

The Swings

A PLAY BY
EDWARD DE GRAZIA

CHARACTERS: JOHN, MARIE.

SCENE: *A public park. Upstage, a lone towering tree, some shrubs; centerstage, two park swings suspended from the flies.*

JOHN and MARIE, backs to audience, rhythmically push the swings, in unison. Due to their positions and the lighting, it cannot be told whether the swings are occupied. If there are occupants, these utter no sounds. The swings might creak in a pleasant sing-song way. There is fog or haze all about; the sun, if it is the sun, resembles a full moon.

JOHN: Was it worth while, Marie?

MARIE: O yes, John!

JOHN: Your scrimping and saving.

MARIE: Your ranting and raving.

JOHN: Now Marie!

MARIE: Oh, John!

JOHN: It was hard, to be sure, but then it had to be.

MARIE: There was no other way, was there?

JOHN: The freighter from Tripoli.

MARIE: The statue of liberty.

■ *The Swings* was first produced by the Gene Frankel Weekend Repertory Theatre early this year. EDWARD DE GRAZIA has written several other plays which are still awaiting performance. In his professional life an attorney, he took an active part in the recent censorship trial of *Tropic of Cancer* in Maryland.

JOHN: The tons of brick made my hands so thick.

MARIE: Oh John, you could have kept the violin stick.

JOHN: It was a bow, Marie.

MARIE: Even so. You could have kept it.

JOHN: When my fingers didn't hold it correctly anymore, I preferred to let it drop.

MARIE: I wanted you never to stop. The sounds. Like Rachmaninov.

JOHN: Vivaldi, Marie. (*pause*) I'd rather lay bricks good than play bad the violin.

MARIE: Oh John! (*pause*) That's why I . . . went with you isn't it?

JOHN: Is it?

MARIE: That and other things. Wasn't it?

JOHN: Was it?

MARIE: Oh John.

JOHN: Marie. (*pause*) Would you do it again? If you had the chance?

MARIE: Yes! It was worth it! (*pause*) Wasn't it?

JOHN: My scrimping and saving.

MARIE: My ranting and raving.

JOHN: And then . . . there's them.

MARIE: Yes. (*pause*) Them.

JOHN: Isn't there?

MARIE: Yes. (*pause*) Them.

JOHN: There wasn't before.

MARIE: No.

JOHN: But there are now.

MARIE: Yes. Them.

JOHN: They're ours.

MARIE: Yes. Ours.

JOHN: Marie!

MARIE: Oh John! I'm so happy!

JOHN: Marie.

MARIE: Oh John.

JOHN: They are ours, aren't they.

MARIE: Yes! Yes! Oh John!

JOHN: Marie? (*pause*) Could we?

MARIE: Oh John. (*pause*) How could we?

JOHN: It's a free country, Marie.

MARIE: John, Naughty!

JOHN: They wouldn't know we'd gone. (*pause*) They didn't know they'd come.

MARIE: John!

JOHN: Did they?

MARIE: Never mind! (*pause*) Try and think of something else!

JOHN: I can't.

Pause.

MARIE: Try!

JOHN: I can't.

Pause.

MARIE: Where'd we go?

JOHN: Oh (*gestures*) back there!

MARIE (*shocked*): John!

JOHN (*gestures*): Around there!

MARIE (*less shocked*): John!

JOHN: Somewhere! (*gestures toward sky*)

MARIE (*calmly*): John.

JOHN (*gestures wildly*): Anywhere!

MARIE (*amusedly*): John Boveri-Brown! (*pause*) You're fun-ny!

JOHN: My hands get tired.

MARIE: John. Use your foot!

JOHN: My feet get tired.

MARIE: Your hip?

JOHN: My bone gets tired.

MARIE: John!

JOHN: Marie. (*pause*) I think they're dizzy by now.

MARIE: They never say a word. (*pause*) That shows they're hap-py.

JOHN: Yes. (*pause*) No.

MARIE: They *are* so hap-py!

JOHN: Dead ones never say a word.

MARIE: John!!!

