

*fall evening*  
EVERY EVENING ONE MAY ATTEND THE ORCHESTRA  
OF THE TREE CRICKETS *Play*

The all-pervading music of a September night ~~about~~  
~~Portland~~ is <sup>nature's</sup> ~~that~~ orchestra of ~~nature~~ <sup>which</sup> ~~that~~ begins <sup>with the setting of the sun</sup> ~~with twilight~~ and  
plays through the hours of approaching dawn. This is a chorus of  
tree crickets in every garden, orchard or wooded lot <sup>around Portland</sup>

What ~~a common course it is to test the~~ <sup>is generally tested</sup> child's know-  
ledge <sup>is</sup> in a list of printed or oral questions? How <sup>well known</sup> ~~rare~~ and yet how  
~~easy~~ to test his love of nature by walking in the garden as night ap-  
proaches during the late summer and fall and try to distinguish the  
players in the omnipresent chorus of insects.

Who knows the master fiddlers in the diffused light  
of the September moon? No, they are not the tree frogs or the <sup>well known</sup> lit-  
tle black crickets that <sup>cheep like a chick and</sup> love a crevice among the clods. They are two  
species of ~~snowy~~ tree crickets, ghost-like, dressed in pale green, al-  
most white in color and less than an inch in length.

Yes, you must consciously stop and harken. The delight-  
ful, rhythmic music is so interwoven with the night. It might escape  
you like the all prevailing dim effect of the moon. Then harkening,  
you can single out two musicians in the chorus, the "whistler" with a  
clear, soft, unbroken note; the other we might call the "fiddler" for  
his notes pulsate, with a slight pause between, as regular as the beat  
of a human heart. You will notice that the key is high-pitched in both  
but varies a little in different individuals. Hundreds of players join  
the concert <sup>yet</sup> and all are in harmony.

Approach the bush or a branch of the tree and try to  
locate one of these elfin musicians. He is right here. Then you turn  
the other ear. No, he's over there. He's like a ventriloquist. Press  
on your flashlight and if your eyes are keen, you'll see the little

wings elevated or even bent forward. The inside edges rub together very much like a bow crosses the strings of a fiddle. You will be amazed that such a loud clear sound can come from such a tiny instrument. *The membrane of the transparent wings are as tough as a drum.*

Stranger than fiction, you will discover that the female of the species is silent. The male is a little artist that does not wander about seeking his lady love. He stands steadily at his own gate <sup>fiddling</sup> playing in the faith that his sweetheart will like his song and come of her own free will.

The little tree crickets each have six legs with slender bodies. The hind legs are shaped like those of a grasshopper. They are good jumpers. The male and female are easily identified because the female has slender, round body and what looks like a thin, little tail which is called an ovipositor. With this she punctures a twig or cane and deposits her tiny eggs. The male has the flat, gauze-like wings resting on the top of his back. Both of them have long, slender antennae that move continuously like living threads.

At night when you slip into bed and draw up the covers, if you are a lover of nature, you are conscious of the throbbing of the cricket heart of September. It is a delightful, rhythmic, sleep-inspiring music, the most comforting of all the sounds of nature.