



6-1969

## Motifs of Time and Nature in the Poetry of E.E. Cummings

Karl Douglass Harris  
*University of Tennessee - Knoxville*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk\\_gradthes](https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_gradthes)

 Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Harris, Karl Douglass, "Motifs of Time and Nature in the Poetry of E.E. Cummings. " Master's Thesis, University of Tennessee, 1969.  
[https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk\\_gradthes/2928](https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_gradthes/2928)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at TRACE: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses by an authorized administrator of TRACE: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. For more information, please contact [trace@utk.edu](mailto:trace@utk.edu).

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Karl Douglass Harris entitled "Motifs of Time and Nature in the Poetry of E.E. Cummings." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in English.

Dr. F. Dewolfe Miller, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Dr. Nathalia Wright, Dr. Richard Kelly

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

June 10, 1969

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Karl Douglas Harris entitled "Motifs of Time and Nature in the Poetry of E. E. Cummings." I recommend that it be accepted for nine quarter hours of credit in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in English.

John Wayne Miller  
Major Professor

We have read this thesis and  
recommend its acceptance:

Nathalia Wright  
Richard Kelly

Accepted for the Council:

William A. Smith  
Vice Chancellor for  
Graduate Studies and Research

MOTIFS OF TIME AND NATURE IN THE POETRY  
OF E. E. CUMMINGS

---

A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Graduate Council of  
The University of Tennessee

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

---

by  
Karl Douglas Harris

June 1969



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. F. DeWolfe Miller, whose assistance as head of my committee and whose encouragement as a friend have been invaluable. I would also like to thank Dr. Nathalia Wright and Dr. Richard Kelly, whose suggestions proved of inestimable value. I would like to thank my parents and, particularly, my wife, the wonderful persons without whose moral support this thesis would not have been completed.

## ABSTRACT

E. E. Cummings' poetry has for many years been noted for its typographical gymnastics, which, admittedly, are noteworthy. But technical innovation alone does not make poetry. A poetry must be judged by its words, as well as by the way they are typed and arranged. This thesis is a study of selected words, the motifs of time and nature, in Cummings' poetry. The primary source comprises the published volumes of his poetry, Poems 1923-1954, 95 Poems, and 73 Poems, and the prose i:six nonlectures, which contains important statements of his poetics. Since time and nature are the basic aspects of the human condition, the selection of motifs is limited to these two areas. The method of study is by discussion that suggests possible interpretations and by tables that support the interpretations with multiple recurrences of the motifs. These motifs indicate that the eccentricities of Cummings' style are not the basis of, but are only incidental to, his poetry. The motifs of nature, word-symbols that represent the cycle of life, show that Cummings emphasizes birth and rebirth. The motifs of time, such as "moment" and "now," illustrate his existential view of life. The motifs reveal that his is a poetry that affirms life, the living now, growth, and renewal.

ERRATUM: All tables in this thesis contain a uniform typographical error in transcription. Cummings virtually always jams his parentheses, but the transcriptions as given here erroneously use conventional spacing.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
I. MOTIFS OF TIME . . . . .	10
II. MOTIFS OF NATURE . . . . .	45
III. CONCLUSION . . . . .	103
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	107
VITA . . . . .	110

# LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
I-1.	Time Motif: Time . . . . .	25
I-2.	Time Motif: Moment . . . . .	27
I-3.	Time Motif: Now . . . . .	29
I-4.	Time Motif: Never and When . . . . .	31
I-5.	Time Motif: Being . . . . .	32
I-6.	Time Motif: Spring . . . . .	35
I-7.	Time Motif: April . . . . .	38
I-8.	Time Motif: Autumn and Winter . . . . .	39
I-9.	Time Motif: Words About Dawn and Day . . . . .	40
I-10.	Time Motif: Words About Night and the Coming of Night . .	42
II-1.	Nature Motif: Earth . . . . .	64
II-2.	Nature Motif: World . . . . .	65
II-3.	Nature Motif: Star . . . . .	67
II-4.	Nature Motif: Flower . . . . .	69
II-5.	Nature Motif: Rose . . . . .	74
II-6.	Nature Motif: Daisy, Lilac, Lily, Pansy, Poppy . . . . .	77
II-7.	Nature Motif: Blossom . . . . .	79
II-8.	Nature Motif: Petal . . . . .	80
II-9.	Nature Motif: Tree . . . . .	81
II-10.	Nature Motif: Leaf . . . . .	84
II-11.	Nature Motif: Bird . . . . .	87

TABLE	PAGE
II-12. Nature Motif: Rain . . . . .	91
II-13. Nature Motif: Snow . . . . .	94
II-14. Nature Motif: Wind . . . . .	97
II-15. Nature Motif: Moon . . . . .	99



## INTRODUCTION

As each succeeding volume of E. E. Cummings' poetry was published, the line of critics increased. Those who felt negatively toward his poems thought that little development had taken place, that the technique was glaring, that the aesthetic was strained, and that the meanings were trivial. The affirmative critics pointed to a poetry that would take its place among the great literary works of the language. S. V. Baum's book is a collection of critical essays on Cummings. It is Baum's opinion that Cummings' writings caused a controversy that is still alive, so Baum chose what he considered the most interesting of the critical comments which show to what extent the controversy exists.<sup>1</sup> What follow, then, are excerpts of the diversified critical comments:

Kenneth Burke remarks,

Cummings seems to have got himself into a surprising tangle which keeps him fluctuating between the cryptic and the moony, the comic and the mystically ecstatic--and he frequently grows vindictive in ways that show more fancy and invention than maturity.<sup>2</sup>

Von Abele, in answer to the criticisms that Cummings had not grown, states, "This is a serious thing to say about a body of work which not only has become legendary in its time; but can also boast a number of poems widely praised as first-rate."<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>S. V. Baum, E. E. Cummings and the Critics (East Lansing, Michigan, 1961), p. vii.

<sup>2</sup>Kenneth Burke, "Recent Poetry," Southern Review, I (1935-1936), 176-177.

<sup>3</sup>Rudolph Von Abele, "'Only to Grow,' Change in the Poetry of E. E. Cummings," PMLA, LXX (December, 1955), 913.

Philip Horton says that Cummings' "personality is one that has been a museum-piece in the whatnots of literary parlors for the last decade."<sup>4</sup>

S. I. Hayakawa says, "No modern poet to my knowledge has such a clear, child-like perception as E. E. Cummings--a way of coming smack against things with unaffected delight and wonder,"<sup>5</sup>

Thom Gunn comments that Cummings had "not yet, to my knowledge, written anything that could be loosely termed great."<sup>6</sup>

Harriet Monroe says,

He is as agile and outrageous as a faun, and as full of delight over the beauties and monstrosities of this brilliant and grimy old planet. There is a grand gusto in him, and that is rare enough to be welcomed in any age of a world too full of puling pettifoggers and picayunes.<sup>7</sup>

R. P. Blackmur says this:

Such an art when it pretends to measure life is essentially vicarious; it is a substitute for something that never was--like a tin soldier, or Peter Pan. It has all the flourish of life and every sentimental sincerity. Taken for what it is, it is charming and even instructive. Taken solemnly, as it is meant to be, the distortion by which it exists is too much for it, and it seems a kind of baby talk.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup>Philip Horton and Sherry Mangan, "Two Views of Cummings," Partisan Review, IV (May, 1938), 60.

<sup>5</sup>From Samuel I. Hayakawa, "Is Indeed 5," Poetry, XXIII (1938), 284-292.

<sup>6</sup>From Thom Gunn, "Poetry as Written," Yale Review, XLVIII (December, 1958), 297-305.

<sup>7</sup>Harriet Monroe, "Flare and Blare," Poetry, XXIII (January, 1924), 214-215.

<sup>8</sup>R. P. Blackmur, The Double Agent (New York, 1935), pp. 26-27.



George Wesolek says:

Cummings, the poet, exemplifies the alienation of the searcher for beauty and truth from the world. Monklike, he follows a discipline which liberates his vision. He turns his head with pride to the heavens and seeks out the stars that shine brilliantly through dirty windows, or over the towering mountains of a steel city, or in the mud of a garden path. He proclaims the star in man, the mystery that will never be solved by the furious machinations of a mind. . . .<sup>9</sup>

These rather diverse comments do point to a controversy, as Baum suggests. And they suggest that Cummings' poetry has not as yet found its level of appraisal. Several book-length studies aim to reach more definite conclusions and assessments of his poetry. Charles Norton has written the definitive biography of Cummings. Norman Friedman wrote two books, one on the art of Cummings' poetry and the other on his growth as a poet. Barry Marks made a study of Cummings' poetry as it carries out his aesthetic in technique and themes. Robert Wegner's is the latest book-length study; this book treats theme, image, and technique of both Cummings' prose and poetry as they relate to Cummings' idea of love.

Several critics have suggested that his poetry is lyrical. Michael Harrington calls Cummings a lyric poet with a long ancestry and says that his finest poems are lyric in the way Valery defines the term, "the development of an exclamation."<sup>10</sup> John Arthos says that Cummings

---

<sup>9</sup>George Wesolek, "e. e. Cummings: A Reconsideration," Renaissance, XVIII (Fall, 1965), 5.

<sup>10</sup>Michael Harrington, "Modern Idiom, Traditional Spirit," Commonweal, LXI (December 10, 1954), 294-295.



is "one of the few modern poets who write about beautiful things simply."<sup>11</sup> Arthos feels that Cummings is one modern poet

. . . who has most consistently aimed at lyric expression in the direct manner . . . he has been constantly searching but he has always known what he is searching for . . . truth of experience . . . truth beautiful because it sings and is beautiful.<sup>12</sup>

John Bishop says that here was another figure than Hamlet--"fine, impertinent; full of shocks and capers, in the midst of some absurd mocking suddenly turning surpassingly lyrical. Here was Mercutio."<sup>13</sup> Theodore Spencer feels that Cummings was the best lyric poet of this country.<sup>14</sup> Gorham B. Munson says, "Cummings creates perfect lyrics, and a perfect lyric is indefinable and unanalyzable."<sup>15</sup>

Thrall and Hibbard define the lyric:

A brief subjective POEM strongly marked by IMAGINATION, melody, and emotion, and creating for the reader a single, unified impression . . . the conception of the lyric as the individual and personal emotion of the poet still holds and is, perhaps, the chief basis for discriminating between the lyric and other poetic forms. . . . Subjectivity, too, is an important element of a form which is the personal expression of personal emotion imaginatively phrased. . . . In a sense it

---

<sup>11</sup>John Arthos, "The Poetry of E. E. Cummings," American Literature, XIV (1943), 372.

<sup>12</sup>Arthos, p. 372.

<sup>13</sup>John P. Bishop, "The Poems and Prose of E. E. Cummings," Southern Review, IV (1938), 174.

<sup>14</sup>From Theodore Spencer, "Technique as Joy," Perspective USA, II (Winter, 1953), 23-29.

<sup>15</sup>From Gorham B. Munson, "Syrinx," in E. E. Cummings and the Critics, ed. S. V. Baum, pp. 9-18.

could be argued, perhaps, to be not so much a form as a manner of writing. Subjectivity, IMAGINATION, melody, emotion--these qualities have been fairly persistently adhered to by the poets.<sup>16</sup>

It would seem that the establishment of genre is important to any interpretive study of a poetry. It will be seen in this study and in the poems of Cummings which are discussed that Cummings is a lyric poet when he is at his best and most serious. We will find that he bases his important creations on emotion and feeling, that he is personal and subjective. The poems considered are brief, unified, and melodic. The primary source, therefore, consists of his published poetry, Poems, 1923-1954 (1954), 95 Poems (1958), and 73 Poems (1962), and one other work of Cummings, i:six nonlectures, which is important as a statement by the poet on his writings.

Before attempting an analytical study of the poems of a modern poetry which John P. Bishop says is ". . . as elusive as quicksilver . . .,"<sup>17</sup> we must review Cummings' aesthetics as discussed by him. After he had been thirty years in print, Cummings accepted the Charles Eliot Norton Professorship at Harvard. There he gave a series of lectures which are recorded for us in Cummings' i:six nonlectures. This book tries to answer the question, "Who, as a writer, am I?" a question of interest to his readers and to anyone concerned with his poetry. In this slender volume the poet shows his past home life honestly and

---

<sup>16</sup>William Flint Thrall, Hibbard and Holman, A Handbook to Literature (New York, 1960), pp. 269-270.

<sup>17</sup>Bishop, 174.

gracefully, and he gives glimpses of notable people whom he has met.<sup>18</sup> Above all, Cummings sets down his poetics as clearly as Poe, Coleridge, or Wordsworth ever did. But let us read what the poet says he proposes to do in his six nonlectures:

Let me cordially warn you, at the opening of these so-called lectures, that I haven't the remotest intention of posing as a lecturer. Lecturing is presumably a form of teaching; and presumably a teacher is somebody who knows. I never did, and still don't, know. What has fascinated me is not teaching, but learning; and I assure you that if the acceptance of a Charles Eliot Norton professorship hadn't rapidly entangled itself with the expectation of learning a very great deal, I should now be somewhere else. . . . For while a genuine lecturer must obey the rules of mental decency, and clothe his personal idiosyncrasies in collectively acceptable generalities, an authentic ignoramus remains quite indecently free to speak as he feels. This prospect cheers me, because I value freedom; and have never expected freedom to be anything less than indecent. The very fact that a burlesk addict of long standing (who has many times worshipped at the shrine of progressive corporeal revelation) finds himself on the verge of attempting an aesthetic striptease, strikes me as quite a remarkable manifestation of poetic justice; and reinforces my conviction that since I can't tell you what I know (or rather what I don't know) there's nothing to prevent me from trying to tell you who I am--which I'd deeply enjoy doing. . . . But who am I? Or rather--since my drawing and painting self concerns you not at all--who is my other self, the self of the prose and of the poetry? Here I perceive a serious problem. . . .<sup>19</sup>

And do we not all perceive a problem, perhaps serious, as the poet acknowledges? Cummings is certainly writing in a refreshing and humorous vein here. He pokes gentle fun at lectures, teachers, and the noble, formidable institutions of higher learning. But he also pokes fun at

---

<sup>18</sup>David Burns, "First Person Singular," Yale Review, XLIII (Winter, 1954), 307.

<sup>19</sup>E. E. Cummings, i:six nonlectures (Cambridge, 1953), p. 3. Hereafter the abbreviation i:six will be used to identify this book.

himself. And he is honest, wonderfully and amazingly honest for a poet of his fame and esteem. Without any doubt, the man admits and tabulates his weaknesses. These are: poetry that tends toward the burlesque, a freedom that seems excess, and enjoyment of life that unabashedly includes the corporeal. The passage has the wisdom and humor of the court fool of literary and historical tradition. Therefore, like the Fool advising, amusing, and relieving King Lear, perhaps Cummings can attempt to answer the question that has been asked since the days of Aristotle-- "Who, as a writer, am I?" Perhaps Cummings is not as precocious and audacious as a would-be lecturer might at first conclude.

Later in the first nonlecture, Cummings suggests an answer to his poetics:

. . . for these two wonderful human beings, my father and my mother, loved each other more than themselves . . . as for me, I was welcomed as no son of any king and queen was ever welcomed. Here was my joyous fate and my supreme fortune. If somehow a suggestion of this illimitable blessing should come to you from me, my existence here and now would be justified: otherwise, anything I may say to you will have not the slightest significance. For as surely as each November has its April, mysteries only are significant; and one mystery-of-mysteries creates them all. . . .

(i:six, pp. 10-11)

And Cummings quotes from one of his poems:

nothing false and possible is love  
 (who's imagined, therefore limitless)  
 love's to giving as to keeping's give;  
 as yes is to if, love is to yes

(i:six, p. 14)

It is surprising, and encouraging to those who still believe in the family, to meet a modern poet who respects parenthood: It is more surprising to find a modern poet who believes in a love that is more than

physiologically oriented. What else could a love be that is not false and not limited? But most surprising of all, in a world of machines, materialism and science, is it to discover a poet who expresses a belief in a force or god beyond mankind; or what else are we to assume "one mystery-of-mysteries" is?

Perhaps the mystery is too complex for one word, yet Cummings, further on in his nonlectures, gives an important qualifier. He says that ". . . love is the mystery-of-mysteries who creates them all" (i:six, p. 43). Love is the greater, the all-encompassing mystery. Love is infinite or limitless. So, the word "love" is not a definition of the mysterious force; "love" is a qualifier Cummings feels is most important, for it indicates that the mystery that is creator is one of love. Cummings also shows this creator to be a personal one by his use of "who." Such a supreme personality has no qualifier in any of man's languages. If there is a force beyond mankind, like Yahweh of the Jewish tradition, he is unnameable. Cummings also speaks of "a mystery called nature" (i:six, p. 43). The poet is not contradictory, for "nature" is a particular mystery that is encompassed by that called "love." Nature, certainly, is a very important mystery for Cummings, since he is consistently concerned with such subjects as spring, flowers, and stars.

