



# **Five Poems by E. E. Cummings**

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Oliver Hickman

Soprano, Voice, Violin, and Piano  
2017-18

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## Performance Notes

### Soprano

Lyrics should be sung in a dramatic fashion. Have fun with it.



Speak-sing similar to *Sprechstimme*. Pitch should be close but it is not required to be exact

### Voice

No voice type is necessary however the performer should be comfortable speaking, yelling, whispering, whistling, and singing. Depending on the venue, they may need to be amplified. The part is written in treble clef but can be transposed if needed.



Mouth click. Performer should sweep resonance ad-lib.



Whisper lyric

### Violin

The “slow bow” marking indicates the player use a slower than normal bow speed. They should ride the line between steady sound and creaky.

### Piano

The piano part is actually two players—one player on the keys and one player inside the piano. There are not separate parts due to the coordination between the parts.

Strings to be marked inside that piano to allow for quick location are as follows: F#2, G2, B2, C3, A#3, A3, B#3, B3, F4, G#4, G4, B4, E5, F#5, G#5, F#6.



Indicates a preparation in I and III. a guitar pick or medium thickness should be interwoven on the D4 strings so that it very lightly touches the C# and E# notes around it.



Indicates a plucked string either with fingernail or pick.



Lightly mute string.



Harp-like gliss on high strings. Let ring.



Sustain pedal down. Dampen strings with one hand, hit same strings with the other.



Player on the strings should lightly touch strings and octave below written to create harmonics and move up and down the strings. Player on the keys should trill between the two notes.

## Five Poems

### I

into the strenuous briefness  
Life:  
handorgans and April  
darkness, friends

i charge laughing.  
Into the hair-thin tints  
of yellow dawn,  
into the women-coloured twilight

i smilingly  
glide. I  
into the big vermillion departure  
swim, sayingly;

(Do you think?) the  
i do, world  
is probably made  
of roses & hello:

(of solongs and, ashes)

### II

O sweet spontaneous  
earth how often have  
the doting

fingers of  
prurient philosophies pinched  
and  
poked

thee  
has the naughty thumb  
of science prodded  
thy

beauty how  
often have religions taken  
thee upon their scraggy  
knees squeezing and

buffeting thee that thou mightest conceive  
gods  
but  
true

to the incomparable  
couch of death thy  
rhythmic

lover

thou answerest

them only with

spring

### III

but the other  
day i was passing a certain  
gate rain  
fell as it will

in spring  
ropes  
of silver gliding from sunny  
thunder into freshness

as if god's flowers were  
pulling upon bells of  
gold i looked  
up

and  
thought to myself death  
and will You with  
elaborate fingers possibly touch

the pink hollyhock existence whose  
pansy eyes look from morning till  
night into the street  
unchangingly the always

old lady sitting in her  
gentle window like  
a reminiscence  
partaken

softly at whose gate smile  
always the chosen  
flowers of reminding

### IV

in Just-  
spring when the world is mud-  
luscious the little  
lame baloonman

whistles far and wee

and eddyandbill come  
running from marbles and  
piracies and it's  
spring

when the world is puddle-wonderful

the queer  
old baloonman whistles  
far and wee  
and bettyandisbel come dancing

from hop-scotch and jump-rope and

it's  
spring  
and  
the  
goat-footed

baloonMan whistles  
far  
and  
wee

## V

spring omnipotent goddess Thou  
dost stuff parks  
with overgrown pimply  
chevaliers and gumchewing giggly

damosels Thou dost  
persuade to serenade  
his lady the musical tom-cat  
Thou dost inveigle

into crossing sidewalks the  
unwary june-bug and the frivolous  
angleworm  
Thou dost hang canary birds in parlour windows

Spring slattern of seasons  
you have soggy legs  
and a muddy petticoat  
drowsy

is your hair your  
eyes are sticky with  
dream and you have a  
sloppy body from

being brought to bed of crocuses  
when you sing in your whisky voice

the grass rises on the head of the earth  
and all the trees are put on edge

spring  
of the excellent jostle of  
thy hips  
and the superior

slobber of your breasts i  
am so very fond that my  
soul inside of me hollers  
for thou comest

and your hands are the snow and thy  
fingers are the rain  
and your  
feet O your feet

freakish  
feet feet incorrigible

ragging the world

E. E. Cummings  
Published by *The Dial* in 1920

## Score

# I

into the strenuous briefness

Oliver Hickman  
text by E. E. Cummings

$\text{♩} = 70$

Soprano

Voice

Violin

Piano

*mouth clicks; sweep resonance*

*sul tasto*

*mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp*

*p*

7

S

V

Vln.

