

My happiest Day

Unseen
Silent Silenced
Intimidated
Overpowered Controlled

Ground down thin to the ground
She who is nothing,
Yet she who shan't be defeated.
She who will burn in flame but if she must will rise again
She who remembers what they do
when they devalue you

She who is powerful and dangerous
And expects everything. And nothing. She who appreciates it all
The happiest day when she is known for being like no other.
Her happiest day when she's

Noticed
Heard Encouraged
Fearless
Empowered Liberated

My Happiest Day - Poem

I hate the idea of the 'happiest day'.
One day when you just feel good
Fixated on concepts of 'perfect',
The 'best'. We don't see what is already here.
We don't understand - imperfect's perfect;
It's sadness that helps us see good.
We'll wait and wait for the 'happiest day'
But it's been here all along - we just missed it.

"My happiest day?" It didn't take much thinking. Just the mention of it brought the memory bubbling up in my mind, and I smiled, despite the situation. The dark-haired woman didn't smile back.

I closed my eyes for a moment, imagining the scent of grass and soaked earth. "It was the first of March in my sixteenth year." I began slowly, "I'll never forget it. We had spent the last nine years trying to find a cure for my brother, something that would stop him being burned by the rain. The day we found the medicine my father had come back from his journey to the West, and the sky was dark with an awful storm."

"He'd brought back the root of an Epione tree, our last hope, so I boiled it into a tea and took it to my brother. He didn't think anything would happen- he had long since resigned himself to the idea he would never be able to safely leave the house- but when he took the first sip his skin began to glow like there was light in his veins and before I could stop him, he was running for the door. I shouted in panic, too shocked to run after him, then I saw his silhouette standing there in the rain. Unharmmed."

There was no way to describe the joy I'd felt, no way to express how every cobweb of fear I'd had for nine years had blown away on the wind. I took a steadying breath and continued. "We ran together, all the way through town. I showed him the forest and he laughed at the sound the river made as it bubbled over the rocks, then cried at the feeling of rain-drenched grass when he lay in the clearing. I'd never seen the world like that until he saw it."

The dark haired woman was silent for a moment. "How long until the Epione root wore off?"

I swallowed, then said quietly. "A week." She waited for me to continue. "Father had to travel to get more once a month, he has done for the last three years. Until now. Now that..."

"It's become illegal." The dark haired woman glanced down at the official notice I had brought to her, throwing it onto the fire and turning to scan her shelves until she found the jar she was looking for. Epione root. I suppressed a sob.

"Please, just name your price." I begged, hungrily eyeing the jar. "Anything."

"I already named it." the woman said, and before I knew what was happening she tapped a long branch of wood against my forehead.

A shockwave went through my skull. The twig seemed to shimmer for a moment and I blinked, unsure of what had just happened. Everything felt hazy. Somehow she was handing me the jar of Epione root and turning back to her cauldron over the fire.

"What- what do you want for it?" I asked, hardly daring to breathe.

"Nothing." she said, delicately placing the twig inside a box labelled *memories*. "Just tell me one thing. What happened on the first of March in your sixteenth year?"

There was something, then there was nothing. Blank. Dark. "I- I don't know."

The witch of the forest smiled. "Good."

My Happiest Day

Colours burn luminously before my feet; shades of red, orange and yellow. My soul feels elated and I feel the freest I've ever been. The stress of life seems so far away now. I stare upwards and my eyes meet a beautiful sky. It's filled with colours I've never imagined, never thought existed until now. It's beautiful. Yet I know I've seen something like this before. *It's a sunrise*. I think. *But I don't see the sun*.

"The start of a new day." I spin at the voice and see across the burning road; another figure. He smiles at me. "Lots of things are possible when a new day starts again."

"Oh, and I just happen to meet you somewhere that can't possibly exist?" I almost feel the sarcasm in my voice. He lets out a full, joyous laugh.

"It exists alright, maybe not in everyone's reality, but in yours it certainly does."

"Where are we?"

"On the sun."

"And I'm not dead?" I take a step backwards as if it's going to help.

"Not everything is about living or dying."

"But..." I stop for a moment then mumble, "No, no..." I now am noticing the light in this man's bright, blue eyes and the softness in his face. How he walks with confidence but not pride.