Love and nature, as man knows them, are bound by time. But man must try to overcome time, to make eternal what is truthful and beautiful. Yet, as is the frieze on the Grecian urn, man is paradoxically imprisoned

by the ending of each moment. Therefore, another mystery is the poetically existential moment. These mysteries are reflected through Cummings' use of motifs.



## CHAPTER I

### MOTIFS OF TIME

In the preface to her book on Shakespeare's imagery, Caroline Spurgeon says that the images

. . . are not selected to point or to illustrate any preconceived idea or thesis, but they are studied, either as a whole, or in groups, with a perfectly open mind, to see what information they yield, and the result comes often as a complete surprise to the investigator.<sup>1</sup>

Spurgeon's study of imagery is also a study of motifs. A motif may be defined as a word or image that is recurring and that assumes added significance. I too wish to point out some of the connotations of meaning and feeling that are associated with each of his motifs, to see what information the motifs yield. I am not trying to say that Cummings' pattern of imagery or motifs is that of Shakespeare, or that I am attempting the exhaustive study that is Miss Spurgeon's. Yet, I would hope that a study of Cummings' motifs will point to a poetic vision of life that is expressive of man's condition and of the poet's sincere and rather mystical view of life. What is searched for is a pattern in the motifs that expresses Cummings' feelings. This pattern should not only show that the motifs exist but they form a view of life as well.

Ten motifs have been selected to show the time element of Cummings' poetry. The most important of these "time motifs" are "time"

---

<sup>1</sup>Caroline Spurgeon, Shakespeare's Imagery (Boston, 1960), p. x.

itself, "moment," "now," "Spring," "night" and the coming of night, "dawn" and the coming of day, and motifs that have to do with the length of existence. It is necessary to include tables for each motif in this chapter as well as in the succeeding chapters. The tables are merely listings of examples from poems where the motifs occur. The inclusion of these tables will thus enable a smoother discussion of each motif chosen. The tables are not meant to catalogue every occurrence of a word said to be a motif; therefore a certain amount of selectivity is exercised in choosing the examples. A less frequently occurring motif will be referred to as a lesser motif. It should be understood that I have chosen only those words that seem to me to occur most frequently. So there may be a number of possible motifs in Cummings' poetry that this thesis does not discuss or tabulate. It is hoped, however, that the study of the motifs chosen will illuminate the meanings and pattern of those not chosen.

The first motif to be considered is the all inclusive one of "time." Time is the element within which all men's observations are most definitely and finitely set. Time would also be significant or at least inescapable in a poetry that affirms the mystery of love and life, since the infinite as finite man knows it falls within time. All the objects of Cummings' poems--flowers, girls, or God--must be encompassed by time. Frankenburg says, "All terms in nature are unknowns, becoming visible in the brief eternity of an observed relationship. Poetry is a record of such observations." Therefore, when Cummings writes a line or a poem about rain, the rain is not just a representative of freshness



and renewal. "Rain is incorporated in the symbol. There is rain in the poems."<sup>2</sup> The rain is an unknown that occurs in a particular span of time. The poet observes this phenomenon, and his poem is an attempt to be that rain. The time of the rain and the time of the poem about rain assume added significance.

The occurrence of an event within time is seen in a poem about a mouse:

here's a little mouse)and  
 what does he think about,i  
 wonder as over this  
 floor(quietly with  
  
 bright eyes)drifts(nobody  
 can tell because  
 Nobody knows, or why  
 jerks Here & ,here,  
 gr(oo)ving the room's Silence)this like  
 a littlest  
 poem a  
 (with wee ears and see?  
  
 tail frisks)  
 (gone)  
 "mouse",  
 We are not the same you and  
  
 i,since here's a little he  
 or is  
 it It  
 ? (or was something we saw in the mirror)?  
  
 therefore we'll kiss; for maybe  
 what was Disappeared  
 into ourselves  
 who (look). , startled<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup>From Lloyd Frankenburg, Pleasure Dome: on Reading Modern Poetry (Boston, 1949), pp. 157-194.

<sup>3</sup>E. E. Cummings, Poems 1923-1954 (New York, 1954), p. 206. Hereafter the abbreviation Poems will be used to identify this book.

This poem might at first appear to be about a mouse and little else. A mouse is certainly the poem's subject on the literal level. But the mouse is also the vehicle of another meaning, for its coming and going depicts the passage of a fleeting moment in time. The appearance of the mouse almost seems an illusion or a dream. The comment on life and time here is reminiscent of Shakespeare's vision of illusion and reality. In Midsummer Night's Dream reality and true love shade into the fantasy and illusion of the fairy and comic worlds. In the tragedy of Lear dream and reality become so confused in the protagonist's mind that he eventually loses his distinction of either. Similarly, in Cummings' poem about the mouse, time seems to hover between the real and the unreal. The mouse's appearance and disappearance and the entire poem become a metaphor of time. And another interesting thing to note is how the poem metaphorically becomes the mouse, for it typographically and figuratively depicts the mouse's movements. As can be seen in this poem, the mystery of time is a matter that apparently interests Cummings a great deal. And Bishop points out this fact when he says that Cummings is fascinated with the speed of fragments, that the poet's job is to set down "this fragment of time."<sup>4</sup>

A poem that may be called a fragment of time is this:

myself, walking in Dragon st  
one fine August  
night, i just  
happened to meet

---

<sup>4</sup>Bishop, p. 177.

"how do you do" she smiling  
 said "thought you  
 were earning your living  
 or probably dead"

so Jones was murdered by  
 a man named Smith and  
 we sailed on the  
 Leviathan

(Poems, p. 226)

The poem here is a story of shattered life in which time is broken and fleeting. Benstock says that this poem is a simple series of events, "a quick drama of life, seen in but the twinkling of an eye. . . ." <sup>5</sup> Whether Cummings writes about mice or men, time is often an essential element.

We have just looked at two poems that involve time but that do not actually include any of the time motifs. A review of the motifs selected for time should therefore shed some light on others of Cummings' poems. Certainly the meaning of time as an illusion is explicit in the line, "bring this beautiful wanderer/home to a dream called time." <sup>6</sup> The wanderer is the speaker of the poem. Perhaps he is asking for a life in which time is conquered, for such is what could be meant by "a dream called time." The wanderer seems to be dealing with an enigma of life. He is apparently Cummings himself. And since 73 Poems is his last book of poetry, it may be that this phrase expresses the poet's looking to

---

<sup>5</sup> Bernard Benstock, "All the World a Stage: The Elements of Drama in the Poetry of E. E. Cummings," Studies in American Literature, ed. Waldo McNeir, and Leo Levy (Baton Rouge, 1960), 112.

<sup>6</sup> E. E. Cummings, 73 Poems (New York, 1963), No. 39. Hereafter, the abbreviation 73 will be used to identify this book.

death. We certainly understand what the poet is saying when he writes "it is by every star/a different time" (73, No. 45). The relativity of time and all things is meant. And the involvement of time with man's life is seen in the phrase "simple agony of time" (73, No. 70). One of the 73 Poems can be representative of several poems in that volume which deal with time and death's place in time.

timeless

ly this  
(merely and whose  
not

numerable leaves are

fall  
i  
ng)he

Stands

lift  
ing against the  
shrieking

sky such one

ness as  
con  
founds.

all itcreating winds  
(73, No. 54)

The poem perhaps may be paraphrased thus: the oneness of the poet, a creative man, stands strongly against the coming of death and all the incomprehensible forces of the universe. Such an action reminds us of Prometheus' defiance. The falling leaves suggest the cycle of nature. In like manner, the lyrical expressions "Time and lilacs" (Poems,

p. 106) and "in time of daffodils"<sup>7</sup> suggest the mysteries of life and death and their existences in time. The end of a flower's life is expressed sharply: "Time shall surely reap/and on Death's blade lie many a flower curled" (Poems, p. 154). We then read "there is a time for timelessness" (95, No. 3), and realize that this line may mean that if there is a time for life, there is also a time for death.

The poet also speaks of one of the brightest times of life in man, that of love, as we see in the last published poem: "your lover (looking through both life and death)/timelessly celebrates the merciful/wonder no world deny may or believe" (73, No. 73). And again life and death are involved even in the lifetime of love. The use of "timelessly" suggests the power of love, however, to conquer time. To believe in such power is to believe in a mystery. At any rate, when we come to such a line as "mistrusting utterly that timelessness" (73, No. 45), we might feel that there is confusion and even contradiction. But when a poet deals with a mystery, there are no answers, no definitions, no applications precisely the same. Perhaps the poet is expressing his natural human doubt here. Or he could be trying to show that "timelessness" and all that it stands for are beyond time as man knows it. When the poet exclaims, "autumn has gone:will winter never come?/o come, terrible anonymity; enfold/phantom me with the murdering minus of cold" (73, No. 67), we see that he is lyrical. But we also know that he is talking about the coming of death, of time's end for him. The illusion

---

<sup>7</sup>E. E. Cummings, 95 Poems (New York, 1958), No. 16. Hereafter the abbreviation 95 will be used to identify this book.

of life and death is felt in the figure, "phantom me." Here, then, is a lyrical poet who expresses more than a surface joy of life, who goes more deeply into the meaning of carpe diem than simply "seize the day."

The motif of "moment" may illustrate more clearly than that of "time" Cummings' use of the carpe diem theme. Certainly the following lines are unmistakably carpe diem: "Let not thy lust one threaded moment lose" (Poems, p. 67); "the sun . . ./(never a moment ceasing to begin/ the mystery of day for someone's eyes)" (95, No. 84); and "the particular moment it takes one very falling most . . . star to disappear" (73, No. 37). The poet also seems to know the shallowness of physical moments alone: "when my sensational moments are no more/unjoyously bullied of vilest mind" (Poems, p. 156). And he speaks of "fleshless moments" (Poems, p. 159), indicating moments beyond the physical. But most important of all is the mystery of any particular moment of time: "believe that not anything which has ever been/invented can spoil this or this instant" (Poems, p. 257).

Similar to the meaning of the motif "moment" is that of "now," yet there is a definite difference between the implications of the two. The phrase "an eternal now" (Poems, p. 331) occurs in several places. Comparable phrases are "beautiful most is now" (Poems, p. 403), "your any most very amazing now" (Poems, p. 413), and "amazing most/now" (73, No. 68). Obvious in many of these usages is the moment, or now, of love. But the "eternal now" implies connotations of meaning and feeling beyond those which words express. A phrase definitely about love is this: ". . . tomorrow is our permanent address/ and there they'll scarcely



find us (if they do,/we'll move away still further: into now" (Poems, p. 412). But the existential aspect of life in general is also implicitly expressed in these lines. Another meaning of "now" involves the beautiful moments in nature felt by the poet and any man: "now (more near ourselves than we)/is a bird singing in a tree" (95, No. 87). The mystery of mankind is expressed with the motif: "and now you are and i am now and we're/a mystery which will never happen again,/a miracle which has never happened before" (Poems, p. 466). Certainly the element of love is again present. A line that is quite evocative of the existentialism that belongs to Cummings' vision is, "the sun in his heaven/says Now" (73, No. 29). We must realize that Cummings never forgets the realistic side of his mystical "eternal now," for he writes that "between the nibbling timid toothful hours/wilts the stern texture of Now" (Poems, p. 91). Involved here is the idea that true existential living is not an easy task, for "now" is "stern." These meanings can be listed for the motif "now": (1) "now" means the physical moment of love; (2) "now" is love for a beautiful occurrence of nature in time; (3) "now" expresses the poet's existential view of life which means that man can live only in time and therefore in the present, and if he is to make life full and creative he must try to make each now an eternal one. Cummings certainly recognizes the fact that such an existentialism is based on a mysticism which lies beyond words or proof. He understands that such living is not easy to sustain, much less fully attain. The poet and any man must always search and strive, and this is surely what Cummings means when he says, "precisely ours/is the now to grow" (73, No. 4).

The motifs of "never" and "when" are chosen to give a representative covering of the lesser motif of time. A few comments should suffice to suggest the part such words play. Sometimes a lesser motif may be equivalent to a more important one, as "when is now" (Poems, p. 447). At other times a word like "when" may be used to show the nonreality of time: "the never of when" (Poems, p. 463). Similarly "never" is expressive of the vague, incomprehensible enigmas of life that have haunted mankind down through the ages: "so never is most lonely man alone" (Poems, p. 435).

There are several phrases involving the motif or theme of "being" that deserve comment. One of the most striking of these is, "passing of all shining things" (Poems, p. 35). A poem that depicts a very shining object, the sunset, is this famous piece:

Among

these

red pieces of  
day(against which and  
quite silently hills  
made of blueandgreen paper

scorchbend ingthem

-selves-U

pcurv E,into:

anguish(clim

b)ing

s-p-i-r-a-

l

and,disappear)

Satanic and blasé

a black goat lookingly wanders /



There is nothing left of the world but  
 into this noth  
 ing il treno per  
 Roma si-gnori?  
 jerk,  
 ilyr,ushes

(Poems, pp. 199-200)

The sun is shown setting against the background of hills which has the surrealistic appearance of "blueandgreen paper." Then a goat appears, seemingly for no reason at all. Bishop points out that Cummings sets up a momentary relationship between himself and the goat wandering in the hills. Then the landscape goes, the sky darkens, and the rain comes. The goat does not stand for anything except a miracle of the world. The sun setting becomes a creation of the mind.<sup>8</sup>

To Cummings, all things in nature assume universal proportions. He writes: "dream's/fragility . . . the self of this/being" (Poems, p. 439), and "every world, before/silence begins a star" (Poems, p. 430). From the mystery of self, a finite speck in the universe, to the infinite proportions of the stars and the worlds that make up the universe--Cummings' intent is to depict the lives of all shining things that meet his fancy. And all things, as man knows them, scientifically and intrinsically live their time and fade away. The tables entitled "Words About Dawn and Day" and "Words About Night and the Coming of Night" serve to illuminate further what we have discussed thus far.

The motifs that help complete Cummings' view of time are those that have to do with the cycle of nature, those of the seasons of the

---

<sup>8</sup> Bishop, pp. 176-177.

year. By far the most frequently recurring time motif of Cummings is "Spring." Comparable and contrasting motifs, "autumn" and "winter," relate the meanings of "Spring" to them. Trees that are described as "winterbrief" are shining things or lives in nature that are less alive in winter, and winter is a traditional symbol of death. Autumn then signals the coming of death: "autumn is between there and here" (Poems, p. 119), "autumn has gone: will winter never come?" (73, No. 67), and especially "cruelly, love/walk the autumn long; / the last flower in whose hair" (Poems, p. 139). The carpe diem theme is clear enough. It is even clearer with the motif "Spring," for it is Spring that will come after winter to bring renewal of life. On the surface level the meaning is simple, perhaps too simple for some. One could see the renewal of life as reflected in the cycle of seasons as a literary trick worn out by tradition and conventional use. We read "the mad magnificent herald Spring" (Poems, p. 4) and "winter, whom Spring shall/kill" (Poems, p. 211), and we feel that the poetic thought is suitable in that it has had literary precedents. But we may not be inclined to say that the poet is expressing much beyond this lyricism, joyful enough in its place but fixed there with little chance to move to a level greater or deeper. Munson says that Cummings' "topics are the again-and-again-and-again handled themes of all lyricists; and what he says about these enigmas does not differ in substance from what has been reiterated." But Munson is quick to say that the difference is in the freshness with which they are felt.<sup>9</sup> Such a difference is certainly hard to illustrate,

---

<sup>9</sup>Munson, p. 12.

for we are to an extent dealing with the intangible feeling within the poetry. Munson comments further, "Cummings has jabbed his pen into life, but he has also twisted it in the wound, and it is this twist of the pen that makes literature."<sup>10</sup>

A closer look at the motif of "Spring" may reveal deeper connotations of meaning. The line "sharp lips of Spring" (Poems, p. 159) is a personification that clearly involves the physical. When the poet writes "the small spiritual cry of spring/utters a striving flower" (Poems, p. 156), the meaning is close to what William Blake tried to do when he wrote poetry that blended the physical and the spiritual into one incomprehensible totality. Imagination and creativity are part of the oneness of "Spring" and life: "the imagined galleon of Spring" (Poems, p. 118). Love is part of "Spring": "where/always/it's/Spring) and everyone's/in love and flowers pick themselves" (Poems, p. 103). The poet or any man should be a part of Spring: "wholly to be a fool/while Spring is in the world" (Poems, p. 208). And again, we feel that the existential aspect of Cummings' vision is intrinsic in all these lines. One of the most startling equivalents of spring is found in the following: "spring/most singularly/ . . . is/ . . . Death" (Poems, p. 313). Spring means winter following. Life means death. And we see the reverse twist of the life and death business in this line: "his autumn's winter being summer's spring" (Poems, p. 300). Moreover, as if death could be miraculously overcome, Cummings says, "our summer in fall/and in winter our spring/

---

<sup>10</sup>Munson, p. 18.

is the yes of yes" (73, No. 4). "Spring," like "time," is given its element of nonreality in lines such as "she quickly dreamed of spring" (73, No. 5) and "now i lay me down to dream of Spring" (73, No. 44). If the element of sexual love seems to be present in any of these lines, it is merely because Cummings involves all aspects of life observed within his vision of life. Again, it is as much as Blake tries to do.

