

# THE FAMILY

by

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NOTE: This piece is partly sung and partly spoken. The music is divided into three parts, designated 1, 2, and 3.

Upstage, a woman stands on a riser in a frame—either of light or a set piece—-that suggests to some degree a romantic greeting card. She sings. Theme 1 is tuneful, sweet, and traditional.

Eddie loved Agatha,  
Agatha loved Eddie.  
A marriage, then a baby;  
It happens every day.

Mama is nursing,  
Papa changes diapers,  
Hundreds of photos  
Of three lovely faces.

The woman steps down from the riser; her manner becomes looser and the song more conversational. The music becomes more complex with an ironic flavor to it, Theme 2. The woman might begin to clear the stage as though she were cleaning her home.

But this story doesn't tell us  
What effect this blessed event  
Had on Eddie's garden  
And Agatha's work.  
And what about  
The diminished time for crossword puzzles,  
And the resulting  
Strain on their senses of humor?

And this story doesn't tell us  
Anything  
Of Agatha's fatigue  
And Eddie's little dalliance.  
And the continual frustration  
Of the sweet little baby's  
Complete and total  
Lack of consideration.

The woman is once again framed in romantic lighting, caught suddenly wherever on stage she happens to be. The music returns to Theme 1.

Mama singing lullaby's;  
Papa playing piggy-back;  
The triumph of walking;  
The miracle of speech.

A promotion for him;  
A house for her;  
A child on the grass;  
And parents hand in hand.

The light and the music release her again into Theme 2. She continues to clear the stage.

But what of the struggle  
Of Agatha and Eddie  
To make a new path to each other  
Through the debris  
Of daily demands  
And details and diapers  
And diapers and diapers and diapers and diapers,  
And to find at least a comfortable embrace.

Someone else can tell you  
About the still present danger  
In Eddie's compromise  
Of his need for adventure  
And his need for a home.  
But I can tell you  
How Agatha loved her first baby,  
So much that she even surprised herself.

The lights now illuminate the woman—who is AGATHA—on a completely bare stage. She speaks to us now, eventually using the first person singular. In the music the tune disintegrates further. The instruments seem to respond to the emotions of AGATHA as she tells her story, Theme 3.

For she was a modern young woman  
With very wide tastes,  
From Al Capp  
To Emanuel Kant.  
She had a degree  
(In city-planning)  
And had had several affairs,

(One with an Italian).  
But nothing prepared her  
For the pain of this love.

She yearned to return  
To the world of big people  
And to fulfill the promise  
Of her early career.  
But  
She laughed  
When her child ran to her arms,  
And she cried  
When her child practiced  
Saying goodbye.

Perhaps the woman sits on the floor, or perhaps not. A light glows in her arms or her lap.

Part 3

I feel  
Blessed  
By the beauty of the little warm body,  
And the faith  
In the hand reaching up to my own.  
I feel blessed  
By the touch of butterfly fingers,  
And by the kiss  
Of someone who has nothing to hide.

You can  
Never  
Hold all of an adult in your arms;  
They have too many secrets,  
And they're simply too big.  
But my arms are a home  
For a sleeping baby,  
And I know her history  
As I know my own.

We are all alone,  
Single  
And separate,  
Stretching to touch a neighboring soul.  
And here is this baby  
Like a piece of my own.  
She is myself,  
And my lover,

A friend in the universe  
That I have found somehow  
And now  
Must let go.

The light in her arms goes out. The music resumes the form of Theme 2 pulling AGATHA with it.

Eddie and she  
Were staying together.  
Her child  
Was growing up and away.  
It happens every day.  
It's no special story.  
But her return to the world  
Brought tears just the same.

And after she'd cried  
In the strong arms of Eddie,  
Those of her mother,  
And those of her shrink,  
She turned back to the days  
Of details and diapers  
To relieve her pain  
With a new baby's kiss.

The woman is caught once more in the romantic frame and the music returns to Theme 1.

Eddie loved Agatha.  
Agatha loved Eddie.  
A family of four  
And a story of their own.