

EXTRACT

# INVERTEBRATE TRILOGY

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INVERTEBRATE TRILOGY

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# THE INVERTEBRATE TRILOGY

by

Susan Rogers

BEETLE GRADUATION

CICADA SONATA

GRASSHOPPER BURNING

# B E E T L E      G R A D U A T I O N

THIS PIECE MOVES BETWEEN PAST AND PRESENT.

CHARACTERS:

MISS BEETLE.	SEVEN YEARS OLD	FORTY YEARS OLD.
MOTHER.	THIRTY TWO YEARS OLD	SIXTY FIVE YEARS OLD

SCENE 1

THE LINK SPEECH. THIS SPEECH NEEDS A SCORE. IT IS TO BE SPOKEN NOT SUNG AND THE WORDS AND MUSIC MUST BE EQUAL.

MOTHER                    I believe. I believe in. I believe in Nothing and Something. The dark rings on the tail of my cat. Progeny an ashes. I have been intrigued, danced in every room and embraced the bright days. Now this, a journey into Mist. Before in another time I knew my own reality. Now it sits in a polished frame. I am a photograph.

MISS BEETLE            Take a large scarab beetle,  
cut off its head and wings,  
put them in oil and apply it.

It is written in a book.

If one throws a dung beetle onto a gazelle,  
the latter will surely die.  
If the beetle is placed in the centre of a rose,  
It remains lying there so quietly  
that it seems to be dead.

These are my secrets,  
The little ecstasies.  
You can touch them if you wish.

Those are my secrets,  
They are not yet for you.  
The darkness would make you afraid.

These are my places,  
Inside is a discovered violence.  
It sits patiently inside a rose.

SCENE 2

MOTHER 32 YEARS OLD

MISS BEETLE 7 YEARS OLD. THEY ARE IN THE SAME SPACE.

MOTHER                   Beeeeetlllle, Where are youuuuuuu?

MISS BEETLE             In the gound, in the ground, in the ground.  
Put the Beetle in the ground, then you turn it round and round.  
Put the Beetle in the ground, then you turn it round and round  
Put the Beetle in the ground, then.... No it's not Beetle my name  
is Miranda. Yes it is Miranda so there... Not Beetle.

MOTHER                   Beetle, my little Beetle, Beetie. Are you hiding from mummy? Come on,  
out, when I call you. Damn, where is she?

MISS BEETLE             Crush a Beetle mush a Beetle make a Beetle dead. Smack, smack crack  
a Beetle on the head. I'm not a Beetle I'm Miranda, I'm Miranda. I'm....

MOTHER                   Stop it.

MISS BEETLE             Put a Beetle in the gr....

MOTHER                   Shut up for Christ's sake.

MISS BEETLE             Shut up for Christ's sake. Amen.

MOTHER                   Bloody kid.

MISS BEETLE            Put a Beetle in the ground, in the ground and I'll be dead, dead dead a  
dead Beetle.

MOTHER                Beetic stop it.

MISS BEETLE           I'll be dead, I'll be dead, dead, a dead Beetle.

MOTHER                I want a lovely little live Beetle.

MISS BEETLE           I'm Miranda.

MOTHER                You are my precious Beetle.

MISS BEETLE           NO. No, no, no.

MOTHER                I need a holiday.

### SCENE 3

MISS BEETLE. AGED 40 YEARS. SHE IS ALONE.

MISS BEETLE           Did I tell you when she died I was in the kitchen? When she died I was  
stringing snow peas. Haven't eaten them since. I'd been into the room,  
the small bedroom, ten minutes before. Her face was, she was in pain.  
It upset me. I went back to the kitchen and worried over the vegetables.  
The night nurse came and told me. That she had died. I washed my  
hands, her hands. Dried them on the tea towel. They came later that  
night. Two men in leather aprons with a stretcher. I put my head in the  
hollow of the pillow where her head had lain heavy with morphine. I am  
waiting for the hysteria. I am watching myself. I need a holiday.

SCENE 4

MOTHER 65 YEARS OLD

MISS BEETLE 40 YEARS OLD. EACH IN A SEPARATE PLACE.

MOTHER I am full of little fears.

MISS BEETLE I need a holiday.

MOTHER What a sunset. The sky is on fire and filled with the screams of insects.

MISS BEETLE The sky is bug filled and I'm afraid in the sunset. Dark-rising. Moon-bleached. Day -ending.

MOTHER My mother loved me. My mother didn't like me. She said I was simple. My mother loved me.

