

Marvelous Whirlings: E.E. Cummings' *Eimi*, Louis Aragon, Ezra Pound, & *Krazy Kat*

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ABSTRACT

In 1931, poet, painter, individual E.E. Cummings traveled to the USSR. The journal he kept during his travels would be expanded into the book *Eimi* and published in 1933. *Eimi* is an ambitious, wild, dense, and experimental work, which blends dizzying linguistic play, highly stylized modernist poetics, and scathing political commentaries of the USSR. As a work cataloging the intersection of modernist artistic ideals and the growing tide of totalitarian political forces during the 1930s, *Eimi* gains a great deal from contextualization alongside works by Louis Aragon (*The Adventures of Telemachus and "Le Front Rouge"*) Ezra Pound (*The Cantos*), and George Herriman (*Krazy Kat*). Such contextualization reveals that, in *Eimi*, Cummings actively resisted the political responses of Aragon and Pound (toward communism and fascism, respectively) rooting his triumphs as an individual artist, which occur throughout the text, within the dynamics of Herriman's *Krazy Kat*. Thus, in the unworld of the USSR, Cummings represents himself finally, not as a dadaist or communist bed-fellow of Aragon, nor as a Poundian incarnation, but Krazy's poet through and through