JOHN: Dying ones do. (*pause*) Say a word. (*pause*) Or two.
(*pause*) That's what changed my mind.

Pause.

MARIE: I wish you'd pick up the violin.

JOHN: My fingers are too thick.

MARIE: I like them. (*pause*) They look like . . . German sausages.
The kind Annie Rosenheim used to make.

JOHN: Did you ever hear German sausages play Vivaldi?

MARIE: John! (*pause*) They're so . . . plump . . . and white.
(*pause*) They look like . . . Oh! (*she neglects to push*)

JOHN: What?

MARIE (*blushingly*): Oh! (*pause*) The thoughts I think! (*neglects
another push*)

JOHN: What. . . .

MARIE: The White Sox win yesterday, John?

JOHN: What! Don't be silly! Why do you. . . .

MARIE: They still in the basement, John?

JOHN: Who? The German sausages? What. . . .

MARIE: The White Sox.

JOHN: No! Yes! (*pause*) They're one game out. (*pause*) But
what. . . .

MARIE: I'm glad. I don't like it when they're in the basement all
the time. (*pause*) It seems so . . . low.

JOHN: Yes. (*pause*) Marie?

MARIE: Isn't it a lovely evening?

JOHN: It's afternoon, Marie. (*pause*) Marie?

MARIE: I love to stand and . . . just do this.

JOHN: I'd rather sit.

MARIE: And do this?

JOHN: And not do this.

MARIE: John!

JOHN: Marie. (*pause*) There was something you were. . . .

MARIE: Who's your favorite pitcher, John?

JOHN: What? Marie!

MARIE: I mean it John. I'd like to know.

JOHN: Hedy Laarr.

MARIE (*missing a push*): John!

JOHN: In Ecstasy.

MARIE: That's not what I. . . . When did you see. . . .

JOHN: I didn't. But it is.

MARIE: John!

JOHN: I wish I could sit and not do this.

MARIE: You're tired, darling.

Pause.

JOHN: Marie?

MARIE: Mine is Monte Stratton. (*pause*) He wears glasses.

JOHN: He should play the violin.

MARIE: John.

JOHN: Anyhow. . . he's dead.

MARIE: John! (*missing a push*)

JOHN: You could probably find him playing second harp.

MARIE: John!

JOHN: I wish you'd not call me John all the time.

MARIE: John! Oh! (*giggles*) What else can I call you (*pause*)
Monte?

JOHN: No.

MARIE: Paul?

JOHN: Yes.

MARIE: Peter?

JOHN: Why not?

MARIE: Penrod?

JOHN: No. (*pause*) I draw the line there.

MARIE: See! You really answer to John. (*pause*) It fits you.

JOHN: Yes.

MARIE: John, isn't the moon lovely?

JOHN: It's the sun. (*pause*) You always put me on the defensive,
don't you?

MARIE: I do?

JOHN: Yes.

Pause.

MARIE: I like to tease.

JOHN: Yes.

MARIE: I like to push.

JOHN: Yes.

MARIE: Draw back a little and . . . push.

JOHN: It's obvious.

MARIE: I never get tired.

JOHN: No.

MARIE: I could do it in my sleep.

JOHN: You do.

MARIE (*giggles*): With one hand behind my back.

JOHN: You're very good at what you want to be.

MARIE: Left . . . or right.

JOHN: Unnn.

MARIE: I'm very . . . unn . . . versatile.

JOHN: Unnn.

MARIE: Are you listening?

JOHN: Unnn.

MARIE: You're thinking.

JOHN: What was it my fingers reminded you of?

MARIE: Annie Rosenheim's German sausages.

JOHN: But what was it her sausages reminded you of?

MARIE: Oh, they were plump and white as . . . Oh! (*missing a push*)

JOHN: Marie?

MARIE: How could Monte Stratton be dead, John?

JOHN: Marie!

MARIE: He looked so young . . . and strong . . . out there on the mound.

JOHN: Marie!

MARIE: And he'd won over twenty . . . and lost only eight.