"Will you dance with me on this rising sun?" He asks, smiling, "You won't get this opportunity again."

"Sure?" He laughs his wholesome laugh again.

"Well don't let me tell you how!" And I didn't. I felt my arms moving and I felt confident in myself. I knew there was desperation back home, but I now have this strange surety that there's freedom and hope too. After a while this man taps on my shoulder and points below us.

"We've risen," He says, "Time for you to go."

"I'm dreaming, aren't I?" I whisper. He nods but points below us. I follow his gesture curiously. I see myself and jump of shock. I see myself smiling broadly, holding a letter addressed to me in my hands.

"Look out for that today," He says, "Don't forget me and enjoy your happiest day."

"Happiest day?"

"The best of your life." My dream fades and I wake in my bed. I feel light and the world doesn't seem so heavy anymore. For years I've been dreaming of being a successful artist. To express colours like I saw in my dream. *My dream...*

I rush downstairs and grab my paints and brushes and paint the vivid picture in my mind's eye. I let the brush and the paint do the work. Then I step back.

"Dancing on the rising sun," I murmur. I put my brush down and turn to the hallway of my apartment. Out of the corner of my eye I notice the post flap moving. I hear it rustling. *The letter*. Sure enough, a small letter falls to the floor. I rush forward and rip it open.

Dear Ms Elliot,

Recently I have had the joy of seeing some of your fantastic paintings. Words do not describe them. I am holding an exhibition soon and I would love to feature your work...

My heart leaps and I see the man from my dream wink...

and laugh, his beautiful laugh.

I felt defeated. Despair had clawed its way into my life and into my body, until I was well and truly defeated. The more you hear the inevitable, aggravating phrase “it’s going to be okay”, the more aware you become of the truth. You cannot win.

Yet somewhere in that blood-stained lie, is the slightest stitch of silver-lining. They tell you because they love you. They believe in you. If I’m honest with you here, it was that minute sliver of hope that forced me to try. And I did try. I really did. But after-all, trying just isn’t enough. Not in this war, at least.

It furtively crept up my skin, overcoming my outer defences until I was weak, and crawled in. Greedily, mercilessly, it devoured every soldier, closing in on my chest, until I could bear no more. I was told to hide away, and I was forced to constantly endure downhearted cries and disgruntled glares as punishment for heartbreakingly disclosing that the enemy has sabotaged my home. All the memorable faces that once gave me a sense of security, now face away, as if I’m the only victim of it, as if it’s not lurking behind them, creeping up on them too. I missed seeing those faces, for the only face I got to see was one I felt ashamed to call my own.

I was rushed to hospital, rescued from my home before my body began to drown in a white sea, which I soon realised to be the covers of my new bed. Gloved hands met the surface of my skin, dragging me alive from the whirlwind of thoughts and confusion. They told me to keep fighting. They told me to not give up. The second my eyes fall, I’m thrown at with armour, down my throat, into my lungs as they help me to breathe, help me to rise against my invisible enemy, and it was that moment it hit me, I was no longer on my own. I had the faces I missed rushing in from every side, comforting words into my ears and smiles greeted mine, but I was too grateful to try and comprehend the worry they worked to disguise, to notice the white capes they were wearing and the plastic on their faces- too grateful to realise they were shielding themselves from me.

They gave me new soldiers, ones that made me feel empowered, but my enemy sensed this, and it rose too. It threw every soldier down, bloodthirsty for each one, they considered adding more, but I was weakening, I couldn’t hold more, I couldn’t take it, it was ruthless, barbarous, and I couldn’t take it anymore. I lost all hope, just like it wanted me to. That’s the duty of the enemy, to throw you into despair, to ruin your life, and your body, and then to snatch it away. I let myself go.

And then I woke up. I remember fighting the light as I opened my eyes for the first time in ages, and the weight on my chest was gone. Faces surrounded me, faces that were never really gone. I couldn’t suppress tears as I was led outside, soft grass bowing to my touch, as they led me to practice simple, normal things, like throwing a ball. That was my happiest day, when the trumpets sounded for our side and my war was miraculously over. But the nurses’ smiles soon faded away as another patient was wheeled through the ward, heaving, sweating, gasping for air. I prayed for him, he had a long way to go, but his war would be over too, and with the confidence I never thought would come from my own experience, I knew his happiest day was soon to come. Just as mine.

