ENG255  
Week #2 Reading/Discussion/Writing  

READING  
- Robert Frost, pages 1900 – 1912 (all poems, especially Mending Wall; The Oven Bird; Desert Places)  
- Wallace Stevens, pages 1938 – 1951 all poems especially Sunday Morning; The Idea of Order at Key West; The Poem that Took the Place of a Mountain  
- e.e. cummings, pages 2118 – 2125 – all poems especially “next to of course god america i; my sweet old etcetera; anyone lived in a pretty how town; i sing of Olaf glad and big)  

WRITING: Choose from the following:  
- **Frost:** Explain why Frost can be considered a *traditionalist* and at the same time a *modernist*. Use specific examples from the selection of his poetry and his *techniques* to illustrate the points you make.  
- **Stevens:** As for ideas, he’s as close to Walt Whitman as we’ll come before we get to the fifties (and the Beats). If you’re familiar with Whitman’s writings, can you make some connections? OR In what ways should we be considering Stevens a distinctly *American* poet, one who is creating our American Vernacular?  
- **Cummings:** He was named the “acrobat of words,” an “enfant terrible.” In his poetry, he turned all of the poetic devices on their heads. Write about this playfulness in his treatment of quite serious subjects. Be specific about the devices and the subjects. In what ways do you consider this *American* and *modernist writing*?  
- **You:** Choose any one of these poets to be influenced by and write your own *modernist American* poem. Then write about it as you would respond to any of the previous poems: what is distinctly *American and modernist* about your work?  

Note: As you consider ways to articulate *modernism*, draw from our class discussions on both the political / social / cultural forces influencing writers of this time as well as the writerly *techniques*, the style, the American *vernacular* they were creating.  

Stevens on poetry and reality:  
- “We live in the description of a place and not the place itself.”  
- “Accuracy of observation is the equivalent of accuracy of thinking.”  
- “What we see in the mind is as real to us as what we see by the eye.”  
- “Poetry must be irrational.”  
- “Poetry is not personal.”  
- “One reads poetry with one’s nerves.”  
- Poetry – “a response to the daily necessity of getting the word right”  
- Poetry – “an accuracy with respect to the structure of reality”  
- Poetry – “the gaiety of language,” “a holiday in reality,” a voice speaking in “ghostlier demarcations, keener sounds” of “ourselves and our origins”  

FORMAT  
- Word process  
- Write one (and only one please) FULL page single-spaced  
- Include a heading in the upper left-hand corner (your name, date, ENG255, WW#2)