

## The Macho Zone

**M**any years ago the Marvelous Maria Beatriz and I were traveling from New York to Boston by bus. As we boarded, a desperate woman holding a young boy and with a little girl in tow handed Maria Beatriz the boy (who was suffering from a cold) and blurted out that the bus line would allow one child to ride free with the parent but not two, and since she had two children but only her own ticket... So we got on the bus, sudden parents of a new son.

Four hours to Boston, so time to hear Kati's story of an abusive relationship and cradle a wheezing snot-filled cranky little boy named Macho and play games with a polite little girl. Kati's friend would meet them at South Station and then help them get home to Puerto Rico.

Except that South Station is a big confusing place, and the friend could not be found, so they took the girl and headed off to scout while I stayed with Macho and the luggage.

So, I am holding this wheezing, sleeping boy against my chest, swaying, the two of us a still point in the crush of people, his breath through my shirt to my skin, each protecting the other: I was in the Macho Zone - a place clear, clean, and full of grace. And finite, of course. They found the friend, and off they went to Puerto Rico, and us to home and memory.

What has this to do with theatre?

I've often thought that great art is great because it creates its own Macho Zone, releasing us from conscience into the liberation of expecting nothing in return, otherwise known as grace.

I feel that if I can create one or two Zone moments in my writing, I can count myself successful. But it's not something I can arm-twist into being. Just as with Macho, all I can do is cradle something human and let what washes over me wash over me - and then record it with as much honesty as I can, send it to the world, and hope it makes it home to Puerto Rico.

(October 2008)



The blessing of those moments when we can slough off the irritating weight of our egos.