

who knows if the moon's

Poem by E. E. Cummings

Two Limericks

Poems by Edward Lear and Ogden Nash

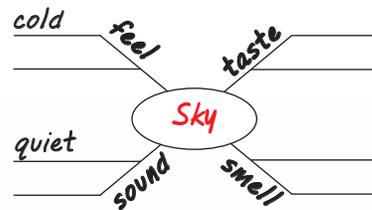
How can LANGUAGE be used to surprise you?

COMMON CORE

RL 4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text.

Language can be used to inform you, to entertain you, and to try to change your mind about something. Language can also be used to surprise you, to develop your imagination, so that you can imagine worlds you might never actually experience.

WEB IT Try using language in an unexpected way. Think of something to describe, such as the sky. Instead of writing about the way it looks, try to describe how it sounds, feels, tastes, or smells. Create a web like the one shown to organize your response. Let your imagination go to work.



Meet the Authors

● TEXT ANALYSIS: FORM IN POETRY

The way a poem uses the elements of poetry to express meaning is called the poem's **form**. Form can be the way the poem looks on the page. Form can be the way the poet uses sound and figures of speech. Form can be the way the poet uses rhymes and rhythms. The poems you are about to read are written in very different forms.

- The poem by E. E. Cummings is written in free verse. **Free verse** does not have a pattern of rhymes (in fact it may have no rhymes at all). Free verse is not written in meter and the lines may vary in length. "Alone in the Nets" (page 588) is written in free verse.
- The poems by Edward Lear and Ogden Nash are **limericks**, poems about very silly subjects. Despite their silly subject matter, limericks are written in a rigid form. They have five lines, a regular de-dum-de-dum meter, and a regular rhyme scheme.

● READING STRATEGY: PARAPHRASE

Paraphrasing means restating a line or a stanza in your own words. Paraphrasing is a good way to see if you understand something you have read, especially if it's difficult or uses unfamiliar language. As you read the Cummings poem (the limericks are very easy) jot down your thoughts and try paraphrasing sections you have trouble understanding.

- When you come across a word or idea that you don't understand, **reread** the passage.
- To **clarify** a confusing detail, or make it more understandable, **paraphrase** the lines; that is, try to restate them in your own words.

As you read the poems that follow, use a graphic organizer like the one shown to record phrases or lines that give you trouble. Also note what meanings become clearer as you reread or paraphrase them.

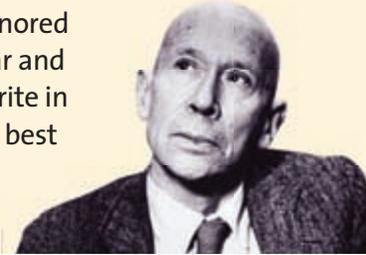
Phrases or Lines	Why It's Confusing	Paraphrase
"coming out of a keen city" (line 2)	How can a city be "keen"?	leaving a grand city

E.E. Cummings

1894–1962

A New Kind of Poet

From age 8 to age 22, E. E. Cummings wrote one poem a day. While in college, he began to experiment with his writing. He ignored "proper" grammar and punctuation to write in a way that he felt best expressed his feelings.

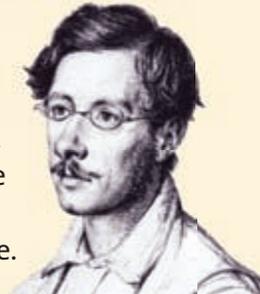


Edward Lear

1812–1888

An Accidental Poet

Edward Lear considered himself an artist, and he first became famous for his drawings. Then he began writing limericks to entertain his employer's grandchildren. Lear's skill at writing these five-line nonsense poems was key to his lasting fame.

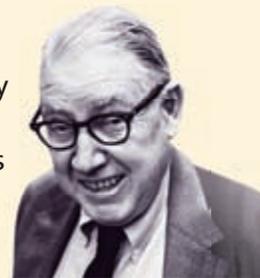


Ogden Nash

1902–1971

A Humorous Success

Ogden Nash's early serious poems were rarely published. When he started writing humorous verse, however, Nash quickly found success.



Complete the activities in your **Reader/Writer Notebook**.

Authors Online

Go to thinkcentral.com. KEYWORD: HML6-637



who knows if the moon's

E. E. Cummings

who knows if the moon's
a balloon, coming out of a keen city
in the sky—filled with pretty people? **A**
(and if you and i should

5 get into it, if they
should take me and take you into their balloon,
why then
we'd go up higher with all the pretty people

than houses and steeples and clouds:
10 go sailing
away and away sailing into a keen
city which nobody's ever visited, where

