to all intents  
a corpse and wanting any rag  
upon what God unto him gave)  
responds, without getting annoyed  
"I will not kiss your fucking flag"

straightaway the silver bird looked grave  
(departing hurriedly to shave)

but-though all kinds of officers  
(a yearning nation's blueeyed pride)  
their passive prey did kick and curse  
until for wear their clarion  
voices and boots were much the worse,  
and egged the firstclassprivates on  
his rectum wickedly to tease  
by means of skillfully applied  
bayonets roasted hot with heat-  
Olaf (upon what were once knees)  
does almost ceaselessly repeat  
"there is some shit I will not eat"

our president, being of which  
assertions duly notified  
threw the yellowsonofabitch  
into a dungeon, where he died

Christ (of His mercy infinite)  
i pray to see; and Olaf, too

preponderatingly because  
unless statistics lie he was  
more brave than me: more blond than you

Edward Estlin Cummings

## **If**

If freckles were lovely, and day was night,  
And measles were nice and a lie warn't a lie,  
    Life would be delight,-  
    But things couldn't go right  
    For in such a sad plight  
I wouldn't be I.

If earth was heaven, and now was hence,  
And past was present, and false was true,  
    There might be some sense  
    But I'd be in suspense  
    For on such a pretense  
You wouldn't be you.

If fear was plucky, and globes were square,  
And dirt was cleanly and tears were glee  
    Things would seem fair,-  
    Yet they'd all despair,  
    For if here was there  
We wouldn't be we.

Edward Estlin Cummings

## **if everything happens that can't be done**

if everything happens that can't be done  
(and anything's righter  
than books  
could plan)  
the stupidest teacher will almost guess  
(with a run  
skip  
around we go yes)  
there's nothing as something as one

one hasn't a why or because or although  
(and buds know better  
than books  
don't grow)  
one's anything old being everything new  
(with a what  
which  
around we come who)  
one's everyanything so

so world is a leaf so tree is a bough  
(and birds sing sweeter  
than books  
tell how)  
so here is away and so your is a my  
(with a down  
up  
around again fly)  
forever was never till now

now i love you and you love me  
(and books are shutter  
than books  
can be)  
and deep in the high that does nothing but fall  
(with a shout  
each  
around we go all)  
there's somebody calling who's we

we're anything brighter than even the sun  
(we're everything greater  
than books  
might mean)  
we're everanything more than believe  
(with a spin  
leap  
alive we're alive)  
we're wonderful one times one

Edward Estlin Cummings

**if i**

if i

or anybody don't  
know where it her his

my next meal's coming from  
i say to hell with that  
that doesn't matter (and if

he she it or everybody gets a  
bellyful without  
lifting my finger i say to hell  
with that i

say that doesn't matter) but  
if somebody  
or you are beautiful or  
deep or generous what  
i say is

whistle that  
sing that yell that spell  
that out big (bigger than cosmic  
rays war earthquakes famine or the ex

prince of whoses diving into  
a whateses to rescue miss nobody's  
probably handbag) because i say that's not

swell (get me) babe not (understand me) lousy  
kid that's something else my sweet (i feel that's  
true)

Edward Estlin Cummings



### **If I have made, my lady, intricate**

If I have made, my lady, intricate  
imperfect various things chiefly which wrong  
your eyes (frailer than most deep dreams are frail)  
songs less firm than your body's whitest song  
upon my mind - if I have failed to snare  
the glance too shy - if through my singing slips  
the very skillful strangeness of your smile  
the keen primeval silence of your hair

- let the world say "his most wise music stole  
nothing from death" -

    you will only create  
(who are so perfectly alive) my shame:  
lady whose profound and fragile lips  
the sweet small clumsy feet of April came

into the ragged meadow of my soul.

Edward Estlin Cummings

### **if I should sleep with a lady called death... (III)**

if I should sleep with a lady called death  
get another man with firmer lips  
to take your new mouth in his teeth  
(hips pumping pleasure into hips).