Frankenburg says that Cummings' poetry ". . . both rhythmically and in idea, increasingly comes to depend on calculated equilibriums."<sup>11</sup> O'Conner says that Cummings attempts to construct a poetry almost entirely on a language of connotation, "a periphery beyond which is merely confusion."<sup>12</sup> And Marks comments, "The particular quality of experience that Cummings invites us to share is also very like the one which the Bible cites in enjoining us, 'he who would find himself, must lose himself.'"<sup>13</sup> The study of the motifs seems to give some direction to connotations that might otherwise lead to confusion. Nevertheless discussion may at times make the reader feel that he is losing himself. Perhaps ultimately it is only in the poet's own words that one can find himself. The following selection, then, concludes the discussion on time motifs and points toward the chapter on nature motifs:

---

<sup>11</sup>Frankenburg, p. 153.

<sup>12</sup>William Van O'Conner, Sense and Sensibility in Modern Poetry (Chicago, 1948), pp. 158-159.

<sup>13</sup>Barry A. Marks, E. E. Cummings (New York, 1964), p. 25.

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.

(Poems, p. 100)

The tables for the motifs of time follow (Tables I-1 through I-10  
 and Tables II-1 through II-15).

TABLE I-1

## TIME MOTIF: TIME

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 106	light cursed falling in a singular block	<u>Time</u> <sup>a</sup> and lilacs
<u>Poems</u> , p. 154	time is the garden:colours come and go,	<u>Time</u> shall surely reap/and on Death's blade lie many a flower curled,
<u>Poems</u> , p. 261	breathe with me this fear	tell such to murder <u>time</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 367	as freedom is a breakfast- food	<u>time</u> is a tree(this life one leaf)
<u>Poems</u> , p. 371	not time's how(anchored in what mountaining roots	not <u>time's</u> how(anchored in what mountaining roots/of mere eternity)
<u>Poems</u> , p. 383	enters give	welcomes welcomes/her dreams his face/ . . . and <u>time's</u> dead
<u>95</u> , No. 3	now air is air and thing is thing:no bliss	the courage to receive <u>time's</u> mightiest dream
<u>95</u> , No. 11	in time's a noble mercy of proportion	in <u>time's</u> a noble mercy of proportion/ . . . there's <u>time</u> for laughing  there is a time for <u>timelessness</u> <sup>b</sup>
<u>95</u> , No. 16	in time of daffodils (who know	in <u>time</u> of daffodils/ . . . of lilacs/ . . . of roses/ . . . of all sweet things



TABLE I-1 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
		beyond/whatever mind may comprehend/ . . . (when <u>time</u> from <u>time</u> shall set us free)
<u>95</u> , No. 71	stand with your lover on the ending earth--	--how fortunate are you and i, whose home/is <u>timelessness</u> :
<u>95</u> , No. 94	being to timelessness as it's to time	being to <u>timelessness</u> as it's to <u>time</u> ,/ love did no more begin than love will end;
<u>73</u> , No. 39	white guardians of the universe of sleep	bring this beautiful wanderer/home to a dream called <u>time</u> :
<u>73</u> , No. 45	what time is it? it is by every star	what <u>time</u> is it? it is by every star/a different <u>time</u> , and each most falsely true;  confusing <u>timelessness</u> and <u>time</u>  <u>time</u> cannot children, poets, lovers tell--/ measure imagine, mystery, a kiss  mistrusting utterly that <u>timelessness</u>
<u>73</u> , No. 70	pity his how illumitable plight	simple agony of <u>time</u>
<u>73</u> , No. 73	all worlds have halfsight, seeing either with	your lover(looking through both life and death)/ <u>timelessly</u> celebrates the merciful/ wonder no world deny may or believe

<sup>a</sup>All motifs will be underlined in all the tables. Cummings does not use italics in any of the examples.

<sup>b</sup>"Timelessness" and "timelessly" are included in this table.

TABLE I-2

TIME MOTIF: MOMENT<sup>a</sup>

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 8	(thee will i praise between rivers whose	let not thy lust one threaded <u>moment</u> lose:
<u>Poems</u> , p. 67	notice the convulsed orange inch of moon	silver <u>minute</u> of evening
<u>Poems</u> , p. 119	before the fragile, gradual throne of night	fragile <u>instant</u>
_____	when i have thought of you somewhat too much	(the simple <u>instant</u> of perfect hunger/yes)
<u>Poems</u> , p. 156	when my sensational moments are no more	when my sensational <u>moments</u> are no more/ unjoyously bullied of vilest mind
<u>Poems</u> , p. 159	will suddenly trees leap from winter and all	fleshless <u>moments</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 257	come a little further-- why be afraid	(believe that not anything which has ever been/invented can sport this on this <u>instant</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 211	you are like the snow only	nothing lingers/beyond a little <u>instant</u> ,
<u>95</u> , No. 11	in time's a noble mercy of proportion	saharas have their centuries;ten thousand/ of which are smaller than a rose's <u>moment</u>



TABLE I-2 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>95</u> , No. 84	how generous is that him- self the sun	the sun/--arriving truly, faithfully who goes/(never a <u>moment</u> ceasing to begin/the mystery of day for someone's eyes)
<u>73</u> , No. 37	now that, more nearest even than your fate	the particular <u>moment</u> it takes one very falling most (there:did you see it?) star to disappear, that hugest whole creation may be less incalculable than a single kiss
<u>73</u> , No. 40	your homecoming will be my homecoming--	the absence of that <u>moment</u> when a stranger takes in his arms my very life who's your
<u>73</u> , No. 70	pity his how illimitable plight	pity his how illimitable plight/who dies at any <u>moment</u> born--
<u>73</u> , No. 71	how many moments must (amazing each	how many <u>moments</u> must/ . . . these more than eyes/restroll and stroll

<sup>a</sup>This table will include the word equivalents of "instant" and "minute."

TABLE I-3

## TIME MOTIF: NOW

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 91	Cleopatra built	between the nibbling timid teethful hours/ wilts the stern texture of <u>Now</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 331	"Introduction" to <u>New Poems</u>	Life, for eternal us, is <u>now</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 399	as any (men's hells having wrestled with)	an eternal <u>now</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 401	dead every enormous piece	plunged in eternal <u>now</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 403	what over and which under	beautiful most is <u>now</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 411	true lovers in each happening of their hearts	such a forever is love's any <u>now</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 412	all ignorance toboggans into know	-tomorrow is our permanent address/and there they'll scarcely find us (if they do,/we'll move away still further:into <u>now</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 413	darling! because my blood can sing	your least/your any most very amazing <u>now</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 463	honour corruption villainy holiness	and geoffrey and all) come up from the never of when/come into the <u>now</u> of forever come riding alive

TABLE I-3 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 466	now all the fingers of this tree (darling) have	and <u>now</u> you are and i am <u>now</u> and we're/ a mystery which will never happen again,/ a miracle which has never happened before
<u>95</u> , No. 85	here pasture ends--	both <u>now</u> alive/creatures (bright if by shadowy if)
<u>95</u> , No. 87	now (more near ourselves than we)	<u>now</u> (more near ourselves than we)/ is a bird singing in a tree
<u>73</u> , No. 4	but we've the may	precisely ours/is the <u>now</u> to grow
<u>73</u> , No. 29	the greedy the people	they live for until/though the sun in his heaven/says <u>Now</u>
<u>73</u> , No. 68	what is	amazing most/ <u>now</u> ,
<u>73</u> , No. 69	!hope	prodigious a/ <u>now</u> of magnificent sound

TABLE I-4

MOTIFS OF TIME: NEVER AND WHEN<sup>a</sup>

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 429	this (let's remember) day died again and	did you (kiss/me) quickly count to <u>never</u> ?
<u>Poems</u> , p. 435	so many selves (so many fiends and gods	so <u>never</u> is most lonely man alone
<u>Poems</u> , p. 449	light's live lurch	not into nothing and nothing into <u>never</u> / and <u>never</u> into (touch me!love) forever
<u>Poems</u> , p. 436	out of more find than seeks	we played with a piece of <u>when</u> /till it rolled behind forever
<u>Poems</u> , p. 447	blossoming are people	<u>when</u> is now
<u>Poems</u> , p. 463	honour corruption villainy holiness	come up from the never of <u>when</u> /come into the now of forever

<sup>a</sup>This table is merely meant to suggest the meanings of Cummings' use of "never" and "when." The possibilities and connotations are nearly limitless in Cummings' more abstract words. The meanings or implications of "never" or "when" or any other abstract word can be suggested by the more concrete of the motifs and their tables.

TABLE I-5  
MOTIFS OF TIME: BEING<sup>a</sup>

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 20	Puella Mea	Eater of all things lovely--Time! <sup>b</sup>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 35	the glory is fallen out of	passing of all shining things <sup>b</sup>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 429	this (let's remember) day died again and	this day . . . died again and/again; <sup>c</sup>
		forevering am--
<u>Poems</u> , p. 430	purser than purest pure	a pilgrim from beyond/the future's future; and/immediate like some/newly remembered dream <sup>d</sup>
		every world, before/silence begins a star <sup>e</sup>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 439	out of the mountain of his soul comes	dream's/eternity . . . the self of this/ being <sup>f</sup>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 443	who sharpens every dull	he sharpens is to am <sup>g</sup>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 444	noone" autumnal this great lady's gaze	her whole life smiled/"was and will always remain:who i am <sup>h</sup>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 447	if a cheerfulest Elephant- angelchild should sit	Love only has ever been, is, and will ever be, So

TABLE I-5 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 449	light's lives lurch	love, stand with me while silence sings/ not into nothing and nothing into (touch me!love) forever/--until is and shall be and was are night's/total exploding million- minded who <sup>1</sup>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 468	luminous tendril of celestial wish	teach disappearing also me the keen/ illimitable secret of begin
<u>Poems</u> , p. 111	even a pencil has fear to	since the world's but/a piece of eminent fragility. <sup>j</sup>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 119	when i have thought of you somewhat too	(the simple instant of perfect hunger/Yes) <sup>k</sup>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 142	conversation with my friend is particularly	my friend's being, out of the sportaneous clumsy trivial acrobatic edgeless gesture of existence, <sup>1</sup>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 156	come nothing to my comparable soul	come nothing to my comparable soul/which with existence has conversed in vain, <sup>m</sup>

<sup>a</sup>"Being" involves any measurement of existence as well as any use of the verb "to be."

<sup>b</sup>These two examples are specifically illustrative of the traditional carpe diem motif. Other examples of carpe diem can be found in the Table of "now," and in tables of the love motifs.

<sup>c</sup>This example involves the dying and renewing of the existence of each day.

TABLE I-5 (continued)

<sup>d</sup>This example implies the future tense of "is," and is speaking of Chaucer.

<sup>e</sup>The use of "begins" suggests the beginning of the existence, and therefore the beginning of the "is" or being of "every world" or "star."

<sup>f</sup>Here the fragility of a dream is associated with the being of the poet's own existence. Fragility suggests the briefness of a moment of beauty or of life.

<sup>g</sup>This line may refer to the poet's own poetic creating.

<sup>h</sup>Her life may be that of a beloved of the poet or it may be that of anything of beauty he loves. At any rate, she is fully alive, for the phrase "who i am" suggests selfhood in full being.

<sup>i</sup>As with "who i am," "who" according to Cummings is a person fully alive and individual. Here past, presence and future of all existence is that of love. In love's time lies eternity.

<sup>j</sup>The world's entire existence is "a piece of eminent fragility." What is implied is the briefness not only of our own lives but of the world's life as well. The relativity and meaninglessness of time is also clearly implied. This is the age-old idea of the world and our lives being as grains of sand.

<sup>k</sup>This example is obviously sexual, but it suggests Cummings' use of "yes" in place of the verb "is" or the motif "now." We will see that Cummings calls any moment in life, whether it be enjoyment of sex, love, or some small part of this world--say, a rose, "the simple instant of perfect hunger/Yes."

<sup>l</sup>For example, here the momentary existence of a friend in a conversation is that "yes."

<sup>m</sup>The use of "nothing" is mystical and philosophic, as is the use of "existence" also. Here the poet as much as says that he cannot fathom the incomprehensible infinite truths of existence.



TABLE I-6

## TIME MOTIF: SPRING

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 4	Epithalamian	the mad magnificent herald <u>Spring</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 14	Puella Mea	my fragile lady wandering/in whose perish- able poise/is the mystery of <u>Spring</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 21	in Just-spring	in Just- <u>spring</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 55	i am going to utter a tree, nobody	it shall be roses and/ <u>spring</u> will bring her
<u>Poems</u> , p. 100	Spring is like a perhaps hand	<u>spring</u> is like a perhaps/Hand in a window/ (carefully to/and fro moving New and/Old things/ . . . moving a perhaps/fraction of flower here placing/an inch of air there) and/without breaking anything.
<u>Poems</u> , p. 103	who knows if the moon's	where/always/it's/ <u>Spring</u> ) and everyone's/ in love and flowers pick themselves
<u>Poems</u> , p. 118	before the fragile gradual throne of night	the imagined galleon of <u>Spring</u> )
<u>Poems</u> , p. 140	why did you go	little kittens who/are called <u>spring</u> ,
<u>Poems</u> , p. 156	when my sensational moments are no more	the small spiritual cry of <u>spring</u> /utters a striving flower,

TABLE I-6 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 159	will suddenly trees leap from winter and will	sharp lips of <u>spring</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 208	since feeling is first	wholly to be a fool/while <u>Spring</u> is in the world
<u>Poems</u> , p. 211	you are like the snow only	winter, whom <u>Spring</u> shall kill
<u>Poems</u> , p. 263	somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond	you open always petal by petal myself as <u>Spring</u> opens/(touching skilfully, mysteriously) her first rose
<u>Poems</u> , p. 300	conceive a man, should he have anything	(his autumn's winter being summer's <u>spring</u>
<u>Poema</u> , p. 313	Spring (sidewalks are) is	<u>spring</u> /most singular/ly . . . is . . . Death
<u>Poems</u> , p. 375	my father moved through dooms of love	(and every child was sure that <u>spring</u> /danced when she heard my father sing)
<u>Poems</u> , p. 402	love is a spring at which	love is a <u>spring</u> at which/crazy they drink who've climbed/steeper than hopes are fears
<u>Poema</u> , p. 415	if (among	we are <u>spring</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 419	trees/were in (give)	earth was in/(live/live) <u>spring</u> /with all beautiful/things

TABLE I-6 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 420	"sweet spring is your	"sweet <u>spring</u> is your/time is my time is our/time for <u>springtime</u> is lovetime
<u>Poems</u> , p. 444	"summer is over	" <u>spring</u> follows winter:/as clover knows, maybe"/ (heart makes the suggestion)
<u>Poems</u> , p. 462	in/Spring comes (no-	in/ <u>Spring</u> comes (no/one asks his name)/ a mender/of things
<u>Poems</u> , p. 463	honour corruption villainy holiness	merrily moving through sweet forgiveness of <u>spring</u>
<u>73</u> , No. 4	but we've the may	our summer in fall/and in winter our <u>spring</u> / is the yes of yes
<u>73</u> , No. 5	the first of all my dreams was of	she quickly dreamed of <u>spring</u>
<u>73</u> , No. 44	now i lay (with everywhere around)	now i lay me down to dream of <u>Spring</u>
<u>73</u> , No. 63	(listen)	for it's <u>Spring</u> /--irrevocably;

TABLE I-7

## TIME MOTIF: APRIL

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 14	Puella Mea	lady drifting . . . with <u>April</u> feet like sudden flowers
<u>Poems</u> , p. 54	into the strenuous briefness	into the strenuous briefness/Life:/hand-organs and <u>April</u> ,/darkness,
<u>Poems</u> , p. 75	Paris;this April sunset completely utters	this <u>April</u> sunset completely utters/utters serenely silently a cathedral
<u>Poems</u> , p. 128	when you went away it was morning	kissing with little dints/of <u>april</u> ,
<u>Poems</u> , p. 143	one April dusk	one <u>April</u> dusk . . . i entered a mad street whose/mouth dripped with slavver of spring
<u>Poems</u> , p. 219	if i have made, my lady, intricate	lady through whose profound and fragile lips/ the sweet clumsy feet of <u>April</u> came/into the ragged meadow of my soul.
<u>Poems</u> , p. 413	darling!because my blood can sing	if a look should <u>april</u> me
<u>95</u> , No. 65	first robin the;	since becomes why;/old turns to young/(winter goodbye)/ <u>april</u> hello,
<u>73</u> , No. 10	because it/'s A/pril	because it/'s <u>A/pril</u> /Lives lead their own persons

TABLE I-8

TIME MOTIFS: AUTUMN AND WINTER<sup>a</sup>

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 63	a wind has blown the rain away and blown	I think i too have known/ <u>autumn</u> too long/ . . . O crazy daddy/of death dance cruelly for us and start/the last leaf whirling
<u>Poems</u> , p. 119	autumn is:between there and here	<u>autumn</u> is:between there and here/gladness flays hideously hills.  through the <u>autumn</u> indisputably roaming/ death's big rotten particular kiss.
<u>Poems</u> , p. 139	cruelly, love	cruelly, love/walk the <u>autumn</u> long;the last flower in whose hair,
<u>Poems</u> , p. 153	when unto nights of <u>autumn</u> do complain	when unto nights of <u>autumn</u> do complain/ earth's ghastlier trees . . . when frost
<u>Poems</u> , p. 203	but observe;although	trees <u>winter</u> brief surly old
<u>95</u> , No. 45	i love you much (most beautiful darling	although <u>winter</u> may be everywhere/ . . . noone can quite begin to guess/(except my life) the true time of year--
<u>73</u> , No. 36	if in the beginning twi- light of winter will stand	if in the beginning twilight of <u>winter</u> will stand/. . . one/spirit serenely truly himself;
<u>73</u> , No. 67	enter no (silence is the blood whose flesh	<u>autumn</u> has gone:will <u>winter</u> never come?/. . . terrible anonymity/. . . (very whiteness: absolute

<sup>a</sup>This table is briefer than that for "spring," because "spring" is a chief motif which suggests the meanings of "autumn" and "winter."