Pno.

*pp* *mp*

*in \_\_\_\_\_ to the stren-u - ous brief - ness*

*sul tasto* *sul pont*

*mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *mf*

*mp*

\*

*Red.*

\*pluck string w/ finger

(♩. = ♩)

13 *mp*

S hand - or - gans and a - pril friends

V *whisper* life dark-ness

Vln. *ord* *p*

Pno. 13

18 *mf* *a tempo*

S i charge laughing laugh - - - - -

V *mf*

Vln. *ord* *tr* *mf*

Pno. 18 *tr* *mf* *harmonic gliss*

22

*p* *mp*

S in - to the hair thin tints of yel - low

V

Vln. *mp*

Pno. *p*

*Red.* →

26

S dawn \_\_\_\_\_

V dawn dawn dawn dawn

Vln. *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* sim

Pno. *mf* *sim*

\*lightly dampen strings with hand

29 *mp* *mf*

S of yel-low dawn in - to the wo-man col-oured

V *8* dawn dawn dawn dawn

Vln. 29

Pno. 29 *mp*

(Red.)

32 *a tempo* *p* *mf*

S twilight i smilingly i

V *8* glide i

Vln. 32 *tr*

Pno. 32 *mp* *tr* *mf*

(Red.)



*a tempo* *rit.* *p*

36

S in - to the big ver-mil-ion de - par-ture swim, say-ing-ly;

V

Vln.

Pno.

*mp*

42 *in conversation*

S the world is probably made of roses & hello: ashes)

V (do you think) i do (of solongs and, ashes)

Vln.

Pno.

*tr*

*b♭* *(b♭)*

*mf* *pp*

*Red.*

# II

## oh sweet spontaneous earth

♩ = 70

Soprano

Voice

Violin

Piano

*mp*

*pp* *mp* *p*

*Red.*

slow bow

S

V

Vln.

Pno.

*mp*

*p* *mf* *p* *mf*

ord

O sweet spon - tan - e - ous earth how

\*use pick from previous movement

(Red.)

oh sweet spontaneous earth

7

8 *accel.* *f* *rit.* *mp*

S of - ten have how of - ten have how of - ten have how of - ten have the

V *askingly* *p* *f*

Vln. 8

Pno. 8 *f* *mp*

how often have

12 *a tempo* *p* *mp*

S do-ting fin-gers of pru-rient phi - lo-soph-ies pinched and poked thee

V *mp*

Vln. 12 *pizz.* *jete* *mp* *pp*

Pno. 12 *mp* *p* *p*

pinched and poked

(Red.)

17 *mf* *mp*

S has the naugh-ty thumb of sci-ence pro-dded thy beau-ty

V pro-dded thy beau-ty

Vln. pizz. jete *mp* *pp*

Pno. *mp*

21 *accel.* *p* *rit.* *f* *mp*

S how of-ten have how of-ten have how of-ten have how of-ten have how of-ten have

V askingly *p* *f*  
how often have

Vln. *p* *f* *mp*

Pno. *p* *f*

*Red.*

*a tempo*

26

S

re - lig - ions ta - ken thee up - on their scra - ggy knees

V

Vln.

slow bow

Pno.

*mp*

*Red.*

29

S

squee-zing and buf - fe - ting thee that thou migh - test con ceive

V

that thou

Vln.

pizz. slow bow pizz. slow bow

Pno.

*Red.*

\*dampen strings with one hand; hit same strings with other hand

## oh sweet spontaneous earth

33 *p* rit. *mp* *mf* a tempo *p*

S  
gods but true to the in-com-par-a-ble couch of death

V  
death

Vln.  
ord

Pno.  
*p* *mf* *p*  
*mf*  
Red.

