

e. e. cummings

(1894-1962)

Text 2

from *Collected Poems*, poem 52)ta
ppin
g
toehip
popot
amus Backgen
teel-ly
lugu-
bri ousLOOPTHELOOP¹

as

fathandsbangrag

5

10

15

This poem is a description of a jazz pianist absorbed in the rhythm of his music.

eyes

1. **loop the loop** = circle made by an aircraft flying up and down.

Tasks

1. Four parts of the pianist's body are presented. Write them below. The last one is provided.

.....

.....

fat hands

2. The main feature of the pianist is his size. What words and devices suggest his size?

3. Look at the footnote for line 13. It shows the movement of the pianist's eyes. What device might show that this movement is fast?

4. The last line is made up of four one-syllable words. Two have already been pointed out in task 1, can you find the other two?

5. The same device used in line 13 is used here to convey the rapid succession of notes following the rhythm of the music. Find other devices e. e. cummings uses to convey a slow rhythm and the pauses in the music. Then try reading the poem aloud.

Concluding tasks

1. Consider the two poems you have examined and state the possible reasons for e. e. cummings' scornful attitude towards conventional language and standardized vocabulary.
Here are some possible reasons. Tick those that you consider suitable, add more if you wish.

- words have become a cliché
- machine patterns are reflected in poetry
- poetry must be actively interpreted by the reader
- life cannot be predicted and standardized
- there is no order in momentary perception
- other: ...

2. What other writers in the literature you have studied have the same unconventional attitude towards language?



portrait with mask.