TABLE I-9

## TIME MOTIF: WORDS ABOUT DAWN AND DAY

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 42	the hours rise up putting off stars and its	it is <u>dawn</u> /the world/goes forth to murder dreams
<u>Poems</u> , p. 54	into the strenuous briefness	the hair-thin tints/of yellow <u>dawn</u> ,
<u>Poems</u> , p. 75	Take for example this:	finally through altogether delicate gestures of rain/a colour comes, which is <u>morning</u> ,
<u>Poems</u> , p. 124	the ivory perfuming rose	the unkind/ <u>dawn</u> its muscle amorous
<u>Poems</u> , p. 380	up into the silence the green	the young/ <u>morning</u> with a warm world in. it/(kiss me)you will go/on into the <u>sunlight</u> the fine/ <u>sunlight</u> with a firm <u>day</u> in it
<u>Poems</u> , p. 414	might these be thrushes climbing through almost (do they	might these be thrushes/ . . . (do they/ . . . wonderingly celebrate <u>day</u> /and welcome earth's arrival with a soul)/ <u>sunlight</u> ?yes
<u>Poems</u> , p. 456	to start,to hesitate; to stop	at last perfection,now and here/--but look: not <u>sunlight</u> ?yes!
<u>95</u> , No. 36	yes but even	God's <u>sunlight</u>



TABLE I-9 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>95</u> , No. 47	out of night's almost Floats a colour(in	out of night's almost Floats a colour (in/-to <u>day's bloodlight</u> climbs the onlying/ world)
<u>95</u> , No. 71	stand with your lover on the ending earth--	to frolic in such mysteries as birth/ and death a <u>day</u> (or maybe even less)
<u>95</u> , No. 78	all nearness pauses, while a star can grow	single. sweet <u>day's</u> death:
<u>73</u> , No. 1	O the sun comes up-up-up in the opening	O the <u>sun</u> comes up-up-up in the opening/ sky(the <u>all</u> the/any merry every pretty each/bird sings birds sing
<u>73</u> , No. 40	your homecoming will be my homecoming	a noone who,till their and your returning,/spends the forever of his loneliness/dreaming your eyes have opened to <u>morning</u>
<u>73</u> , No. 69	!hope	leaping through merciful/ <u>sunlight</u> )to/ burst



TABLE I-10

## TIME MOTIF: WORDS ABOUT NIGHT AND THE COMING OF NIGHT

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 43	The hours rise up putting off stars and it is	<u>night</u> walks scattering poems
<u>Poems</u> , p. 53	beyond the brittle towns asleep.	the chattering <u>sunset</u> ludicrously/dies, i hear only tidewings/in the <u>last light</u> / twitching at the world
<u>Poems</u> , p. 76	Paris;this April sunset completely utters	<u>twilight</u> (who slenderly descends,/ daintily carrying in her eyes the dangerous <u>first</u> <u>stars</u> ).
<u>Poems</u> , p. 118	before the fragile gradual throne of night	a green brief gesture of <u>twilight</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 124	the ivory perfuming rose	empty <u>twilight</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 150	at the ferocious phenomenon of 5 o'clock in the oblong air, from which a singular ribbon of common sunset is hanging,	and it is 5 o'clock in the oblong air, from which a singular ribbon of common <u>sunset</u> is hanging,
<u>Poems</u> , p. 175	it really must	i can't sleep (smoking sawdust/cigarettes in the/middle of the <u>night</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 210	some ask praise of their fellows	(shyly/if a poem should lift to/me the distinct country of your/eyes, gifted with green <u>twilight</u> )

TABLE I-10 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 217	after all white horses are in bed	send life out of me and the <u>night</u> /absolutely into me
<u>Poems</u> , p. 219	out touching hearts slenderly comprehend	like this most <u>early single star</u> which tugs/ weakly at <u>twilight</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 248	sunset)edges become swiftly	<u>sunset</u> )edges
<u>Poems</u> , p. 311	at dusk	at <u>dusk</u> /just when/the Light is filled with birds
<u>Poems</u> , p. 368	wherelings whenlings	thrushes toward <u>dusk</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 411	we love each other very dearly	eyes of air/not with <u>twilight's</u> first thrushes may awake/more secretly than our(if disappear/should some world)selves
<u>Poems</u> , p. 429	this(let's remember)day died again and	this (let's remember) <u>day died</u> again and/ again; whose golden, crimson <u>dooms</u> conceive/ an oceaning abyss of orange dream
<u>Poems</u> , p. 429	hush)/noones	noones/ . . . are all breathing bright <u>darkness</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 431	swim so now million many worlds in each	least less than than particle of perfect <u>dark</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 468	luminous tendrill of celestial wish	most ethereal/silence through <u>twilight's</u> mystery made flesh--/dreamslender exquisite white firstful flame/--new moon

TABLE I-10 (continued)

Vol. & Number	First Line Title	Example
95, No. 42	from spiralling ecstatically this	proud nowhere of earth's most prodigious <u>night</u>
95, No. 69	over us if (as what was dusk becomes	<u>dusk</u> becomes/ <u>darkness</u>
95, No. 77	i am a little church (no great cathedral)	merciful Him whose only now is forever:/ standing erect in the deathless truth of His presence/ (welcoming humbly His light and proudly His <u>darkness</u> )
73, No. 38	silently if, out of not knowable	yours is the light by which my spirit's born:/yours is the <u>darkness</u> of my soul's return/--you are my sun, my moon, and all my stars
		not knowable/ <u>night</u> /s utmost nothing,
73, No. 39	white guardians of the universe of sleep	suns of the <u>night</u> , bring this beautiful/ wanderer home to a dream called time:
73, No. 49	faithfully tinying at twilight voice	<u>twilight</u> voice/of deathless death's innum- erable doom:/ . . . acceptance of irrevocable time
73, No. 52	who are you, little i	the gold/of November <u>sunset</u> /(and feeling: that if day/has to become <u>night</u> /this is a beautiful way)

## CHAPTER II

### MOTIFS OF NATURE

The first poem of Cummings' published poetry, "Epithalamion," is essentially the wedding song of all of nature. And the term "epithalamion" is appropriate for Cummings' purpose here in view of its meaning as defined by Danziger and Johnson: "Just as the ode was originally associated with the public ceremony of an Olympic victory, so various other lyrics are also associated with some sort of ceremonial. One of these is the epithalamion, a song in honor of a wedding."<sup>1</sup> Cummings' so-called marriage lyric for nature begins thus:

Thou aged unreluctant earth who dost  
with quivering continual thighs invite  
the thrilling rain the slender paramour  
to toy with thy extraordinary lust,  
(the sinuous rain which rising from thy bed  
steals to his wife the sky and hour by hour  
wholly renews her pale flesh with delight)  
--immortally whence are the high gods fled?  
(Poems, p. 3)

The setting of this epithalamion seems to be that of the conventional pastoral. But even beyond this rustic scene nature plays a still more important part in the celebration of love. In the first stanza rain is personified as a lover, the sky as his wife, and the earth, representative of the totality of nature, as rain's paramour. We see that nature continues to play an essential part throughout the poem:

---

<sup>1</sup>Marlies K. Danziger and Wendell Stacy Johnson, A Poetry Anthology (New York, 1968), p. 59.

Wind beautifully who wanderest  
 over smooth pages of forgotten joy  
 proving the peaceful theorems of the flowers  
 --didst e'er depart upon more exquisite quest?  
 (Poems, p. 3)

This first poem of Tulips and Chimneys is, therefore, a lyrical poem in celebration of love in which nature plays an important part. And although Cummings does make several mythological allusions in the poem, the major emphasis is upon nature--its various descriptions and personifications. Nature is as a lady in one part of the poem:

Lady at whose imperishable smile  
 the amazed doves flicker upon sunny wings  
 (Poems, p. 6)

The marriage of all things in nature--the universal wedding ceremony of all of nature--occurs in the spring:

Spring, that omits no mention of desire  
 in every curved and curling thing, yet holds  
 continuous intercourse--through skies and trees  
 the lilacs smoke and poppy's pompous fire  
 the pansy's purple patience and the grave  
 frailty of daisies--by what rare unease  
 revealed of teasingly transparent folds--  
 with man's poor soul superlatively brave.  
 (Poems, p. 5)

And the lyrical view of the universe and of life is clear within the poem:

Now is the time when all occasional things  
 close into silence, only one tree, one  
 svelte translation of eternity  
 unto the pale meaning of heaven clings,  
 (whose million leaves in winsome indolence  
 simmer upon thinking twilight momentarily)  
 as down the oblivious west's numerous dun  
 magnificence conquers magnificence.  
 (Poems, p. 6)

We see in the last stanza the prominence of the time motifs and the importance of time in Cummings' view of life in time and nature. In the passages quoted from "Epithalamion" are many elements of nature that will be studied as motifs.

Nature motifs that occur in "Epithalamion" as well as elsewhere in Cummings' poetry are "earth," "wind," "rain," "leaf," "flower," several individual flower motifs, and "bird." Other motifs to be studied in this chapter are "star," "moon," and "snow." But before this is done, one problem to be posed about "Epithalamion" and certain other Cummings' poems is this: is the poem primarily about a lover and his beloved, or is it primarily about nature? Some poems are clearly one or the other. But there may be many poems that are about nature personified in terms of human love. On the other hand, there may be poems about love written in terms of nature. What is to be decided is this: is there a sufficient number of poems that primarily focus on nature? If so, then Cummings is a lyrical poet who sees beauty, truth, and love in a rose, a thrush, or a man. He is one who mystically speaks of a power of love that informs and binds all in a nature man participates in and is a part of.

Theodore Spencer says, "There is no doubt about what Mr. Cummings stands for. He has said it time again and again. He is for . . . the living Now--in flower, bird, mountain and man; he is for the remembrance of miracles."<sup>2</sup> Cummings observes, recalls, and tries to recreate

---

<sup>2</sup>Spencer, pp. 23-29.



miracles of nature so that we can remember and recreate these in our minds. Wegner says that Cummings is a poet alone with such basic phenomena as stars, twilight, and the moon, which serve as symbols of the cycle of growth and love. They are phenomena which renew themselves and are to that extent in accord with the universal will of creation.<sup>3</sup> The "star" motif is suggestive of renewal in this phrase: "and every world, before/silence begins a star" (Poems, p. 430). The stars reflect the structures that make up the universe: "a flutter of stars/a turbulence of forms" (Poems, p. 27). The phrase "this very frail enormous star" (Poems, p. 188) is an oxymoron that does two things. It shows the scientific truth that a star as seen by man on earth is a flickering speck in the sky while in actuality it may be many times the size of the earth or even the sun. And on another level of meaning, this star may be a symbol of the seeming frailties of life, the illusions or mirages, that mask an underlying and renewing strength. And, as if reason and science do not matter a whit, Cummings poses an "if": "if a thought should weigh a star" (Poems, p. 321). The mystery of nature is what is important. Consequently the miracle of stars is reflected thus: "several stars are opening/one beyond one beyond one immaculate curving/cool treasure of silence" (Poems, p. 219). And finally, the one single mystery of man in relation to all creation is seen in this sentence: "and does our fatally unshadowing fate/put on one imaginable star/: then a small million of dark voices sing/against the awful mystery of light" (Poems, p. 325).

---

<sup>3</sup>Robert Wegner, The Poetry and Prose of E. E. Cummings (New York, 1965), pp. 35-36.



The mystery of "world" is expressed thus: "yes is a world/& in this world of/yes live/(skilfully curled)/ all worlds" (Poems, p. 318). Scientifically, it might be said that the universe is made up of worlds within worlds. A theory concerning the universe is used to reflect the complexity of nature. The poet is fascinated by and renders exciting the kaleidoscope of worlds within worlds. Flowers can be such worlds. "'Worlds?' o no: i'm certain they're/ (look again) flowers" (Poems, p. 43). The motif of "world" is associated with love: "love! if a world ends/more than all worlds begin to (see?) begin" (95, No. 78). All elements of nature might be "whycoloured worlds" (Poems, p. 268). Since "yes is a world" (Poems, p. 38), any "now" might be a world. A world may be a star: "and every world, before/silence begins a star" (Poems, p. 430). Cummings speaks of "our world" (73, No. 62), apparently referring to the world of himself and his closest loved one. We can conclude that Cummings' motif "world" refers to any object, person, or moment in nature or the universe. It is an all-inclusive motif as is, to an extent, "star." The motif of "earth" is a specific name for the world in which we live. A sentence that says much about "world" and the related motifs of "earth" and "star" is this: "all worlds have half-sight, seeing either with/life's eye (which as if things seem spirits) or/(if spirits in the guise of Things appear/ death's" (73, No. 73). It would seem that this definition of the motif "world" follows--each world is any element of the universe tangible or intangible, that is, known or not known, but vaguely perceived by man. There are apparently two ways in which men regard the worlds that make up the universe, and the

simplest labels to give to these two views, judging by the above quote, are Aristotelian and Platonic. All the motifs therefore may be said to represent worlds which are nature's elements so often taken for granted. Wegner points out that they are perceived as nothing in the usual sense of the word, that is, "devoid of significance." But to Cummings these infinitely various worlds speak of completeness, fulfillment and rebirth, the ultimate of "nothing."<sup>4</sup>

The motif of "world" is not, however, the major motif of Cummings' view of nature; it is merely a definitive one that helps establish the poet's view of life. In the sense that it is the most frequent of the nature motifs and also because it occurs in many beautiful lines of poetry, "flower" is the major motif of nature. The worlds found in flowers provide the poet and his poems with the concept of Keats, "beauty is truth." The flower motif reflects Cummings' lyrical impulse clearly. Here the vision of man, love, and life in nature and time all come together into a kind of marriage. It is the marriage celebrated in "Epithalamion" in which the tangible and the intangible, the sexual feelings and the spiritual yearnings of man, the real and the unreal--all things--are united into the mystical totality that is Cummings' universe. Since feeling is the basic criterion by which to judge, weigh, and believe, men of reason cannot accept such a universe. But one must accept the premise of the world within the writing if he is to judge that writing. There needs to be that "willing suspension of disbelief"

---

<sup>4</sup>Wegner, pp. 35-36.

Coleridge speaks of before a decision can be formed concerning Cummings' poetry.

