



PROJECT MUSE®

Hammered Dulcimer

Lisa Williams

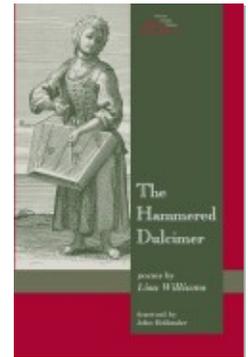
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THE END OF SPRING

There is betrayal in such sudden change.
We do not own it, this froth
of heat drowning our efforts,
making us frown at the day's complete,
exhausting utterance. Minute
after rayed minute rains down,
on the sidewalks, in the corners of rooms,
in our throats, and we are too tired
to take the change apart. We give it a name.

Summer, we say. *The end of spring*.
Flowers like lost grips,
dried and slouched with disappointment.

Birth crawled into a crevice.
Wasps flying through window cracks, withered, enraged.
Last week, something raised its head
and wild winds rolled
from the Blue Ridge to the pine-covered hill
behind my house

downing three pines over it. The broken trees
we chopped and hauled away,
polishing off the initial mess
with carefulness. Every season
shreds the deeply appreciated
flares of the last.

Destruction. Creation.
There is no good way to distinguish
between the two. And our art isn't much different.

We like to pretend
it stands clear, but it's always in flux.
It moves. It falls.

It is. The weather of the world,
the weather of the mind. It finds us.
The way two goldfinches,
the male with his black angled hood,
the female brownish and earthly,
return to my garden every afternoon.
The way their species,
elusive, yet too well-known,
threaten to flicker my every poem
with the usual cliché,
though I have yet to catch their sublimity.
I promise myself
I won't let them in, but what can I do?
I can't fight the refrain,
what returns to the setting,
returns to the poem,
and does not grow tired of the vast, enduring
background. I'd guess
that is poetry:
not flight, but things coming back
where they're wanted, comfortable
—haunts
of detail—while the rest, the god or goddess,
the uniform reign,
lingers behind, never known
in its entirety,
heavy and gray, burnished and green,
a tapestry so prevalent
we hardly see it,
the monstrous “yes” that does not change
slipping over the hills into our hands,
our feet, our eyes flooded with what
could be peace
in the star-flecked night.