A happiest day comes with stereotypes,
A wedding, a miracle, Christmas, a celebration,
What we associate as something 'memorable',
But your happiest day can simply be today,
And be even better tomorrow.

"A happiest day comes with smiles",
"And laughter",
"Giggles and dancing",
Or does it?
Maybe it's simply breathing,
hearing a lowering of cases on the news channels,
a channel of truths we wish we could ignore,
Maybe it's a nurse finally getting some sleep,
closing her eyes scarred with trauma from her day on the ward,
maybe it's a phone ringing, filling a silent house with some kind of company.

A happiest day,
Well to be honest,
Can you remember the difference between this day and yesterday?
Or have you become one with this unproductive cycle of life Covid has made for us,
Maybe your happiest day will be breaking free of that mould life fits into these days.

So yes,
A happiest day isn't a wedding, a miracle, Christmas or a celebration,
Those things are a wishful memory of the past, stuck in an old calendar we can't retrieve,
No, you can make today your happiest day,
By just making this day stand out.

Freida Lindsey

Amberley Parochial School

My Happiest Day

It has been five days since the end of war in England. Five days of worry. Five days of fret. Five days of not knowing. I'm sitting in the kitchen, on a wooden, wobbly chair. There is a cold cup of tea on the table, growing a whitish-yellow skin by the hour. There is no point in waiting. It should be over for them anyway. So many have died.

A little metallic tap in the hallway tells me that the post has arrived. I can get it later. Thoughts are wizzing uncontrollably around my head, and horrible images cloud my vision. Images of people lying on the ground, ~~to~~ crimson blood leaking from their bodies. A man holding a gun up to a prisoner's face, his finger on the trigger. I ~~pushed~~ push them to the back of my mind, blinking hard, but the tears had already come. To distract myself, I heave my body up from the chair and trudge down the hallway to get the post. A little white slip of paper is sitting at my feet - a telegram.

I pick up the telegram and slipped it out of its little envelope. The words on it read:

'Dear Mrs Ida Hicks,

as you know, the war ended five days ago. Our search warrens have been searching the battle fields and trenches. It has come to my attention that your husband, Mr John Hicks, and your son, Master Wilfred Hicks, are ~~dead~~ dead.

Yours Sincerely,

Major Lukus Jenkins, Top office, Head of Army.

I read this letter again and again. The words were still inscribed in my brain like ink on paper. They're dead. They're dead. They're dead.

I run into the living room and sit down on the sofa with a thump. Tears leak down my face in a waterfall. My eyes turn red with crying. The carriage clock on the mantelpiece shows an hour had passed since I got the telegram. An hour of grief. I look up at the family photo on the shelf by the window. Three happy, smiling faces. My family and me. I stop crying, wipe my eyes and go back to the kitchen to fix myself some lunch. As I am in the hallway, I hear a knock on the door. A knock that's sharp and quick, not a slow tap. I know that knock. It's John's knock.

I run to the door, fumbling with the lock as happy, warm tears stream down my already sodden face. As the door swings open, I fling my arms around the visitor's neck.

"Careful, Ida, dear," the man says in a deep, calming voice. John's voice. Another voice behind John says "Hi, mam." I don't recognise this voice. It's older. It's more mature. But still, I recognise the boy.

"Wilfred!" I exclaim in joy. It is Wilfred, but not the fifteen-year-old boy I knew in 1939. Six years have passed and I am now looking at a twenty-one-year-old man. John has aged too, but less noticeably. They're here. Alive.

This is the happiest day of my life.

My Happiest Day

Branches emptied in a cloud of leaves on the water-soaked window; lightning crashed, as blue eyes fluttered open and brown hair shuddered away yesterdays troubles into nothingness. The crystal, blue eyes belonged to Ben, a young boy no older eight, that is rather more shy than boy. CRASH! ZAP! The lightning struck again sending a cacophony of noise through the town like a wave in a stream.

