

News, Notes, Correspondence

- *Michael Webster alerted us to a piece by Charles Hutchinson and Peter Miller in *The Village Voice*, April 5-11, 2000, concerning Joe Gould's *Oral History of Our Time*, the masterwork he was allegedly writing but which seemed to have been lost. Besides giving a short sketch of Gould's life, the article discusses eleven of Gould's notebooks that are now housed at New York University. See the article at <http://www.villagevoice.com/2000-04-04/news/joe-gould-s-secret-history/>
- *Gerry Locklin was interviewed by Christopher McCabe for the *Los Angeles Weekly*, June 9-15, 2000, 46-47. And he published *The Mystical Exorcycle: poems*, Andover, MA: The Chuckwagon, 2001; *duke, lester, charles: the sixth jazz chap*, Albuquerque, NM: Zerx Press, 2001; and, with Patricia Cherin, *Familiarities*, a poetry chapbook, San Pedro, CA: Lummo Press, 2001.
- *Oscar Bearinger sent us his collection of poems and drawings, *breaking through*, Eganville, Ontario, Canada, 2001.
- *Poets House's "Friends in the House" published *The Manhattan Poetry Map*, with #28 indicating 4 Patchin Place, and with the following blurb accompanying it: "E.E.Cummings, the Lost Generation Poet, lived here from 1923 until his death in 1962, walking daily to Washington Square Park, where he would sketch in his notebooks." We contacted Poets House about the "Lost Generation" part, since the disillusionment and cynicism of Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms* do not seem to be what Cummings was conveying in *The Enormous Room* or in the basic tenor of his poems about World War One.
- *George Held published a book of poems, *Beyond Renewal*, Mena, Arkansas: Cedar Hill Publications, 2001. Held acknowledges *SPRING* in which one of his poems, "How Dad Died," originally appeared.
- *David Forrest, M.D., composed a poetic "Treasury of Error," a parody of almost 60 lines reporting on the scientific program of the Association for Psychoanalytic Medicine, "Parapraxes in the Plays of William Shakespeare," by Eugene J. Mahon, M.D. David wrote us on January 2, 2001, "As Mahon makes much of the preoedipal bond as symbolized by the number one vs. two, I worked in our poet EE, as nobody does unity better."
- *Prof. Mark Leier, Department of History, Simon Fraser University, emailed us at the end of May, 2001, concerning the "anarchistic" sentiments Cummings expressed in a letter to his sister in 1922. Leier is writing a biography of Bakunin and is interested in the latter's similar sentiments at a similar age.



*Stephen Scotti and Kristine Stott gave a very successful concert of Cummings poems set to music at the ALA Conference in Cambridge, MA, May 24-27, 01.

*Dana Gioia published a book of poems, *Interrogations at Noon*, St. Paul, MN: Graywolf Press, June 2001.

*A Mr. David Saito-Chung emailed us on June 11, 2001, from Los Angeles, that he was writing a feature on Cummings for the “Leaders & Success” page of *Investor’s Business Daily*, and asking for an interview.

*Friend and colleague Tom Smith sent us a remarkable book on July 11, 2001, entitled *Graves of the Poets*, poems by H. R. Coursen and others, photos by Pamela Mount and others, Manassas, VA: EM Press, 1993. Pages 54-55 have photos of the graves of Marion and Cummings and reprint two of Cummings’

poems: “what if a much of a which of a wind” (CP 560) and “it is at moments after i have dreamed” (CP 145).

*John Ordeman sent a postcard with a quote from William Safire’s “On Language” column in the *NY Times Magazine*, July 8, 2001: “The joyously anticapital poet Edward Estlin Cummings (who styled himself e.e.cummings...)”

*We have a letter from John Tagliabue, Oct. 2, 2001, containing this testimonial: “Yes, I always liked Cummings, he helped me come to myself. During my first years at Columbia in NYC (1941-42) I met José Garcia Villa and others and we shared our enthusiasm for him. My *great* teacher there Mark Van Doren I think said wise things in praise of Cummings and Mark helped me much to come to myself via the many writers he admired. Cummings—a *love* poet *with* humor, with lilt, with springtime often, and giddiness and joy.”

*Ordeman sent us on Oct. 9, 2001, a brochure announcing “1X1 seventeen poems on love” by Cummings, a record by Norfolk Unitarian Records, with Jim Rothermel flute, Bob Fishbeck clarinet, Esdras Ben Lubin guitar, Bob Kriner bass, and James H. Curtis reader.

*Isabel Alfandary had a second daughter, Oriane, Dec. 4, 2001. And in Jan. 02 gave birth to a book, *E.E. Cummings, ou la minuscule lyrique*, Paris: Editions Belin, 2002.

*William Jay Smith published *The Girl in Glass: love poems*, woodcuts by Jacques Hnizdovsky, NY: Books & Co., Turtle Point Press, Jan. 2002.

*Alys Rho Yablon, our former contributor and production editor, married Akiva Eliezer Meller in Jerusalem, Jan. 1, 2002. On the wedding invitation was engraved “one’s not half two. It’s two are halves of one” (CP 556).

