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Hammered Dulcimer

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THE MAN BY THE RIVER

The man by the river let no one in.
The man by the river grew pale and thin.
He lived in a house on the edge of the woods
where the marsh wind blows and the dark creeps in.

On days of sun he'd stay inside
and pace, and question himself out loud
why his true love left, why his mother died,
why a vulture circled the wide blue sky.

On days the air turned damp and dim
he'd walk from his house and the wind-tossed pines
down his father's hill to the changing strand
where waves of green met grains of sand.

The wind plucked on an instrument
that no one human hand could fit.
He watched the restless sea and land
find lines of truth to move beyond.

He watched the waves sweep twigs and bones
to shore, and sweep them back again
more fragile from the dry, hot sun.
The wind rolled dreams along the sand.

The light passed over his youth one day.
And flocks of dark birds lighted down
each year for the seeds on his father's land
and the berries that clung to his father's tree.