The next morning, a sleep deprived Ben awoke a beam of bright light streaming in through his (no longer water-soaked) window. The shining sun seemed to guide him down the creaking, twisting stairs and his rice crispies called him to the dark-oak table. Moments later, the rice crispies were molged down by a garished and ravenous Ben. As soon as they were, he rushed outside only to see three black-scorched stones each engraved with a different symbol - a line; a swirl and a weird eyeball looking thing.

Somehow, this reminded him of his-recently deceased - grandad (Thon). Ben's eyes welled up with tears; a haze of memories filled his mind. He began to rearrange the stones until they made a sort of triangular-shape. Suddenly the stones started to shake and shudder. Poof! Ben's garden was filled with a cloud of black and

dark smoke. "Emerging alright dear?" yelled his mother from the house. "Everything's fine mom just fine!" replied Ben (obviously lying). In the smoke Ben could make out: a pair of feet; then legs; then a body; THEN A HEAD!

"Ben. Ben is that you?" asked a strangely familiar voice. "Wh... who's there?" enquired Ben in a sort of squeaking voice. "It's Thon now who are you?"

"Grandad?" asked Ben

"Yes," replied Thon

Immediately the two gave each other a large long hug. The rest of seemingly everlasting day, they spent together. They played, sang and even danced. But still Ben wanted more. So they went off galamancing and frolicing. But still Thon wanted more. So they drove to the beach and had a long soulful heart-to-heart talk.

"Ben, I must leave you now; it is sunset and I can only stay for a day." whispered Thon, as tears welled up to his and Ben's eyes. "No" lamented Ben. Tears streamed down Ben's face, as Thon began to fade away. His dust shimmered over the horizon and the air carried him to the after-life. That night... branches exploded in a cloud of leaves on his water-soaked window; lightning crashed, as a blue eyed and brown haired child remembered, his happiest day.

My Happiest Day

"Get up boy" yells Gron Follickey "I've found some dim-witted cotton head to adopt you, you filthy flea ridden dunce."

George ignores the horrible noise hoping it will stop, then he realises what Gron Follickey has said, he's being adopted! He suddenly understands that this is going to be the best day of his life. The best day of his life. This is amazing!

George's life was not nice in fact it was horrible. He was beaten every day. Up at five o'clock in the morning, only cold mushy gruel for breakfast. Working fifteen hours straight maybe doing laundry, or straightening nails. Some of the jobs were doing something worthwhile, some were pointless, all were relentless. He wasn't allowed to sleep until ten at night and even then, the rattle of night workers kept him up. Cold, often wet he slept in his cramped damp box.

Day after day after day with no breaks. He had been working ever since he was three. He just wanted to break out of this horrible, miserable, cold hell.

"This fool lives in Devon moo moo baa baa. That will be your new company you filthy animal" says Gron Follickey grabbing George by the nose and pulling him towards the door "here piggy piggy!"

Gron Follickey opens the orphanage door narrowly and a slice of sunrise bursts into the darkness. A tall gentle woman stands on the step her eyes dance with delight as she looks at George. George is smiling but a tiny element inside him is fearful.

"Madam I hope you enjoy looking after this delightful boy, so dear he is to my heart errrrr ahh madam I just remembered that we have had to buy George these new clothes, so that will be an extra four pounds" purrs Gron Follickey poking George forward whilst holding his chubby grimy hand out.

The lady whose name is Miss Ellery reaches into her bag and hands over the money. She knows very well that the clothes were not new and certainly not worth four pounds, but she just wants George. She has always dreamt of having a child of her own and now that has come true.

Miss Ellery leads George to her carriage and opens the door for him. George stands motionless he doesn't know what to do. Miss Ellery takes him by the hand "As soon as you feel comfortable please get in the carriage". No one had ever been so patient with him in his life.

Miss Ellery wraps a soft warm blanket around George's filthy "new" clothes and the carriage sets off. George feels scared but his tiredness takes over and he sinks to sleep.

The carriage suddenly comes to a halt jolting George awake. His fear grows again. Miss Ellery says "How about a pie?". The next thing George knows is that he has a pie in his hand. The pie is soft and warm and the smell is the most amazing thing he's ever smelt.

George is warm for the first time in his life. He can feel food inside him. He doesn't feel empty anymore. He feels safe. It's the first time he has not been waiting for something bad to happen.

From that moment on George's life changed forever and every day became his happiest day.