

Delores Gauntlett

LAMPLIGHT

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Lampshades, their temples lapped in *Home-Sweet-Home*,
one for each room, all washed and dried,
wicks trimmed: *Jane and Louisa will soon come home*,
soon come home; I close my eyes,
passing in memory the high grass weltering in dew,
the ruminating cows in the bright field,
the red hibiscus that softened the cut-stone wall,
that time of day when the crickets break out sawing in the wind
pitched between petal and thorn—*My dear*,
will you 'low me to waltz with you?—

I begin here, with my methodical aunt
whose inward eye browsed through me
as through the uncut pages of a book

for something particular,
as if my soul were something to be flipped over
and deciphered like a map spread flat—
my aunt, for whom the Psalm sent up its balm
like a fire's whirling spark
over the cancer already altering her veins,
for whom the tambourine shuddered its muse...

She was the first to go and to have said aloud
what this poem does not want to name,
though what she said, at that window under the hill,
would become the fuel that powered my lamp of dreams.
Those firewood days of Beechamville come back
fresh as the moon to an evening stream.

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