The flower motif, then, should reveal more about Cummings' world. Wegner says that in Cummings' poetry "each object perceived becomes the subject of rapt contemplation, an object wonderful and inspiring in itself, a marvel of creation."<sup>5</sup> The flower is one of these marvels. Friedman says that the flower is one of the symbols by which Cummings creates his poetic universe.<sup>6</sup> Arthos says that the flower is very important to the poet.<sup>7</sup> Cummings himself amazingly speaks of "god's flowers" (Poems, p. 49). He speaks of the "souls of flowers" (Poems, p. 122), personifying them, making them alive to the touch of the mind. He recreates the beauty of the flower so that the truth of beauty can be recreated also in the feelings of the reader: "little knives of flower" (Poems, p. 80) describes snow; "brook/-bright flowers" (Poems, p. 462) describes through the use of synesthesia the flowers; "when faces called flowers float out of the ground" (Poems, p. 465) is an unusual personification combined with a synecdoche, as well as simpler elements, that describes the miraculous appearances of flowers. Certainly the flower motif is associated with sexual love: "and these my days their sounds and flowers/Fall in a pride of petaled hours;/like flowers at the feet, of mowers/ whose bodies strong with love/through meadows hugely move"

---

<sup>5</sup>Wegner, p. 42.

<sup>6</sup>Norman Friedman, E. E. Cummings: The Art of His Poetry (Baltimore, 1960), p. 95.

<sup>7</sup>Arthos, pp. 372-373.

(Poems, p. 10). But this passage might also very well be a parable of life. Cummings uses the flower motif to describe ladies addressed in love poems: "thy breast is as a tomb/softer than flowers" (Poems, p. 24), "thy forehead is a flight of flowers" (Poems, p. 25), and "mouth flower-faint" (Poems, p. 5). Certainly the sexual implication of the following is clear: "the flower you gave me when we/loved" (Poems, p. 27). These lines are evidence of the fact that Cummings can write beautiful poetry dealing with physical love. One must keep in mind that Cummings writes of all the aspects of life that make up man's universe and feelings. Simply stated, he is a mystic who recognizes the world of the flesh.

The rose is a particular flower that Cummings is fond of, and the motif "rose" is the most frequently recurring specific flower motif. The existential now is seen in lines containing the rose motif: "a rose's moment" (95, No. 11) and "one small/most of a rose" (Poems, p. 434). Cummings even suggests that the name "rose" is merely a label man invents for a particular mystery or miraculous happening beyond his defining: "cries the (whom we call rose a) mystery" (73, No. 65). The two most striking uses of the rose motif, however, are for creation and death. Cummings writes, "Spring opens/(touching skilfully, mysteriously) her first rose" (Poems, p. 263). Spring, personified, brings forth her first rose. In another poem, Cummings flips the coin when he says "a rose shall beget the spring" (Poems, p. 13). The creation of life is ambiguously and mysteriously associated with the rose. But, as we have seen, Spring and life suggest the coming of Autumn and death. Cummings' rose seems to be a symbol of whatever life there is that reaches beyond

death, as in the following lines: "The symbol of the rose/motionless/ with grieving feet and/wings/mounts" (Poems, p. 50). Earlier in the same poem, one with the first-line title "the rose," we read, "the rose/ is dying the/lips of an old man murder/the petals" (Ibid.). The old man may very well be the traditional personification of death. Perhaps the actual flower dies while its symbol "mounts/against the margins of steep song" (Ibid.). The fact that the poet mentions the song may suggest that the symbol of the rose lives in the poetry or in the words of man. On the other hand, the entire poem may be an allegory of life after death. Cummings places roses in his parents' heaven: "a heaven of blackred rose/my father will be (deep like a rose/tall like a rose)" (Poems, p. 253). Whether or not we are to take Cummings literally regarding the immortality of life does not seem important, at least for now. The significant thing is that roses occur immortally within the world of his poetry.

The short table of the lesser flower motifs ("daisy," "lilac," "lily," "pansy," and "poppy") serves to illustrate that a number of minor motifs perform similarly to the major motifs. Lilacs and pansies are also found in heaven (Poems, p. 253). Lilacs and lilies are associated with the fragile existential moment: "Time and lilacs" (Poems, p. 106), "an opening lily drowsy-fair" (Poems, p. 7). The lesser flower motifs are used in the more earthy sense: "hurting sexual smell/of lilies" (Poems, p. 157). The life and death theme is recurrent among the lesser flower motifs: "the grave/frailty of daisies" (Poems, p. 5), and "death's clever enormous voice/which hides in a fragility/of poppies"

(Poems, p. 39). The lesser motif of "blossom" is also like the other flower motifs, except that it can frequently be used as a verb that suggests the act of creating or living: "shall/blossom a first star" (95, No. 48). As a noun, "blossom" often represents living things and persons that are truly alive: "all blossoms that do learn, scents of not known/music" (Poems, p. 8). And "blossom," as countless other motifs, becomes a substitution for the motif "now": "each shameless/gaiety of blossom" (95, No. 90). Finally, "petal" suggests all the things all the other flower motifs suggest. Specifically, "petal" is most frequently used in two ways: as a modifier--"petaled flesh" (Poems, p. 18), "petaled hours" (Poems, p. 10); and as a noun that is also metaphorical--"the fainting murdered petals" (Poems, p. 157), "eyes which are really petals" (Poems, p. 253), "petals of silence" (Poems, p. 449).

One further conclusion can be derived from the previous discussion on the flower motifs. To study the major motifs of Cummings' poetry is sufficient; the lesser motifs will generally reflect the major motif they are subordinate to. Therefore, the remaining discussion on nature motifs will concern only major ones.

The motifs of "leaf" and "tree" are, of course, related to each other and to the previously discussed nature motifs. The importance of "leaf" and "tree" lies in their further depiction of Cummings' vision. The universe with its innumerable parts is illustrated in such lines as, "trees (in/whose black bod/ies leaves hide" (Poems, p. 255), and "time is a tree (this life one leaf)" (Poems, p. 367). Yet, as soon as "tree" is made a symbol of life or of the universe, Cummings implies that this



"tree" and all it stands for will come to an end: "trees winterbrief" (Poems, p. 203). Paradoxically he will then suggest with the motifs of "leaf" and "tree" that there is perfection and therefore infinity: "for the stars have been/finished in the nobler trees and/ the language of leaves repeats/eventual perfection" (Poems, p. 136). Of course, it is "language" that is the subject of the verb "reaches" and that acts on the object "eventual perfection." And "language" is not a very tangible word for a system of intangibles known as symbols. We are reminded suddenly of the immortality of the symbol of the rose. A startling metaphor, "tree is voice" (Poems, p. 415), seems to indicate something of the psyche while describing the sound of the wind in a tree. A similar line is, "the fragile skill/of new leaves' voices" (Poems, p. 159). One might ask, "What is language?" Perhaps Cummings means that life is voice or speaking or singing, as the mystery of the following lines suggests: "Each why of a leaf says/(floating each how)/you're which as to die/(each green of a new)" (Poems, p. 390). The leaf and the different elements of nature present insolvable questions about life: "leaf twig limb/ask every question time can't answer" (73, No. 46). And one little speck of life is as important as all the universe: "(undaunted guest of dark most downwardness/and marvellously self diminutive/whose universe a single leaf may be)" (73, No. 49). Thus, when the poet writes riddles which read like the utterances of a "natural" court fool, there may be connotations of meaning and feeling beyond the words themselves. The following may be called "riddles of life": "a wind has blown the rain away and blown/the sky away and all the leaves away,/ and the trees



stand" (Poems, p. 63), "when unto nights of autumn do complain/earth's ghashtlier trees by whom Time measure is" (Poems, p. 153), "so world is a leaf so tree is a bough" (Poems, p. 423), "rosetree, rosetree/--you're a song to see:whose/all(you're, a sight to sing)/poems are opening" (95, No. 90). Cummings is always paradoxical concerning life, for as soon as we read of life, we read of the inevitability of death: "the last immortal/leaf/is/dead" (Poems, p. 35), "not/numerable leaves are/fall/i/ng)" (73, No. 54). Lyrically, the answer is always the same: "one dead leaf stirring/--far away (as far as alive) lies/april" (73, No. 67). Spring and life shall return. There is renewal. To conclude the discussion on "leaf" and "tree" the paradox of life might be stated: There is first death and nothing; out of this void comes life in a time such as spring; death or winter or nothing will return; and again there is the promise of renewal, rebirth, and life. Cummings knows that this cycle exists and he states it in his poetic world. He cannot prove where the cycle begins or ends. Perhaps he hopes there is finally renewal and not death. Perhaps he believes in life because there is no death without life, but this little "proof" can easily be stated in the reverse--there is no life without death.

It is only natural that Cummings is interested in the many creatures of this world, living beings that are born, that grow to maturity, and that eventually come to their winters, their deaths. I have chosen the bird to represent all of the creatures of Cummings' poetic universe. The motif "bird" suggests what the poet and any man can learn of life by living close to its manifestations. Cummings says,

"I'd rather learn from one bird how to sing/than teach ten thousand stars how not to dance" (Poems, p. 245). The bird has a specialty, a vocation in life: "(the all the/any merry every pretty each/bird sings birds sing/gay--be--gay because today's today)" (73, No. 1). The birds sing for no other reason than to celebrate the existence of one moment or one day.

Each bird is also a unique creature, an individual being: "now (more near ourselves than we)/is a bird singing in a tree,/who never sings the same things twice/and still the singing's always his" (95, No. 87). Even the least of these is this type of fully alive, individual songster: "or does some littler bird than eyes can learn/look up in silence and completely sing?" (Poems, p. 421). And the bird is not just an egocentric individualist; he sings for others; the bird is one ". . . who sings for us for you for me/for each leaf newer than can be:/and for his own (his love) his dear/he sings till everywhere is here" (95, No. 87). The bird's goal in life is stated: "he sings till everywhere is here. . . ." The statement is a riddle; it speaks no scientific, concrete fact or proof. He sings so that all things existing are that much closer us, to him, to all other things alive. His purpose is that of a mystic. It is only a step to relate the bird's singing and purpose to man's life. Cummings describes "a fine not a coarse clown" as a dumb fellow whose "silence of himself sang like a bird" (73, No. 30). In the following lines the speaker of the poem compares himself to a bird: "may i be gay/like every lark/who lifts his life/from all the dark/who wings his why/beyond because/and sings an if/of day to yes"

(73, No. 43). The speaker of most of the poems is more than likely Cummings himself; he might also, by extension, be anyone. In the lines above, the poet wants to live a life that is beyond the factual conclusion of "yes." He wishes to pose the possibility, the "if," of life in opposition to all that is dark. He wishes to sing and to do, not to postulate or to conclude. Cummings, in fact, implies that man can never hope to reach absolutes or conclusions, scientific or otherwise. If man wants to attain a full life, then he must believe in the "ifs" of life. Cummings particular lot in life, like the bird's, is singing. The poet realizes, however, as many great writers have, that he, as a finite creature, has the limitations imposed by time and death and human weaknesses, or by what has been termed "the human condition." He says, "i heard/a certain bird/i dreamed i could sing/but like nothing/are the joys/of his voice" (Poems, p. 418). The bird here seems definitely to become a symbol of an ideal singer. And when there are ideals, there are also things beyond the reach of man's life, which is to say--beyond death. Therefore the word "nothing" must assume a philosophical or spiritual aspect like the use of "nothing" does in King Lear. Lear must make something out of nothing to realize himself, to be redeemed from himself. Shakespeare is positive, not nihilistic, in his use of "nothing." And so is Cummings. "Nothing" becomes symbolic of that which we do not know factually or through reason; it represents what we feel. It is in "nothing" that a greater reality exists. And like Lear, when we believe in the "if" of this unknown that we feel, then we are rescued from the chaos, darkness and nothingness of an existence threatened by

death. We make, to put it too simply, something out of nothing. The bird sings because of his feelings and does not, cannot question. The difference in man is perhaps that he questions.

I would like to discuss the remaining motifs as they suggest that which is beyond temporal life. Cummings uses the motif of "rain" in an allegorical way to imply such a mystery: "(the sinuous rain which rising from thy bed/steals to his wife the sky hour by hour/wholly renews her pale flesh with delight)" (Poems, p. 3). The obvious use of personification is no doubt meant to make the process of rain more alive to the reader's senses. The motif may also represent something spiritual. Certainly we read lines which might be no more than unusual personifications used to heighten poetic description: "the rain or rather/ Somebody who uses roofs and streets skilfully to make a/possible sound" (Poems, p. 76). But a poet need not always use a word in one sense only, even if that word be a recurrent image. Cummings writes, "i have found what you are like/the rain,/(who feathers frightened fields/with the superior dust-of-sleep" (Poems, p. 122). Why is Cummings interested in knowing of the rain? Perhaps, like the bird, the leaf, and the flower, it teaches man more of life. Nature, even the universe, is the classroom, and man must be close to the manifestations of the universe to be in a learning position. "Rain comes;/predicating forever, assuming/the laughter of afterwards--/i spirally understand/what/touching means" (Poems, p. 257). The rain helps the poet to understand what touching or physical closeness itself means. Touching is admittedly concrete and physical, but it might be symbolic of spiritual closeness. The rain predicates "forever."

The motif of "snow" is also associated with this mysterious and unknown forever: "forevering snow" (Poems, p. 466), and "magical/foreverfully falling snow" (73, No. 5). Yet the image of "snow" is traditionally associated with death. And Cummings does use "snow" in connection with death: "winter's not forever, even snow/melts" (Poems, p. 412). Apparently Cummings uses "snow" paradoxically to mean forever as well as death. The phrase, "foreverfully snow," seems to show that snow or death is "forevering" or, in other words, that snow brings forever, or eternity, to whatever has died. The following is a significant poem on death, and apparently snow, although "snow" is never mentioned:

enter no(silence is the blood whose flesh  
is singing)silence:but unsinging. In  
spectral such hugest how hush,one

dead leaf stirring makes a crash

--far away(as far as alive)lies  
april;and i breathe-move-and-seem some  
perpetually roaming whylessness--

autumn has gone:will winter never come?

o come, terrible anonymity; enfold  
phantom me with the murdering minus of cold  
--open this ghost with millionaire knives of wind--  
scatter his nothing all over what angry slies and

gently  
(very whiteness: absolute peace,  
never imaginable mystery)

descend

(73, No. 67)

Apparently snow is the "very whiteness" that metaphorically is "absolute peace," as well as "never imaginable mystery." Therefore it would seem that with death comes peace, the answers to life's questions, and

finally life. The image "one dead leaf stirring makes a crash/--far away" is reminiscent of a similar image in Chekhov's The Cherry Orchard, the distant sound of an ax. In Chekhov's play, an old life is dying away like an echo. In Cummings' poetry, what follows is "absolute peace, never imaginable mystery." Whatever else this mystery is, it is a "terrible anonymity." An awesome unknown is the coming of death.

The wind brings snow or death: "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?" (Poems, p. 401). The wind is something like a spirit: "all itcreating wind" (73, No. 54). Wind is a creator of "it" or "anonymity" or death. The wind also speaks of truth: "what if a much of a which of a wind/gives the truth to summer's lie;/ bloodies the dizzying leaves the sun/and yanks immortal stars awry?" (Poems, p. 401). Is "summer's lie" the seasonal life of things? Is Cummings saying that there is more to life than summer? If so, then he is a lyrical poet of William Blake's mold in feeling beyond the physical moment and the cycle of nature. Cummings does describe the physical scene of blowing trees and clouds, in which the sun and stars seem to move. But on another level, he speaks of the spiritual force that moves the universe. In other lines the "wind" motif suggests the mysterious force that imbues flowers with magic and truth: "Wind beautifully wanderest/over smooth pages of forgotten joy/proving the peaceful theorems of flowers" (Poems, p. 3). It as though the flowers and the wind embody more that is real than any science could ever formulate. And surely enough, the wind does not according to the reason of scientific



methodology: "the wind is a Lady with/bright slender eyes (who/moves) at sunset/and who--touches--the/hills without any reason" (Poems, p. 74). The same spiritual quality lights the eyes of anyone truly alive: "our eyes filled with wind" (Poems, p. 210).

An object that has fascinated man through the ages is the moon. In modern times, science has robbed the moon of its magic. But the poets have continued to describe the moon, so much so that the original rapt contemplation now seems naive at best, while the poeticizing often appears threadbare. Cummings, in his turn, attempts to convey the magic and mystery of the moon in his poetry:

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  
(Poems, p. 429)

On the simplest level is described the coming of night and the rising of the moon. Perhaps another level of interpretation could be a sexual one. But apparently the following interpretation could be made: at the first of the poem is "now" and doom, or a day and its dying. As the day dies,



the dying colors become an "abyss of orange dream." And as the sunset fades into dusk, the doom is overcome: "doom disappeared, out of perhaps . . . eternity floated a blossoming. . . ." What has replaced doom is a kind of "forevering now," symbolized by the moon: "all the way from perfect nowhere came . . . livingest the imaginable moon."

