



# Fixer

Edgar Kunz. Ecco, \$17.99 trade paper (80p) ISBN 978-0-06-328859-1

The affecting and lyrical sophomore collection from Kunz (*Tap Out*) traces an arc from instability to renewal. Relying mostly on couplets as vehicles for his speaker's observations of contemporary American life, Kunz begins the book with poems about post-divorce emotional paralysis and the consuming drudgery of dead-end work: "If you think it's a scam/ why do you keep saying yes?" The poems foreground specifics, from "Spicy Three Bean Queso" dip to lawn mower upkeep, with their matter-of-fact presentation belying the speaker's irony. The solitary death of an estranged, alcoholic father is a major subject here, with the speaker and his brothers clearing out a cluttered apartment, where they "tried to be respectful// like in a museum." Kunz is less concerned with mourning or memorializing the dead than with the steps the living take to move on. In "Night Heron," a poem heralding the arrival of new love, a couple pretending to howl like wolves find it "impossible/ to stop waking up next morning/ hoarse and happy." Kunz has written a beautiful collection about becoming "fixed," not just in the sense of repair but in the sense of finding a permanent home for oneself, even while recognizing that what's best about one's life can only be grasped in hindsight: "We miss it,/ we say, hammering// garden boxes together." (*Aug.*)