*Samet Kose published *Cummings: Profil*, Istanbul, Turkey: Yapi Kredi Yayinlari, May 14, 2002, with poems and prose in translation, photos, drawings, notes, introduction, etc., almost 400 pages.

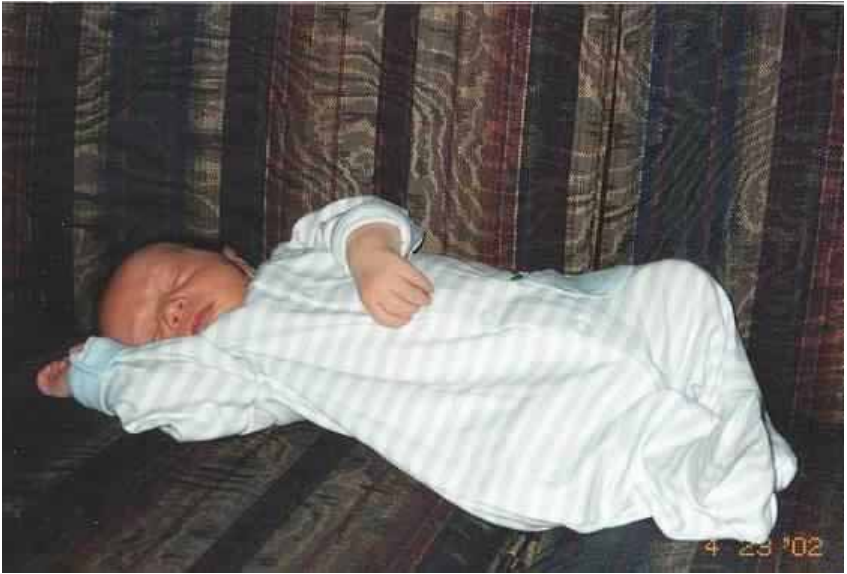
*Forrest and Friedman wrote an entry for “The E. E. Cummings Society” in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography Yearbook: 2001*, eds. Matthew J. Bruccoli, George Garnett, and George Parker Anderson. The Gale Group: A Bruccoli Clark Layman Book, Woodbridge, CT, 2002, 441-42.

*Tony Quagliano wrote us on Jan. 14, 2002, concerning material in the New Orleans newspaper called the *Gambit Weekly*, Dec. 2001, specifically a column by “Blake Pontchartrain—New Orleans Know-It-All,” about the racial origins of George Herriman, the creator of *Krazy Kat*.

- *Forrest sent us a clipping from the *New York Times* of Jan. 31, 2002, containing the following correction: “A January 17 Op-Ed article about Mark Twain misattributed a phrase about poetic language as the ‘precision that creates movement’. The author is E. E. Cummings.” We may also note that the “that” should be “which,” Foreword to *is 5* (1926), reprinted in *Complete Poems*, p. 221.
- *In Feb. 2002 we received a Turkish journal entitled *Kitap-lik* (2001) containing an article on Cummings by the above-mentioned Samet Kose, in which is reproduced an elephant drawing by the poet from a postcard sent to Friedman in 1958.
- *We received a playbill announcing a concert, “let’s touch the sky,” of Cummings poems set to music by composer James E. Reyes, Feb. 10, 2002, in St. Cecilia Church, Boston, MA.
- *The following day, Feb. 11, we attended the reading and reception celebrating the publication of the above-mentioned book by William Jay Smith, *The Girl in Glass*, at the Lenox Hill Bookstore in NYC.
- *On Feb. 18, 2002, we had the pleasure of meeting Ms. Susanne Abbuehl, singer in a musical quartet from Munich. She kindly gave us copies of their CD entitled “April,” wherein about half of their numbers are musical settings of poems by Cummings. We have three extras and will sell them first-come-first-served for \$25, including Postage, checks made out to Norman Friedman, to help support the cost of the Journal.
- *William Jay Smith gave a reading on March 5, 2002, of poems he translated from the Swedish by Leif Sjoberg, at Scandinavian House, NYC.
- *On March 7 we were asked by Kathleen E. Miller of the *Times* Washington Bureau to explain for publication why Cummings wanted his name in the usual caps, contrary to the piece by William Safire above.
- *On March 8, Maryette Charlton sent us a brochure concerning the history of the Jefferson Market Library which mentions the poet’s residence across the street and which uses lowercase for Cummings’ name.
- *Phil Gerber wrote us on April 10, 2002: “Have you ever read Paul Theroux’s ‘novel’ called *Picture Palace*. . . . He deals with a number of 20th century authors, all—I believe—based on actual observation. In any case, Cummings is mentioned several times, in the context of Cape Cod. At one point, the main character (a woman photographer) says: ‘I saw a man with a perfect head and photographed

him and later I found out he was the poet Cummings. ...I thought he was a genius before I saw a single line he'd written' (p. 91)."

