**MISSING MARISA AND KISSING CHRISTINE**by John Patrick Shanley
Christine

I feel sorry for all men. They suffer like dumb beasts. That’s right, I’m single. Being single is mysterious. It’s silent. You live large parts of your life unobserved. There’s no one there saying, "That’s the third time you’ve gone to bathroom. Why do you laugh like that? Are you going to do anything today?" There’s no one saying, "You look unhappy. What is it? I find for myself that when I live with someone, my life lacks depth. It has scope, it has activity. . I don’t know what I’m trying to say. Single, married, both ways are hard. Sometimes you want to suffer and not be seen. Then it’s better to be single. Sometimes you don’t even suffer unless there’s someone there seeing you. Then it’s much better to be single. It’s better to be married when it’s better to be married. For a woman, it’s great when you’re checking into a hotel and you’re Mrs. Whatever. Very solid feeling. I guess it doesn’t matter whether you’re married or nor. I guess I don’t think it matters very much one way or the other. Did you read about the cop who talked a guy out of committing suicide and then committed suicide himself? It’s like he made a deal with Death. That cop made a speech and turned a man around from taking his own life. Do you believe that somebody could say something to you that would make your whole life better or work or improve in some important way? What could someone say to you? After my accident, when I was lying paralyzed for six months, I had a lot of time to think. I thought about all the cruel things I’d done in my life. I tried to remember every generous thing I’d ever done. Moments of insight, of terrible pain, of pleasure. I tried to see patterns in my lists. I saw some things. I made some connections. But after a while it all began to dissolve away like a lace cookie dissolves away in your mouth. Some sweetness, then all gone like a dream. At first it felt like I was wearing an iron hat that was just a little too small. That was the concussion. My brain was actually swollen, pressing against my skull. After a time, that lessened. The feeling of the hat. But I could feel myself then like a tiny object caught in a great flood. I still have that feeling. Like I’m bound up, a little splinter, pitching along in a black rush. People said I was different after the accident. That the blow to my head had hurt me. Maybe. Six months to think about things changed me. Banging my brain changed me. But I look at people and people change. Don’t you agree?