Whether or not we accept the poem as a fresh depiction of the moon's rising is entirely dependent upon individual response. But no matter how we feel about Cummings as a poet, there seems to be little doubt that he intends to sing of the many worlds of nature that reflect some totality that is a greater reality than the comings and goings of particular days or lives. Babette Deutsch feels that Cummings is not shy of romantic lyricism.<sup>8</sup> Alfred Kazin says that Cummings has a "belief in imagination, that ability to see life from within."<sup>9</sup> M. L. Rosenthal says that Cummings "is absorbed in the problem of definition through the trappings of a state of awareness."<sup>10</sup> Perhaps Wesolek states the poet's goal best:

Cummings, the poet, exemplifies the alienation of the searcher for beauty and truth from the world. Monklike, he follows a discipline which liberates his vision. He turns his head with pride to the heavens and seeks out the stars that shine brilliantly through dirty windows, or over the towering mountain of a steel city, or in the mud of a garden path. He proclaims the star in man, the mystery that will never be solved by the furious machinations of a mind.<sup>11</sup>

The tables of the nature motifs follow (Tables II-1 through II-15).

---

<sup>8</sup>Babette Deutsch, Poetry in Our Time (New York, 1953), p. 117.

<sup>9</sup>Alfred Kazin, "E. E. Cummings and His Fathers," New Yorker, XXIX (January 2, 1954), 57-59.

<sup>10</sup>M. L. Rosenthal, "Three Windows on Cummings," Nation, CLXXXVIII (January 10, 1959), 34-35.

<sup>11</sup>Wesolek, p. 5.

TABLE II-1

## NATURE MOTIF: EARTH

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 39	O sweet spontaneous	O sweet spontaneous/ <u>earth</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 80	SNO	<u>earth's</u> ugly) mind
<u>Poems</u> , p. 378	love is the every only god	love is the every only god/who spoke this <u>earth</u> so glad and big
<u>Poems</u> , p. 464	i thank You God for most this amazing	the gay/great happening illimitably <u>earth</u>
<u>95</u> , No. 42	from spiralling ecstatically this	proud nowhere of <u>earth's</u> most prodigious night

TABLE II-2

## NATURE MOTIF: WORLD

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 21	in Just--	in Just--/ spring when the <u>world</u> is mud--/ luscious
		when the <u>world</u> is puddle-wonderful
<u>Poems</u> , p. 318	when/from a sidewalk/out of (blown never quite to	yes is a world/& in this <u>world</u> of/yes live/ (skilfully curled)/all <u>worlds</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 368	wherelings whenlings	imagine how/ . . . whycoloured <u>worlds</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 376	is say no world	i say no <u>world</u> /can hold a you.
<u>Poems</u> , p. 397	pity this busy monster, manunkind,	a <u>world</u> of made/is not a <u>world</u> of born
<u>Poems</u> , p. 413	darling! because my blood can sing	but if a look should april me, /some thousand million hundred more/bright <u>worlds</u> than merely by doubting have/darkly themselves unmade makes love
<u>Poems</u> , p. 43	swim so now million many worlds in each	" <u>Worlds?</u> " o no: i'm certain they're/(look again) flowers."
<u>95</u> , No. 45	i love you much (most beau- tiful darling)	if what calls itself a <u>world</u> should have/the luck to hear such singing/ . . . everyone certainly would/ . . . believe in nothing but love

TABLE II-2 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>95</u> , No. 78	all nearness pauses, while a star can grow	--love! if a <u>world</u> ends/more than all <u>worlds</u> begin to (see?) begin
<u>73</u> , No. 4	but we've the may	but we've the may/(for you are in love (and i am) to sing,/my darling: while/old <u>worlds</u> and young/(big little and all/ <u>worlds</u> ) merely have/the must to say
<u>73</u> , No. 62	now does our world descend	now does our <u>world</u> descend/the path to noth- ingness
<u>73</u> , No. 73	all worlds have halfsight, seeing either with	all <u>worlds</u> have halfsight, seeing either with/ life's eye (which is if things seem spirits) or/(if spirits in the guise of Things appear/ death's:

TABLE II-3  
NATURE MOTIF: STAR

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 27	unto thee i	a flutter of <u>stars</u> /a turbulence of forms
<u>Poems</u> , p. 38	your little voice/Over the wires came leaping	pale important/ <u>stars</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 41	i was considering how	within night's loose/sack a <u>star's</u> /nibbling devours/darkness the/hungry <u>star</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 76	Take for example this:	the dangerous first <u>stars</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 79	of this sunset (which is so	two most/early <u>stars</u> wincing upon a single/ colour
<u>Poems</u> , p. 93	when the spent day begins to frail	when the spent day begins to frail/(whose grave already three or two/young <u>stars</u> with spades of silver dig)
<u>Poems</u> , p. 112	of this wilting wall the colour drub	a <u>star</u> sleepily, feebly, scratches the sore/ of morning.
<u>Poems</u> , p. 118	utterly and amusingly i am pash	this very frail enormous <u>star</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 118	before the fragile gradual throne of night	several <u>stars</u> are opening/one beyond one imma- culate curving/cool treasures of silence.

TABLE II-3 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 219	our touching hearts slenderly comprehend	this most early single <u>star</u> which tugs/weakly at twilight
<u>Poems</u> , p. 257	come a little further-- why be afraid--	here's the earliest <u>star</u> (have you a wish?)/ touch me,/before we perish
<u>Poems</u> , p. 321	love's function is to fabricate unknownness	if a thought should weigh a <u>star</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 325	reason let others give and realness bring--	and does our fatally unshadowing fate/put on one imaginable <u>star</u> /: then a small million of dark voices sing/against the awful mystery of light
<u>Poems</u> , p. 345	you shall above all things be glad and young.	I'd rather learn from one bird how to sing/ than teach ten thousand <u>stars</u> how not to dance
<u>Poems</u> , p. 361	)when what hugs stopping earth than silent is	total sun oceaning than any this/tear jumping from each most least eye of <u>star</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 370	anyone lived in a pretty how town	they sowed their isn't they reaped the same/ sun moon <u>stars</u> rain
<u>Poems</u> , p. 378	love is the every only god	so truly perfectly the skies/by merciful love whispered were,/completes its brightness with your eyes/any illimitable <u>star</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 430	purser than purest pure	and every world, before/silence begins a <u>star</u>
<u>95</u> , No. 21	joys faces friends	while nobody/(and <u>stars</u> moon/sun fall rise come/go rain snow)/remembers
<u>95</u> , No. 42	from spiralling ecstatically this	mind without soul may blast some universe/to might have been, and stop ten thousand <u>stars</u> / but not one heartbeat of this child



TABLE II-4

## NATURE MOTIF: FLOWER

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 3	Epithalamion	wind beautifully who wanderest/over smooth pages of forgotten joy/proving the peaceful theorems of <u>flowers</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 5	_____	mouth <u>flower</u> -faint
<u>Poems</u> , p. 7	Of Nicolette	dreaming in marble all the castle lay/like some gigantic ghost- <u>flower</u> born of night/ blossoming in white towers to the moon
<u>Poems</u> , p. 10	Always before your voice my soul	and these my days their sounds and <u>flowers</u> / Fall in a pride of petaled hours,/like <u>flowers</u> at the feet of mowers/whose bodies strong with love/through meadows hugely move.
<u>Poems</u> , p. 15	Puella Mea	But should my lady smile, it were/a <u>flower</u> of so pure surprise/(it were so very new a <u>flow-</u> <u>er</u> ,/a <u>flower</u> so frail, a <u>flower</u> so glad)
_____	_____	(a <u>flower</u> such as the world had/in Springtime when the world was mad/ and Lancelot spoke to Guenever
<u>Poems</u> , p. 24	i spoke to thee	thy breast is as a tomb/softer than <u>flowers</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 25	my love	thy forehead is a flight of <u>flowers</u>

TABLE II-4 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 27	unto thee i	the air is/deep with desirable <u>flowers</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 36	i like	the <u>flower</u> you gave me when we/loved
<u>Poems</u> , p. 38	your little voice	the jostling and shouting of merry <u>flowers</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 49	but the other	god's <u>flowers</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 65	yours is the music for no instrument	till this our flesh merely shall be excelled/ by speaking <u>flower</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 80	SNO	little knives of <u>flower</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 81	my eyes are fond of the east side	<u>flowery</u> pluckings/of a harpsichord
<u>Poems</u> , p. 83	suppose	Life is an old man, carrying <u>flowers</u> on his head
<u>Poems</u> , p. 100	Spring is like a perhaps hand	Spring is like a perhaps hand/ . . . moving a perhaps/fraction of <u>flower</u> here
<u>Poems</u> , p. 103	who knows if the moon's	everyone's/in love and <u>flowers</u> pick themselves
<u>Poems</u> , p. 122	i have found what you are like	souls of <u>flowers</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 135	where's Madge then,	Inquire of the <u>flower</u> that sways in the autumn

TABLE II-4 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 139	i will wade out	i will wade out/till my thighs are steeped in burning <u>flowers</u>
_____	cruelly, love	the last <u>flower</u> in whose hair
<u>Poems</u> , p. 142	conversation with my friend is particularly	my friend's being . . ./whittles keen careful futile <u>flowers</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 152	if learned darkness from our searched world	if thy hands <u>flowers</u> of silence curled/upon a wish
<u>Poems</u> , p. 156	when my sensational moments are no more	the small spiritual cry of spring/utters a striving <u>flower</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 190	voices to voices, lip to lip	since the thing perhaps is/to eat <u>flowers</u> and not be afraid
<u>Poems</u> , p. 198	now that fierce few	now that fierce few/ <u>flowers</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 212	because	But carry/also, with that indolent and with/ this <u>flower</u> wholly whom you do (not ever fear,/me in your heart) softly
<u>Poems</u> , p. 243	in a middle of a room	". . . imagine/somewhere are real <u>flowers</u> , but/I can't imagine real <u>flowers</u> . . ."
<u>Poems</u> , p. 263	somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond	the heart of this <u>flower</u> imagines/the snow carefully everywhere descending

TABLE II-4 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
_____	is there a flower (whom	is there a <u>flower</u> (whom/i meet anywhere/able to be and seem/so quite softly as your hair
<u>Poems</u> , p. 312	Spring(side	face <u>flowers</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 325	be of love (a little)	(Dare until a <u>flower</u> ,/understanding sizelessly sunlight
<u>Poems</u> , p. 377	these children singing in stone a	little children wound with stone/ <u>flowers</u>
_____	_____	their song is a <u>flower</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 415	if(among	all the <u>flowers</u> of his eyes
<u>Poems</u> , p. 431	swim so now million many worlds in each	"Worlds? no:i'm certain they're (look again) <u>flowers</u> ."
<u>Poems</u> , p. 462	in/Spring comes (no-	brook/-bright <u>flowers</u> -/soft bird/-quick voice
<u>Poems</u> , p. 465	when faces called flowers float out of the ground	when faces called <u>flowers</u> float out of the ground
<u>73</u> , no. 6	fair ladies tall lovers	a Dream/like fire called <u>flowers</u>
<u>73</u> , No. 30	one wintry afternoon	a bespangled clown/standing on eighth street/handed me a <u>flower</u> .

TABLE II-4 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>73</u> , No. 63	(listen)	through wonder/ful sunlight/ . . . are(leaves; <u>flowers</u> )dreams
<u>73</u> , No. 65	"though your sorrows not	". . . But it must be your" whispers that <u>flower</u>

TABLE II-5

## NATURE MOTIF: ROSE

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 7	Of Nicolette	the unearthly sweetness of a <u>rose</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 13	when god lets my body be	a <u>rose</u> shall beget the spring
<u>Poems</u> , p. 50	the rose	the <u>rose</u> /is dying the/lips of an old man murder/the petals
_____	_____	The symbol of the <u>rose</u> /motionless/with griev- ing feet and/wings/mounts
<u>Poems</u> , p. 54	into the strenuous brief- ness	world/is probably made/of <u>roses</u> & hello:/(of solongs and, ashes)
<u>Poems</u> , p. 134	when life is quite through with	under the grass/lies her head/by oaks and <u>roses</u> /deliberated
<u>Poems</u> , p. 156	when my sensational moments are no more	Time being not for us, purple <u>roses</u> were/ sweeter to thee
<u>Poems</u> , p. 189	voices to voices, lip to lip	not for philosophy does this <u>rose</u> give a damn
<u>Poems</u> , p. 213	Nobody wears a yellow	a dead yellow small <u>rose</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 253	if there are any heavens my mother will (all by herself) have	it will be a heaven of blackred <u>roses</u> /my father will be(deep like a <u>rose</u> /tall like a <u>rose</u> )



TABLE II-5 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 263	somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond	Springs opens/(touching skilfully, mysteri- ously) her first <u>rose</u>
_____	_____	the voice of your eyes is deeper than all <u>roses</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 368	wherelings whenlings	(sometimes a wonder/of wild <u>roses</u> )
<u>Poems</u> , p. 411	we love each other very dearly	this creative never known/complexity was born before the moon/before God wished Himself into a <u>rose</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 434	or who and who)	Mere but one small/most of a <u>rose</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 444	"summer is over	". . . your thorniest question/my <u>roses</u> will answer"
<u>95</u> , No. 11	in time's a noble mercy of proportion	a <u>rose</u> 's moment
<u>95</u> , No. 19	un(bee)mo	asl( <u>rose</u> )eep
<u>95</u> , No. 72	i shall imagine life	but though mankind persuades/itself that every weed's/a <u>rose</u> , <u>roses</u> (you feel/certain) will only smile
<u>95</u> , No. 76	these from my mother's greatgrandmother's rose- bush white	<u>roses</u> which really are dreams of <u>roses</u>

TABLE II-5 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
		the little white <u>rose</u> of a child
<u>95</u> , No. 90	rosetree, rosetree	<u>rosetree</u> , <u>rosetree</u> /-you're a song to see
<u>73</u> , No. 65	though your sorrows not	cries the (whom we call <u>rose</u> a) mystery

TABLE II-8

## NATURE MOTIFS: DAISY, LILAC, LILY, PANSY, POPPY

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 5	Epithalamion	the grave/frailty of <u>daisies</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 23	tumbling-hair/picker of buttercups/violets	the big bullying <u>daisies</u> /through the field wonderful
<u>Poems</u> , p. 5	Epithalamion	the <u>lilac</u> 's smoke
<u>Poems</u> , p. 106	light cursed falling in a singular block	Time and <u>lilacs</u> . . . .minutes and love
<u>95</u> , No. 16	in time of daffodils (who know	in time of <u>lilacs</u> who proclaim/the aim of waking is to dream
<u>Poems</u> , p. 7	Of Nicolette	an opening <u>lily</u> drowsy-fair
<u>Poems</u> , p. 18	Puella Mea	my lady's very singular/and slenderest hands moreover are/(which as <u>lilies</u> smile and quail)
<u>Poems</u> , p. 157	I have seen her a stealth- ily frail	hurting sexual smell/of <u>lilies</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 253	if there are any heavens my mother will (all by herself) have	a fragile heaven of <u>lilies</u> -of-the-valley
<u>Poems</u> , p. 5	Epithalamion	<u>pansy</u> 's purple patience

TABLE II-6 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 49	but the other	the pink hollyhock existence whose/ <u>pansy</u> eyes look from morning till/night into the street
<u>Poems</u> , p. 253	if there are any heavens my mother will (all by herself) have	It will not be a <u>pansy</u> heaven/ . . . but/it will be a heaven of blackred roses
<u>Poems</u> , p. 5	Epithalamion	<u>poppy</u> 's pompous fire
<u>Poems</u> , p. 7	Of Nicolette	from her couch of <u>poppy</u> petals peers/the sleepy morning
<u>Poems</u> , p. 39	the bigness of cannon	death's clever enormous voice/which hides in a fragility/of <u>poppies</u>

TABLE II-7

## NATURE MOTIF: BLOSSOM

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 8	(thee will i praise between those rivers whose	it is the moment which shall seek/all <u>blossoms</u> that do learn, scents of not known/ music
<u>Poems</u> , p. 18	Puella Mea	for each breast a <u>blossom</u> is
<u>Poems</u> , p. 378	these children singing in stone a.	children forever/singing wreathed with sing- <u>ing/blossoms</u> children of/stone with <u>blossom-</u> <u>ing/eyes</u>
<u>95</u> , No. 48	someone i am wandering a town(if its	shall/ <u>blossom</u> a first star
<u>95</u> , No. 90	rosetree, rosetree	each shameless/gaiety of <u>blossom</u>
<u>73</u> , No. 5	the first of all my dreams was of	she quickly dreamed a dream of spring/--how you and i are <u>blossoming</u> .

