

Selection from Samuel Beckett's *Happy Days*

Performed by Courtney Walsh

Winnie: Another heavenly day. Begin Winnie. Begin your day.

(*toothpaste, cap*) Running out – ah well – can't be helped

-Just one of those old things – just can't be cured.

(*mirror, teeth*) Ah yes – Good Lord! - Good God!

-Ah well – no worse – no better/no worse – no change.

-No pain – hardly any.

(*spectacles*) Can't complain – no, no – mustn't complain.

-So much to be thankful for – no pain – hardly any.

-Slight headache sometimes – occasional mild migraine.

-It comes – then goes.

-Ah yes – many mercies – great mercies – prayers perhaps not for naught.

-First thing. Last thing. Old things. Old eyes. On, Winnie.

(*medicine*) Loss of spirits... lack of keenness... want of appetite

Infants... children... adults... six level... tablespoonfuls daily

Before and after... meals... instantaneous... improvement.

Ah that's better!

(*lipstick*) Running out. Ah well. Mustn't complain.

What is that wonderful line, Willie?

Oh fleeting joys – oh something lasting woe.

Oh this is going to be another happy day!

That is what I find so wonderful, that not a day goes by – hardly a day,

Without some wonderful addition to one's knowledge.

I mean, provided one takes the pains.

Ah yes, if only I could bear to be alone, I mean prattle away with not a soul to hear.
Not that I flatter myself you hear much, no Willie, God forbid.
Days perhaps when you hear nothing. But days too when you answer.
So that I may say at all times (even when you do not answer and perhaps hear nothing) something of this is being heard. I am not merely talking to myself.
That is, in the wilderness. Something I could never bear to do – for any length of time.
That is what enables me to go on, go on talking that is.
Whereas, if you were to die – or go away and leave me, then what would I do, what *could* I do all day long?
Simply gaze before me with compressed lips.
Or a brief... gale of laughter, should I happen to see the old joke again.
This is going to be a happy day! Another happy day.

What now? Words fail. There are times when even they fail.
Is that not so, Willie, that even words fail at times?
What is one to do then until they come again? Brush and comb the hair if it has not been done, or trim the nails if they are in need of trimming.
These things tide one over.

Bless you, Willie. Just to know that in theory you can hear me, even though in fact you don't is all I need. Not to say anything I would not wish you to hear or liable to cause you pain. Not to be just babbling away on trust, as it were, not knowing, and something gnawing at me. Doubt. Here. Abouts.
There is of course the bag. There will always be the bag. Even when you are gone.

The day is now well advanced.

And yet it is perhaps a little too soon for my song. To sing a song too soon is a great mistake, I find.

There is of course the bag. Could I enumerate its contents? Could I, if some kind person were to come along and ask, What have you got in that big black bag, Winnie? Give an exhaustive answer? No. The depths in particular, who knows what treasures. What comforts. Yes, there is the bag.

But something tells me, Do not overdo the bag, Winnie, make use of it of course, let it help you... along when stuck, by all means, but cast your mind forward, cast your mind forward, Winnie, to the time when words must fail – and do not overdo the bag. Perhaps just one quick dip.

(revolver) You again! Oh I suppose it's a comfort to know you're there, but I'm tired of you. And now?

Is gravity what it was? I fancy not. Yes, the feeling more and more that if I were not held – in this way – I would simply float up into the blue.

Don't you ever have that feeling, Willie, of being sucked up? Don't you have to cling on sometimes? You don't?

Ah well, natural laws, natural laws, I suppose it's like everything else, it all depends on the creature you happen to be.

All I can say is, for my part, for me, they are not what they were when I was young and... foolish and... beautiful... possibly... lovely... in a way...to look at.

Forgive me, Willie, sorrow keeps breaking in. Ah well, what a joy to know you are there.

I used to perspire freely. Now hardly at all.

The heat is much greater. The perspiration much less. That is what I find so wonderful.

The way man adapts himself. To changing conditions. Oh yes, great mercies.

I speak of the time when I was not yet caught – in this way –

And I had my legs and the use of my legs, and could seek out a shady place, like you, when I was tired of the sun, or a sunny place when I was tired of the shade, like you

- and they are all empty words.

Well, it is all very understandable, very understandable.

How often have I said, in evil hours, Sing now, Winnie, sing your song, there is nothing else for it, and did not. Could not.

One cannot sing just to please someone, however much one loves them,

No, song must come from the heart, that is what I always say, pour out from the inmost, like a thrush. Or the bird of dawning, with no thought of benefit, to oneself or anyone else. And now?

Something says, Stop talking now, Winnie, for a minute, don't squander all your words for the day, stop talking and do something for a change, will you?

Do something! What claws! Bit more like it.

Keep yourself nice, Winnie, that's what I always say, come what may, keep yourself nice.

And now?

(bag) It is perhaps a little soon – to make ready – for the night – and yet I do – make ready for the night – feeling it at hand – saying to myself – Winnie - it will not be long now, Winnie. Sometimes I am wrong. But not often.

May one still speak of time? Say it is a long time now, Willie, since I saw you. Since I heard you. May one? One does. I used to think... I say I used to think that I would learn to talk alone. By that I mean to myself, the wilderness. But no. No, no. Ergo you are there. Oh no doubt you are dead, like the others. No doubt you have died, or gone away and left me like the others, it doesn't matter, you are there. The bag too is there, the same as ever. I can see it. The one you gave me that day...

Then... now... what difficulties here for the mind. To have been always what I am

- and so changed from what I was.
- I am the one, I say the one, and then the other.
- Now the one, then the other.

There is so little one can say, one says it all. All one can. And no truth in it anywhere.

Sometimes I hear sounds. But not often. They are a boon, sounds are a boon

They help me... through the day. Yes, those are happy days. When I hear sounds.

I used to think... they were in my head. But no. No, no.

I have not lost my reason. Not yet. Not all. Some remains.

Sounds. Like little... sunderings, little falls... apart.

It's things, Willie. In the bag, outside the bag. Ah yes, *things* have a life.

Take my looking-glass, it doesn't need me.

What now, Willie? There is my story of course, when all else fails. A life. A long life.

I do of course hear cries. But they are in my head surely. My head was always full of cries.

Faint confused cries. They come. Then go. As on a wind.

That is what I find so wonderful. They cease. Ah yes, great mercies, great mercies.

What are those exquisite lines?

Go forget me why should something o'er that something shadow fling...

Go forget me... why should sorrow... brightly smile...

Go forget me... never hear me... sweetly smile... brightly sing...

One loses one's classics. Oh not all. That is what I find so wonderful.

A part of one's classics remains, to help one through the day.

Oh yes, many mercies, many mercies.

I used to say, Winnie, you are changeless, there is never any difference between one fraction of a second and the next. Why bring that up again? There is so little one can bring up, one brings it all up. All one can.

My neck is hurting me. My neck is hurting me!

Ah that's better. Everything within reason. I can do no more. Say no more. Problem here. No, something must move, in the world, I can't any more. A zephyr. A breath.

I hear cries. Sing. Sing your old song, Winnie.

Ah well, what matter, that's what I always say, it will have been a happy day, after all, another happy day.

