

THE BEST YEAR OF HER LIFE

When my two-year-old daughter
sees someone come through the door
whom she loves, and hasn't seen for a while,
and has been anticipating,
she literally shrieks with joy.

I have to go into the other room
so that no one will notice the tears in my eyes.

Later, after my daughter has gone to bed,
I say to my wife,
"She will never be this happy again,"
and my wife gets angry and snaps,
"Don't you dare communicate your negativism to her!"

And, of course, I won't, if I can possibly help it,
and of course I fully expect her
to have much joy in her life,
and, of course, I hope to be able
to contribute to that joy --
I hope, in other words, that she'll always
be happy to see me come through the door --

but why kid ourselves -- she, like every child,
has a life of great suffering ahead of her,
and while joy will not go out of her life,
she will one of these days cease to actually,
literally, jump and shriek for joy.

COLD, STRAIGHT FROM THE CAN

i want to thank you for teaching me
to eat spaghetti-and-meat balls
cold, straight from the can.

actually, what i saw you
(to my original horror) consume
was a can of campbell's split-pea soup,
uncooked.

i have not yet reached that point of spiritual perfection
at which i can conceive of spooning
campbell's split-pea soup
to my lips,
cold, straight from the can,

but i can conceive of minestrone
as the next distinct possibility.