

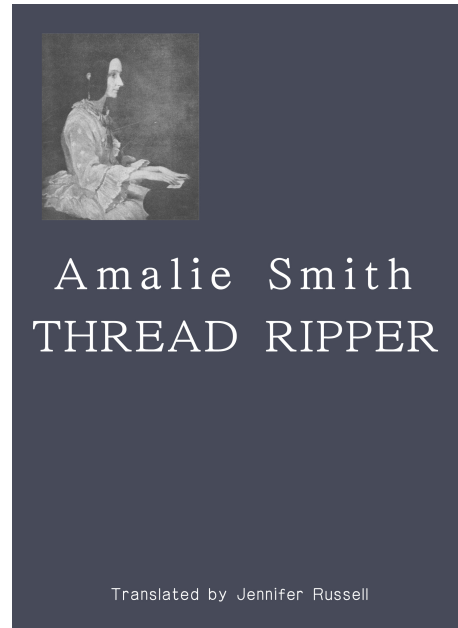
THREAD RIPPER

by Amalie Smith

Translated from the Danish by
Jennifer Russell

An LRB Bookshop Spring Pick
The London Magazine Editor's Pick

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An artist in her thirties weaves and unravels connections between the loom and the computer, DNA and technology, dreams and decisions

Thread Ripper is a double-stranded novel about weaving, programming, and pioneering women. A tapestry-weaver in her thirties embarks on her first big commission: a digitally woven tapestry for a public building. As she works, devoting all her waking hours to the commission, she draws engrossing connections between the stuff that life is made from – DNA, plant tissue, algorithms, text, and textile – and that which disrupts it – radiation, pests, entropy, and doubt. In the novel's second strand, we meet Ada Lovelace, the 1830s mathematician and pioneer of computer programming, and mythical figures such as Penelope, the faithful wife of Odysseus, who wove and unpicked a shroud to put off her 108 suitors.

Contemplative yet clear-sighted, and reviving women's histories, Amalie Smith's bracing hybrid of a novel bares the aching interwovenness of art and life.

AMALIE SMITH (b. 1985) is a Danish writer and visual artist. A graduate from the Danish Academy of Creative Writing and the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Smith has received numerous awards for work, including the Danish Arts Foundation's prestigious three year working grant. *Thread Ripper* is her second novel published in English translation. *Marble* was published by Lolli in 2020.

JENNIFER RUSSELL has published translations of Amalie Smith, Christel Wiinblad, and Peter-Clement Woetmann. She was the recipient of the 2019 Gulf Coast Prize for her translation of Ursula Scavenius's 'Birdland', and in 2020 she received an American-Scandinavian Foundation Award for her co-translation of Rakel Haslund-Gjerrild's *All the Birds in the Sky*.

PRAISE FOR *THREAD RIPPER*

'A dreamy, spacious book which threads together many exquisite components: the languages of data, irradiated gardens, computer bugs, sensate plants, the experience of longing. It tells stories of what it's like to live now, in our hybrid bodies, and it gives the oldest technologies new life.'

– **Daisy Hildyard, author of *The Second Body* and *Emergency***

'Made of interconnected texts that summon stories from the recent past, personal memory and obscure historical periods, *Thread Ripper* is an absorbing and compulsive read. Moments in bended time are summoned or recalled by a single mind, and woven together, electrified like a neural network. Amalie Smith's book reflects how it feels to be inside a generative mind and a body, and celebrates the desire to ask provocative questions without the need for definitive answers.'

– **Alice Hatrick, author of *Ill Feelings***

'A mesmerizing choreography of textile and technology, archive and memory. With cellular precision, Amalie Smith weaves connective tissue between selfhood and history through vital, tactile accumulations of affect and imagery. Innovative, intricate and achingly bodily, *Thread Ripper* is a rare treasure.'

– **Elinor Cleghorn, author of *Unwell Women***

'Wholly original, reflective and resonant. The first of many striking aspects of *Thread Ripper* is the immediate appeal of this book as a physical object... We pursue instances of transformation and apparent progress as Smith weaves free-floating thoughts about episodes from her contemporary life. Luminous.'

– ***The Irish Times***

'*Thread Ripper* is, in its impressive hybridity of art and life, one of the most daring novels I've read to date. It's a book that looms high over others and dares to waver in ways future texts can only dream of imitating.'

– ***The Arts Desk***

'Expansive in its scope and yet so quiet and thoughtful in its singular voice... A writer to pay attention to.'

– ***Lunate***

'Ada Lovelace meets AI weaving and the question of love in climate crisis, in this warp-and-weft novel from experimental Scandi-lit gift-givers.'

– **Burley Fisher Books Staff Pick**

'Amalie Smith has woven a formidable book about a doubtful weaver and digital technology's textile past. Everything is beautifully intertwined.'

– ***Politiken* ♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥**

'Luminously cerebral, ambitious and wide-ranging, yet miraculously uncomplicated to follow... An ingenious hybrid novel.'

– ***Weekendavisen***