Seeing how the limp huddling string  
of your smile over his body squirms  
kissingly, I will bring you every spring  
handfuls of little normal worms.

Dress deftly your flesh in stupid stuffs,  
phrase the immense weapon of your hair.  
Understanding why his eye laughs,  
I will bring you every year

something which is worth the whole,  
an inch of nothing for your soul.

Edward Estlin Cummings

**in just-**

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

Edward Estlin Cummings

## **in spite of everything...**

in spite of everything  
which breathes and moves,since Doom  
(with white longest hands  
neatening each crease)  
will smooth entirely our minds  
-before leaving my room  
i turn,and(stooping  
through the morning)kiss  
this pillow,dear  
where our heads lived and were.

Edward Estlin Cummings

**in time of daffodils(who know**

in time of daffodils(who know  
the goal of living is to grow)  
forgetting why,remember how

in time of lilacs who proclaim  
the aim of waking is to dream,  
remember so(forgetting seem)

in time of roses(who amaze  
our now and here with paradise)  
forgetting if,remember yes

in time of all sweet things beyond  
whatever mind may comprehend,  
remember seek(forgetting find)

and in a mystery to be  
(when time from time shall set us free)  
forgetting me,remember me

Edward Estlin Cummings

## **it is at moments after I have dreamed**

it is at moments after i have dreamed  
of the rare entertainment of your eyes,  
when (being fool to fancy) i have deemed

with your peculiar mouth my heart made wise;  
at moments when the glassy darkness holds

the genuine apparition of your smile  
(it was through tears always) and silence moulds  
such strangeness as was mine a little while;

moments when my once more illustrious arms  
are filled with fascination, when my breast  
wears the intolerant brightness of your charms:

one pierced moment whiter than the rest

-turning from the tremendous lie of sleep  
i watch the roses of the day grow deep.

Edward Estlin Cummings

## **it may not always be so**

it may not always be so; and i say  
that if your lips, which i have loved, should touch  
another's, and your dear strong fingers clutch  
his heart, as mine in time not far away;  
if on another's face your sweet hair lay  
in such a silence as i know, or such  
great writhing words as, uttering overmuch,  
stand helplessly before the spirit at bay;

if this should be, i say if this should be --  
you of my heart, send me a little word;  
that i may go unto him, and take his hands,  
saying, Accept all happiness from me.  
Then shall i turn my face, and hear one bird  
sing terribly afar in the lost lands.

Edward Estlin Cummings

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Edward Estlin Cummings



## **maggie and milly and molly and may**

maggie and milly and molly and may  
went down to the beach (to play one day)

and maggie discovered a shell that sang  
so sweetly she couldn't remember her troubles, and

milly befriended a stranded star  
whose rays five languid fingers were;

and molly was chased by a horrible thing  
which raced sideways while blowing bubbles: and

may came home with a smooth round stone  
as small as a world and as large as alone.

For whatever we lose (like a you or a me)  
it's always ourselves we find in the sea

Edward Estlin Cummings

## may i feel said he

may i feel said he  
(i'll squeal said she  
just once said he)  
it's fun said she

(may i touch said he  
how much said she  
a lot said he)  
why not said she

(let's go said he  
not too far said she  
what's too far said he  
where you are said she)

may i stay said he  
which way said she  
like this said he  
if you kiss said she

may i move said he  
is it love said she)  
if you're willing said he  
(but you're killing said she

but it's life said he  
but your wife said she  
now said he)  
ow said she

(tiptop said he  
don't stop said she  
oh no said he)  
go slow said she

(cccome?said he  
ummm said she)  
you're divine!said he  
(you are Mine said she)

Edward Estlin Cummings

## **my father moved through dooms of love**

my father moved through dooms of love  
through sames of am through haves of give,  
singing each morning out of each night  
my father moved through depths of height

this motionless forgetful where  
turned at his glance to shining here;  
that if(so timid air is firm)  
under his eyes would stir and squirm

newly as from unburied which  
floats the first who, his april touch  
drove sleeping selves to swarm their fates  
woke dreamers to their ghostly roots

and should some why completely weep  
my father's fingers brought her sleep:  
vainly no smallest voice might cry  
for he could feel the mountains grow.

