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Jeanette Winterson's bold and revelatory novels have established her as a major figure in world literature. She has written some of the most acclaimed books of the last three decades, including her internationally bestselling first novel, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, the story of a young girl adopted by Pentecostal parents that is considered one of the most important books in contemporary fiction. Jeanette's adoptive mother loomed over her life until Jeanette finally moved out at sixteen because she was in love with a woman. As Jeanette left behind the strict confines of her youth, her mother asked, "Why be happy when you could be normal?" This memoir is the chronicle of a life's work to find happiness. It is a book full of stories: about a girl locked out of her home, sitting on the doorstep all night; about a religious zealot disguised as a mother who has two sets of false teeth and a revolver in the dresser drawer; about growing up in a north England industrial town in the 1960s and 1970s; and about the universe as a cosmic dustbin. It is the story of how a painful past, which Winterson thought she had written over and repainted, rose to haunt her later in life, sending her on a journey into madness and out again, in search of her biological mother. It is also a book about literature, one that shows how fiction and poetry can guide us when we are lost. Witty, acute, fierce, and celebratory, *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* is a tough-minded search for belonging - for love, identity, and a home.

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