

Silence of mountains and streams.
 Higher than clouds, finally reaching
 The peak, we spread out teapot and cups
 Then wait for the water to boil. A steady wind
 Blows the first few autumn leaves.
 Finally, the serving boy hands me the pot.
 Filling each cup a little at a time,
 The brew becomes richer with each serving.
 Stretching out, we chant poems until the tea
 Is finished. Our talk never turns
 To the affairs of men. After a while,
 You take out ink and paper and begin painting
 The ancient face of a mountain rock. In an instant
 You have captured ten thousand years.
 As you hand it to me, a sudden gust of wind
 Carries it off, and we laugh. Since the immortals
 Left, what does it matter? There are only
 These mountains and rivers without end.
 Getting ready to leave, we gather up the cups
 And tray. The wind blowing harder now swells out our
sleeves

And we are almost carried away. You joke
 About the return of the Yellow Crane.
 Looking below, the Yangtse is only a winding thread.
 Halfway down the mountain, you tell me how much
 You enjoyed the tea.

WRITTEN AFTER READING THE TANKA OF TACHIBANA AKEMI

"Happiness is when"

1.

Happiness is when
 You come home from work
 And something good is ready to eat
 And after you eat you sit down
 And take a long nap
 And wake up the next morning
 And it's Saturday.

2.

Happiness is when
 You wake up very early
 And don't have to go to work
 And the kids sleep late
 And before you even have breakfast
 you've written a new poem.

3.

Happiness is when
You find yourself out of work
And have just enough money
So you don't have to worry
For a little while
And can really enjoy it.

4.

Happiness is when
You go into a book store
Not knowing what you're looking for
And walk right up
To the book you want and buy it
Without even thinking
About the money.

5.

Happiness is when
You buy a new car
And don't have to wash it
Or check the oil or tires
And you can drive it for two years
Without ever thinking about it.

6.

Happiness is when
You sit out on the back steps
And drink just enough wine
Or just enough beer
So you don't have to think
About anything unpleasant.

7.

Happiness is when
You don't have to go to work
And for three or four days
You can sit around at home
And not have to shave
Or even brush your teeth.

8.

Happiness is when
You go to work for a week
And have nothing to do
And it never catches up with you
And nobody notices
You sit at your desk
Revising poems.

9.

Happiness is when
There's no one at home
And you find an old girly magazine
That looks good to you again
And you go upstairs to bed
And jerk off with it in peace
And fall soundly asleep.

10.

Happiness is when
On a cold winter Sunday
The snow flurries fall now and then
And you drink a little wine
To keep off the melancholy
And at evening sit down
With your wife and children
And eat a big dinner
Of garlic bread and spaghetti

11.

Happiness is when
You stay home from work sick
And after everyone's gone
Crawl back into bed
And fall asleep slowly
With a drop of sunlight
On your nose.

12.

Happiness is when
You don't feel a bit tired
And stay up all night

Puttering around the house
Like a friendly ghost
And have everything you want
All to yourself.

— Joe Salerno

North Caldwell NJ

THE STATE AND THAT BEGGING MOTHERFUCKER, ART

Shostakovitch,
I listen to the 8th written during World War II,

he has this blaring lemon intense vastness
which
people might read messages into;
the intellectuals and world-savers loved
Shostakovitch while
Russia was on our side

(upon the capture of Berlin there were
world-wide photos of American and Russian
soldiers embracing)

whatever is needed at the moment is
right

when that moment is used and something else
is needed
that situation adjusts to what some call
history.

I still like Shostakovitch
especially his 5th
which is another historic
celebration of something
else.

Shostakovitch,
I listen to his
8th

then it ends

now there's a Beethoven string
quartet
and my white cat with his
one eye
stretches his legs at
my feet.