38 *mf* 3 3

S  
thy rhyth-mic lov-er thou an-swer-est them on-ly with spring

V

Vln.  
slow bow  
*p* *mf* *p subito*

Pno.  
*mf* *mf*  
Red.

re-set pick in piano

# III

but the other

$\text{♩} = 80$   
(3+3+4)

Soprano

Voice *mf* *f* 2nd time only

but the other day i was passing a certain gate

Violin pizz. *f*

Piano lightly mute *f* *mp*

S *mp* rit.

rain fell as it will in

V

Vln. arco sul tasto *mp*

Pno.

12 a tempo

S

V

*f* 2nd time only

as if god's flowers were pulling upon bells of gold

12 pizz.

Vln.

*f*

12

Pno.

*f*

\*inside the piano gliss on high strings

*mp*



15 *mp* *rit.*

S I \_\_\_\_\_ looked up \_\_\_\_\_ and thought \_\_\_\_\_ to my - self death

V death

Vln. *arco sul tasto* *mp*

Pno. *Red.* →

21 *p* *ppp p*

S you who

V *mf* and will you with elaborate fingers possibly touch the pink hollyhock existence whose pansy eyes look from morning

Vln. *ord. slow, wide vibrato* *p*

Pno. *mf*

but the other

*ppp p ppp*

to

*mp*

to night into the street unchangingly the always old lady sitting in her gentle window

(*2do.*)

23 *a tempo*

S

23 *2nd time only*

V

like a reminiscence partaken softly

23 *pizz.*

Vln.

*mp*

23 *mp*

Pno.

26 *mp* rit.

S at whose gate

V

Vln. arco sul tasto *p*

Pno.

30

S smile

V smile *p* always the chosen flowers of reminding

Vln.

Pno.

Red.

# IV

in Just-

$\text{♩} = 100$

*mf* *mp*

Soprano  
in Just- spring — when the world is mud - lus-cious

Voice  
*mp*  
mud - lus-cious

Violin  
*fp*  
harmonic gliss

Piano  
*mp*  
Red. —

5 rit. *f* *a tempo* ( $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ )

S the lit - tle lame bal - loon man whis - tles far and wee

V *mf*  
whistle — — — — —

Vln. *mf* *port* *port* *tr* *mp*

Pno. *f*

10

S

V

Vln.

Pno.

*mf*

and eddy and bill come running from marbles and piracies

sul pont

*f*

*p*

*ord*

*mp*

*p*

*f*

Red.

13

S

V

Vln.

Pno.

*mf*

*mp*

*rit.*

and it's spring — when the world is pud-dle-won-der-ful the queer old bal-loon-

and pud-dle-won-der-ful

*mp*

*mf*

*mp*

Red.

*a tempo* (♩ = ♩)

**S** 17 *f* man whis - tles far and wee

**V** 8 *mf* whistle

**Vln.** 17 *port* *port* *tr* *mf*

**Pno.** 17 *f*

**S** 20

**V** *mf* and bettyandisbel come dancing from hop-scotch and jump-rope

**Vln.** 20 *sul pont* *f* *ord* *p*

**Pno.** 20 *mp* *p* *f*

Slower ♩ = 80  
rit. a tempo

S  
it's spring and the goat foot - ed bal-loon-Man whis - tles far and wee

V  
and whistle\_ \_ \_ \_ \_

Vln.  
port port

Pno.  
p f  
Red. \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

# V

## spring omnipotent goddess Thou

♩ = 68 *pp* < *mf* *mf*

Soprano  
spring om - ni-po-tent god-ess Thou dost stuff

Tenor

Violin  
no vib → molto vib  
*p* → *mf* *p* → *mf*

Piano  
*f* *p* < *mf* *f*  
Ped.

5 *mp*

S  
parks with ov-er-grown pim - ply che - va - liers and gum-chew-ing gig - gly

T

Vln.  
5 → sul tasto *p*

Pno.  
5 *f* *mp*



8

S

damo-sels

Thou dost per-suade to ser-e-nade his

*mf* *mp*

3

T

Vln.

ord.

*mf*

sul tasto

Pno.

