

FIXER



# FIXER

EDGAR KUNZ



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First Ecco paperback published 2023

FIRST EDITION

*Designed by Angela Boutin*

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data has been applied for.

ISBN 978-0-06-328859-1

ScoutAutomatedPrintCode

for K

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# DAY MOON

After I left I waited for someone  
a friend or her herself to walk

quickly up to me on the bus or in  
the bustling coffee shop and slap

my face spit on my hands call  
me a bastard a real motherfucker

by waited I mean I wanted  
to be revealed by some visible sign

a welt to ride the ledge of my cheek  
through the glass-littered

streets it didn't come and it didn't  
come and I grew desperate I stared

too long at strangers at Safeway I bought  
boxes of clementines and ate them

like a possum on the train cramming  
the rinds in the gap between the seat

and the wall I drank warm beer I made  
no calls I sat on a hot metal bench

by a briny lake and tried to imagine  
the lives of the joggers

passing in front of me their joys  
their sicknesses and regrets it was

melodramatic I was useless I thought  
of my friend who wrote a novel over

a long winter in Nova Scotia  
read it once and buried it in the copse

of birches behind the house he chose  
the spot he said for its plainness

so he couldn't remember later  
and dig it up and in this way one

medicated season slid into the next  
without incident gardenia bloom

persistent sun I fell in love  
with the perfect voice of a Midwest

radio DJ from a station I streamed  
on my phone called in one request

after another I fell in love with a video  
of Stevie Nicks singing backstage

to her makeup artist sheer  
cotton dress their harmonies breezy

and immaculate I woke around noon  
to the thup-thup of helicopters and another

unsober voicemail from my dad angling  
for a loan went out in my underwear

and found a fine black powder settling  
on the windowsills dusting the parked

cars a day moon suspended  
in orange haze it turned out a man

who would go months without  
getting caught was methodically setting

fire to the half-built condo complexes one  
by one one in ten thousand residents

is a billionaire the same article  
told me though I could be forgiven

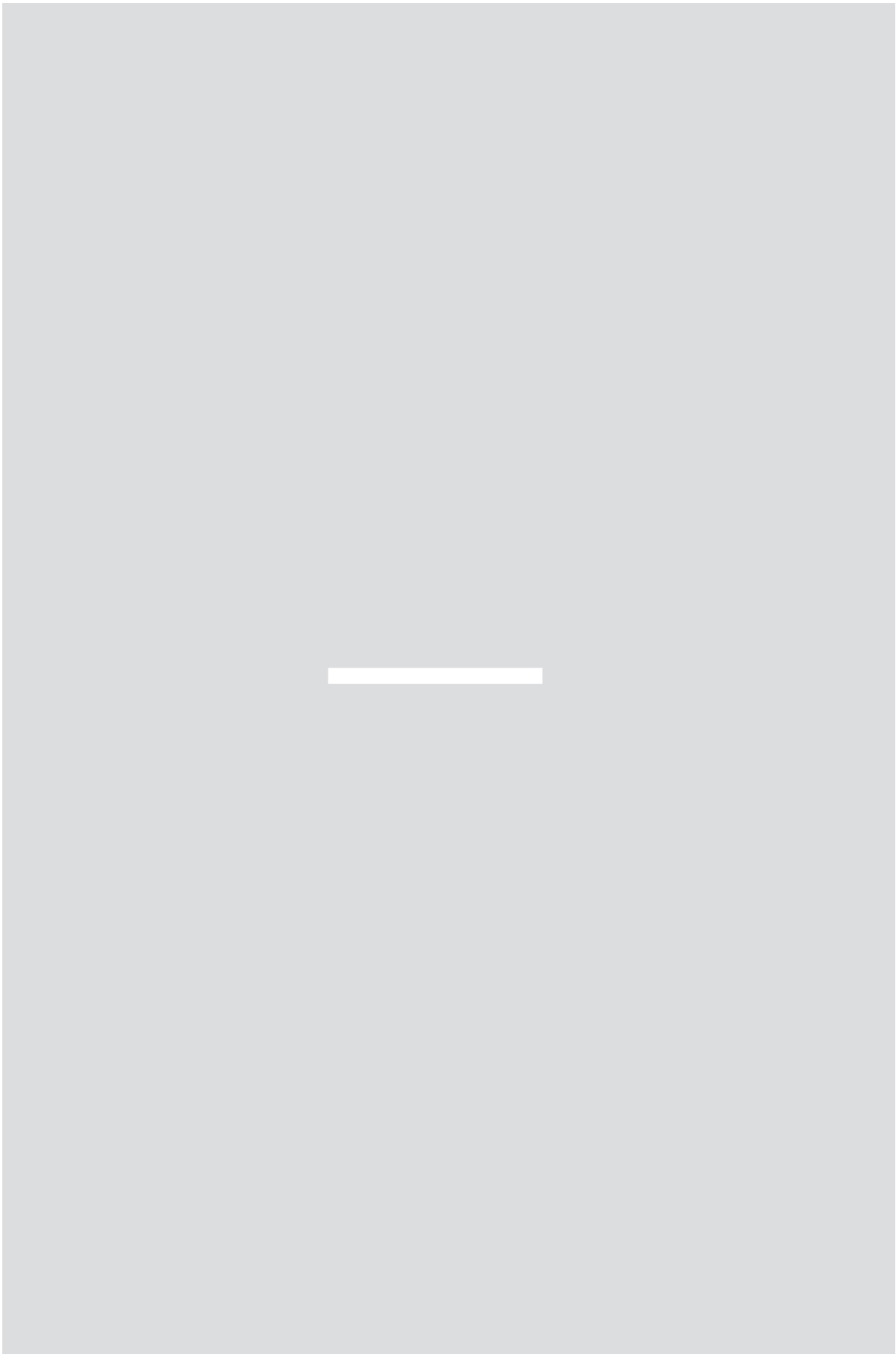
for thinking the headlands were  
burning again the intervals between

