



PROJECT MUSE®

Hammered Dulcimer

Lisa Williams

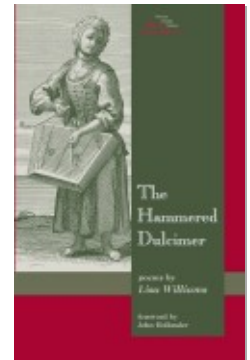
Published by Utah State University Press

Williams, Lisa.

Hammered Dulcimer.

Logan: Utah State University Press, 1998.

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



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AMBIVALENCE

It is hard to believe
as alive as we are
that on certain afternoons
—say this one, with its gray streams of light
into corners of rooms
and its mild open air
and its orthodox cries
from lowest heaven—the soul can wander
to and fro
without knowing what to do,
can be heavy with longing
without longing for,
and the feet can carry the body
across floor after floor
without going anywhere
beyond their own plain action.
Then there is no satisfaction.
Then yearning, in fact,
may be all we can find.
At such times, the heart wants—
To draw back? To lie still?
We can't tell.
The flesh holds out its hands,
two lumps of desire,
silver in the fallen light,
tarnished with rifts, portents, years . . .
They can bear no answer.