

## E. E. Cummings Poetry Questions

### **“anyone lived in a pretty how town”**

1. The hero of the poem is “anyone”; “noone” is the heroine. a. What do the names “anyone” and “noone” suggest about what kind of people they are? b. What two meanings are suggested in line 12?
- 2a. What does “anyone” do in the “pretty how town”? b. What, as suggested by lines 7 and 8, do the rest of the townspeople (“women and men”) do? c. What do the other lovers, “someones” and “everyones” do in the town?
- 3a. What happens to the children in the “pretty how town” as “up they grow”? b. What happens to them “with up so floating many bells down”?
- 4a. What happens to “anyone” “one day i guess” that eventually also happens to “noone”? b. What do the “busy folk” do with them and what happens to them “by April”?
- 5a. What does the repetition of the seasons, bells, and celestial objects suggest in the poem? b. Why is this necessary to the theme of the poem?

### **“somewhere i have travelled,gladly beyond”**

6. Describe the effect the speaker's beloved has on him in the poem.
7. In the first three stanzas, what figures of speech show how the speaker feels about his love and how she affects him?
8. Explain what you believe Cummings means by “death and forever” in stanza 4.
- 9a. How can the rain be said to have “small hands”? b. What is the speaker suggesting about his love by using this beautiful and mysterious metaphor?

### **“what if a much of a which of a wind”**

10. What does the speaker of “what if a much of a which of a wind” suggest about the human spirit?
11. What does Cummings mean by the last two lines of the poem?
12. What do you believe is the tone of the poem? Explain.
13. Cummings opens each stanza with a question and a different image of destruction. a. What are the questions presented? b. How is destruction described in each stanza or what is being destroyed?

### **“pity this busy monster, manunkind”**

14. Cummings attacks what he calls “progress,” which he sees as the problem in much of modern life. a. To what condition does he compare progress? b. What does the word “manunkind” suggest is the cause of this condition? c. Why should we not pity the victim?
15. What two examples of technological progress does Cummings use to show “manunkinds” warped sense of reality and self-importance?
16. What do the words “hypermagical” and “ultraomnipotence” suggest about “manunkind”?
17. What might Cummings mean by the “good universe next door”?