Lifting the valleys of the sea  
my father moved through griefs of joy;  
praising a forehead called the moon  
singing desire into begin

joy was his song and joy so pure  
a heart of star by him could steer  
and pure so now and now so yes  
the wrists of twilight would rejoice

keen as midsummer's keen beyond  
conceiving mind of sun will stand,  
so strictly(over utmost him  
so hugely)stood my father's dream

his flesh was flesh his blood was blood:  
no hungry man but wished him food;  
no cripple wouldn't creep one mile  
uphill to only see him smile.

Scorning the pomp of must and shall  
my father moved through dooms of feel;  
his anger was as right as rain  
his pity was as green as grain

septembering arms of year extend  
less humbly wealth to foe and friend  
than he to foolish and to wise  
offered immeasurable is

proudly and(by octobering flame  
beckoned)as earth will downward climb,

so naked for immortal work  
his shoulders marched against the dark

his sorrow was as true as bread:  
no liar looked him in the head;  
if every friend became his foe  
he'd laugh and build a world with snow.

My father moved through theys of we,  
singing each new leaf out of each tree  
(and every child was sure that spring  
danced when she heard my father sing)

then let men kill which cannot share,  
let blood and flesh be mud and mire,  
scheming imagine, passion willed,  
freedom a drug that's bought and sold

giving to steal and cruel kind,  
a heart to fear, to doubt a mind,  
to differ a disease of same,  
conform the pinnacle of am

though dull were all we taste as bright,  
bitter all utterly things sweet,  
maggoty minus and dumb death  
all we inherit, all bequeath

and nothing quite so least as truth  
-i say though hate were why men breathe-  
because my father lived his soul  
love is the whole and more than all

Edward Estlin Cummings

## my love

my love  
thy hair is one kingdom  
the king whereof is darkness  
thy forehead is a flight of flowers  
thy head is a quick forest  
filled with sleeping birds  
thy breasts are swarms of white bees  
upon the bough of thy body  
thy body to me is April  
in those armpits is the approach of spring  
thy thighs are white horses yoked to a chariot  
of kings  
they are the striking of a good minstrel  
between them is always a pleasant song  
my love  
thy head is a casket  
of the cool jewel of thy mind  
the hair of thy head is one warrior  
innocent of defeat  
thy hair upon thy shoulders is an army  
with victory and with trumpets  
thy legs are the trees of dreaming  
whose fruit is the very eatage of forgetfulness  
thy lips are satraps in scarlet  
in whose kiss is the combinings of kings  
thy wrists  
are holy  
which are the keepers of the keys of thy blood  
thy feet upon thy ankles are flowers in vases  
of silver  
in thy beauty is the dilemma of flutes  
thy eyes are the betrayal  
of bells comprehended through incense

Edward Estlin Cummings

## **my sweet old etcetera**

my sweet old etcetera  
aunt lucy during the recent

war could and what  
is more did tell you just  
what everybody was fighting

for,  
my sister

Isabel created hundreds  
(and  
hundreds)of socks not to  
mention fleaproof earwarmers  
etcetera wristers etcetera, my  
mother hoped that

i would die etcetera  
bravely of course my father used  
to become hoarse talking about how it was  
a privilege and if only he  
could meanwhile my

self etcetera lay quietly  
in the deep mud et

cetera  
(dreaming,  
et  
cetera, of  
Your smile  
eyes knees and of your Etcetera)

Edward Estlin Cummings

## **next to of course god america i**

"next to of course god america i  
love you land of the pilgrims' and so forth oh  
say can you see by the dawn's early my  
country 'tis of centuries come and go  
and are no more what of it we should worry  
in every language even deafanddumb  
thy sons acclaim your glorious name by gorry  
by jingo by gee by gosh by gum  
why talk of beauty what could be more beaut-  
iful than these heroic happy dead  
who rushed like lions to the roaring slaughter  
they did not stop to think they died instead  
then shall the voice of liberty be mute?"

