

E-Content

American Literature

Semester: III

Lecture 15

Prepared by:

Mohd. Fazil Akhtar

Session 2020-2021



**GALGOTIAS
UNIVERSITY**

(Established under Galgotias University Uttar Pradesh Act No. 14 of 2011)

COURSE CONTENT UNIT-III

Course Code : XXXXX

Course Name: Data structures using C

Lecture 15: E E cummings: 'i sing of Olaf glad...'

"**i sing of Olaf**" (sometimes referred to as "**i sing of Olaf glad and big**") is a poem by E.E. Cummings. It first appeared in Cummings' 1931 collection *ViVa*. It depicts the life of Olaf, a conscientious objector and pacifist during the First World War who is tortured by the United States Army but nonetheless "will not kiss your fucking flag", and subsequently dies in prison.

School of Liberal Education

Course Code : ENG2012 Course Name: American Literature

COURSE CONTENT UNIT-III

Course Code : XXXXX

Course Name: Data structures using C

POEM

I sing of Olaf glad and big
whose warmest heart recoiled at war:
a conscientious object-or
his wellbelovéd colonel (trig
westpointer most succinctly bred)
took erring Olaf soon in hand;
but-though an host of overjoyed
noncoms (first knocking on the head
him) do through icy waters roll
that helplessness which others stroke

COURSE CONTENT UNIT-III

with brushes recently employed
anent this muddy toiletbowl,
while kindred intellects evoke
allegiance per blunt instruments-
Olaf (being to all intents
a corpse and wanting any rag
upon what God unto him gave)
responds, without getting annoyed
“I will not kiss your fucking flag”

School of Liberal Education

Course Code : ENG2012

Course Name: American Literature

COURSE CONTENT UNIT-III

straightaway the silver bird looked grave
(departing hurriedly to shave)
but-though all kinds of officers
(a yearning nation's blueeyed pride)
their passive prey did kick and curse
until for wear their clarion
voices and boots were much the worse,
and egged the firstclassprivates on

GALGOTIAS
UNIVERSITY

COURSE CONTENT UNIT-III

his rectum wickedly to tease
by means of skillfully applied
bayonets roasted hot with heat-
Olaf (upon what were once knees)
does almost ceaselessly repeat
“there is some shit I will not eat”

GALGOTIAS
UNIVERSITY

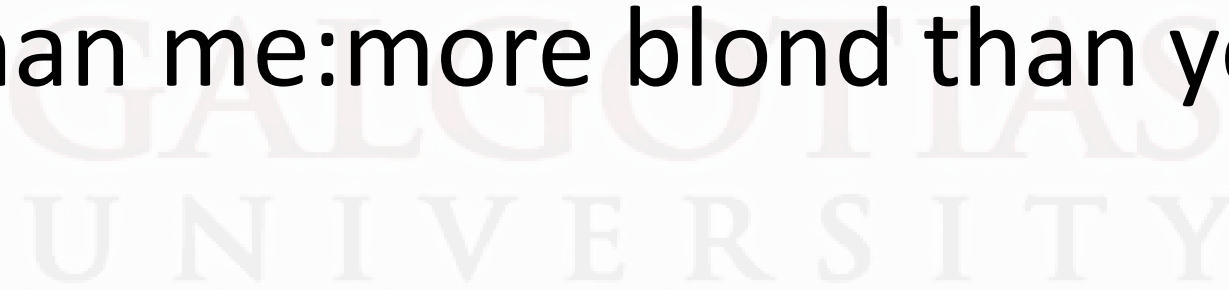
COURSE CONTENT UNIT-III

our president, being of which
assertions duly notified
threw the yellowsonofabitch
into a dungeon, where he died

GALGOTIAS
UNIVERSITY

COURSE CONTENT UNIT-III

Christ (of His mercy infinite)
i pray to see;and Olaf,too
preponderatingly because
unless statistics lie he was
more brave than me:more blond than you



COURSE CONTENT UNIT-III

The poem is based on the true story of a "big blond conscientious objector who was reading Sir Thomas Browne", whom Cummings briefly encountered while stationed at Camp Devens in 1918; Susan Cheever noted that Cummings never learned the man's name, and only "vividly imagined his fate"

CALIFORNIA
UNIVERSITY

COURSE CONTENT UNIT-III

Critics have noted the similarity of the opening stanza to that of Virgil's *Aeneid*, underlining the contrast between Olaf (whose heroic values are based in peace) and Achilles (whose heroic values were based in war). Gary Lane has observed that the poem's "laconic conclusion" prefigures W. H. Auden's "The Unknown Citizen"

School of Liberal Education

Course Code : ENG2012

Course Name: American Literature

COURSE CONTENT UNIT-III

Although the poem's original publication contained the word "fucking", anthologies typically bowdlerized this to "f.ing"; similarly, Olaf's statement that "there is some shit i will not eat" is typically rendered as "there is some s. i will not eat"

GALGOTIAS
UNIVERSITY

School of Liberal Education

Course Code : ENG2012

Course Name: American Literature

COURSE CONTENT UNIT-III

Reference Page

<https://akademician.files.wordpress.com/2016/04/cummings-i-sing-of-olaf.pdf>

GALGOTIAS
UNIVERSITY