always
it's
15 Spring) and everyone's
in love and flowers pick themselves **B**

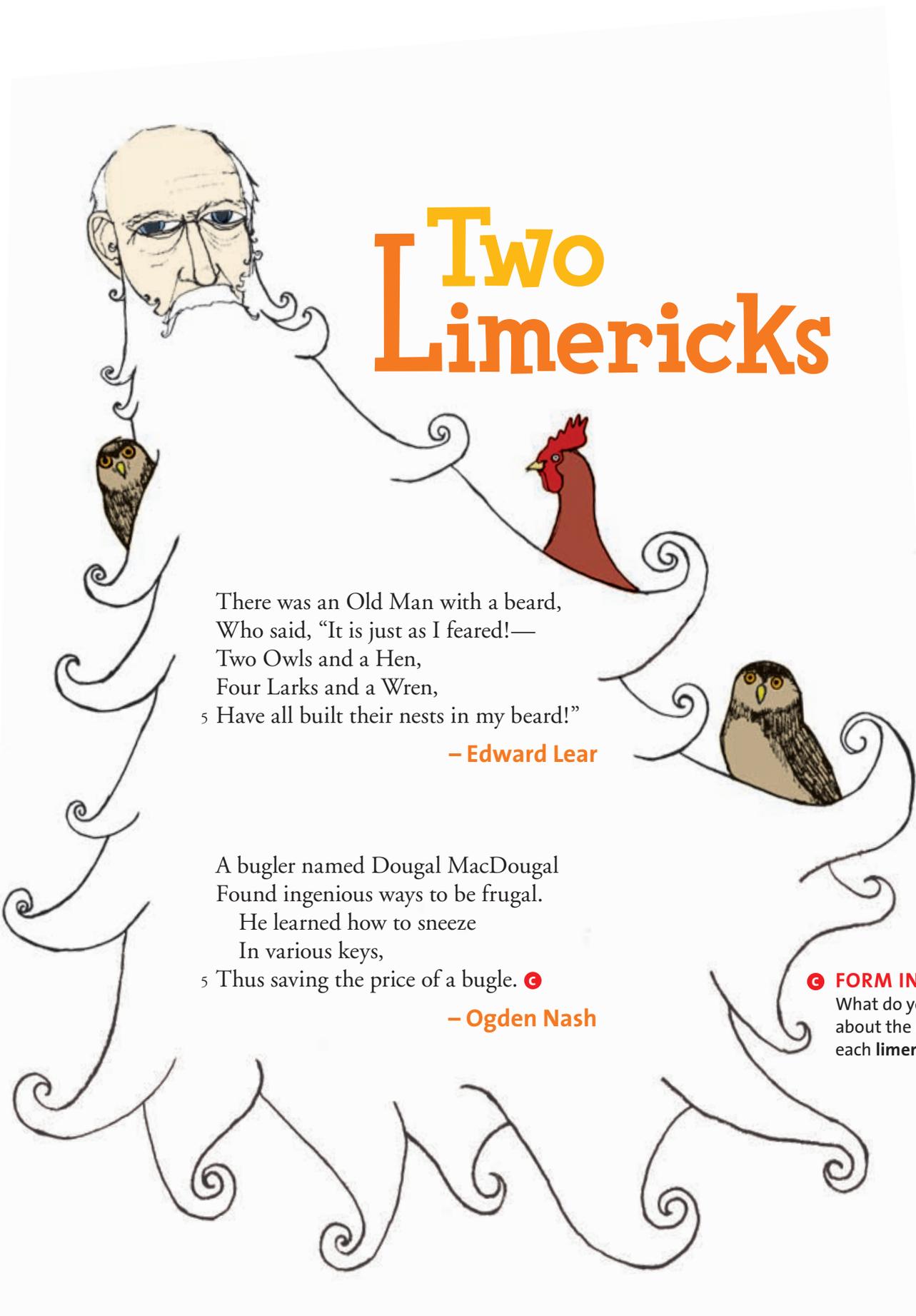
A PARAPHRASE

Reread lines 1–3. What words or phrases in these lines are confusing? Add them to your chart.

B FORM IN POETRY

Reread lines 13–16. Why do you think Cummings broke these lines the way he did?





Two Limericks

There was an Old Man with a beard,
Who said, "It is just as I feared!—
Two Owls and a Hen,
Four Larks and a Wren,
5 Have all built their nests in my beard!"

— Edward Lear

A bugler named Dougal MacDougal
Found ingenious ways to be frugal.
He learned how to sneeze
In various keys,
5 Thus saving the price of a bugle. ❶

— Ogden Nash

❶ **FORM IN POETRY**

What do you notice about the rhymes in each limerick?

Comprehension

- Clarify** What does the speaker in “who knows if the moon’s” imagine will happen if you go up in the balloon with him?
- Recall** In the first limerick, what does the Old Man find in his beard?
- Clarify** In the second limerick, why doesn’t Dougal need a bugle?



RL.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text.

Text Analysis

- Paraphrase** Look back at the graphic organizer you completed as you read. What parts of “who knows if the moon’s” were you able to understand better after paraphrasing? Explain.
- Compare and Contrast Form** Using a chart like the one shown, compare and contrast the form of the limericks with the form of “who knows if the moon’s.”
- Analyze Imagery** What images does the speaker in “who knows if the moon’s” create to help you imagine what the city in the sky will be like?
- Analyze Free Verse** Cummings’ poem is written in free verse but it still has rhymes and a kind of rhythm. What rhyming words can you find? What examples of **alliteration**—consonant sounds repeated in words close together—can you find? Read the poem aloud to see how the lines of different lengths create a rhythm.
- Visualize** What funny images, or pictures, do the limericks put in your mind?

	<i>“who knows if the moon’s”</i>	<i>Two Limericks</i>
<i>Rhythm and Rhyme</i>	<i>no regular rhythm or rhyme</i>	<i>regular rhythm, regular rhyme pattern (aabba)</i>
<i>Lines and Stanzas</i>		
<i>Shape</i>		

Extension and Challenge

- Creative Project: Writing** Write a few limericks of your own using silly rhymes. Imitate the beat and rhyme scheme of the limericks you read. Often limericks, like the one here by Lear, open with the words “There was” or “There once was.”

How can LANGUAGE be used to surprise you?

Look back at the web you completed on page 636. Using the words you recorded there, or new words, write a free verse poem about what you imagine a city above the sky would be like. Try to use sound effects, figures of speech, and unusual graphic elements, as Cummings does.