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## Hammered Dulcimer

Lisa Williams

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Project MUSE., <https://muse.jhu.edu/>.



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<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/9345>

## THE TENDERNESS

*for Neil*

A strong doe running with her young  
is an unfathomable thing. In this late light  
the trees form a craggy embrace

for her searching, and nothing's at rest.  
Not the hill, not the fawn she defends,  
not the pasture of clover and grass

but pursuance of movement itself  
is her meaning—the absence of stone.  
From embankment to thicket to lawn

that running must be her existence.  
Sometimes she is splintered. Sometimes  
her own child and its tenderness catches

on the adamant surface of flight—  
We are lucky to come upon this  
as we barrel headlong through the world

in our hard, narrow armor of self,  
to come upon some kind of tenderness  
turned, for a moment, to us.

Even if we stand defenseless  
and certain to lose what we want,  
we are lucky to notice her stop

in the grey morning mist, the sharp upward  
incline to the heart of our forest,  
this fleeting but palpable guest.