



i thank you God for most...

Analysis

i thank you God for most this amazing
by E. E. Cummings

“i thank You God for most this amazing,” a sonnet of gratitude, came directly out of E. E. Cummings’ heart. This poem presents his devotion to God’s beautiful creation, nature. There are two voices: one of the poetic persona of Cummings and another, his inner voice. The first voice is in awe at God’s creation and the second voice or the speaker’s inner voice provides the reasons for his astonishment and amazement. Through this poem, the poet captures his spiritual awakening on an ordinary morning where scenes appear in a usual fashion like every day. Still, the impression on his mind was different.

SUMMARY:

The poem begins with a note of thanks to the divine being, God, for creating a fantastic day. He thanks Him for the greenery, the widening blue sky, and all that is “natural,” “infinite,” and “yes” (positive). Then the second voice describes why he feels such awe of the typical morning. It is because he is spiritually awakened. Now he can see what others cannot and feel what others take for granted. In the third quatrain, the poet’s voice wanders about how God invested all the five senses into human beings out of nothingness. Ironically, the same human beings doubt his illimitable power. But the speaker does not doubt Him as his ears and eyes are awakened and opened.

MEANING:

This poem is about the spiritual awakening of a speaker and how he finds God’s presence in nature after waking up on an ordinary morning day. His physical voice describes the primary impression captured through his five senses that are gifts of God to humankind. In alternative stanzas (two and four), his inner voice describes why he can see the mundane differently from others. Overall, this poem shows how our way of seeing things change when we come to realize the presence and significance of God.

THEME:

The main theme is spiritual awakening. Cummings talks about how his spirit is awakened after long days of ignorant slumber. The “amazing day” is the wake-up call for the speaker’s call. When he wakes up and looks at everything around, the trees, sky, and sun seem new, jolly, and infused with new energy. Previously, he could only sense their superficial beauty, not the life within. As he is spiritually awakened, the silent chord is struck by God’s divine music. He is in awe at the limitlessness of His creation. Besides, this poem also explores the themes of nature, divinity, and true happiness.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

Cummings was born in a Unitarian family. As he grew up, he leaned towards Transcendentalism. His transcendental beliefs can be found in this poem. In this poem, he captures his oneness with God and His boundless creation. It can be regarded as a personal note of thanksgiving to God in the event of his spiritual awakening. Besides, Cummings wrote several sonnets with modernist twists, and this piece is one of them.



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FORM

The poem is a devotional sonnet written implementing the Shakespearean sonnet form. It consists of three quatrains and a couplet. The poem is written from the perspective of a first-person speaker. There are two voices in the poem. The first voice is physical, and the second one presented in brackets (use of aside) is the spiritual voice of the speaker. Though it is in a conventional form, there are some oddities in sentence structure, punctuations, spacing, and capitalization, trademarks of Cummings' poetry.

RHYME SCHEME

The rhyme scheme of the poem is ABAB CDCD EFEF GG. Cummings uses perfect end rhymes and slant rhymes. For instance, in the first quatrain, "amazing" and "everything" rhyme perfectly. In contrast, "trees" and "yes" end with an imperfect rhyme. It is an example of slant rhyme, which can also be seen in "no" and "You"; "and" and "opened." The rest are perfect rhymes.

METER

(A discussion of the meter will be determined by the level of the learners, and requirements of the curriculum).

The poem is written in iambic pentameter with a number of variations. There are a number of anapests within the iambic lines. Some lines are acephalous, beginning with one stressed foot. There is a sound shift in the third line of the third quatrain where the speaker comments on humankind's doubt in God. After the dashes, all the feet become trochaic (falling rhythm), and the sentence catches the iambic rhythm again in the last foot.

LITERARY DEVICES & FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Inversion

Cummings inverts the conventional order of sentences to emphasize particular terms. For instance, in the very first line, "i thank You God for most amazing/ day". The word "most" is placed after the preposition instead of before the noun "God". This device is also used in "human merely being."