TABLE II-8

## NATURE MOTIF: PETAL

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 10	Always before your voice my soul	these my days their sounds and flowers/Fall in a pride of <u>petaled</u> hours
<u>Poems</u> , p. 18	Puella Mea	<u>petaled</u> flesh
<u>Poems</u> , p. 137	between green/mountains	parted <u>petaled</u> /mouth, face/delirious. indivis- ible/ <u>grace</u> /of dancing
<u>Poems</u> , p. 157	I have seen her a stealth- ily frail	i have watched certain <u>petals</u> rapidly wish/in the corners of her youth
<u>Poems</u> , p. 157	who's most afraid of death? thou	the fainting/murdered <u>petals</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 253	if there are any heavens my mother will (all by herself) have	eyes which are really <u>petals</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 263	somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond	you open always <u>petal</u> by <u>petal</u> myself as Spring opens
<u>Poems</u> , p. 377	these children singing in stone a	these silently lit/tle children are <u>petals</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 449	quick i the death of thing	<u>petals</u> of silence



TABLE II-9

## NATURE MOTIF: TREE

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 55	i am going to utter a tree, Nobody	i am going to utter a <u>tree</u> , Nobody/shall stop me
<u>Poems</u> , p. 63	a wind has blown the rain away and blown	a wind has blown the rain away and blown/the sky away and all the leaves away,/and the <u>trees</u> stand.
_____	_____	a wind has blown the rain/away and the leaves and the sky and the/ <u>trees</u> stand;/the <u>trees</u> stand. The <u>trees</u> ,/suddenly wait against the moon's face.
<u>Poems</u> , p. 80	SNO	Thick silence)/black <u>treest</u> think
<u>Poems</u> , p. 135	into the smiting	into the smiting/sky tense/with/blend/ing/the/ <u>tree</u> leaps/a stiffened exquisite
<u>Poems</u> , p. 136	after five	for the stars have been/finished in the nobler <u>trees</u> and/the language of leaves repeats/ eventual perfection
<u>Poems</u> , p. 141	little tree	little <u>tree</u> /little silent Christmas <u>tree</u> / . . . i will <u>kiss</u> your cool bark
<u>Poems</u> , p. 153	if learned darkness from our searched world	thoughtful <u>trees</u> whom night hath pondered o'er

TABLE II-9 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 153	when unto nights of autumn do complain	when unto nights of autumn do complain/ earth's ghashtlier <u>trees</u> by whom Time measured is
<u>Poems</u> , p. 154	this is the garden: colours come and go,	the slow deep <u>trees</u> perpetual of sleep
<u>Poems</u> , p. 159	will suddenly trees leap from winter and will	will suddenly <u>trees</u> leap from winter and will/ the stabbing music of your white youth
<u>Poems</u> , p. 203	but observe; although	<u>trees</u> winterbrief
<u>Poems</u> , p. 255	you	i/have seen <u>trees</u> (in/whose black bod/ies leaves/hide
<u>Poems</u> , p. 312	Spring (side	<u>tree</u> bodies
<u>Poems</u> , p. 367	as freedom is a breakfast- food	--time is a <u>tree</u> (this life one leaf)
<u>Poems</u> , p. 415	if (among	<u>tree</u> is voice
<u>Poems</u> , p. 419	trees/were in (give	<u>trees</u> /were in (give/give) bud when to me/you/ made for by love/love said did/o no yes
<u>Poems</u> , p. 421	"sweet spring is your	not a <u>tree</u> can count his leaves/each herself by opening/but shining who by thousands mean/ only one amazing thing/ . . . "sweet spring is your/time is my time is our/time . . . "

TABLE II-9 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 423	if everythhing happens that can't be done	so world is a leaf so <u>tree</u> is a bough
<u>95</u> , No. 90	rosetree, rosetree	<u>rosetree</u> , <u>rosetree</u> /--you're a song to see: whose/all (you're a sight to sing)/ poems are opening
_____	_____	<u>dreamtree</u> , <u>truthtree</u> / <u>tree</u> of jubilee
_____	_____	<u>lovetree</u> ! least the/rose alive . . . /--a heart her each petal

TABLE II-10

## NATURE MOTIF: LEAF

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 35	the glory is fallen out of	the last immortal/ <u>leaf</u> /is/dead and the gold/ year/a formal spasm/in the/dust
<u>Poems</u> , p. 135	into the smiting	O hast/annihilator/drawing into you my enchanting/ <u>leaves</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 136	after fine	the language of <u>leaves</u> repeats/eventual per- fection
<u>Poems</u> , p. 147	it's just like a coffin's	drifts between/tables like an old <u>leaf</u> / between toadstools
<u>Poems</u> , p. 153	if learned darkness from our searched world	if god should send the morning; and before/ my doubting window <u>leaves</u> softly to stir,
<u>Poems</u> , p. 154	when unto nights of autumn do complain	i do excuse me, love, to Death and Time/ storms and rough cold, wind's menace and <u>leaf's</u> grieving:
<u>Poems</u> , p. 159	will suddenly trees leap from winter and will	the fragile skill/of new <u>leaves'</u> voices
<u>Poems</u> , p. 255	you	trees (in/whose black bod/ies <u>leaves</u> /hide
<u>Poems</u> , p. 287	mouse) Won	we/'ve/hidden him in A <u>Leaf</u> /and,/Opening/ beautiful earth/put (only) a <u>Leaf</u> among dark/ ness

TABLE II-10 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 303	here's to opening and upward, to leaf and to sap	here's to opening and upward, to <u>leaf</u> and to sap/and to your (in my arms flowering so new) self whose eyes smell of the sound of rain
<u>Poems</u> , p. 367	as freedom is a breakfast-food	--time is a tree (this life one <u>leaf</u> )
<u>Poems</u> , p. 389	nonsun blob a	my are your/are birds our all/and one gone/away the they/ <u>leaf</u> of ghosts
<u>Poems</u> , p. 390	it's over a (see just	Each why of a <u>leaf</u> says/(floating each how)/you're which as to die/(each green of a new)
<u>Poems</u> , p. 401	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 <u>leaves</u> the sun/and yanks immortal stars awry?
<u>Poems</u> , p. 415	if (among	each living ablaze greenly thing/ . . . <u>leaf</u> is wing
<u>Poems</u> , p. 423	if everything happens that can't be done	so world is a <u>leaf</u> so tree is a bough
<u>Poems</u> , p. 465	when faces called flowers float out of the ground	when every <u>leaf</u> opens without any sound
<u>95</u> , No. 85	here pasture ends--	until no least/ <u>leaf</u> almost stirs/as never (in/againless depths/of silence)

TABLE II-10 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>95</u> , No. 87	now (more near ourselves than we)	each <u>leaf</u> newer than can be
<u>73</u> , No. 46	out of midsummer's blazing most not night	<u>leaf</u> twig limb/ask every question time can't answer
<u>73</u> , No. 49	faithfully tinying at twi- light voice	(undaunted guest of dark most downwardness/ and marvellously self diminutive/whose uni- verse a single leaf may be)
<u>73</u> , No. 54	timeless	not/numerable <u>leaves</u> are/fall/i/ng)
<u>73</u> , No. 67	enter no (silence is the blood whose flesh	one dead <u>leaf</u> stirring makes a crash/--far away (as far as alive) lies/april;



TABLE II-11

## NATURE MOTIF: BIRD

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 25	my love	thy head is a quick forest/filled with sleeping <u>birds</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 26	listen	in my dream you had/desire to thwart me and became/a little <u>bird</u> and hid in a tree of tall marble/from a great way i distinguished/singing
<u>Poems</u> , p. 54	the moon is hiding in	cover her briefness in singing/close her with intricate faint <u>birds</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 61	it may not always be so; and i say	Then shall i turn my face, and hear one <u>bird</u> /sing terribly afar in the lost lands
<u>Poems</u> , p. 134	of my	a street/there is/where strange <u>birds</u> purr
<u>Poems</u> , p. 138	Lady of Silence	through the sensible/night/a/quick <u>bird</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 252	twi--/is--Light bird	twi--/is--Light <u>bird</u> /ful/--ly dar/kness eats/a distance
<u>Poems</u> , p. 264	is there a flower (whom	what <u>bird</u> has perfect fear/(of first deepest rare/quite who are your eyes
<u>Poems</u> , p. 264	my darling wince	darling(for only Nobody knows/where truth grows why/ <u>birds</u> fly and/especially who the moon is.

TABLE II-11 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 271	so standing, our eyes filled with wind, and the	notice how the keen ship lifts (skilfully/ like some <u>bird</u> which is all <u>birds</u> but more fleet)/herself against the air
<u>Poems</u> , p. 307	swi( /across/gold's	Swi/mming/ (w--a)s / <u>bIr/d</u> ,
<u>Poems</u> , p. 311	at dusk/just when	at dusk/just when/the Light is filled with <u>birds</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 345	you shall above all things be glad and young.	I'd rather learn from one <u>bird</u> how to sing/ than teach ten thousand stars how not to dance
<u>Poems</u> , p. 389	nonsun blob a	my are your/are <u>birds</u> our all/and one gone/ away
<u>Poems</u> , p. 415	if (among	every new/ <u>bird</u> no bigger than to sing
<u>Poems</u> , p. 418	until and i heard	i heard/a certain a <u>bird</u> /i dreamed i could sing/but like nothing/are the joys/of his voice
<u>Poems</u> , p. 421	life is more true than reason will deceive	or does some littler <u>bird</u> than eyes can learn/look up in silence and completely sing?
<u>Poems</u> , p. 423	if everything happens that can't be done	(and <u>birds</u> sing sweeter/than books/tell how)

TABLE II-11 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 465	when faces called flowers float out of the ground	all the pretty <u>birds</u> dive to the heart of the sky
<u>95</u> , No. 87	now (more near ourselves than we)	now(more near ourselves than we)/is a <u>bird</u> singing in a tree,/who never sings the same thing twice/and still that singing's always his
_____	_____	who sings for us for you for me/for each leaf newer than can be:/and for his own (his love) his dear/ <u>he</u> sings till everywhere is here
<u>73</u> , No. 1	O the sun comes up--up-- up in the opening	(the all the/any merry every pretty each/ <u>bird</u> sings <u>birds</u> sing/gay--be--gay because to- day's today)
<u>73</u> , No. 2	for any ruffian of the sky	for any ruffian of the sky/your <u>kingbird</u> doesn't give a damn/ . . . he loves because he cannot fear/(you see it in the way he stands/and looks and leaps upon the air)
<u>73</u> , No. 11	humble one (gifted with	humble one (gifted with/illimitable joy)/ <u>bird</u> sings love's every truth/beyond all since and why/asking no favor but/ . . . to sing
<u>73</u> , No. 30	one wintry afternoon	a fine not a coarse clown/ . . . and while never saying a word/who was anything but dumb;/since the silence of him/self sang like a <u>bird</u> .

TABLE II-11 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>73</u> , No. 33	christ but they're few	god how he sings/the <u>robin</u> (who/'ll be silent in/a moon or two
<u>73</u> , No. 43	may i be gay	may i be gay/ like every <u>lark</u> /who lifts his life/from all the dark/who wings his why/ beyond because/ and sings an if/of day to yes
<u>73</u> , No. 47	without the mercy of	all these/thankful (hark) <u>birds</u> singing wholly are

TABLE II-12

## NATURE MOTIF: RAIN

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 3	Epithalamion	Thou aged unreluctant earth who dost/with quivering continual thighs invite/the thrill- ing <u>rain</u> the slender paramour/to toy with thy extraordinary lust,/
_____	_____	(the sinuous <u>rain</u> which rising from thy bed/ steals to his wife the sky and hour by hour/ wholly renews her pale flesh with delight)
<u>Poems</u> , p. 9	(thee will i praise be- tween those rivers whose	a <u>rain</u> frailly raging whom the hills/sink into
<u>Poems</u> , p. 49	but the other	<u>rain</u> /fell (as it will/in spring)/ropes/of silver gliding from sunny/thunder
<u>Poems</u> , p. 51	spring omnipotent goddess thou dost	spring/ . . . your hands/are the snow/and thy fingers are the <u>rain</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 65	your is the music for no instrument	(if i have made songs/it does not greatly mat- ter to the sun, nor will <u>rain</u> care/cautiously who prolongs/unserious twilight)
<u>Poems</u> , p. 75	Take for example this:	the <u>rain</u> or rather/Somebody who uses roofs and streets skilfully to make a/possible and beau- tiful sound:
<u>Poems</u> , p. 76	_____	the streets turn young with <u>rain</u> .

TABLE II-12 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 117	it is funny, you will be dead some day.	the <u>rain</u> 's face
<u>Poems</u> , p. 122	i have found what you are like	i have found what you are like/the <u>rain</u> ,/(who feathers frightened fields/with the superior dust-of-sleep
<u>Poems</u> , p. 210	you are like the snow only	you are like . . . /the <u>rain</u> /only sweeter frailer
<u>Poems</u> , p. 238	i will cultivate within	<u>Rain</u> is no respecter of persons
<u>Poems</u> , p. 257	when rain whom fear	<u>Rain</u> comes;/predicating forever, assuming/the laughter of afterwards--/i spirially under- stand/what/touching means
<u>Poems</u> , p. 302	move	move/deeply, <u>rain</u> /(dream hugely)
<u>Poems</u> , p. 311	much i cannot)	least flowers of <u>rain</u>
<u>Poems</u> , pp. 367- 368	wherelings whenlings	this now of the sky/ . . . dawn dark <u>rain</u> snow
<u>Poems</u> , p. 370	anyone lived in a pretty how town	they sowed their isn't they reaped their same/ sun moon stars <u>rain</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 374	my father moved through dooms of love	his anger was as right as <u>rain</u>

TABLE II-12 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 411	we love each other very dearly	we love each other very dearly/,more/than <u>rain</u> -drops need sunbeams
<u>95</u> , No. 44	--laughing to find	crying to lose/(as down someone/who's we ungrows)/a dream in the <u>rain</u>
<u>95</u> , No. 82	now comes the good rain farmers pray for (and	(here is the <u>rain</u> awaited by leaves with all/ their trees and by forests with all their mountains)
<u>73</u> , No. 44	Now i lay (with everywhere around	(the great dim deep sound/of <u>rain</u> ; and of always and of nowhere)



TABLE II-13

## NATURE MOTIF: SNOW

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 5	Epithalamion	a silver sudden parody of <u>snow</u> /tickles the air to golden tears
<u>Poems</u> , p. 13	when god lets my body be	will lay between their little breasts/my strong fingers beneath the <u>snow</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 14	Puella Mea	my fragile lady wandering/in whose perishable poise/is the mystery of Spring/(with her beauty more than <u>snow</u> /dexterous and fugitive/ my very lady drifting/distinctly
<u>Poems</u> , p. 80	SNO	<u>SNO</u> /a white idea (Listen/ . . . tiny, angels sharpen; themselves/(on/air)/don't speak/a white idea
<u>Poems</u> , p. 126	let us tremble) a per- sonal radiance sits	each street takes of shadowy/light the droll <u>snowing</u> delirium
<u>Poems</u> , p. 154	this is the garden: colours come and go,	absolute lights like baths of golden <u>snow</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 159	will suddenly trees leap from winter and will	the unswift mouths of <u>snow</u> /insignificantly whisper
<u>Poems</u> , p. 210	you are like the snow only	you are like the <u>snow</u> only/purer fleeter
<u>Poems</u> , p. 237	i will cultivate within	the <u>snow</u> doesn't give a soft white/damn Whom it touches

TABLE II-13 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 303	here's to opening and upward, to leaf and to sap	here's to silent certainly mountains; and to/ a disappearing poet of always, <u>snow</u> /and to morning.
<u>Poems</u> , p. 361	)when what hugs stopping earth than silent is	until out of merely not nothing comes/only on one <u>snowflake</u> (and we speak our names
<u>Poems</u> , pp. 367- 368	wherelings whenlings	this now of the sky/ . . . dawn dark rain <u>snow</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 370	anyone lived in a pretty how town	and only the <u>snow</u> can begin to explain/how children are apt to forget to remember
<u>Poems</u> , p. 374	my father moved through dooms of love	he'd laugh and build a world with <u>snow</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 379	denied night's face	rains a grey <u>snow</u> /of motherly same
<u>Poems</u> , p. 367	("fire stop thief help murder save the world"	god whispered him a <u>snowflake</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 400	when you are silent, shining host by guest	<u>snowingly</u> enfolding glory
<u>Poems</u> , p. 401	what if a much of a which of a wind	what if a keen of a lean wind flays/screaming hills with sleet and <u>snow</u> / . . . stifles forests with white ago?
<u>Poems</u> , p. 408	open green those	a least/dare/of <u>snow</u> less quite/is nothing but herself

