

Five to Sixfold

Coming to cummings

Swimming around in e.e.'s brain
(summer, wind, moon, rain)
seeing the whispers
hearing the touch
something everso maybe much

Strolling around in e.e.'s brain
(woman, man, ecstasy, pain)
feeling the yellow
greying the blue
gentle brilliant pretty birds, you

Floating around in e.e.'s brain
(anyone, somewhere, anytime, sane)
kissing past starlight
caressing green sea
laughter springtime poetry, me

Five to Sixfold

Incomprehension

Spring, a time of planting, anticipation,
wonder--a tiny zinnia seed, the start of a sprout,
a young plant, a colorful reflection of God's goodness,
an inspiration for art, for poetry.

A tiny seed the size of a star in the sky,
a star so distant I see it as it was a billion years ago,
stars so numerous they appear as dust.
The vast Milky Way only one of many galaxies.

I do not understand the seed nor the stars
yet you think you understand me.
Let us listen to one another, come to a starting point
travel out from there...

A bouquet of zinnias graces my table, set for guests.
Yellow, scarlet, pink, orange, chartreuse evoke compliments.
I did not do this, did not create them, they were merely stars.
Our friends, gardeners too, nod, smile--
we speak the same language.

Language cannot describe the infinite limits of space--
as colorful, as mysterious as the zinnias that grace
this massive, infinitesimal earth of ours.
Even so, we wonder, we gaze,
we give thanks to the Infinite for the finite,
write, make art, try to understand one another.

Five to Sixfold

About 10 Minutes before the Hour

At the moment
the cathedral of Notre Dame began to burn
I was eating yogurt after class.
At that moment
someone sat down to get a hair cut
someone ordered a pizza
someone thrilled at the sight of a pod of dolphins.

At the moment Notre Dame caught fire
a man struck his wife
a woman left for work
someone was bathing his son.
As I was eating yogurt after class
someone was mailing a tax return
someone's brother died
somewhere a mountain goat munched on grass.

At the moment Notre Dame began to burn
a child was conceived
somewhere the sun set
somewhere the sun rose
and somewhere along the shore, gulls cried.

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Toward the Light

If you asked the old couple
how many summers
Nantucket sun had warmed them
a number is not what you would get.

“Since the year the general store was remodeled...”
“Since before Barbara was in school...”
“Way before the new ferry boats...”

And way before they ever considered
how very long the sandy path
to Sankaty Head Light would become.

If you asked them how many times
they had trod that path together
they would just laugh.

Today they walk in silence
hearing the call of the unseen waves,
listening to the ever-present zephyr
in the path-hugging thicket.

They hold hands as always,
now, to steady one another
as they approach the crest of the hill.

Five to Sixfold

Gradual Departure

You did not willingly buy a ticket
for the bus that is taking you
on a one-way, unwanted journey
further and further away
further from those who love you
further from yourself.

An unwilling passenger, you no longer resist,
sometimes no longer even notice
the scenery through the bus windows.

With all my heart I wish you would come back,
wish you could come back--
my wish the mere shadow of your own, I know.
Your resigned sadness and my longing understand:
this bus moves only forward, never in reverse.

I miss you.
Even when I am in your presence
I miss you.