He spoke. And drank rapidly a glass of water

Edward Estlin Cummings

## **nobody loses all the time (X)**

nobody loses all the time

i had an uncle named  
Sol who was a born failure and  
nearly everybody said he should have gone  
into vaudeville perhaps because my Uncle Sol could  
sing McCann He Was A Diver on Xmas Eve like Hell Itself which  
may or may not account for the fact that my Uncle

Sol indulged in that possibly most inexcusable  
of all to use a highfalootin phrase  
luxuries that is or to  
wit farming and be  
it needlessly  
added

my Uncle Sol's farm  
failed because the chickens  
ate the vegetables so  
my Uncle Sol had a  
chicken farm till the  
skunks ate the chickens when

my Uncle Sol  
had a skunk farm but  
the skunks caught cold and  
died so  
my Uncle Sol imitated the  
skunks in a subtle manner

or by drowning himself in the watertank  
but somebody who'd given my Unde Sol a Victor  
Victrola and records while he lived presented to  
him upon the auspicious occasion of his decease a  
scrumptious not to mention splendiferous funeral with  
tall boys in black gloves and flowers and everything and

i remember we all cried like the Missouri  
when my Uncle Sol's coffin lurched because  
somebody pressed a button  
(and down went  
my Uncle  
Sol

and started a worm farm)

Edward Estlin Cummings



**o sweet spontaneous**

o sweet spontaneous  
earth how often have  
the  
doting

                    fingers of  
prurient philosophers pinched  
and  
poked

thee  
, has the naughty thumb  
of science prodded  
thy

                    beauty . how  
often have religions taken  
thee upon their scraggy knees  
squeezing and

buffeting thee that thou mightest conceive  
gods  
            (but  
true

to the incomparable  
couch of death thy  
rhythmic  
lover

                    thou answerest

them only with

                    spring)

Edward Estlin Cummings

## **of Ever-Ever Land i speak**

(of Ever-Ever Land i speak  
sweet morons gather roun'  
who does not dare to stand or sit  
may take it lying down)

down with the human soul  
and anything else uncanned  
for everyone carries canopeners  
in Ever-Ever Land

(for Ever-Ever Land is a place  
that's as simple as simple can be  
and was built that way on purpose  
by simple people like we)

down with hell and heaven  
and all the religious fuss  
infinity pleased our parents  
one inch looks good to us

(and Ever-Ever Land is a place  
that's measured and safe and known  
where it's lucky to be unlucky  
and the hitler lies down with the cohn)

down above all with love  
and everything perverse  
or which makes some feel more better  
when all ought to feel less worse

(but only sameness is normal  
in Ever-Ever Land  
for a bad cigar is a woman  
but a gland is only a gland)

Edward Estlin Cummings

## **pity this busy monster, manunkind**

pity this busy monster, manunkind,

not. Progress is a comfortable disease:  
your victim (death and life safely beyond)

plays with the bigness of his littleness  
--- electrons deify one razorblade  
into a mountainrange; lenses extend  
unwish through curving wherewhen till unwish  
returns on its unself.

A world of made  
is not a world of born --- pity poor flesh

and trees, poor stars and stones, but never this  
fine specimen of hypermagical

ultraomnipotence. We doctors know

a hopeless case if --- listen: there's a hell  
of a good universe next door; let's go

