

News, Notes, & Correspondence

*Thanks to all who have sent in subscriptions. We would especially like to thank Rachel Brown, Milton Cohen, Larry Chott, George James Firmage, David Forrest, Norman Friedman, John M. Gill, Gillian Huang-Tiller, Millie M. Kidd, Cathy LeBlanc, Bernard MacDonald, Taimi Olsen, Michael T. O'Neill, John T. Ordeman, Bryan Page, Bradford G. Saron, Sharon Shepherd, Sheridan Steelman, Bernard V. Stehle, and Bickford Sylvester for their generous contributions. If we've forgotten anyone, please forgive us (and let us know).

*The February 3, 2003 issue of *The New Yorker* reproduced a drawing on pages 74-75 accompanied by the following caption:

POSTSCRIPT

Al Hirschfeld, the illustrator who caricatured eight decades of celebrities—from George Gershwin to Julia Roberts—died last week, at the age of ninety-nine. Hirschfeld's iconic line drawings also gently satirized the makers of celebrity: in this drawing from 1956, the showgoers include the Times drama critics Brooks Atkinson, Arthur Gelb, and Sam Zolotow, plus Hirschfeld himself—the bearded man at the theatre door.

The New Yorker neglected to point out what the two posters on either side of the doors were announcing:

Now Playing
The Rectangle Theatre
HIM by e.e. cummings [sic]

*In April of 2003 we received *Macaroni on the Moon* (Lincoln, NE: Universe, 2003), a first collection of poems by Barry Dordick, with illustrations by Defne Amado—target age-group: 9-12.

*Gudrun M. Grabher edited *Silence / Sichtbar: Cummings Coming Into German, Translations with Comments* (Innsbruck, 2003), collected in part from papers delivered at the 1999 ALA Conference in Baltimore, previously published in *Spring* #9 (2000). Contributors are Barbara Straif, Sabine Amann, Akiko-Klara Kubo, Maria Krabichler, Birgit Monz, Christine Öhlinger, Gudrun M. Grabher, Marion Rohrleitner, Barbara Seeber, Martina Antretter, and Nina Köll.

*We received the following email on October 15, 2003 from Michael and Hiromi Welch:

IT'S A BOY!

Michael and Hiromi Welch are pleased to announce the birth of their first child, THOMAS TAIYO WELCH—born at 6:04 a.m. on Thursday, 9 October 2003, in Bellvue, Washington. He weighed 8 pounds, 15 ounces (4060 grams), measured 20.5 inches (52 cm), and arrived exactly on his due date. Taiyo is a Japanese name meaning “sun” or “sunlight.” Baby is doing very well, but mommy is really tired (daddy, too).

“Children have neither past nor future; and that which seldom happens to us is that they rejoice in the present.” —La Bruyère

Michael and Hiromi

Later, Michael sent a haiku:

first star—
a seashell held
to my baby's ear

*We received a letter from John Ordeman on January 22, 2004:

Dear Norman,

I found this review of interest. It was laid in a copy of the first English edition of *The Enormous Room* (Firmage 2A6) and is, I presume, a contemporary review.

As you probably know, Robert Graves quoted extensively from a letter he had received from T.E. Lawrence (“Lawrence of Arabia”) in his introduction to this edition.

It occurred to me that readers of *Spring* might find this rather quirky commentary of interest. I don't believe it has been published elsewhere.

THE ENORMOUS ROOM

AN AMERICAN WAR BOOK.

“The Enormous Room.” By E. E. Cummings.
(Cape. 7s. 6d.)

If the author of this extraordinarily powerful and extremely unappetising volume were asked—as he will no doubt be asked very frequently—what justification he could urge for having published it, he would probably reply that its justification was to be found in its truth-

fulness. And of its possession of that quality no reader with a grain of discrimination is likely to be for a moment in doubt. Its sincerity, its tang of irresistible and indubitable truth, is not to be questioned; it is as certainly true as it is horrible. And as Colonel T. E. Lawrence, who introduces it to the English public, very truly says, it is as well that the horrors which lurk at the rear of armies, in the hospital, and the military prison should find literary record as that the noisier tragedy of the trenches should find enduring expression.

It would be impossible, in the columns of a newspaper intended to be read by people of all kinds and of all ages and of both sexes, adequately to review such a book as "The Enormous Room." Inoffensive excerpts, full of life and colour and picturesqueness, would be found readily enough, but they would be deeply deceptive; they would give the reader no hint of the qualities which make the book what it is. And in reading it, it will be well to remember that, as Colonel Lawrence tells us, it is no record of isolated experiences. Things as gruesome, as revolting as are here chronicled happened all over Europe—England not excepted. War is war, and Mr. Cummings has written a book which, perhaps more than any other volume yet published, helps us to understand the inferno of hideous meaning expressed by that oft-repeated phrase.

*In 2003 the critical views anthology-machine that is Harold Bloom and Chelsea House published a "comprehensive research and study guide" to some poems of E. E. Cummings as part of the "Bloom's Major Poets" series. The anthology offers a short two-page introduction by Harold Bloom, along with selected excerpts of criticism of "All in green went my love riding," "Memorabilia," i sing of Olaf glad and big," "somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond," and "my father moved through dooms of love."