TABLE II-13 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 412	all ignorant toboggans in- to know	winter's not forever, even <u>snow</u> /melts
<u>Poems</u> , p. 416	these (whom; pretends	<u>snowing</u> /by upward with Joy
<u>Poems</u> , p. 466	now all the fingers of this tree (darling) have	forevering <u>snow</u>
<u>95</u> , No. 4	this man's heart	a <u>snowflake</u> twi-/sts/, on/its way to now/-here
<u>95</u> , No. 6	spirit colossal	<u>snowily</u> nowheres/of winter his silence
<u>95</u> , No. 21	joys faces friends	while nobody/(and stars moon/sun fall rise come/go rain <u>snow</u> )/remembers
<u>95</u> , No. 40	silence	(inquiry before <u>snow</u>
<u>95</u> , No. 44	--laughing to find	--laughing to find/anyone's blind/(like me like you)/except in <u>snow</u> --
<u>73</u> , No. 5	the first of all my dreams was of	magical/foreverfully falling <u>snow</u>
<u>73</u> , No. 44	Now i lay (with every- where around)	given is how beautifully <u>snow</u>
<u>73</u> , No. 61	one	<u>snowflake</u> / . . . is upon a gra/v/es/t/one

TABLE II-14

## NATURE MOTIF: WIND

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 3	Epithalamion	<u>Wind</u> beautifully who wanderest/over smooth pages of forgotten joy/proving the peaceful theorems of flowers
<u>Poems</u> , p. 63	a wind has blown the rain away and blows	a <u>wind</u> has blown the rain away and blown/the sky away and all the leaves away,/and the trees stand. I think i too have known/ autumn too long
<u>Poems</u> , p. 74	the wind is a Lady with	the <u>wind</u> is a Lady with/bright slender eyes (who/moves) at sunset/and who--touches--the/ hills without any reason
<u>Poems</u> , p. 75	_____	<u>wind</u> being a lady in a green/dress, who; touches; the fields/(at sunset)
<u>Poems</u> , p. 117	it is funny, you will be dead some day	the rich improbable hands of the <u>wind</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 122	i have found what you are like	wields/easily the pale club of the <u>wind</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 210	supposing i dreamed this)	you are a house around which/i am a <u>wind</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 271	so standing, our eyes filled with wind, and the	our eyes filled with <u>wind</u>

TABLE II-14 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 401	what if a much of a which of a wind	what if a much of a which of a <u>wind</u> /gives the truth to summer's lie;/bloodies the dizzying leaves the sun/and yanks immortal stars awry?
_____	_____	what if a keen of a lean <u>wind</u> flays/screaming hills with sleet and snow:/strangles valleys by ropes of thing/and stifles forests in white ago?
<u>73</u> , No. 54	timeless	all itcreating <u>wind</u>
<u>73</u> , No. 67	enter no (silence is the blood whose flesh	open this ghost with millionaire knives of <u>wind</u>

TABLE II-15

## NATURE MOTIF: MOON

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 33	if i believe	<u>moon</u> and sunset/stars and flowers/gold cres- cendo and silver muting
<u>Poems</u> , p. 37	O Distant	handsome/ <u>moon</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 38	your little voice/over the wires came leaping	Humorous <u>moon</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 64	a thing most new complete fragile intense	the minute <u>moon</u> /is a remarkable splinter in the quick/of twilight
<u>Poems</u> , p. 76	Take for example this:	(the new <u>moon</u> /fills abruptly with sudden silver/these torn pickets of lame and begging colour)
<u>Poems</u> , p. 118	utterly and amusingly i am pash	timid lewd/ <u>moon</u> plunge skilfully into the hill.
<u>Poems</u> , p. 125	a blue woman with sticking out breasts hanging	<u>moon</u> , begins to drool/softly, in the hot alley,
<u>Poems</u> , p. 127	the mind is its own beauti- ful prisoner.	the sticky <u>moon</u> /opening in dusk her new wings
<u>Poems</u> , p. 157	i have seen her a stealth- ily frail	the <u>moon</u> is like a floating silver hell/a song of adolescent ivory

TABLE II-15 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 203	but observe; although	now for a <u>moon</u> / to squat in first darkness/-- a little <u>moon</u> thinner than/memory/faint/-er/ than all the whys/which lurk/between your naked shoulderblades.
<u>Poems</u> , p. 205	the moon looked into my window	the <u>moon</u> looked into my window/it touched me with its small hands/and with curling infantile fingers
_____	_____	the little hands withdrew, jerkily, them- selves/quietly they began playing with a button/the <u>moon</u> smiled she/let go my vest and crept/through the window
<u>Poems</u> , p. 216	i go to this window	i see the new <u>moon</u> /thinner than a hair
<u>Poems</u> , p. 218	touching you i say (it being Spring	the <u>moon</u> if you'll/notice follows us like a big yellow dog
_____	_____	there's the <u>moon</u> , there is something faithful and mad
<u>Poems</u> , p. 243	in a middle of a room	a <u>moon</u> swims out of a cloud
<u>Poems</u> , p. 252	twi--/is --Light bird	( <u>moon</u> begins The/)/now, est hills er dream;
<u>Poems</u> , p. 256	i met a man under the moon	i met a man under the <u>moon</u> /on Sunday.
<u>Poems</u> , p. 262	lady will you come with me into	Clocks strike. The/ <u>moon's</u> round, through the window



TABLE II-15 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 264	my darling since	darling (for only Nobody knows/where truth grows why/birds fly and/especially who the <u>moon</u> is.
<u>Poems</u> , p. 277	m00n Over t0wns m00n	<u>m00n</u> Over t0wns <u>m00n</u> /whisper/less creature huge gr0/pingness/wh0 perfectly wh0/fl0at/newly al0ne
<u>Poems</u> , p. 277	moon over gai	finally and always, the iflike <u>moon</u> over moving/me--the/ <u>moon</u>  0:/m/o/o/n/o
<u>Poems</u> , p. 324	come (all you mischief--	nobody/can sell the <u>Moon</u> to the) <u>moon</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 366	these people socalled were not given hearts	which may your million selves and my suffice/ to through the only mystery of love/become while every sun goes round its <u>moon</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 368	wherelings whenlings	<u>moon</u> /'s whis-/per/in sunset
<u>Poems</u> , p. 370	anyone lived in a pretty how town	they sowed their isn't they reaped their same/sun <u>moon</u> stars rain
<u>Poems</u> , p. 379	denied night's face	i bring you peace/the <u>moon</u> of day
<u>Poems</u> , p. 411	we love each other very dearly	sweet this creative never known/Complexity was born before the <u>moon</u> /before God wished Himself into a rose

TABLE II-15 (continued)

Vol. & No.	First Line Title	Example
<u>Poems</u> , p. 429	this (let's remember) day died again and	livingest the imaginable <u>moon</u>
<u>Poems</u> , p. 468	luminous tendril of celes- tial wish	dreamslender exquisite white firstful flame/ --new <u>moon</u>
<u>95</u> , No. 21	joys faces friends	while nobody/(and stars <u>moon</u> /sun fall rise come/go rain snow)remembers
<u>95</u> , No. 50	o (rounD) moon, how	o (rounD) <u>moon</u>
<u>95</u> , No. 51	f	<u>m/oo/n</u> (/poor shadoweaten
<u>73</u> , No. 38	silently if, out of not knowable	you are my sun, my <u>moon</u> , and all my stars

## CHAPTER III

### CONCLUSION

Whenever a new study of literature is made, one of the first questions asked of it is, what new knowledge has been added to the body of literary criticism? There have been a number of studies of Cummings' unusual poetic technique. Norman Friedman's first study of Cummings' relates the content to the technique, but his book does not clearly delineate Cummings' basic view of life. In fact, Friedman merely suggests through understatement that Cummings has a vision serious enough to form the basis of a lyrical poetry.<sup>1</sup> Friedman's second book is concerned with the growth of the poet. Barry Marks studies primarily the poet's aesthetics, and his book gives valuable insight into the intentions of Cummings. The present study is indebted to Friedman and Marks. But both critics attempt to cover all the elements of both style and content. The latest book-length study, that of Robert Wegner, focuses on the overall significance of love in Cummings' poetry. This thesis is indebted to Wegner's interpretation of the philosophical and spiritual nature of Cummings' concept of love. Wegner states his general aim:

My purpose in this book is to present an appreciation of Cummings as a poet. I have not made lists, graphs, or charts. I have simply commented upon those elements in the prose and poetry of Cummings that have interested me. . . .<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Friedman, e. e. cummings: the art of his poetry, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Wegner, p. 11.

If a criticism is to be made of Wegner's study, it is that he overemphasizes the philosophy of love, while having a broad purpose and a loose structure in his book. If he meant to claim so much for the case of love in Cummings' writing, then he ought to have clearly indicated Cummings' basic vision. And it would appear that further analysis, such as the motif tabulations of this thesis, is necessary before a statement of Cummings' universe can be made.

One thing is clear. None of the book-length studies have dispelled the diversity of critical opinion regarding Cummings' worth as a poet, or even what he meant to do. It would appear that there should be some general consensus about the poet's intentions before any judgment could be made. As we saw in the Introduction, there is great disagreement among the critics. Sherry Mangen says that Cummings reduces his existential now to ". . . negation and rejection. . . ." <sup>3</sup> It appears, however, that the motifs of time show that even on the simplest level Cummings is quite positive in his use of "now," "moment," and "day" and in his affirmation of "spring" over "winter" and life over death. Arthos feels that Cummings' images are unsupported by logic. <sup>4</sup> The motif tables reveal that there is much logic--not scientific, but poetic or literary--to many of Cummings' images. Then there is the often-voiced criticism that Cummings is too wrapped up in his own private world. Southworth

---

<sup>2</sup>Wegner, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>Horton and Mangen, p. 90.

<sup>4</sup>Arthos, pp. 380-381.

says that Cummings is too concerned with self.<sup>5</sup> A characteristic of a lyrical poet, and Cummings has been called that many times, is that he is subjective, or personal. Also traditional is the idea that each writer creates only from his own highly personal outlook. Besides, a mystic poet, which Cummings has also been called, is ultimately concerned with the self in all its physical and spiritual vicissitudes. Harriet Monroe says that Cummings ". . . tires the reader with intricate intellectual acrobatics which scarcely repay one for puzzling out their motive over the slippery typographical stepping-stones."<sup>6</sup> And the typography, while glaring and shocking at times, is not the main element of either Cummings' originality or style; therefore, to judge by his unusual technique is to use the wrong criterion. As for some of the most extreme cases of bizarre techniques, they are usually no more important than any experimentation with form ever is. And out of experiments very often come the freshly cloaked truths. William Carlos Williams makes an important observation when he says,

We give the artist freedom requiring only that he use it to say whatever he chooses to say. We do not suppress him when he happens to say something which we dislike or to which we are for various reasons officially or individually opposed."<sup>7</sup>

What Cummings says is mystical and visionary. A number of critics have suggested that Cummings has a vision that is beyond the physical or tangible. Wegner says, "His basic thesis is that only those

---

<sup>5</sup>James G. Southworth, Some Modern American Poets (Oxford, 1950), p. 136.

<sup>6</sup>Monroe, p. 22.

<sup>7</sup>From William Carlos Williams, "E. E. Cummings," Evergreen Review (Winter, 1959), pp. 214-216.

in love are alive and in harmony with the universe; that lack of love accounts for every misinterpretation of life."<sup>8</sup> Kazin comments,

More and more, in Cummings' recent books, one sees how this belief in imagination, that ability to see life from within, has enabled him to develop, out of the provocative mannerism of his early life, a verse that is like lyric shorthand--extraordinarily elastic, light, fresh, and resonant of feeling.<sup>9</sup>

Wesolek says that Cummings' ". . . success depends upon his supraview of nature . . . ." <sup>10</sup> One belief that helps form this study is that in order to understand Cummings and therefore evaluate him, one must be aware of Cummings' "supraview of nature" which is an inherent part of his poetry. It is the contention of this thesis that a study of the motifs of time and nature in Cummings' poetry is important in an understanding of the poet's vision.

In Cummings' poetry the motifs suggest and imply his vision. There are poems that express the basest of human feelings, for this is reality. We emerge from an extensive reading of Cummings' poetry with a picture of a man who has his man-desires and impulsive actions but who nonetheless feels a kinship with the creating force that made him. Cummings gives us a picture of the world that includes both man and his god. The images or motifs of his poetry, considered collectively, reflect his vision.

---

<sup>8</sup>Wegner, p. 48.

<sup>9</sup>Kazin, p. 59.

<sup>10</sup>Wesolek, p. 4.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### PRIMARY SOURCES

- Cummings, E. E. i:six nonlectures. Cambridge, 1966.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 95 Poems. New York, 1958.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Poems 1923-1954. New York, 1954.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 73 Poems. New York, 1962.

### SECONDARY SOURCES

- Arthos, John. "The Poetry of E. E. Cummings." American Literature, XIV (May, 1943), 372-383.
- Baum, S. V., ed. E. E. Cummings and the Critics. East Lansing, Michigan, 1962.
- Benstock, Bernard. "All the World a Stage: The Elements of Drama in Poetry of E. E. Cummings." Studies in American Literature, ed. Waldo McNair, and Leo Levy. Baton Rouge, 1960, pp. 104-131.
- Bishop, John P. "The Poems and Prose of E. E. Cummings." Southern Review, IV (July, 1938), 173-186.
- Blackmur, R. P. The Double Agent. New York, 1935.
- Burke, Kenneth. "Recent Poetry." Southern Review, I (July, 1935), 164-177.
- Burns, David. "First Person Singular." Yale Review, XLIII (Winter, 1954), 306-308.
- Danziger, Marlies K., and Wendell Stacy Johnson, eds. A Poetry Anthology. New York, 1968.
- Deutsch, Babette. Poetry in Our Time. New York, 1952.
- Frankenburg, Lloyd. Pleasure Dome: on reading modern poetry. Boston, 1949.

- Friedman, Norman. e. e. cummings: the art of his poetry. Baltimore, 1960.
- Gunn, Thom. "Poetry as Written." Yale Review, XLVIII (Winter, 1959), 297-305.
- Harrington, Michael. "Modern Idiom, Traditional Spirit," Commonweal, LXI (December 10, 1954), 294-295.
- Hayakawa, Samuel I. "Is Indeed 5." Poetry, LII (August, 1938), 284-292.
- Horton, Philip, and Sherry Mangel. "Two Views of Cummings." Partisan Review, IV (May, 1938), 58-63.
- Kazin, Alfred. "E. E. Cummings and His Fathers." New Yorker, XXIX (January 2, 1954), 57-59.
- Marks, Barry A. E. E. Cummings. New York, 1964.
- Monroe, Harriet. "Flare and Blare." Poetry, XXIII (January, 1924), 211-215.
- Munson, Gorham B. "Syrinx." E. E. Cummings and the Critics, ed. S. V. Baum, pp. 9-18.
- Rosenthal, M. L. "Three Windows on Cummings." Nation, CLXXXVIII (January 10, 1959), 34-35.
- Southworth, James G. Some Modern American Poets. Oxford, 1950.
- Spencer, Theodore. "Technique as Joy." The Harvard Wake, V (Spring, 1946), 25-29.
- Spurgeon, Caroline. Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us. Boston, 1960.
- Thrall, William Flint, Hibbard and Holman. A Handbook to Literature. New York, 1960.
- Von Abele, Rudolph. "'Only to Grow': Change in the Poetry of E. E. Cummings." PMLA, LXX (December, 1955), 913-933.
- Wegner, Robert. The Poetry and Prose of E. E. Cummings. New York, 1965.
- Wesolek, George. "e. e. cummings: A Reconsideration." Renaissance, XVIII, i (Fall, 1965), 3-8.
- Williams, William Carlos. "E. E. Cummings." Evergreen Review, II (Winter, 1959), 214-216.

## VITA

Karl Douglas Harris was born in Clarksville, Tennessee, on July 14, 1941. He attended elementary schools in Louisville, Kentucky, and in Jefferson City, Tennessee. He attended secondary schools in Edinburgh, Scotland, and in Jefferson City, Tennessee. He completed his Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in English, May, 1962, at Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, Tennessee. He pursued graduate work in the School of Theater, The University of Denver, 1962-1963. In 1963-1964, he taught tenth and eleventh grade English at Salem High School, Morganton, North Carolina.

He began his graduate studies in English at The University of Tennessee in September, 1964. He completed his course work in December, 1965. He then taught Remedial Reading in the Knoxville City Schools until June, 1966. In the summer of 1966, he taught English in The Knoxville College Summer Tutorial Program. In 1966-1967, he taught in New Market Elementary School of the Jefferson County Schools. In the summer of 1967, he helped in the reading program of the Upward Bound Project, Carson-Newman College.

Beginning in September, 1967, he taught English at Hiwassee College, Madisonville, Tennessee. He continued as an instructor at Hiwassee College the following year. On December 21, 1968, he married a colleague, Elizabeth Annette Kinser. In the Spring Quarter of 1969, he graduated from The University of Tennessee with a Master of Arts degree, majoring in English.