

# Spring: The Journal of the E. E. Cummings Society

---

Volume 16 | Number 1

Article 8

---

2007

## Featured Poets Translation

John Edwin Cowen

Gerald Locklin

Jacques Demarcq

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/spring\\_cummings](https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/spring_cummings)

---

### Recommended Citation

Cowen, John Edwin; Locklin, Gerald; and Demarcq, Jacques (2007) "Featured Poets Translation," *Spring: The Journal of the E. E. Cummings Society*: Vol. 16: No. 1, Article 8.

Available at: [https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/spring\\_cummings/vol16/iss1/8](https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/spring_cummings/vol16/iss1/8)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@GVSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Spring: The Journal of the E. E. Cummings Society by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks@GVSU. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@gvsu.edu](mailto:scholarworks@gvsu.edu).

## 10 Poems

John Edwin Cowen

---

1

only a child  
can say

the letter *a*

with love  
and sincere

acclam(*a*)tion

2

### *THE NEW YORKER*

unread)  
to have to  
to you—

thank you,  
are we  
sorry: —

,therefore  
sub (it)—  
Man, u—

, Script !  
mitting this  
(return



*WHO IS ARTHUR VANDERBORG?*

)Mary

in Arthur's partridged,  
 deathfilled head  
 wherein lies his  
 pertinences,  
 primed by  
 colors,a,flower  
 perped to  
 a Balkan's  
 tart,  
  
 once  
 she wooed  
 a boy named  
 Christ,tiger  
 bright he  
 claimed her  
 Magdalene white,and  
 writing a poem  
 with a flower on his head, is  
  
 (Arthur

6

Let us dine in mind  
 and wine  
 )with  
 Harry's  
 lovely bones in chime  
  
 Let us sup on thought  
 and cider  
 )as  
 Harry's  
 millionth second thickens  
  
 —Harry has his mind  
 to dine  
 Yes!  
 unless  
 his ghost is none the wiser.

Handkerchief of my golden lady  
 who up from grief came tumbling down  
 wake up to dry your bluey-blues  
 summer is a-comin' & i can't get you

anyone in lace with a face like yours  
 catching the sunnyside down of life  
 with upside downs & merry-go-rounds  
 play catch me catch me & dance you can

& life's a much much mystery girl  
 who struts her ways & buries her griefs  
 who catches me down & twirls me about  
 shows me her heavenly stars&casts me out

but if i find a little bayou next-to-your-wild  
 world, there i'll be—dressed in greenest gold

(this  
 inspector's, wistfully, productive  
 Spring, as

melons-Up, spiritus, conspicuous  
 jubilant  
 You, into booming, skidding, ever-so

seasoningly  
 who-do-you-suppose's great  
 flourishing

goodnesses could pick, and having  
 springfully  
 \ me)))perched over you

must be  
 Spring, so whimsically, and, potently  
 WE))))))

**PERHAPS THE FEW**

Nobody can put the stars  
back together again—

Like Humpty Dumpty—all  
will come to a smashing end.

*How do you like yours—over  
light? over well?*

*Who will remember God was good?  
perhaps the few, who understood.*

**E. E. CUMMINGS ADAPTATION**

—versed by John Edwin Cowen

“Verily, verily;  
from fair  
to worst

equals a mere  
) )stroll:  
thank God—

the distance  
between  
first and

next rate: was  
is and  
ever shall

be strictly  
) )im-  
measurable”

—from an E. E. Cummings letter to José Garcia Villa (9/8/43)

— *Teaneck, New Jersey*

## Cézanne/Pissarro Poems

Gerald Locklin

---

*Ave atque Vale: The Chrysalis of Modernism*

In the 1880s the waters of Cézanne and Pissarro  
Were never still and not much good  
For drinking, fishing, bathing.  
They were almost ceasing even to be  
The waters of the eye, were becoming  
The waters of emotion,  
Later to freeze-frame into the waters of the mind,  
The neo-neo-classical,  
The ultra-formalist abstract.

Pissarro's washerwomen,  
Like those of Anna Livia Plurabelle,  
Were undergoing metamorphoses  
Into rock and tree and birdsong  
(or bird-screeches).  
Trees existed as frames and verticals;  
Walls, roofs, hills as horizontals.  
Cézanne's strokes marched single-file  
To the beat of a universal drummer.  
Pissarro's went every-which-way  
Like a Van Gogh aura.  
Their scenes seldom slept and,  
when they did,  
Slept fitfully.  
Pissarro's Adam and Eve, Hansel and Gretel,  
Literally lost themselves not merely  
*In* the woods, but *into* the wood itself.

Cézanne was going beyond solipsism  
To the aesthetic priesthood of Joyce and Eliot,  
Paring his fingernails into impersonality,  
And towards the death of the artist/author  
As declared by Beckett and Barthes.

The artist became God  
And was replaced by Him.

Two Views of Jalais Hills, Pontoise

Pissarro in 1867  
Looks left at it,  
Follows it down to valley/village,  
Up to fields/sky/clouds.

Things at a distance  
Become clearer  
As if viewed farsightedly.

Cézanne in 1879-81  
Looks *from* the left now  
To the path that runs down to  
And up with  
The town that's now grown to the hilltop.

His trees are ruled by Composition:  
Astigmatic, layered, gestured.

Pissarro's ladies are promenading  
Past the frame.

Will has superseded skill.