MISS BEETLE My mother drank. She said I was plain. A plain little Beetle.

MOTHER My mother was a saint.

MISS BEETLE My Mother had a lover. My lover In-Law.

MOTHER My mother had many lovers. I had lots of Uncles

MISS BEETLE My mother hated her body. Loved my father.

MOTHER My Mother Flirted. She was promiscuous and loving.

MISS BEETLE My Mother was not lovable.

MOTHER My Mother had secrets.

MISS BEETLE My mother told me everything, burdened me, protected me.

MOTHER                    My mother was a woman who died not understanding how she arrived at that point. I have my mother's hands.

MISS BEETLE                I am my mother. Look at my hands.

MOTHER                    Look at my hands. Her hands.

MISS BEETLE                When I look at my hands I am afraid.

MOTHER                    I am full of little fears.

MISS BEETLE                If I could cry I would feel normal.

MOTHER                    It is a relief to cry.

SCENE 5

MISS BEETLE 40 YEARS OLD SHE IS ALONE.

MISS BEETLE                Her cat rubbed up against my leg. I bent down to pick the thing up. It leapt high landing on the sideboard flicking a tail marked in ever darkening stripes to a black tip. Hissing and furious it swayed before me. I knocked it off. It screamed and darted like a possessed familiar down the hallway.

SCENE 6

MOTHER 65 YEARS OLD.

MISS BEETLE 40 YEARS    INTHE SAME SPACE.

MOTHER                    Don't torment the cat.

MISS BEETLE                I didn't touch the bloody thing. Jesus Christ.

MOTHER                    You hate cats.

MISS BEETLE            Yes

MOTHER                You always hated cats.

MISS BEETLE            Yes

MOTHER                It's unnatural.

MISS BEETLE            So?

MOTHER                He said there is nothing more that can be done.

MISS BEETLE            What?

MOTHER                That young Doctor.

MISS BEETLE            Why didn't you ring?

MOTHER                I didn't think.

BEETLE                 I would have come and got you.

MOTHER                I didn't think.

MISS BEETLE            I would have gone with you.

MOTHER                Yes.

MISS BEETLE            What did you do?

MOTHER                I went to the pictures and cried.

MISS BEETLE            I would have gone with you.

MOTHER                Yes.

MISS BEETLE            I didn't expect this.

MOTHER                What?

MISS BEETLE            This, your strength.

MOTHER                Oh!

MISS BEETLE            It sort of shocks me.

MOTHER                I need a holiday.

MISS BEETLE            I needed to go with you.

MOTHER                Somewhere warm.

MISS BEETLE            To be useful, needed. Didn't you want me there?

MOTHER                Italy.

MISS BEETLE            No.

MOTHER                Yes. Sunshine.

MISS BEETLE            I'll go with you.

MOTHER                No.

MISS BEETLE            Why?

MOTHER                I look in the mirror. I see me alive.

MISS BEETLE            We must accept it.

MOTHER                No.

SCENE 7

MISS BEETLE 40 YEARS. SHE IS ALONE

MISS BEETLE

Where did my plainness come from?

I'm watching you from this window that contains the garden. You pace the flower beds touching the huge trees, spread your hands over the bark and knots of the cut branches. Listening. What do you hear? I'd like to run down the stairs, join you on the fresh cut lawn that pleases and stains your beautiful feet. Where did my plainness come from? It rained a little during the night and now the smell from the dampening and cutting rises to this window, slipping in through the small opening. I see you taking your leave of this place. Every day I force myself into the streets. Everything looks different and the colours are so sharp and unnatural. Each day I walk so my legs won't forget the way of it, so my heart won't stop. Please don't suffer. Please be careful and follow the instructions.

SCENE 8

MOTHER 65 YEARS OLD

MISS BEETLE 40 YEARS OLD. THEY ARE IN THE SAME SPACE.

MOTHER

Rome was cold. Cold without the bite of winter snow that makes such weather bearable. Cold with the dreariness of light lost skies and drizzle. The buildings loomed above the narrow ways black and rotting from exhaust fumes. On the Corso the traffic noise bounced from side to side. The noise pitted my skin. I became part of the decay. I had seen the coat in a window one night after dinner. I wanted it. Craved it. I searched the maze of narrow streets totally focused on possession. My own silliness and the luscious weightless luxury of the cashmere made me happy. Sensuously happy. I started sleeping in it. One afternoon I folded myself up in the coat on the bed and sucked my thumb as I had as a child. Rolled up and sucking, rocking myself into a remembered tranquillity.

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