



PROJECT MUSE®

Hammered Dulcimer

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Published by Utah State University Press

Williams, Lisa.

Hammered Dulcimer.

Logan: Utah State University Press, 1998.

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



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TO NIGHT

I don't want to be afraid of you
and yet I am.
You are the tapestry
of my mortality.
You are the arbor of sound
when sound is through with me,
threats and grasses plaited through your hem.
And in the deeper places,
the center I can't thumb,
there are colors, chants,
descriptionless
wild faces.

If you are a woman
you have burdens.
You were never light.
Socrates felt that night
was when we start to see,
when the philosophers
emptied their hands
of common pleasure:
no figs on plates,
or wine,
or wordless measure,
just perfect quiet
as the soul sinks
and wisdom rises
from the lower kingdom
where she holds court
with her noble spirits . . .
She would not abandon
the light of the mind
that had shown
such graces—
and Socrates was about to die
when he explained this.