

1972

Happiness

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THE FACE

Sweating, though washed an hour ago,
the face explains
what has been done to it.

1. The revisit to the oral surgeon.
2. Drink.
3. Is it safe to live on this street where there are murders?
4. Bruises it neither remembers nor understands.

The face dries itself on a piece of crumpled Kleenex.
It takes itself to bed.
It expects to sleep uneasily, if at all.

HAPPINESS

I sent you this bluebird of the name of Joe
with "Happiness" tattooed onto his left bicep.
(For a bluebird, he was a damn good size.)
And all you can say is you think your cat has got him?

I tell you the messages aren't getting through.
The Golden Gate Bridge is up past its ass in traffic;
tankers colliding, singing telegrams out on strike.
The machineries of the world are raised in anger.

So I am sending this snail of the name of Fred
in a small tricolor sash, so the cat will know him.
He will scrawl out "Happiness" in his own slow way.
I won't ever stop until the word gets to you.