



# E.E. Cummings: A Biography

*Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno*

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Throughout the forty-five years of his professional writing life, Edward Estlin Cummings consistently celebrated the ordinary, reviled pretentiousness, scourged conformity, experimented boldly with words and syntax and punctuation, and wrote some of the most erotic and tender love poetry in the English language. Yet Cummings could also be difficult, truculent, opinionated, wrong-headed, emotional, bigoted and egotistical. Dubbed by Ezra Pound as "Whitman's one living descendant," Cummings sang of himself and of America in a unique voice, as resonant now as it was a half-century ago.

Charismatic and famous among the famous, Cummings always seemed to be in the right place at the right time, and was a major presence wherever he resided, whether in Cambridge, Europe or New York. He counted some of the most important artists of his time as friends: Pound, Hemingway, Dylan Thomas and many more.

"Sawyer-Laucanno emphasizes the relation of the private man to his work, offering fresh insights into the grand optical arrangement of Cummings's books."--Starred Library Journal Review

For nearly half a century, the personal papers, journals and diaries of Edward Estlin Cummings were kept from public view. These documents reveal far more about the inner life of the famous poet and painter than has ever been known. Now, noted biographer Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno presents the first, definitive, revelatory life story of E.E. Cummings (1894–1962), an American original.

"Well-researched, comprehensive, and essential to understanding the artist and the artistry."--Starred Kirkus Reviews

For *E.E. Cummings: A Biography*, the author had unprecedented access to all of Cummings's papers—anguished diary entries, reflections on consultations with two psychoanalysts, an autobiographical novel, and a carefully prepared manuscript containing more than one hundred blatantly erotic poems.

In the words of William Corbett, author of *Boston Vermont* and *Don't Think Look*, "E.E. Cummings, Yankee individualist and, rare for an American poet, satirist is here in full. This means warts and all, but Sawyer-Laucanno has not come to judge. In this readable and absorbing life he has paid Cummings the honor of clear-eyed candor." Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno paints a full and memorable portrait of this extraordinary American poet.

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