

PETER MURPHY | *Closing Time*

The 24 hour bars in Atlantic City have three happy hours
a day so I can pursue happiness whenever my shift lets out.
I know the end is near when the cleaners appear to scrape gum
from the gaudy carpets and drizzle disinfectant over urine
dripped from the dicers who don't want to lose their place
at the table. Gullible men who believe they can game the ivories
they toss across the green felt when they can't control their bladders.

I used to think life was a chain of dominoes, and if I tipped
one over, all my problems would come 'a tumbling down.
I also believed being happy was the key to happiness,
and that just made me sadder. Everyone suffers, my friends,
and most of us suffer more than others as we lumber
down the Boardwalk from Pampers to Depends,
mewling and puking and leaking at both ends.

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