

vegetables he has picked up in the strip district and which he attempts to sell.)

GABRIEL. *(Singing.)*
 Yes, ma'am, I got plums
 You ask me how I sell them
 Oh ten cents a piece
 Three for a quarter
 Come and buy now
 'Cause I'm here today
 And tomorrow I'll be gone

(GABRIEL enters.) Hey, Rose!

ROSE. How you doing, Gabe?

GABRIEL. There's Troy ... Hey, Troy!

TROY. Hey, Gabe. *(Exit into kitchen.)*

ROSE. *(To GABRIEL.)* What you got there?

GABRIEL. You know what I got, Rose. I got fruits and vegetables.

ROSE. *(Looking in basket.)* Where's all these plums you talking about?

GABRIEL. I ain't got no plums today, Rose. I was just singing that. Have some tomorrow. Put me in a big order for plums. Have enough plums tomorrow for St. Peter and everybody.

(TROY reenters from kitchen, crosses to steps.)

GABRIEL. *(To ROSE.)* Troy's mad at me.

TROY. I ain't mad at you. What I got to be mad at you about? You ain't done nothing to me.

GABRIEL. I just moved over to Miss Pearl's to keep out from in your way. I ain't mean no harm by it.

TROY. Who said anything about that? I ain't said anything about that.

GABRIEL. You ain't mad at me, is you?

TROY. Naw ... I ain't mad at you, Gabe. If I was mad at you I'd tell you about it.

GABRIEL. Got me two rooms. In the basement. Got my own door too. Wanna see my key? *(HE holds up a key.)* That's my own key! Ain't nobody else got a key like that. That's my key! My two rooms!

TROY. Well, that's good, Gabe. You got your own key ... that's good.

ROSE. You hungry, Gabe? I was just fixing to cook Troy his breakfast.

GABRIEL. I'll take some biscuits. You got some biscuits? Did you know when I was in heaven ... every morning me and St. Peter would sit down by the gate and eat some big fat biscuits? Oh, yeah! We had us a good time. We'd sit there and eat us them biscuits and then St. Peter would go off to sleep and tell me to wake him up when it's time to open the gates for the judgment.

ROSE. Well, come on ... I'll make up a batch of biscuits. *(ROSE exits into the house.)*

GABRIEL. Troy ... St. Peter got your name in the book. I seen it. It say ... Troy Maxson. I say ... I know him! He got the same name like what I got. That's my brother!

TROY. How many times you gonna tell me that, Gabe?

GABRIEL. Ain't got my name in the book. Don't have to have my name. I done died and went to heaven. He got your name though. One morning St. Peter was looking at his book ... marking it up for the judgment ... and he let me see your name. Got it in there under M. Got Rose's name ... I ain't see it like I see yours ... but I know it's in there. He got a great big book. Got everybody's name what

Start

was ever been born. That's what he told me. But I seen your name. Seen it with my own eyes.

TROY. Go on in the house there. Rose going to fix you something to eat.

GABRIEL. Oh, I ain't hungry. I done had breakfast with Aunt Jemimah. She come by and cooked me up a whole mess of flapjacks. Remember how we used to eat them flapjacks?

TROY. Go on in the house and get you something to eat now.

GABRIEL. I got to go sell my plums. I done sold some tomatoes. Got me two quarters. Wanna see? (*HE shows TROY his quarters.*) I'm gonna save them and buy me a new horn so St. Peter can hear me when it's time to open the gates. (*GABRIEL stops suddenly. Listen.*) Hear that? That's the hellhounds. I got to chase them out of here. Go on get out of here! Get out! (*GABRIEL exits singing.*)

Better get ready for the judgment
Better get ready for the judgment
My Lord is coming down

— END

(*ROSE enters from the house.*)

TROY. He gone off somewhere.

GABRIEL. (*Offstage.*)

Better get ready for the judgment
Better get ready for the judgment morning
Better get ready for the judgment
My God is coming down

ROSE. He ain't eating right. Miss Pearl say she can't get him to eat nothing.

TROY. What you want me to do about it, Rose? I done did everything I can for the man. I can't make him get well. Man got half his head blown away ... what you expect?

ROSE. Seem like something ought to be done to help him.

TROY. Man don't bother nobody. He just mixed up from that metal plate he got in his head. Ain't no sense for him to go back into the hospital.

ROSE. Least he be eating right. They can help him take care of himself.

TROY. Don't nobody wanna be lock up, Rose. What you wanna lock him up for? Man go over there and fight the war ... messin around with them Japs, get half his head blown off ... and they give him a lousy three thousand dollars. And I had to swoop down on that.

ROSE. Is you fixing to go into that again?

TROY. That's the only way I got a roof over my head ... cause of that metal plate.

ROSE. Ain't no sense you blaming yourself for nothing. Gabe wasn't in no condition to manage that money. You done what was right by him. Can't nobody say you ain't done what was right by him. Look how long you took care of him ... till he wanted to have his own place and moved over there with Miss Pearl.

TROY. That ain't what I'm saying, woman! I'm just stating the facts. If my brother didn't have that metal plate in his head ... I wouldn't have a pot to piss in or a window to throw it out of. And I'm fifty-three years old. Now see if you can understand that! (*TROY gets up from the porch and starts to exit the yard.*)

ROSE. Where you going off to? You been running out of here every Saturday for weeks. I thought you was gonna work on this fence?

TROY. I'm gonna walk down to Taylors'. Listen to the ball game. I'll be back in a bit. I'll work on it when I get back. (*HE exits the yard. The LIGHTS go to black.*)