Personification

In the first quatrain, the "trees" are personified. The speaker describes how their "spirits" leap in the morning. The second quatrain showcases the personification of the "sun," "life," and "love."

Metaphor

It occurs in "a blue true dream of sky". The "sky" is compared to a "blue true dream" of the creator (or the speaker). In the second quatrain, "earth" is described as a "gay/ great happening" that is in itself illimitable. Moreover, in the final couplet, the speaker hints at his soul through the phrases "ears of my ears" and "eyes of my eyes."



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Repetition

There is a repetition of the term “which” in the fourth line: “**which** is natural **which** is infinite **which** is yes.” It is meant for the sake of emphasis.

Aside

This literary device is used in alternative stanzas. Cummings uses this device to share his inward thoughts. In these sections, the speaker shares the reasons for his amazement at nature.

Alliteration

The repetition of similar sounds at the beginning of neighbouring words can be found in the following instances:

- “am alive again” (line 5)
- “life and of love” (line 7)
- “gay/ great” (lines 7-8)
- “tasting touching” (line 9)

Rhetorical

It occurs in “human merely being/ doubt unimaginable You?” In this line, “You” is a reference to God.

Anaphora

Anaphora is the repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of consecutive lines. It occurs in the last two lines of the poem. Both lines begin with the phrase, “now the”.

ANALYSIS

Lines 1-4

*i thank You God for most this amazing
day: for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything
which is natural which is infinite which is yes*

E. E. Cummings’ poem “i thank You God for most this amazing” begins with the speaker’s sense of gratitude to God. He gropes for words to thank Him for a new day. When the sunlight touches the green leaves, it seems the trees’ spirits leap up to thank Him. The speaker thinks the sky is a “blue true dream” of God. From the speaker’s tone, it seems that he finds everything around him in a new outlook. The mornings of the past were normal as his physical eyes could not grasp the presence of God. As he is spiritually awakened, he can decipher His signs; thus, everything seems newer to his eyes.



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The speaker thanks God for everything that is “natural,” “infinite,” and “yes.” It is easy to understand the first two adjectives. Cummings is pointing at the natural world and its boundless beauty. The third epithet, “yes,” symbolizes positivity in nature.

Lines 5-8

*(i who have died am alive again today,
and this is the sun's birthday; this is the birth
day of life and of love and wings: and of the gay
great happening illimitably earth)*

The second quatrain captures the speaker's inner voice. He affirms that his soul has died. But, on this particular day, he feels alive again. It was long before when he could feel in the same manner. After long years, his soul is awakened. Now, it seems that the sun is born again. It is the “birthday” of “life,” “love,” and “wings.” The term “love” is a reference to divine love, and the “wings” stand for the speaker's ability to transcend beyond the mortal level. Lastly, the speaker refers to the earth as a whole and describes it as a “gay/ great happening” that is limitless. It is a hint at earth's boundless beauty.

Lines 9-12

*how should tasting touching hearing seeing
breathing any—lifted from the no
of all nothing—human merely being
doubt unimaginable You?*

In the third quatrain, the speaker is in awe at God's power. He thinks about how He created human beings from nothingness and invested them with five senses: “tasting touching hearing seeing/ breathing.” As the speaker is seeing everything in a new way, he is able to understand the fundamental role of his senses. Previously, they were there, but now the sensory reception is different. Not knowing God's awe-inspiring abilities, human beings now “doubt” his very existence, ironically.

Lines 13-14

*(now the ears of my ears awake and
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)*

The last couplet of “i thank You God for most this amazing” presents the speaker's resolution. Though others question God's existence, he does not. The reason is that now his spiritual “ears” and “eyes” are awakened. In these lines, the “eyes” stand for divine vision. It is a reference to the speaker's ability to see beyond the veil of everything and sense God's presence. Besides, the “ears” hint at his ability to hear God's divine, ceaseless music echoing in nature. His “ears,” which have been sleeping, are now “awake” by the tone.

Adapted from: <https://www.poemotopia.com/e-e-cummings/i-thank-you-god-for-most-this-amazing/#summary>