*On December 6, 2003, "Songs of Logan Skelton" for piano, soprano, and baritone were performed at the University of Michigan School of Music's Britton Recital Hall. Twenty four of Skelton's settings of Cummings' poems were performed,

among them “applaws)” (CP 548), “Now i lay(with everywhere around)” (CP 816), “If you can’t eat you got to” (CP 489), “who are you,little i” (CP 824), “r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r” (CP 396), “next to of course god america i” (CP 267), “this is a rubbish of human rind” (CP 647), “in time of daffodils(who know” (CP 688), and “noone and a star stand,am to am” (CP 721).

*The city of Leiden in the Netherlands has painted 101 poems in various languages on walls throughout the city. Among them is Cummings’ poem “the hours rise up putting off stars and it is” (CP 67). Quite a good photo of the poem on its wall may be viewed at: <http://www.muurgedichten.nl/cummings.html>. The whole project is much more fun than it sounds. The project’s home page may be found at <http://www.muurgedichten.nl/wallpoems.html>, and a list of all the poems, with links to a photo and translation of each, is at: <http://www.muurgedichten.nl/indexopontstaan.html> .

*Thierry Gillyboeuf sent us a copy of his latest translation, *Tulipes et Cheminées*, published by La Termitière in 2004. The book translates the first edition of *Tulips and Chimneys*, and it includes a postscript by the translator.

*Michael Webster and Etienne Terblanche presented “Eco-Iconicity in the Poetry and Poem-groups of E. E. Cummings: A Dialogue” at the Fifth Symposium on Iconicity in Language and Literature in Kraków, Poland, March 17, 2005.

*María Teresa González Mínguez writes [July 2005]: Did I tell you my communication on Cummings and *EIMI* and *The Divine Comedy* and Dante has been accepted for the AEDEAN Congress in Jaén (Southern Spain)? I’m so happy!!!

*We also received a note in August, 2005 (with subscription) from Tom Smith—the relevant portion of which follows:

I missed the 80th birthday party for Norm and Zelda a few weeks ago, so I haven’t seen him for a few years. He was my teacher (several undergrad and one grad course) at UConn. We became friends, sharing a love for literature and jazz. They are both fine people.

Good luck as editor, and thanks for all the work you’re doing.

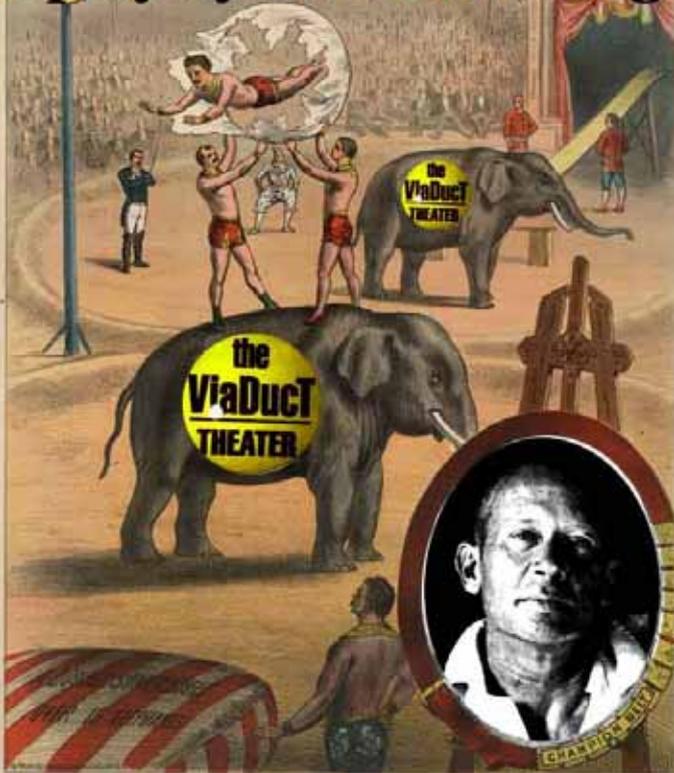
Best,
Tom Smith

(retired, but still occasionally teaching a Humanities course, summer and/or winter)

coming in MAY 2005

"Him"

a play by E.E. Cummings



damn everything but the circus

*The Viaduct Theater in Chicago IL presented a production of *Him* in May and June of 2005. Anyone who saw the production is invited to send their impressions for News, Notes, & Correspondence.

*John Tagliabue wrote on August 9, 2005:

I've always had *much* affection & admiration for the work of E.E. Cummings. That's been a long good fortune; it startles me to that I am now beyond age 82! From the time I was a young Columbia College student in NYC when Mark Van Doren was my most helpful teacher and when I knew José García Villa, a young poet then (1941-45) and great admirer of Cummings, I've been entertained and educated by Cummings' poems & his *six nonlectures* & so on.