*f*

Detailed description: This block contains the first system of the musical score, measures 8 through 11. The Soprano (S) part has lyrics 'damo-sels' and 'Thou dost per-suade to ser-e-nade his'. The Tenor (T) part is silent. The Violin (Vln.) part features an 'ord.' (ordine) marking and a crescendo leading to a *mf* dynamic, with a 'sul tasto' instruction. The Piano (Pno.) part has a *f* dynamic marking. The time signature changes from 3/4 to 2/4 between measures 8 and 9.

12

S

la-dy the mu-si-cal tom-cat

Thou dost in-vei-gle in-to

*mf* *mp*

3

T

Vln.

ord.

*p* *mf*

Pno.

*mp* *f*

Detailed description: This block contains the second system of the musical score, measures 12 through 15. The Soprano (S) part has lyrics 'la-dy the mu-si-cal tom-cat' and 'Thou dost in-vei-gle in-to'. The Tenor (T) part is silent. The Violin (Vln.) part starts with a *p* dynamic, followed by an 'ord.' marking and a crescendo to *mf*. The Piano (Pno.) part has a *mp* dynamic in measure 12 and a *f* dynamic in measure 14. The time signature changes from 3/4 to 2/4 between measures 12 and 13.

16

S

cross-ing side - walks the un-wa - ry june-bug and the fri-vo - lous an-gle - worm

T

8

Vln.

16

sul tasto

ord.

*p*

Pno.

16

*mp*

19

S

Thou dost hang ca - na - ry birds in par-lour win - dows Spring

T

8

Vln.

19

*mf p*

no vib

*p*

Pno.

19

*f*

21 *mf* 3

S slat-tern of sea-sons

T 8 *f* you have soggy legs and a muddy petticoat drowsy is your hair

Vln. 21 *molto vib* *mf* *f* slow bow

Pno. 21 *p* *f* *Red.*

24

S

T 8 your eyes are sticky with dream and you have a sloppy body from being brought to bed of crocuses

Vln. 24

Pno. 24 *Red.*

The musical score is for the song "The Rose Tree" and consists of four staves: Soprano (S), Tenor (T), Violin (Vln.), and Piano (Pno.). The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked "a tempo".

**Soprano (S):** The vocal line begins at measure 26. It features a half rest in measure 26, followed by a half note G#4 in measure 27. In measure 28, there is a triplet of eighth notes (A4, B4, C5) marked *f*, followed by a triplet of eighth notes (D5, C5, B4) marked *f*. The lyrics "spring of the ex-cel-lent jos-tle of thy hips" are written below the notes.

**Tenor (T):** The vocal line begins at measure 26. It features a half rest in measure 26, followed by a half note G#3 in measure 27. In measure 28, there is a triplet of eighth notes (A3, B3, C4) marked *f*, followed by a triplet of eighth notes (D4, C4, B3) marked *f*.

**Violin (Vln.):** The violin line begins at measure 26. It features a half note G#4 marked *mp* and "ord. no vib". In measure 27, there is a triplet of eighth notes (A4, B4, C5) marked *f* and "molto vib". In measure 28, there is a half note G#4 marked *fp* and "molto vib".

**Piano (Pno.):** The piano accompaniment begins at measure 26. It features a half note G#3 marked *fp*. In measure 27, there is a half note G#3 marked *fp*. In measure 28, there is a half note G#3 marked *fp*. In measure 29, there is a half note G#3 marked *f*.

30

S

and the su - per - i - or slob - ber of your breasts i am so

T

Vln.

*fp* *f* *fp*

Pno.

*fp* *f* *fp*

33

S

ver - y fond\_\_ that my soul in - side\_\_ of me hol - lers\_\_

T

*fff*

for thou comest

Vln.

*f* *ff*

Pno.

*f* *ff* *8va\**

\* player inside of the piano moves to the keys

35 *p*

S and your hands are the snow and thy fin - gers are the rain and your

T

Vln. *p* sul tasto

Pno. *p*

38 getting angry and maybe a bit disgusted *fff*

S feet O your feet freakish feet feet incorrigible ragging the world

T feet feet feet

Vln. *ff* sul pont

Pno. *ff* *fff*