

5 It is not easy to live in this world. Everyone is constantly upset by the small things that go wrong: one is insulted by a friend; another is neglected by her family; yet another has a bad argument with his spouse or his teen-age child.

10 Often, people cry when they are unhappy. This is natural. For a short time, when I was young, I worked in an office. Toward lunchtime, as the people in the office grew hungry and tired and irritable, they would begin to cry. My boss would give me a document to type, and I would push it away crossly. He would yell at me, "Type it!" I would yell back, "I won't!" He himself would become petulant on the phone and slam it into its cradle. By the time he was ready to leave for lunch, tears of frustration would be running down his cheeks. If an acquaintance stopped by the office to take him to lunch, he would turn his back and ignore that person. Then that person's eyes, 15 too, would well up with tears.

20 After lunch, we usually felt better, and the office was filled with its normal hum and bustle, people carrying folders and walking briskly here and there, sudden bursts of laughter rising from cubicles. Work would go well until late in the afternoon. Then, as we all grew hungry and tired again, even more tired than in the morning, we would begin to cry again.

Most of us continued to cry as we left the office. In the elevator, we elbowed one another, and on the walk to the subway we glared at the people coming toward us. On the stairs descending into the subway, we forced our way down through the crowd coming up.

25 It was summer. In those days, there was no air-conditioning in the subway cars, and, as we all stood packed together, swaying between stops, the tears wet our cheeks, the sweat ran down our backs and legs, and the women's feet swelled in their tight shoes.

30 Some people would gradually stop crying as they rode toward home, especially if they had found a seat. They would blink their damp eyelashes and contentedly suck on their fingers as they read their newspapers and books, their eyes still shining.

They might not cry again that day. I don't know, because I wasn't with them; I can only imagine. I myself did not usually cry at home, except at the table, if my supper was very disappointing, or if my bedtime was drawing near, because I did not really want to go to bed, because I did not want to get up the next day and go to work. But

maybe others did cry at home, maybe on and off all evening, depending what they found there.