JOHN: That was thirteen years ago, Marie!

MARIE: The sunlight ricocheting off his glasses.

JOHN: Thirteen years, Marie!

Pause.

MARIE: Haven't you taken me out to the ballgame in thirteen years, John?

JOHN: Marie!

MARIE: It was a big pleasure for me,

JOHN: Marie!

MARIE: I didn't mind not seeing the opera. (*pause*) Or going horseback in the Park. (*pause*) But watching a ballgame was a big pleasure for me, John.

JOHN: I . . .

MARIE: You shouldn't have quit taking me out.

JOHN: Well . . . I . . .

MARIE: So abruptly. (*pause*) And for so long a time.

JOHN: Well . . . I . . .

MARIE: Without letting me know what you weren't doing.

JOHN: Aw, Marie.

MARIE: You must take me back out . . . tomorrow.

JOHN: Marie.

MARIE: Before they even warm up.

JOHN: Marie, I . . .

MARIE: I want to make up for lost time.

JOHN: Aw, Marie . . .

MARIE: Show them we're still . . . well . . . with them!

JOHN: Aw . . .

MARIE: Even if they are in the English basement.

JOHN: Marie . . .

MARIE: Even if they stay in the English basement.

JOHN: Aw . . .

MARIE: Even if they never move out.

JOHN: Marie. Aw . . . (*the light on JOHN dims*)

MARIE: That's what I like about baseball. (*pause*) It makes me feel . . . loyal. It's something I afford too rarely these days. (*pause*) Believe me.

JOHN: Aw Marie . . . (*the light on JOHN scarcely reveals him*)

MARIE (*softly but with feeling*): There should be more loyalty like I have for them . . . and make everything so much better. (*pause*) It's something we all do without too frequently these days. (*pause*) I only wish I could afford such loyalty for the Cubs. (*pause*) I could try. (*pause*) That'd increase loyalty.

(*pause*) I might even try a bigger step and be loyal to . . . the Red Sox. They're in the American League too. (*pause*) And then I've nothing really against the Tigers. (*pause*) or the A's. Or the Browns. Or the Yankees. Or the Indians. (*pause*) Or the A's. (*pause*) Or . . . the . . . Dodgers. (*pause*) Or the Braves. (*pause*) Except I think they're in the National League. (*pause*) But so are the Cubs. (*pause*) I wouldn't need to be provincial . . . where loyalty's concerned. (*pause*) I could show some loyalty for those Reds too. (*pause*) And those Giants. And those Bees. And those Cardinals. And those . . . Pirates. (*pause*) Pirates sound undeserving. But they're not. (*pause*) They're like everyone else. They only wear beards. Like in Cuba and North Beach. (*pause*) Under the beards they're like everybody else. (*pause*) I could extend my loyalty over to them. (*pause*) It would be a good example. (*pause*) I might even extend my loyalty out to the minors. (*pause*) Beat around in the bushes. (*pause*) Or further. (*pause*) Into the colleges. (*pause*) Duke, Yale, Northwestern. (*pause*) Kentucky. Ohio State, Harvard. (*pause*) No, maybe not Harvard. (*pause*) But, well, why not? (*pause*) They're cute. Swallowing goldfish. And I might as well go whole-hog! Loyalty's not something to be parsimonious about. (*pause*) Once I got going, I could give up all my loyalty. (*pause*) I have plenty to go around. (*pause*) I might even reach down for the Little Leagues, if I weren't arrested, the boys'd be very appreciative. . . .

JOHN (*the light flickers back on him*): Marrrrrie. . . .

MARIE: Say, what about the Mexicans! And the Puerto Ricans too! (*pause*) Why not? It'd be good (*pause*) For me (*pause*) And them. (*pause*) I wouldn't want to overdo it, I suppose, but John? Don't the Japanese play ball too? If they did. . . .

JOHN (*the light restored on him*): MARIE WE'RE AT WAR WITH THE LOUSY JAPS!!!!

MARIE: What? (*pause*) John?

JOHN: Marie! Marie! We're at war with the lousy Japs!

