

Happiness

By Adrienne Wolfert

Happiness is just a thing called Joe
or Bill or Stan or Adolphus the Second or Moe
Happiness is a state of being.
So the state of being -- call it Joe
But don't hold a real guy to blame
whatever his name
if he isn't it though you think
he is. No man nor woman
for that matter, is. It's
just a thing that happens
for a while
but can't last forever
but when it's NOW, you gotta store it up like Vitamin B
(not C, that don't last)
so that in the days of starvation
you got some weight to lose.

Movie screens
and magazines
they don't know what they do to a gal
promisin' her she has only to meet that guy named
Happiness and oh brother
no labor pains for her.

It ain't fair to the guy
puttin' all that weight
of a woman on him . . . She better
hang onto a few
other things. For
if you marry Happiness and he's away workin'
to feed you enough to enjoy it
and Boredom walks into the front door,
or Loneliness, or Old Age,
or Failure or whatever
you dread
you gotta look around your house, see,

Happiness was here.
Here's his pipe or burned out cigar
his trousers on the floor, a dirty shirt
It's hard to remember that these dumb things
mean Happiness 'cause now
they're saying, pick me up
Put me away. Make the house
respectable for visitors
welcome or not.

Now, look Happiness, you say when he comes home all
pooped
Why can't you put the cap on the toothpaste?
Don't you know
Dissatisfaction came today
and wore me out entertaining him?

Disillusion paid a visit, snooping' to see what kind of
housekeeper I am
After all the promises my teachers made my mother
My back hurts from bending to pick up after all you
slobs and what do you think I found crow's feet 'round
my eyes.

If Tragedy comes . . . poor Happiness,
there ain't no room in the house for him
He just can't get in the front door for all that
bastard Tragedy stands there
with his telegram
He just fades like romance in a TV commercial
when the beautiful gal forgets her mouthwash
and no one will tell her.
Oh he's there all right. He squeezes in
to put his hand under your elbow
but you can't see him, he may as well be an armchair
'Tragedy got you tight and he's squeezing' ole Happiness out
'cause when in the dark of your skull comes the crack of
lightning with the awful rear to split your head
right open and spill your sanity truth
and you know you can't
(in spite of your hart which keeps sending blood to your guts,)

live
then, they better be there, bouncing back
up

'Those Happiness moments whatever they were and are
they better be there jumping' up and down like little
children on the sofa sayin'

"Get outa here, death, get out! 'This is Happiness' house!"