

**An Imaginary Dialogue Between An Author
And A Public, printed on the book-jacket
of my first play**

E. E. Cummings

Author: Well?

Public: What is Him about?

Author: Why ask me? Did I or didn't I make the play?

Public: But surely you know what you're making—

Author: Beg pardon, Mr. Public; I surely make what I'm knowing.

Public: So far as I'm concerned, my very dear sir, nonsense isn't everything
in life.

Author: And so far as you're concerned "life" is a verb of two voices—
active, to do, and passive, to dream. Others believe doing to be only
a kind of dreaming. Still others have discovered (in a mirror sur-
rounded with mirrors), something harder than silence but softer
than falling; the third voice of "life", which believes itself and
which cannot mean because it is.

Public: Bravo, but are such persons good for anything in particular?

Author: They are good for nothing but walking upright in the cordial reve-
lation of the fatal reflexive.

Public: And your play is all about one of these persons, Mr. Author?

Author: Perhaps. But (let me tell you a secret) I rather hope my play is one
of these persons.

(qtd. in *i: six nonlectures* 64)

Work Cited

Cummings, E. E. *i: six nonlectures*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1953.

Program Note for *Him*

E. E. Cummings

WARNING: *him* isn't a comedy or a tragedy or a farce or a melodrama or a revue or an operetta or a moving picture or any other convenient excuse for "going to the theatre"—in fact, it's a PLAY, so let it PLAY; and because you are here, let it PLAY with you. Let it dart off and beckon to you from a distance, let it tiptoe back and snap its fingers under your nose, let it sweep up at you from below or pounce down on you from above, let it creep cautiously behind you and tap you on the back of the neck, let it go all around and over and under you and inside you and through you. Relax, and give this play a chance to strut its stuff—relax, don't worry because it's not like something else—relax, stop wondering what it's all "about"—like many strange and familiar things, Life included, this PLAY isn't "about," it simply is. Don't try to despise it, let it try to despise you. Don't try to enjoy it, let it try to enjoy you. DON'T TRY TO UNDERSTAND IT, LET IT TRY TO UNDERSTAND YOU.

(quoted in Norman 222-223)

Work Cited

Norman, Charles. *E. E. Cummings, The Magic-Maker*. 3rd ed. Boston: Little, Brown, 1972.