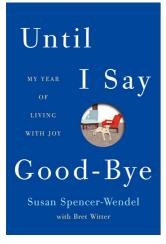# Until I Say Good-Bye

By Susan Spencer-Wendel
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Questions for Discussion

1. The memoir begins with *Happy the Man*, a poem by John Dryden. How does this poem relate to Susan Spencer-Wendel's story? What do you think made her choose it? Do you have a poem or a particular passage from a favorite book that could introduce your own story?

2. How does Susan react when she learns that she has ALS, Lou Gehrig's disease? How does the diagnosis impact her family and the choices she makes? What does being diagnosed with ALS take away from Susan'and what does it give her?

3. Wondering about Lou Gehrig's proclamation that he was the luckiest man on earth, Susan comes to realize that if Gehrig could feel this way, so could she. Why? If you found out you had an irreversible condition, how would you assess your life?

4. Susan made a list of the things she wanted to do and the places she wanted to go in the time she had left'trips to the Yukon with her best friend, Budapest with her husband, New York with her daughter. Are there must-see places or experiences you'd like to try? Share with your group.

5. How did Susan and her husband, John handle her illness with the children? Do you think they truly understand what is happening to their mother? Talk about John. What words would you use to describe him? If you could offer him advice or encouragement or comfort what would it be?

6. Susan includes a list of the little things she loves, including smoking-hot 4-inch heels, the smell and color of freesia, a steaming bath in a clawfoot tub. What are some of the little things that you love?

7. What makes Susan's story uniquely her own? What makes it universal? She wrote Until I Say Goodbye as a gift of love and happiness, of knowing, for her children. Do you think she succeeds? What has life taught you that you'd like to share?

8. What made you choose to read *Until I Say Goodbye*? What did you discover in reading Susan's story? How would you describe her and her amazing journey?