MARIE: Oh. (*pause*) That'd be carrying loyalty too far, John?

JOHN: Marie!

MARIE: D'you think Congress might object?

JOHN: Marie!

MARIE: Move to pass a bill against my loyalty?

JOHN: Holy cow, Marie!

MARIE: And . . . I don't know . . . put me in a jail?

JOHN: Holy cow, Marie!

MARIE: Or in a Jap dislocation camp?

JOHN: Marie!

MARIE: That could happen. (*pause*) Once I was mistaken for a Jap.

JOHN: Marie! Marie!

MARIE: Not for long . . . But while it lasted it wasn't funny. (*pause*) For me.

JOHN: Marie-Anne!

MARIE: To be mistaken for a Jap.

JOHN: Anne-Marie!

MARIE: When you've tried so hard all your life to resemble an American. No.

JOHN: Anne! Anne!

MARIE: Just lie back for a moment in the sun one day . . . half-close your eyes . . .

JOHN: Aw, Anne!

MARIE: . . . and someone'll come and step on you and tell everyone you're a Jap.

JOHN: Aw, Anne!

MARIE: Telling's one thing but if they're going to go and pass a bill against you for lying back in the sun and half-closing your eyes. . . . (*pause*) That's much!

JOHN: Annie! (*the light on him dims again*)

MARIE: Me with my long blond hair. As if everyone couldn't tell exactly what I am. (*pause*) Eyes half-open . . . or . . . half-closed.

JOHN: Annie! Annie! (*the light again scarcely reveals him*)

MARIE: Anyhow, I'm twice as big as a Jap. (*pause*) Tall. (*pause*) Unless I'm seated. Or stooping down. (*pause*) Which I'm usually not. (*pause*) Very rarely, in fact. Not so often as I'd prefer. (*pause*) These days. (*pause*) But if they're going to take and move you into a dislocation camp everytime you stoop down and half-open your eyes . . . well, I leave it to you,

wouldn't that squelch loyalty? Especially if your hair's quite blond . . . well, blondish . . . well, mousy . . . well, brown . . . well, pretty black. (*pause*) It shouldn't make a bit of difference. I've seen many Japanese with blond hair, Straight and curly too. (*pause*) Down to their knees. Which is quite a ways down. (*pause*) Almost in the English basement. (*pause*) But I suppose just because they can't open or shut those eyes of theirs anything but half-way . . . all is forgiven. (*pause*) That's supposed to be justice. (*pause*) It makes you mad. That's what justice is. Injustice. (*pause*) When I'm mad, it's injustice. I have to be glad for justice. (*pause*) We ought put them in a dislocation camp. See how they like it. See if it makes them glad. (*pause*) Bet they'd wish they'd never gone and saluted the good old stars 'n stripes with their German-sausage hands. (*pause*) Serve 'em right. Seeing as how it isn't nearly fair. (*pause*) Not like loyalty. (*pause*) That's justice. (*pause*) Just like loyalty. Which I'm careful to reserve for those select few who deserve it. (*pause*) Like . . . well . . . Americans! Why not? (*pause*) The American League is all. (*pause*) Only the White Sox. (*pause*) My favorites. (*pause*) That pitcher with glasses. (*pause*) Monte. (*pause*) Stratton. He's no Japanese! Monte! (*pause*) Mmmmmmmmmmmmm. (*pause*) In the English basement . . . or anywhere! He can have my loyalty. (*pause*) Just him! (*pause*) Nothing's too good for the licks of him. . . .

JOHN (*the light restored on him*): Oh my God, Marie!

MARIE: John? (*pause*) What?

JOHN: What!

MARIE: What did you want?

JOHN: Marie! (*pause*) Marie!

MARIE: Sometimes I wish, John, you'd call me something else.

JOHN: Marie, I . . .

MARIE: Like Mary-Ann. (*pause*) Or Anne-Marie. (*pause*) Or just plain Annie. That would suit me better, wouldn't it? (*pause*) Annie . . .

JOHN: I . . .

