Previous books by JL Williams include *Condition of Fire* (Shearsman, 2011), *Locust and Marlin* (Shearsman, 2014), *House of the Tragic Poet* (If A Leaf Falls Press, 2016), *After Economy* (Shearsman, 2017), *Origin* (Shearsman, 2022). Published widely in journals, her poetry has been translated into numerous languages. She has read at international literature festivals and venues in the UK, Sweden, Germany, Denmark, Turkey, Cyprus, Canada, Hungary, Romania, Montenegro and the USA.

Williams has undertaken collaborations with artists, perfumers, filmmakers, composers, choreographers and others, and is currently exploring how yoga, meditation and breathwork can support creativity. She was a librettist for the award-winning covid-response *Episodes* project by The Opera Story and the English Touring Opera children's opera, *The Wish Gatherer*. Williams is Creative Projects Manager at the Edinburgh Futures Institute and curates Utopia Lab. She is hopeful about the simple and mysterious power of poetry that allows us to know surselves, each other and the world more deeply. jlwilliams poetry, o. uk

Cover design by Anupa Gardner www.anupagardner.com

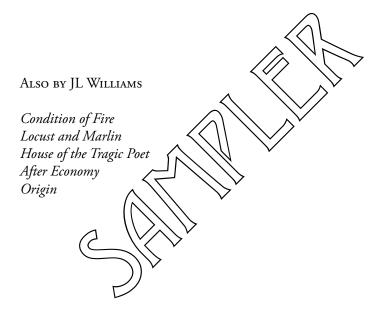
"This tour through Piranesian dreamworlds is also a tour through collective desire. With a subtle clarify, lennifer Williams shows how our fears and longings manifest in architectural fantssies: the dream home, the model workplace, the parace of wonders. The buildings of these tense lyrics are at once familiar and disturbing, the way an influencer's aspirational feed betrays what's bloodhirsty wout want. Where one poem comforts or pleases another unsettles, and another confuses, because in this oneiric logic feelings flow with less reason and more truth. By pursuing her own obsessions with skilful and restrained poetic commitment, Williams has made a very personal map that anyone can, and should, follow in order to find themselves lost." —Harry Josephine Giles

"Like Italo Calvino's invisible cities, these oneiric architectures rise up revealing a glimmering imagination. The visually compelling constructions in these poems possess a beauty that can be subtly unsettling in its materials, proportions, or the relationships or emotions hidden within. At a time when our eyes are already jaded from the remixed possibilities of AI-generated imagery, this intriguing collection is balm for the inner eye, offering an expansive poetics of space as well as

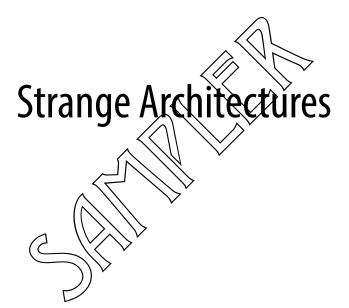
an invitation to take in a sharper and more intricate view of the details around us, and savour the questions about our ways of inhabiting."

—Juana Adcock

"Jennifer constructs cities and skylines of words, inviting us to live within their shelter and syllables. Her poem-architectures are exact ambiguities, precisely lit from every angle of language and geometry, to pinpoint each space, each proportion." —Iain Matheson



JL Williams



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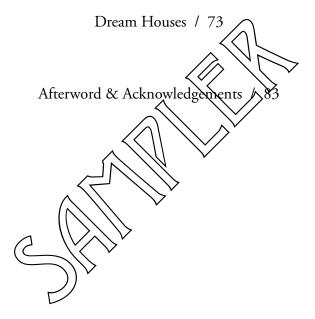
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Contents

Strange Architectures / 9





For James and Imogen, with whom I've built a home.





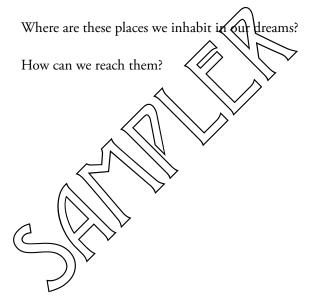
Strange Architectures





I often dream of buildings.

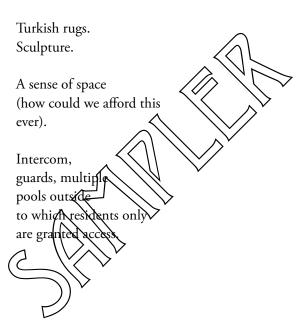
Sometimes they are versions of places I have been. More often they are new to me, more real than any I know.





Capacious central foyer, multi-level entrances into tremendous apartments.

Cathedral ceilings, crystal wall views to the sea.



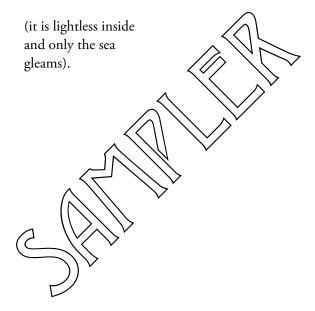
An enormous room with vaulted ceilings made of wood painted white.

A huge bed made of wood painted white

with a mattress
and white crumpled sheets
in which I sleep
but it is not my bed.
It is a shared bed
and a shared room
and it does not feel blean

A house by the sea built low down in the sand

so only a clerestory running below the roof's edge is visible to the sea's waves



Three towers, as in the Tiergarten in Berlin, with pastel glass or plastic glazing the stairwells, creating one long yellow, one pink, one blue channel between brick reminiscent of panes in traffic lights or lighting gels.

Walking through the garden quickly because I am late for the opening party, a biker slaps my ass as he rides past and I look to the building as if for help.

5 (The German Professor's House)

There is a gargantuan garage along the entire side of the house.

The house itself is many-roomed, extensive.

The German professor and his German wife both smoke rolling tobacco; his in a brown pouch, hers in a pink.

Maids are cleaning various small rooms.

I sit in a patio, empty but for a beech wood table on which rests an amber ashtray.

Outside the garage nurns into a health spa in which many people are bathing and being massaged.

There is a problem between the husband and the wife but it cannot be spoken.

The garage has a plastic corrugated roof that allows a wan light to diffuse within the space.

