Without any warning, the disease sweeps across the country like a traveling circus.
People who were once blue, who slouched from carrying a bag of misery over one shoulder are now clinically cheerful.

Symptoms include kind gestures, a bouncy stride, a smile bigger than a slice of canteloupe.

You pray that you will be infected, hope a happy germ invades your body and multiplies, spreading merriment to all your major organs like door-to-door Christmas carolers until the virus finally reaches your heart: that red house at the end of the block where your deepest wishes reside, where a dog howls behind a gate every time that sorrow pulls his hearse up the driveway.
Poem Analysis and Performance

1. Read the poem “Happiness Epidemic”.

2. Look up any words you may not understand in a dictionary or google their meaning.

3. What is the theme of the poem or the point the poet is trying to get across?

4. How would you present the poem in performance? What vocal qualities would you use? What gestures or body movement would you incorporate in your performance?

5. Get very familiar with the poem and then video yourself giving a reading of the poem. Play back the video and see what you think works and what doesn’t seem right.

6. Keep working on the video until you feel it’s a good interpretation of the poem and then share it with your family and friends.