

# 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!"