*Taimi Olsen and her husband, Tom Beeson, gave birth to Joshua Richard Beeson on April 16, 2002. Here we see Josh a week later:



*In May 2002 we saw a "Sorry I missed your Birthday" card, produced by KOCO New York, Inc., containing the opening lines of "since feeling is first" (CP 291), but misquoting them and putting the poet's name in lowercase.

*On May 8, 2002, Jonathan W. Miller, a student at American Intercontinental University, wrote us about a movie entitled *Plain Clothes*, starring Arliss Howard and George Wendt, in which Howard reads a poem in his English Lit class and "effectively gets all the women teachers included hot and bothered." The poem is "she being Brand / -new" (CP 246).

*Also at the end of May, Ordeman sent us the following: "*Tom*, the book Cummings wrote for a ballet based on *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which has never been produced, was published in 1935 in an edition of 1500 copies. As the paper of the dust wrapper has become brittle with age, the book is rarely seen with its wrapper. Few people have, therefore, had an opportunity to read the interesting text printed on the inner flap of the wrapper, a text which, if not written by Cummings, was certainly used with his knowledge and approval. This is that text:

TOM
By E. E. Cummings

“This latest work of Cummings will be welcomed, by admirers of *The Enormous Room*, as a transcendental commentary on Jean le Nègre. Whoever is irritated by poetry will be irritated anew. Anyone who reads *HIM* will appreciate this second (and equally original) contribution to theater; anyone who saw the play will eagerly await this ballet’s production. The starting point of *EIMI* immediately suggests *Tom*. In each case, a humanitarian *idée fixe* serves as the springboard for a plunge into actuality. Here, again, a poet speaks; here again, a partial and cowardly epoch is fearlessly and completely challenged. Vividly (as the spectacle of man’s imperfection becomes the drama of man’s salvation through imperfection) we are reminded of two lines from *No Thanks*—

‘this mind made war
being generous”

*Friedman received a plaque from the American Literature Association, May 31, 2002, Long Beach, CA, “for service to American Author Societies.”



*We came across the following letter in the *Harvard Magazine* for May-June 2002, p. 87:

“UPPERCASE POET

In ‘SPRING SAMPLER,’ you make the common mistake of writing the name of E. E. Cummings ’15 in all lowercase, as ‘e.e. cummings ’15, I suppose because he wrote much of his poetry in lower case. When I wrote him in 1960 to invite him to lecture at Quincy House, he wrote back in lower case but signed his name with capital E, E, and C. And on the address side of the postcard, along with the 3¢ stamp, he typed ‘EE Cummings’ quite clearly.

Jay M. Pasachoff ’63, Ph.D. ’69

Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics Cambridge’

We wrote to Prof. Pasachoff asking permission to reprint, and he kindly responded on June 22, 2002 : “I am very pleased that you would like to reprint my letter about E. E. Cummings. Of course, you are welcome to do so. . . . I wrote him because of my fondness for and interest in his poetry, much of which I had read while at the Bronx High School of Science. . . .”

*John M. Gill e-mailed us on July 11, 2002 with more about the *New York Times* and Cummings:

Perhaps you saw the reference to Cummings in *The New York Times* yesterday. An article on Poets House and Stanley Kunitz, who has lived in Greenwich Village since 1928, concluded: “And then he remembered his first meetings his with Marianne Moore and E. E. Cummings, just as young poets today will remember meeting Stanley Kunitz on the streets or at Poets House” (B8).

This reminds me of the two Op-Ed pieces in the *Times* in January 2002 which mentioned Cummings. You may have seen them, but if not they may be of interest to you. Bill Keller’s column on three retiring Republican Senators (January 12, A31) quoted Cummings’ poem “mr u will not be missed” which Keller termed “the nasty bee sting” and “mean-spirited lines” which “guttled” Louis Untermeyer. Then three days later on January 15 the *Times* printed a letter from Justin Kaplan about this matter: “As [Untermeyer] told me when I worked for him as a research assistant on his edition of Walt Whitman, his smilingly viperish rejoinder to Cummings’ ‘mean-spirited’ epigram had been a brief thank-you postcard” ‘It’s the best thing you’ve ever written” (A22). [Editor’s note: for much more on Untermeyer and Cummings, see Philip Gerber’s “missing mr u (not)” *Spring* 10 (2001): 70-101.]

Then on January 17, an Op-Ed piece on Mark Twain by Roy Blount, Jr. attributed “the precision that creates movement” To Ezra Pound (A29). On January 31 on the Op-Ed page (A27) there appeared a “Correction”: “The author is E. E. Cummings.” What Cummings wrote in the “Foreword” to *is 5* is “the precision *which* creates movement.” The *Times* did not correct Blount’s substitution of “that” for Cummings’ “which.” I find Blount’s substitution ironic in a quotation about precision.

It is good to see that after many years of lower-case, the *Times* consistently these days prints “E. E. Cummings.”

* * *

(this poet made war
whose naught and all
sun are and moon
come fair come foul
he goes alone

—E. E. Cummings (CP 440)