



PROJECT MUSE®

Hammered Dulcimer

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THE GRASSHOPPER

It is a cunning thing:
woven, it would appear, of grass blades
and large as a hand, its hymn
some vast, internal drum.
Antennae waving at the newest sound
it bristles when I approach
as if the wall inside my house
were all in the world
to lean on. I imagine
a soul is like this: driven
to feel narrowed, more acute
in a chosen exterior,
some grumbling carapace.
It waits, pristine as glass,
a wordless, hardened angel
with marble, all-seeing eyes.
How do I catch the spirit
then set it free intact?
Now my jar snags
a recalcitrant leg, the insect foams,
flails curious dimensions,
and, when "freed," limps off
grotesque and frivolous
against the grass. Maybe
some liberation lies
in being out of place, out of a home,
movement itself should be a home
where error has a space . . .
but I'll fixate on the gleam.
Am I its host?

Or does it, green and surly,
unhinge the luminescent world,
this papery self that leaps and leaps
until a broken leg or wing
(mauled by the usual downfall)
looses it from the body
and it can really spring.