disasters collapsing I caught  
my neighbor's eye she was stretching

on her stoop in a fantastic powder-  
blue tracksuit what a world I said

and she didn't seem to hear and jogged  
across the narrow street the moon

behind her rising or sinking  
or neither it was hard to know



# TESTER

I catch a bus out to the county  
and check in at a beige terminal

and they ask me about the smells  
and textures of various dips

and I click appealing  
or not appealing, then elaborate

in the text box below. Artichoke  
and French Onion. Spicy Three

Bean Queso. I got in  
on referral. I live with seven

other people. I measure rent  
in how many sessions I have to do

with the dips. I start testing  
what I can get away with: *notes*

*of bright espresso, mouthfeel  
of a sun-ripe plum.*

I write longer and longer.  
I don't think they read a word.

It's weeks before you're entered  
into the system, more weeks

to get your tiny check. Aline says  
If you think it's a scam

why do you keep saying yes?  
In the fluorescent room I receive

one dip after another from blue  
gloved hands, always the same

plain tortilla chips to dip with,  
the same hands clearing away

the tiny plastic cups. I tinker  
with my descriptions. If I need

water, they bring me water  
in slightly larger cups.

# MODEL

In a button-up and jeans I pretend  
to pump unleaded into a rented Civic.

In a peacoat and slacks I pretend  
to pump premium into a rented Benz.

Inside, I stock the already stocked  
shelves: SunChips and Snickers,

jumbo packs of bottled water, Powerade,  
Coke. I wear an XXL polo with the excess

safety-pinned behind me, JASON stitched  
in thick gold thread above my pocket.

I smile. I laugh without sound.  
When this is over, I will be paid

in gas station gift cards I'll use to fill up  
the car I borrowed to get here.



Meanwhile, customers come and go:  
quart of milk, quarter tank, pack of smokes.

Now and then we have to ask the actual  
Jason to please stay out of the shot.

# ACCOUNT

Because I was the one to end it,  
and so soon, I offered to reimburse her

what I owed. She had covered  
most of the wedding, the move,

our rent. I was living on the grace  
of a friend, sleeping

in his sunroom on Folsom.  
Every morning I opened my account

to see how little I had left.  
It wasn't looking good

until she wrote to say we could forget it  
if I would let her claim me

on her taxes. I guessed there was  
a rebate for this kind of thing.

I could hear my friend knocking  
around in the kitchen, making coffee,

frying eggs. I couldn't believe  
my luck. I let myself be claimed.

# SHOULDER SEASON

Cutting glass from sheets  
wide as twin beds to replace

the island's blown-out panes,  
I drag a scoring knife

along the Sharpie line, slide  
the block under, and let

each plate drop, gently,  
so they break clean.

A few weeks in I begin  
to get a feel for it.

I go from cottage to empty  
cottage, thumb the glazing,

hide the seams. Cormorants  
on the far rocks shaking out

their wings and calling.  
Late sun striking the Atlantic

like a gong. Running out  
of windows, I slow my pace,

make sloppy cuts I know  
won't fit. I smash them out back

then call in a shipment  
from Portsmouth and spend

the day imagining fresh glass  
riding out on the single-

engine boat, nested in cotton  
blankets in the hull.

How long can I go on  
not finishing? Radio says falls

are lasting longer and longer.  
The weather could hold.