MARIE: It's such a lovely sky.

JOHN: I . . .

MARIE: Never get tired.

JOHN: Please!

MARIE: Listening to you chatter and . . . pushing them . . . with you.

JOHN: Marie!

MARIE: Push, Push.

JOHN: Marie!

MARIE: Pushy, push.

JOHN: Marie!

MARIE: Pushy, pushy. (*pause*) It's like the end of the world. (*pause*) Or the bottom of the rainbow. (*pause*) I hardly know which. (*pause*) I guess the world. Because it's all so . . . real. (*pause*) And a rainbow's not, really. Even at the bottom, is it John? (*pause*) John? (*pause*) John? (*pause*) You're not listening again. A rainbow's not really real . . . is it?

JOHN (*disgustedly*): No.

MARIE: Anyway, not so real as the world. (*pause*) With all its things!

JOHN: God!

MARIE: Him too. Yes. He's a thing.

JOHN: No.

MARIE: A rainbow has color but a world has so many . . . well . . . things!

JOHN: No.

MARIE: You can hardly think of all the things.

JOHN: No.

MARIE: Pots and pans.

JOHN: Uh . . .

MARIE: And Mary little lambs.

JOHN: Arngh.

MARIE: And grass and cheeze and ball-point fountain pens.

JOHN: Marie!

MARIE: Add . . . what John?

JOHN: What! (*pause*) Er . . .

MARIE: A rainbow has several strands of color . . . but no things.

JOHN: Er . . .

MARIE: I . . . like . . . things.

JOHN: Uh . . .

MARIE: They make me reconsider. What I'm doing all the time. I mean pushing like this. (*pause*) It's a thing. Yours too. We both have things. (*pause*) Which we push now and then. (*pause*) If they were rainbows we wouldn't push them at all. Rainbows don't push. That's why I like things. (*pause*) You can go and push them.

JOHN (*in a rush*): Marie! Maybe they've fallen asleep! They can't be dizzy so long! We should take a look! You push mine and I'll take a look! Or you take a look and I'll push yours. (*pause*) Marie? (*pause*) Okay?

Pause.

MARIE (*abstractedly*): Sure.

JOHN: Good! (*pause*) Er, which will it be? You or me?

MARIE (*as before*): Oh . . . you . . .

JOHN: Good! (*pause*) Er . . . you . . . er . . . wait?

MARIE: Huh? Yes. Just hurry up with it.

JOHN: So they won't know, you mean? (*pause*) You mean so they won't know?

MARIE: Yes. I suppose so.

JOHN: But . . .

MARIE: You still want to go back there. (*pause*) Or around there. (*pause*) Or somewhere. (*pause*) Don't you? (*pause*) Anywhere!

JOHN: I . . .

MARIE: You're so restless when you have to go back there or anywhere.

JOHN: Marie, I . . .

MARIE: You grow restless and begin to chatter like a monkey.

JOHN: But Marie, I . . .

MARIE: And then it doesn't make sense. (*pause*) What's coming out. (*pause*) Only if I look between the lines . . . then I know.

JOHN: I . . .

MARIE: It's being a woman.

JOHN: You . . .

MARIE: Is why I know.

JOHN: I . . .

MARIE: I can't approve John, though I understand how you must feel.

JOHN: You. . . .

MARIE: It's being a man.

JOHN: Er. . . .

MARIE: Is how you like to feel.

JOHN: You. . . .

MARIE: The best is get it over with. (*pause*) Approve or no. (*pause*) But none of your lolly-gaggin' at me (*pause*) Hear?

JOHN: Marie, I. . . .

MARIE: And none of your pussy-footin'. With me.

JOHN: Marie, I. . . .

MARIE: Beating in my bush. For mulberries or some other silly excuse.

JOHN: Marie!

MARIE: No cock take the weasel either, my friend!

JOHN: I. . . .

MARIE: Just one, two, three, bang!

JOHN: I. . . .

MARIE: No ands, ifs, or buts.

JOHN: How. . . .

