



PROJECT MUSE®

Hammered Dulcimer

Lisa Williams

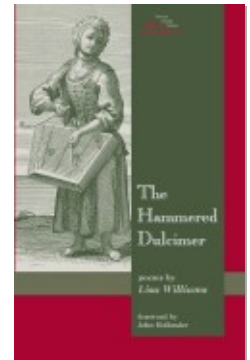
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THE CHANT

Why can't I sing myself awake
when darkness falls, when darkness falls,
or bring myself to brightly make
a difference to my dragging soul
since differences, as we've been told,
are those that we ourselves create?

The crickets know a constant beat
in pointed grass and shadowed hill
as silence threatens to repeat,
when darkness falls and fear unfolds.
There they are, hunched and chanting still,
an independent opposite

to all the rings of quiet black.
But I can't simply rise and break
this ring of silence in my heart
or lift a hand to interrupt
the evening that is closing down.
I stay behind, I hesitate,

as leaden as a lying bell.
The sky is like an empty shell
and inside that, small instruments,
beyond all expectation, leap,
as darkness falls, as darkness falls.
Their sound is sharp. They reconnect
the quiet land to distant stars
and lift, in tiny increments,
some figure out of deepest thought.

When both our bodies wandered here
and never thought to hesitate
but did and meant, since they were near

those differences two souls can make,
then evening held, and fear was old,
and morning had a human shape.