



PROJECT MUSE®

Hammered Dulcimer

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LANDSCAPE

In the neighborhood of sorrow
we move because we grieve.
The houses are low and squat,
the air heavy, the boughs gnarled
with bending toward light.
If you walk along that winding street
shadowed by fate
you might hear music
drifting out of a window, someone playing
not quite well, not quite badly,
a tune that means nothing to you.
In the neighborhood of sorrow
things go about their business:
the birds, bees, etcetera,
almost indivisible
from the monotone sky
except for a small cry
here and there, the casual humming
of eternity. In the underbrush
you'll still find the twining, lush
insistence of a life—
these vines, for example,
coiled around what's young
and delicate: birch, ash, Virginia pine—
but that's just denial
doing what it can.
At one house, a cat
lays a truth from the forest
on the doorstep—a dead infant snake,
raw stomach, smooth new back

of yellow gems. The practiced griever
opens the door
to find it, then throws it in the garden,
its 's' shape of despair
landing lightly on the weeds
and sprung impatiens. Knowledge
spreads into the background
and day begins.
Across great distance, the whine
of a saw, someone taking care
of chaos. Elsewhere,
someone isn't.