Glad to get your notes about *Spring* a few days ago. Back a year ago—in August 2004—I received a farewell letter from Norman Friedman. I hope he is well. He had written a good essay for *Spring* relating Cummings & my poems; and *Spring* had published my poems often; Norman said he was giving you a group of poems I sent him.

Visitors just arrived—so I'll write more to you after hearing from you. You have all my best wishes in your new work devoted to a poet we much admire.

*Milton Cohen, author of *PoetandPainter: The Aesthetics of E. E. Cummings's Early Work* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1987), “*The Dial's* ‘White-Haired Boy’: E. E. Cummings as *Dial* Artist, Poet, and Essayist,” *Spring* 1 (1992), “Disparate Twins: Spontaneity in E. E. Cummings’ Poetry and Painting,” *Spring* 4 (1995), and “‘The Lily Maid of Astolat’: Elaine Orr’s Presence in E. E. Cummings’s Poems and John Dos Passos’s Prose” *Spring* 12 (2003) has recently published not one, but two new books:

---. *Movement, Manifesto, Melee: The Modernist Group 1910-1914* (Lanham, MD: Lexington / Rowman & Littlefield, 2004).

---. *Hemingway's Laboratory: The Paris* in our time (Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 2005).

*Rachel Brown-DeJean, daughter of William Slater Brown (“B” in *The Enormous Room*), wrote in September, 2005:

It was fun to read about my father, Joe Gould, Patchin Place, and all that crowd in the John M. Gill piece. We lived at Patchin Place, too, for a while. I think it was #8.

I was only six or so at the time but I well remember the stream of interesting visitors: Dawn Powell, Djuna Barnes, Pat O’Halloran among them, flowing through Patchin Place. There is another person who lived there at the time: Gloria Nardin Watts who now lives in Wellfleet and whom I

know well. She was a young wife and mother at the time but has a good store of anecdotes. Somebody should really interview her.

About Joe Gould, people really did seem to like him even though he could be a pain in the neck and was pretty smelly as I recall. After we left Patchin Place and moved to the Cape he turned up one summer at our door. Apparently the Villagers had taken up a collection to buy him a one-way ticket to the Browns. He stayed and stayed, and my parents, who had very little money, had a devil of a time raising enough money to send him back. I have an indelible vision of him descending the stairs stark naked one morning.

In response to my saying that I thought sending Joe Gould to the Browns was Greenwich Village's idea of a joke, Rachel e-mailed back the next day:

Several months ago I received the issue with the photo of La Ferté Macé on the cover. Coincidentally I was just beginning work on a photo project of an abandoned mental hospital for women in the south of France that looked strikingly like the building in La Ferté Macé, so I kicked off the statement for that exhibition, (recently opened in Paris), by citing *The Enormous Room*. Here's the quote:

The first time I saw the deserted women's wing of the Asile d'Aliénés in St. Lizier, I thought at once of E. E. Cummings' book, *The Enormous Room*, an account of his incarceration at La Ferté Macé by the French government during the First World War along with hundreds of other misfits including my father. (He is the character B in the book.)

Here were the cavernous spaces and strange, dark cubicles; the barred or loosely shuttered windows, the lovely sight of trees and sky glimpsed through them; the same 18th and 19th century architecture; the ominous darkened stairwells, the enclosed walled yard.

And yet, like the enormous room there had been people and life, such as it was, contained therein; life and inhabitants so vividly described by Cummings both in words and in drawings.

Yes, I agree, the arrival of Joe Gould that summer must have been a good joke and kept them laughing until his return.

Cordially,
Rachel

*A new compact disk of Cummings reading his poetry has been released:

The Voice of the Poet: E.E. Cummings. Read by E. E. Cummings. Compact Disc. Booklet, J. D. McClatchy. Random House Audio, 2005.

This CD contains six readings of poems not present on the Caedmon-Harper-Collins three-cassette collection, *E.E. Cummings Reads*. [Information on this collection is available at <http://www.gvsu.edu/english/cummings/EECreads.html>] In addition, many of the readings of poems on the new disk appear to be taken from different recordings than those on *E.E. Cummings Reads*. Perhaps a comparative study is in order?

*Alert readers will have noticed that this issue of *Spring* welcomes three new members to the Board of Consulting and Contributing Editors: Gillian Huang-Tiller, University of Virginia at Wise; Taimi Olsen, Tusculum College, Greeneville, TN; and Etienne Terblanche, North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa. We also welcome back a previous board member, Milton A. Cohen, University of Texas at Dallas.

* * *

to grow is a fate.

People may dare to live, people may be taught or may teach themselves death; no one can learn growing. No one can dare to grow. Growing equals that any reason or motive or unreason becomes every other unreason or reason or motive. Here exists no sign, no path, no distance, and no time. The grower has not any aim, not any illusion or disillusion, no audience. Not even a doubt: for he is doubt; perfectly all outward or inward points of reference are erased. Drunk and becauseless (talking about a cyclone, telling how at last with the disappearance even of impossibility himself found actually himself and suddenly becoming the cyclone; not perishing in and not surviving; Being) the poet Hart Crane was able to invent growth's likeness.

—EEC (*EIMI* 230-231)