Edward Estlin Cummings

**Poem 42**

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Edward Estlin Cummings

## **since feeling is first**

since feeling is first  
who pays any attention  
to the syntax of things  
will never wholly kiss you;

wholly to be a fool  
while Spring is in the world

my blood approves,  
and kisses are a better fate  
than wisdom  
lady i swear by all the flowers. Don't cry  
- the best gesture of my brain is less than  
your eyelids' flutter which says

we are for each other: then  
laugh, leaning back in my arms  
for life's not a paragraph

and death i think is no parenthesis

Edward Estlin Cummings

## **Sometimes I Am Alive Because With**

sometimes i am alive because with  
me her alert treelike body sleeps  
which i will feel slowly sharpening  
becoming distinct with love slowly,  
who in my shoulder sinks sweetly teeth  
until we shall attain the Springsmelling  
intense large togethercoloured instant

the moment pleasantly frightful

when, her mouth suddenly rising, wholly  
begins with mine fiercely to fool  
(and from my thighs which shrug and pant  
a murdering rain leapingly reaches the upward singular deepest flower which she  
carries in a gesture of her hips)

Edward Estlin Cummings

## **somewhere i have never travelled**

somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond  
any experience, your eyes have their silence:  
in your most frail gesture are things which enclose me,  
or which i cannot touch because they are too near

your slightest look easily will unclose me  
though i have closed myself as fingers,  
you open always petal by petal myself as Spring opens  
(touching skilfully, mysteriously) her first rose

or if your wish be to close me, i and  
my life will shut very beautifully, suddenly,  
as when the heart of this flower imagines  
the snow carefully everywhere descending;

nothing which we are to perceive in this world equals  
the power of your intense fragility: whose texture  
compels me with the color of its countries,  
rendering death and forever with each breathing

(i do not know what it is about you that closes  
and opens; only something in me understands  
the voice of your eyes is deeper than all roses)  
nobody, not even the rain, has such small hands

Edward Estlin Cummings

## **Spring is like a perhaps hand**

Spring is like a perhaps hand  
(which comes carefully  
out of Nowhere)arranging  
a window,into which people look(while  
people stare  
arranging and changing placing  
carefully there a strange  
thing and a known thing here)and

changing everything carefully

spring is like a perhaps  
Hand in a window  
(carefully to  
and fro moving New and  
Old things,while  
people stare carefully  
moving a perhaps  
fraction of flower here placing  
an inch of air there)and

without breaking anything.

Edward Estlin Cummings



**there are so many tictoc...**

there are so many tictoc  
clocks everywhere telling people  
what toctic time it is for  
tictic instance five toc minutes toc  
past six tic

Spring is not regulated and does  
not get out of order nor do  
its hands a little jerking move  
over numbers slowly

we do not  
wind it up it has no weights  
springs wheels inside of  
its slender self no indeed dear  
nothing of the kind.

(So,when kiss Spring comes  
we'll kiss each kiss other on kiss the kiss  
lips because tic clocks toc don't make  
a toctic difference  
to kisskiss you and to  
kiss me)

Edward Estlin Cummings

**this(let's remember)day died again and...**

this(let's remember)day died again and  
again;whose golden,crimson dooms conceive

an oceaning abyss of orange dream

larger than sky times earth:a flame beyond  
soul immemorially forevering am-  
and as collapsing that grey mind by wave  
doom disappeared,out of perhaps(who knows?)

eternity floated a blossoming

(while anyone might slowly count to soon)  
rose-did you see her?darling,did you(kiss  
me)quickly count to never?you were wrong

-then all the way from perfect nowhere came

(as easily as we forget something)  
livingest the imaginable moon

Edward Estlin Cummings

## **what if a much of a which of a wind**

what if a much of a which of a wind  
gives the truth to summer's lie;  
bloodies with dizzying leaves the sun  
and yanks immortal stars awry?  
Blow king to beggar and queen to seem  
(blow friend to fiend: blow space to time)  
-when skies are hanged and oceans drowned,  
the single secret will still be man

what if a keen of a lean wind flays  
screaming hills with sleet and snow:  
strangles valleys by ropes of thing  
and stifles forests in white ago?  
Blow hope to terror; blow seeing to blind  
(blow pity to envy and soul to mind)  
-whose hearts are mountains, roots are trees,  
it's they shall cry hello to the spring

what if a dawn of a doom of a dream  
bites this universe in two,  
peels forever out of his grave  
and sprinkles nowhere with me and you?  
Blow soon to never and never to twice  
(blow life to isn't:blow death to was)  
-all nothing's only our hugest home;  
the most who die, the more we live

