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## The Long Sweetening

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# THE LONG SWEETENING

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Caroline Peay Harrison

The flames burn like low star-fire  
in the creeping chill of late  
night  
or early morning, depends on who  
you ask.  
Stirring the cane becomes a dance  
to the fiddle being played  
nonstop for hours.  
The least ones lie dreaming here  
and there on quilts damp with  
dew,  
but if we dance all night we have  
sweetening for the year.  
Who cares  
that we can go to town and trade for  
all the sugar we will ever need,  
but none so rich and deep as  
the stir-off,  
the making of the pleasure crop  
into molasses  
by the light of another year's  
harvest moon.