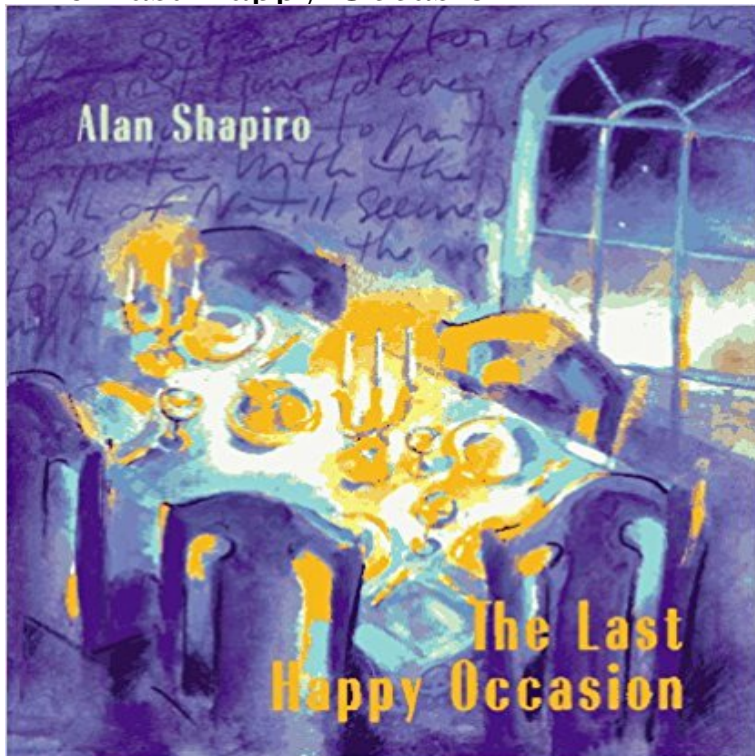


The Last Happy Occasion



The Last Happy Occasion is the coming-of-age story of an American Jew and aspiring writer in the sixties and seventies. In this memoir in six movements, Alan Shapiro recalls how poetry helped him make sense of his own and other peoples lives. Events unfold, including his sisters death, that make him reconsider the transformative power of art and accept the limitations of poetry in confronting the untransformable pain of mortal loss. A refreshingly honest, lovingly crafted work, The Last Happy Occasion is a treasure map for anyone interested in exploring the intersections of life and art. Nominated for the 1996 National Book Critics Circle Award. [Shapiro] seeks what lies at the deepest level of the human heart to mitigate his and our separateness from others. Chase Collins, Chicago Tribune Books The Last Happy Occasion is touching and intelligent, emotionally satisfying and eloquent testimony to the power of poetry to instruct, heal and inspire. Emily Barton, New York Times Book Review Shapiro, not unlike Auden, doses his wordplay with a certain sly irony... . We come away from Shapiros book with an intimate appreciation of the little subversions that poetry can work in ones life. Jonathan Kirsch, Los Angeles Times He is an acute observer of moments, people, art and language. And he packs even seemingly simple stories with many layers of meaning... . He shows us the power and importance of transformative art in life. Publishers Weekly, starred review The literary criticism is sharp, but what entralls the reader more is Shapiros humorous but honest perspective on his younger self, a perspective that is critical without being condescending. Heller McAlpin, Newsday

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