# WILLROBOTSTAKE MYJOB.COM

The About page tells us  
half of all human  
employment is susceptible:  
forklift operators, retail clerks  
and manicurists. I am not  
any of those things, but I am  
not comforted. For each  
occupation, the site assigns  
an automation risk score.  
Car salesman: ninety-six.  
Umpire-slash-referee:  
ninety-four. Each score  
has been assigned a cutesy  
translation—anything above  
ninety: “You are doomed!”  
The data scientists  
who run the site deployed,  
they say, a machine-learning

algorithm to calculate  
the odds. The robots, then,  
are making it clear exactly  
which jobs they will take.  
They assess each  
according to the qualities  
required: finger dexterity,  
social perceptiveness,  
originality, persuasion.  
I am surprised to find  
that the qualities I think of  
as distinctly human  
pose little challenge:  
the robots are confident  
in their ability to perceive,  
to persuade. I click away  
and click back, distracted.  
I check my phone. The site  
assumes a horizon  
of twenty years. The AC  
rumbles on as scheduled.  
Something in the house dings.

# REAL MONEY

Late June and there's a shortage  
of air traffic controllers

in the mid-Atlantic, ads plastered  
everywhere I look. *Competitive*

*Pay, Union Benefits.* I already found  
a job, but I can't break the habit

of hunting. I dig around and learn  
that though the suicide rates

are astronomical, shifts are one hour  
on, one hour off, due to the extreme

concentration required. You get paid  
both hours. My uncle used to work

for a company that was contracted  
to paint all the nuclear power plants



in Massachusetts. Now he works  
for a company that's contracted

to paint all the T stops  
in the greater Boston area.

They paint overnight when the trains  
are stabled. Beats the shit

out of my last job, he says, plus  
they got Ping-Pong tables

in the break room at every station.  
They're meant for the conductors,

he says, but hey, what they don't know.  
My youngest brother quit his job

as a janitor at a middle school  
to start a landscaping company.

Bought a crew cab and a trailer  
and a used ride-on mower he got,

he says, for a bargain. He's staking  
signs, building a client list—

mostly mowing, residential.  
No 401(k), he says, but at least

I set my own schedule. I take the day  
when it rains, except to pry off

and sharpen the mower blades,  
file down the burrs. Dullness

tears the grass. When you do it right,  
it's like you went out on your hands

and knees and snipped each tuft  
with a pair of scissors. But fifty a pop

only gets me so far. Now it's about  
leveling up. Corporate parks, estates,

colleges. Like where you work—  
that's where the real money is.

