

News, Notes, and Correspondence

- * We received a marvelous edition of the French journal, *Plein Chant*, 74-75, Winter / Spring 2002, devoted entirely to work by and about Cummings, and edited by one of our chief French representatives, Thierry Gillyboeuf, no stranger to our pages.
- * In January '02 we received *The Girl in Glass*, love poems by William Jay Smith, with woodcuts by Jacque Hnizdovsky.
- * In the next month we received six titles by Gerry Locklin: *The Mystical Exercycle; Duke, Lester, Charles; Retirement Blues and Other Jazz Poems; The Modigliani / Montparnasse Poems; The Pocket Book: A Novella and Nineteen Short Fictions; and The Ultimate Pessimist and Other Poems.*
- * On September 19, 2002, John Talbot Ordeman wrote us as follows: "In *British Literary Anecdotes* (Facts on file, NYC, 1990, p. 281), Robert Hendrickson states: 'In a letter to critic and novelist Pamela Hansford Johnson, Dylan Thomas wrote:

Few understand the work of Cummings
And few James Joyce's mental slummings
And few young Auden's coded chatter
But then it is the few that matter.'

Readers of *Spring* might enjoy it."

- * Glen Macleod informed us on October 19, 2002, that CNN Headline News was running a banner announcing Cummings' 108th birthday on October 14, and that New Haven's "Art Space sponsored poetry posters in city buses this fall. One poster features Cummings' 'stinging'" (CP 63).
- * The Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine in New York City held a Vespers Celebration of the Poets' Corner on October 27, 2002, to salute *all* the writers in the Poets' Corner, including, of course, Cummings. William Jay Smith was one of the poets reading from his own work.
- * On December 13, 2002, Robert Wegner wrote us:
Forgot to mention in my recent note that I came across another interesting reference to Cummings last June while in Stratford, Canada. We had been taking in a few plays at the Shakespeare Festival, Phyllis and I, and during an intermission while browsing in the gift / book / souvenir shop I came across a volume

titled *The Oxford Treasury of Time Poems*. (A paperback written in 2000.) Casually interested, I began flipping the pages just to see what great thinkers might be represented in this venerable tome when lo! before my eyes here is Cummings with his sonnet “i thank You God for most this amazing.” I was delighted to see him, and it crossed my mind at this moment that it is no longer a question of where will you find our poet in print—but where you will not!

* Apropos of Wegner’s last comment, the following appeared in a business technology help column in the *Chicago Tribune*, September 15, 2003:

Q: I use Microsoft Word and Windows XP Office. I like to write poetry. When I write it on my computer, it automatically capitalizes the first words of lines, whether I want them capitalized or not. Please tell me there is a way I to change this, and what it is.

Bonnie Mitchell, Downers Grove

A: Okay, so maybe producing poetry doesn’t always bring in large revenue numbers, but it can be a business, too, just like accounting and poodle-trimming. So here goes.

The infuriating Bill-knows-better-than-you-do auto-correction feature can be switched on and off—as well as modified—using a number of tools hidden in the Microsoft Word toolbar.

For example, e.e. cummings [sic] would have gone defunct trying to write all those references to himself as “i” rather than “I.” That’s because even when you turn off what looks like the obvious auto-correction features, others still lurk, such as automatically capitalizing the narrow pronoun.

So let’s start with clicking on Tools and then Options in Word. This brings up a bunch of helpful automatic corrections, like always capitalizing the first word of a sentence, catching common misspellings, watching for verb-subject agreement and such. You will find a command under Spelling and Grammar called Settings with a drop down menu letting you pick normal, formal, standard and custom settings. Depending upon the selection, you can switch it on or off.

But even with that done, the software will make every lone letter i into a capital I because that little bit of intrusive help is elsewhere in Word. So click on the Insert command in the toolbar and then Auto Text and then click the icon called Auto Text at the top of the Auto Text heading.

I know it’s confusing, but that’s how they did it.

Next, click on the Auto Correct tab that comes up under the second Auto Text heading, and you will find dozens of rules used to fix gaffes such as switching the vowels in commonly misspelled words like receive. Here you can even make Word conform to your style—such as automatically changing to spell “The Meddler” when you write Bill Gates.

Ain't technology just grand?

Have a question for Jim Coates on small-business technology? Send an e-mail to askjimbi@tribune.com or via snail mail at the Chicago Tribune, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago IL 60611.

We like very much the use of the word “defunct”—a clear reference to “Buffalo Bill ’s” (CP 90) and possibly another dig at Bill Gates’ defunct technology—but we deplore the continued use of the lower case for our non-hero’s initials.

* Readers and admirers of Cummings have no doubt noted the appearance of a new biography of the poet, Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno’s *E. E. Cummings: A Biography*, (Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks, 2004). (See note #5 to Bernard F. Stehle’s article in this issue, page 29.) E-mail reactions to the biography from Cummings Society members have been mixed, with negative ones perhaps outweighing the positive ones. The next issue of *Spring* will feature at least one review of this new biography, along with a collection of reactions to it by our readers.

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“all which isn’t singing is mere talking”

—EEC (CP 804)