Two versions of The Orchard, Saint Denis, at  
Pontoise, 1878

Pissarro has returned to impressionism.  
Pissarro is becoming more impressionist  
Than the impressionists.

Cézanne has incorporated Pissarro  
And anticipated painters yet to come:  
Braque, Juan Gris, Picasso.  
He will tutor them in their geometry:  
Plane, solid, and prismatic.

He will also teach Gertrude and Ernest  
How to lather on the correlative,  
Prepositional textures of their  
Landscapes, seascapes, soulscapes.



*The Conversation and The House of the Hanged Man*  
(with a nod to Fereshteh Daftari)

Pissarro's couple chat, maybe flirt.  
Only a ghost haunts Cézanne's canvas.

Pissarro's sharp roofs point toward heaven.  
Cezanne's are blunted, crowded, thatched,  
Overgrown.

Cézanne's path plunges steeply downhill.  
Pissarro's comes and goes in both directions  
And does not shorten the breath.

Green dominates Pissarro, but architecture  
Is supplanting nature for Cezanne.

Both, however, have abandoned the studio for  
The Once-Great Outdoors.

*Cezanne: The Pool at Jas de Bouffon, 1878*

A bare, centered tree-trunk  
And its reflection in the pool  
Split the canvas vertically  
And continuously.

Even dwellings, even the sky  
Are not their watery reflections,  
Though the surface of the pool  
Be placid.

We have more dimensions  
Than our flat representations  
On canvas, celluloid, or comic book.

Only the greatest music  
And the greatest works of language  
Come close to capturing  
The twin universes of content and consciousness,  
The human organism as the matrix of  
Its iterative algorithms.

Pissarro: *View of Cote des Grouettes,*  
Pontoise, 1878

For the first time a smokestack  
Sings its human stain upon the sky.

Pissarro seems to find the exhalation  
Quite congruent with the pastoral.  
After all, a little smoke never hurt anyone.  
A little smoke is kind of quaint,  
Adds a curlicue to the clouds.

The hands of the laborers  
And of the few first trees  
Are bowed.

Cézanne: *Self-Portrait*, 1873-76

He is a man of confidence,  
But not as completely as when painted by  
His friend, Pissarro. He'd like to think  
His beard and what's left of his hair  
More rakish, though, and he invites  
Comparisons with the self-portraits  
Of Rembrandt van Rijn. A noble river,  
In fact, runs through the background.  
There's a hint of humor as well as challenge  
In the eyes: He is a man who's not afraid  
To meet you eye to eye.

—Long Beach, California

## Les Zozios

Jacques Demarcq

---

### le loriot

didélio  
didliha-didliho

vite un lot, d'idées – riot  
tisse des... lianes  
biche-toi : lionne

dis-lui à Figaro  
*se' il mio desiderio*

oui, bestiau  
m'tit tuyau  
mets-y dl'eau

glisse-lui bas, bisse-lui haut  
si ton chat ton rio  
d'suite carill  
onne

ouinn iinnn  
swing cousine  
s!w!i!n!g

et comme oui comme  
comme j'jouis oui-qu'  
qu'jouis oui-qu'

gouiouic

1985

**the oriole**

didaelio  
didlia-didlio

quick a lot, of hurries – all  
tickling : like  
greedy... love

put it to Fidelio  
*du bist mein Liebling – oh*

with best of  
twitty songs  
make me hot

kiss me high, bitch me low  
if your chat a riot  
sweet carry  
on

ween een  
swing cooing  
s!w!i!n!g

I come in come  
exquisite home  
squeeze it

gueewick

1998

**the treecreeper**  
(*hen*)

prettily dear)  
ti-ti-ti-teer

this tip of twig  
if be tickled  
will it grow tree  
a bit bigger

ti-tai-roi-tee  
ti-ti-ti-tle

with carollings  
ti-ti-ti-toy

gripping it firm  
let me enjoy  
delightedly  
a steep trip on

your stick stiffer  
(my twitty toy

2001

**le grimpereau**

*(mâle)*

ma tite idole)  
ti-ti-ti-toïe

pis qu'les orties  
si t'attises feu  
le bidineux  
tout est rôti

ti-ti-ti-teu  
ti-té-roï-ti

triplé croche trille  
ti-ti-ti-tiirr

mais grippe-ti mol  
grimpeur aussi  
sans corde au nœud  
qui serre aux tiges

(tel Tityre  
*sub tegmine fagi*)

1985

**the stein**

*Gallina gastronomica*

*Alice sings in her kitchen*

pheasant and chicken a chick  
would it be a pleasant third  
a slick cheeky cheeping bird  
just picking her for a week

(and chickadee what is it)

a cheap dirty word alas  
some poultry Girtie ordered  
absurdly I got disturbed  
by a sturdy quick mishmash

(chickadee's a little tit)

suppose that is my pigeon  
does it burst in a meeting  
cooing billing and cooking  
supper for callipygian

(tickling lovely tits or quit)

2005

**the joyce**

*Branta polyglotta*

*Nora sings in the streets of Paris*

O when I bloody pine for you  
whose pen is is is o late  
a quill equally should be straight

(quill equally guili-guili)

having your lines I get on the queue  
just wet waiting a bit for a bite

(bit for a bite and prick for prize)

but I cunt find the Joyce on  
the verge of this lone con game  
so Stein button stays stone

(the verge aside into be conned)

hardy birdy as dare my hand  
this finger game's not very God

(Nor a goody Barnacle goose-d)

*with Rachel Stella, 2004*