anyone lived in a pretty how town

by E. E. Cummings

anyone lived in a pretty how town
(with up so floating many bells down)
spring summer autumn winter
he sang his didn't he danced his did.

Women and men(both little and small)
cared for anyone not at all
they sowed their isn't they reaped their same
sun moon stars rain

children guessed(but only a few
and down they forgot as up they grew
autumn winter spring summer)
that noone loved him more by more

when by now and tree by leaf
she laughed his joy she cried his grief
bird by snow and stir by still
anyone's any was all to her

someones married their everyones
laughed their cryings and did their dance
(sleep wake hope and then)they
said their nevers they slept their dream

stars rain sun moon
(and only the snow can begin to explain
how children are apt to forget to remember
with up so floating many bells down)

one day anyone died i guess
(and noone stooped to kiss his face)
busy folk buried them side by side
little by little and was by was

all by all and deep by deep
and more by more they dream their sleep
noone and anyone earth by april
wish by spirit and if by yes.
Women and men (both dong and ding)
summer autumn winter spring
reaped their sowing and went their came
sun moon stars rain

Interpretation:

Poetry can be interpreted in many ways. No one but the poet knows the exact meaning behind the images, symbols, and nuances of the words. As active readers, we can apply what we know of poetry, the author, and our own personal experiences to bring meaning to a poem. It is possible that you may have a completely different interpretation than someone else. Just be sure you can support your interpretation.

This poem, “anyone lived in a pretty how town,” is about a man named anyone who is not well-liked by the someones and everyones in the town because he is different (“he sang his didn’t he danced his did”). The others in the town are all alike (“they sowed their isn’t they reaped their same”). anyone and noone are in love, but only the innocent children can see and accept this, until they too grow up into someones and everyones and lose their innocence (“down they forgot as up they grew”). Anyone and noone live a life of love, spontaneity, and wonder, while the someones and everyones live a boring, routine life. Eventually, anyone and noone die and are buried together. Few take notice and nothing changes.

The presentation of the seasons shows the passage of time (“spring summer autumn winter”). The order stays constant, but cycles through the year. The order of the sun, moon, stars, and rain changes throughout the poem, and then cycles back to the original order. This may represent the confusion of the someones and everyones in the town. Cycling back to the original order demonstrates that nothing changes over time.