MARIE: Buts drive me bats, and ifs make me stiff, while ands sting my hands. (*pause*) Soooo. . . .

JOHN: Marie, how. . . .

MARIE: You'd better push. . . while I go get ready.

JOHN: Marie!

MARIE: It's easy. Do one with your right and one with your left.

JOHN: But. . . .

MARIE: Or use your foot.

JOHN: And. . . .

MARIE: Or some hip.

JOHN: If. . . .

MARIE: No bones though, John! (*pause*) Promise!

JOHN: Marie!

MARIE: Do you promise?

JOHN: I can't avoid it when. . . .

MARIE: It won't take but a minute. You too. (*pause*) Remember! One, two, three, bing! (*she pinches his cheek and runs upstage behind the shrubs*)

JOHN: Marie! (*the swings begin to wobble as he tries to handle both*) Marie! (*they increasingly wobble and begin to twist in their arcs*)

MARIE (*OFF*): John . . . ?

JOHN (*the swings wobbling worse*) Marie!

MARIE: Yes, dear. (*pause*) John? (*pause*) I'm . . . uh . . . ready.

JOHN (*increasingly anxious*): But Marie!

MARIE (*OFF*): No ifs, ands, or buts, remember! (*pause*) Darling . . . ?

JOHN: But they're wobbling! (*very badly*)

MARIE (*OFF*): It's only because I can't stand ands. (*pause*) Buts drive me nuts. (*pause*) And ifs . . . well . . . I can't tell you! (*pause*) John . . . ? (*pause*) Sweet-pea . . . ?

JOHN: I . . . I . . . can't get them straight! (*but now they begin to straighten*) Wait! Marie, wait!

MARIE (*OFF*) (*with increasing, obvious languor*): Mmmm . . . I'm growing tired dear, waiting. . . .

JOHN (*excitedly*): Marie! I'm coming! Wait! Wait! (*he releases the swings and starts to run upstage; the swings begin to gyrate and he rushes back to steady them*) Oh no!

MARIE (*OFF*) (*as before*): It's a strain, darling. (*pause*) With a temperament like mine. (*pause*) I seem to be becoming more temperamental all the time. (*pause*) I can't think of you when you're out of my sight . . . and when you're in sight . . . it's even worse. (*pause*) I need to lie back and half-close my eyes. . . .

JOHN: Marie! I can't make them equal!

MARIE (*OFF*) (*as before*): Or open them half-way. And look. . . .

JOHN (*irritably*): Or even!

MARIE (*OFF*) (*as before*): At . . . starlight. Or sun bright. . . .

JOHN (*angrily*): Or straight!

MARIE (*OFF*) (*more urgently now*): And then my knees begin to wobble. . . .

JOHN (*indifferently*): They want to bobble.

MARIE (*OFF*) (*as before*): And my heart starts to shake. . . .

JOHN (*speculatively*): I imagine it's because my left's even thicker than my right.

MARIE (*OFF*) (*as before*): I can feel my ribs cracking!

JOHN: It looks a bit like a steak.

MARIE (*OFF*) (*as before*): My tummy begins to quake!

JOHN (*plaintively*): Marie, couldn't you come back here and set them straight?

MARIE (*OFF*) (*as before*): I want it to be over . . . yet I can't remember if it ever began!

JOHN: Then I could go and get ready.

MARIE (*OFF*) (*with much urgency*): And then! (*pause*) And then! (*pause*) John! (*pause*) And then! (*pause*) Oh, (*pause*) John, (*pause*) John! Run! Come! (*pause*) I'm . . . (*a long keen sigh*) . . . done! (*a long pause*) Well!

JOHN (*excitedly*): And then you'd have them both going . . . and then . . . and then . . . Marie! (*pause*) And then . . .

MARIE (*reappearing by the swings*) (*cheerfully*): Hi!

JOHN (*dismayed*): Marie!

MARIE: I waited . . . but then I couldn't wait.

JOHN (*as before*): I was trying to tell you. . . .

MARIE: Funny how those things are.

JOHN: Marie, I. . . .

