

## 'Crimes of the Heart' by Beth Henley

**Bette:** And we were just standing around on the back porch playing with Dog. Well, suddenly Zackery comes from around the side of the house, And he startled me 'cause he's supposed to be away at the office, and there he is coming from 'round the side of the house. Anyway he says to Willie Jay "Hey, boy, what are you doing back here?" And I said, "He's not doing anything. You just run right on Home." Well, before he can move, Zackery comes up and knocks him once right across the face and then shoves him down the porch steps, causing him to skin up his elbow real bad on that hard concrete. Then he says, "Don't you ever come around here again, or I'll have them cut out your gizzard!" Well, Willie Jay starts crying, these tears come streaming down his face then he gets up real quick and runs away with Dog following off after him. After that, I don't remember much too clearly; let's see... I went on into the living room, and I went right up to the davenport and opened the drawer where we keep the burglar gun,,, I took it out, Then I—I brought it up to my ear, That's right. I put it right inside my ear, Why, I was gonna shoot off my own head! That's what I was gonna do. Then I heard the back door slamming and suddenly, for some reason, I thought about mama...how she'd hung herself, And here I was about ready to shoot myself, Then I realized—that's right I realized how I didn't want to kill myself! And she—she probably didn't want to kill herself, She wanted to kill him and I wanted to kill him, too. I wanted to kill Zackery, not myself 'Cause I\_\_ I wanted to live! So I waited for him to come on into the living room. Then I held out the gun, and I pulled the trigger, aiming for his heart, but getting him in the stomach... It's funny that I really did that.