Edward Estlin Cummings

## **when serpents bargain**

when serpents bargain for the right to squirm  
and the sun strikes to gain a living wage -  
when thorns regard their roses with alarm  
and rainbows are insured against old age

when every thrush may sing no new moon in  
if all screech-owls have not okayed his voice  
- and any wave signs on the dotted line  
or else an ocean is compelled to close

when the oak begs permission of the birch  
to make an acorn - valleys accuse their  
mountains of having altitude - and march  
denounces april as a saboteur

then we'll believe in that incredible  
unanimal mankind (and not until)

Edward Estlin Cummings

## **Where's Madge then,**

Where's Madge then,  
Madge and her men?  
buried with  
Alice in her hair,  
(but if you ask the rain  
he'll not tell where.)

beauty makes terms  
with time and his worms,  
when loveliness  
says sweetly Yes  
to wind and cold;  
and how much earth  
is Madge worth?  
Inquire of the flower that sways in the autumn  
she will never guess.  
but i know

my heart fell dead before.

Edward Estlin Cummings

## ygUDuh

ygUDuh

ydoan  
yunnuhstan

ydoan o  
yunnuhstand dem  
yguduh ged

yunnuhstan dem doidee  
yguduh ged riduh  
ydoan o nudn

LISN bud LISN

dem  
gud  
am

lidl yelluh bas  
tuds weer goin

duhSIVILEYEzum

Edward Estlin Cummings

## Young Woman of Cambridge,

"Gay" is the captivating cognomen of a Young Woman of Cambridge,  
Mass.

to whom nobody seems to have mentioned ye olde Freudian wish;  
when I contemplate her uneyes safely ensconced in thick glass  
you try if we are a gentleman not to think of (sh)

the world renowned investigator of paper sailors--argonauta argo  
harmoniously being with his probably most brilliant pupil mated,  
let us not deem it miraculous if their (so to speak) offspring has that large  
appearance of somebody who was hectocotyliferously propagated

when Miss G touched N.Y. our skeleton stepped from his cupboard  
gallantly offering to demonstrate the biggest best busiest city  
and presently found himself rattling for that well known suburb  
the Bronx (enlivening an otherwise dead silence with harmless quips, out  
of Briggs by Kitty)

arriving in an exhausted condition, I purchased two bags of lukewarm  
peanuts  
with the dime which her mama had generously provided (despite courte-  
ous protestations)  
and offering Miss Gay one (which she politely refused) set out gaily for  
the hyenas  
suppressing my frank qualms in deference to her not inobvious perturba-  
tions

unhappily, the denizens of the zoo were that day inclined to be uncouthly  
erotic  
more particularly the primates--from which with dignity square feet  
turned abruptly Miss Gay away:  
"on the whole" (if you will permit a metaphor savouring slightly of the  
demotic)  
Miss Gay had nothing to say to the animals and the animals had nothing  
to say to Miss Gay

during our return voyage, my pensive companion dimly remarked some-  
thing about "stuffed  
fauna" being "very interesting" . . . we also discussed the possibility of  
rain. . .

E distant proximity to a Y.W.C.A. she suddenly luffed  
--thanking me; and (stating that she hoped we might "meet again  
sometime") vanished, gunwale awash. I thereupon loosened my collar  
and dove for the nearest I; surreptitiously cogitating  
the dictum of a New England sculptor (well on in life) re the Helen Moller  
dancers, whom he considered "elevating--that is, if dancing CAN be ele-  
vating"

Miss (believe it or) Gay is a certain Young Woman unacquainted with the  
libido  
and pursuing a course of instruction at Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Mass.  
I try if you are a gentleman not to sense something un poco putrido  
when we contemplate her uneyes safely ensconced in thick glass

Edward Estlin Cummings