MARIE: One, two, three, ding!

JOHN: Marie, I. . . .

MARIE: It seems hardly worth your while . . . but then . . . Say! They're wobbling!

JOHN: Aw, I tried. . . .

MARIE (*testily*): I leave you for a moment, John, and now they're wobbling.

JOHN: But I couldn't. . . .

MARIE: They'll grow dizzy . . . and fall off.

JOHN: I tried to tell you. . . .

MARIE: I turn my back thinking they're on the straight and narrow and you let me down the garden path.

JOHN: Marie, I really tried to. . . .

MARIE: It was your idea and yet you didn't keep your side of the bargain.

JOHN: I tried hard Marie, but. . . .

MARIE: You always need to go back there or anywhere . . . and then . . . and then . . .

JOHN (*noticing the swings have steadied in their arcs*): Hey! Marie!

MARIE: You wonder so often why I disapprove so now you know.

JOHN (*with the swings moving perfectly now*): Look, Marie! They're all. . . .

MARIE (*retaking her original position and beginning to push her swing*): I certainly hope you know.

JOHN: Aw, Marie! I was just getting them in lines and. . . .

MARIE: Please don't ask me once again. (*pause*) Not ever. (*pause*) Not now. (*pause*) Maybe later (*pause*) Though it should be considered doubtful. (*pause*) It isn't I don't like it back there . . . but there are more important things up here . . . to occupy yourself with. (*pause*) What if the heavens fall, the earth shakes, the forests bend and the rivers run? That's no reason to preoccupy yourself with all the less important things in life. (*pause*) I mean the world. (*pause*) That was hardly worth waiting for, John.

JOHN: Aw, Marie!

MARIE: There! Keep yours straight!

JOHN: Marie, I still. . . .

MARIE: Well, I haven't scrimped and saved for that. I'll tell you.

JOHN: Marie, you shouldn't. . . .

MARIE: This is what I scrimped and saved and suffered for you to rant and rave. This! (*pause*) I mean them!

JOHN: I know Marie, I didn't. . . .

MARIE: This is what for I gave up Monte Stratton and his White Sox. Them! Not that! You know me better, John. (*pause*) I may go along with a lolly-gag now and then but it's not what's really worth while.

JOHN: Sure, Marie.

MARIE: I can get as much good reading a bad book.

JOHN: Oh sure, Marie. (*pause*) Crap!

MARIE: You shouldn't mistake my temperament. However moved I may seem. (*pause*) I know what to do from reading loads of bad books.

JOHN: It's times like these I wish my fingers weren't so thick.

MARIE: If you'd read a little more, you'd know what to do too.

JOHN: I feel awful . . . like Ravel's string quartet.

MARIE: Reading might also steady your hands.

JOHN: I want to plunge my hands into a maze of haunted sound.

MARIE: And you wouldn't need to wobble everything soon as I've gone back there or anywhere . . . to please you. (*pause*) Give you satisfaction. (*pause*) Of which you can't expect me to approve as it does them no bit of good. (*pause*) You're not a child, are you, after all.

JOHN: Some lush jungle or tangled forest.

MARIE: But they are. (*pause*) And that's what makes them important. (*pause*) Surely you can see, John. (*pause*) Even a child could see. . . .

JOHN: Run them through some dusty desert. Dip them in some endless sea. . . .

MARIE: Oh well! (*pause*) Push, push.

JOHN: What I left behind to reach the promised land.

MARIE: Pushy, push.

JOHN: Lay bricks, grow thick hands.

MARIE: Pushy, push.

JOHN: Marry her, beget them!

MARIE: Push, Push.

JOHN: Drop the goddamn violin! (*light on him fades*)

MARIE (*dreamily*): Pushy push. Push push. Pushy push. Push push. Push push. Pushy push. Pushy push. Push push. (*pause*) Push push. (*pause*) Push push. (*pause*) Push. (*pause*) Push. (*long pause*) Push. . . .



"All I know about her is that I keep seeing in acknowledgments that she helps make books possible."