# GOOD DEAL

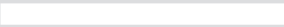
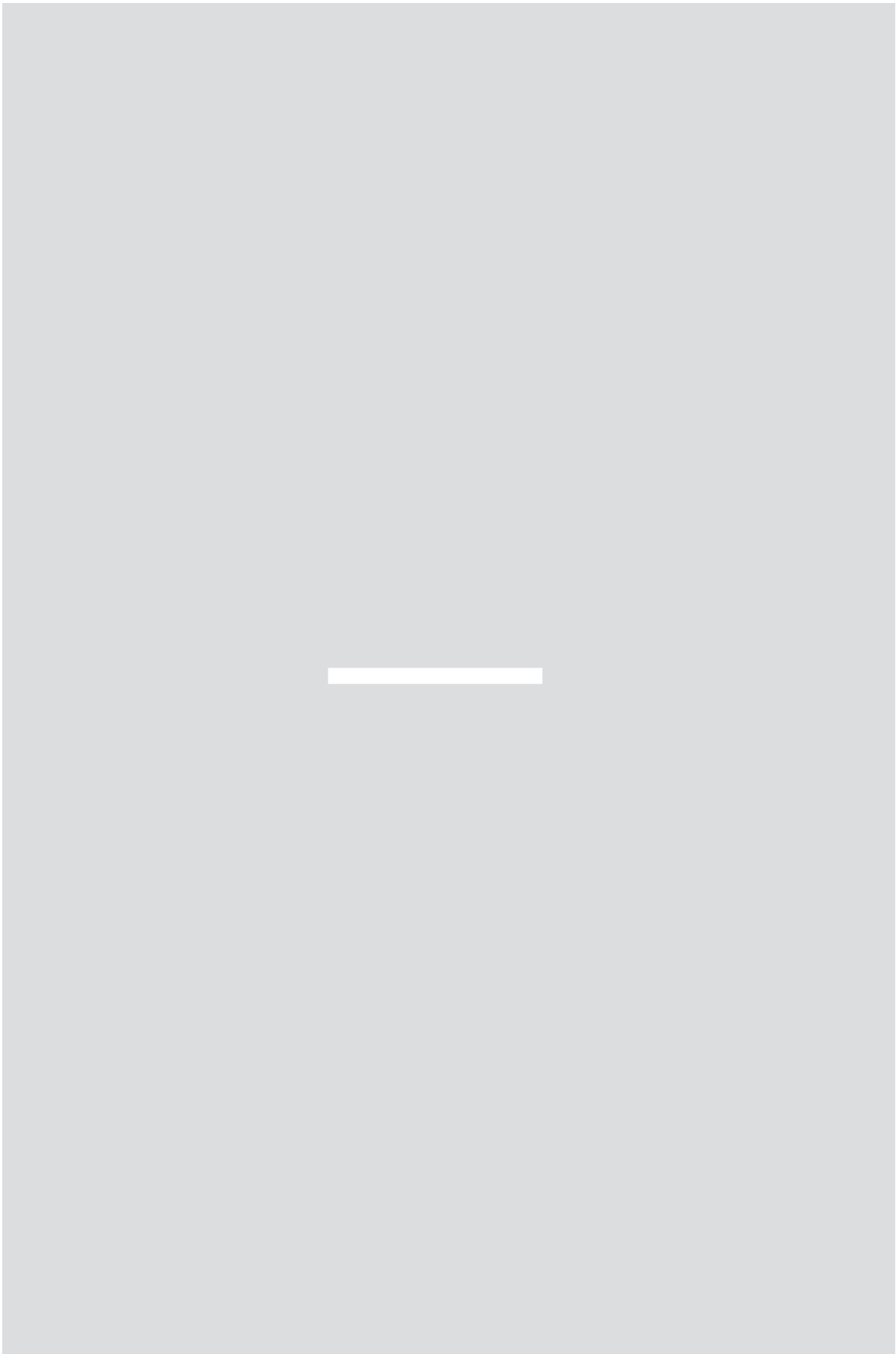
Fast light on my hands  
as I peel the sticker  
from an apple on the train.  
Viruses, I read, are  
colorless, though lab techs  
will blast one with atoms  
so we can see its edges.  
We slow around a bend,  
then gather new speed.  
My lender calls to ask  
if I feel good. I set my screen  
to black-and-white to make  
the living world more vivid.  
He says to hang tight.  
He assures me we can go  
lower. In Springfield we swap  
the electric engine for diesel,  
then drag a small, dark cloud  
across the Berkshires.  
A stash of apples in my bag:

Galas. An Empire.  
We blow through an empty  
station in a mechanical wind.  
A friend of mine rides  
cross-country in the bellies  
of emptied-out coal cars  
or on a plate of steel  
called a porch. He pays  
for almost nothing. He's one  
of my very favorite people.  
I scroll through the latest  
mortgage rates, having no idea  
what a good deal looks like.  
My sweetheart and I have  
a rented apartment the size  
of half a train car,  
but we have a miniature  
dishwasher, so we feel  
we live in luxury.

# SQUATTERS

First the brass lock punched out  
and glinting on the stoop, a floral  
bedsheet tacked in the window,  
dim shapes moving inside. Then mail  
in the mailbox. Freshly cut grass.  
My other neighbor blasts Rush  
Limbaugh reruns and loves  
to corner me out front to explain  
about mechanical pigeon spies,  
China seeding clouds with acid rain.  
World's going to shit, he says,  
all around me. What about the feds  
tapping our calls, I say, trying to be  
agreeable. Bet your ass, he says.  
They're dying to catch you slipping.  
I'm broke, but I start leaving  
at the curb whatever I can spare:  
a bookshelf and two plastic lawn chairs,  
a potted fig. I look out later  
and they're gone; through the wall,

the scuff of a chair leg, laughter.  
My brother comes to visit  
and sleeps on the kitchen floor.  
What's up with your neighbors, he says.  
We put out a cut-glass punch bowl,  
a watercolor map of the state  
with the proportions all wrong.  
In August, two cops in dress shirts  
and bulletproof vests knock  
on my door and ask if I've seen  
any movements. Leave me their card.  
My other neighbor juts his chin:  
You seen them next door?  
Heard they robbed some old lady.  
Who said that, I say. He shrugs.  
The heat swells and breaks.  
An election happens. I sell my car  
and sit on my stoop, chain-reading  
paperbacks, trying to lose  
as much time as possible.  
Mom calls. Are you alone, she says.  
It's about your dad. A hatchback  
clatters by, dragging its muffler.  
In the window next door, my fig  
presses its leaves to the glass.







FIXER

We're breaking into your apartment  
through your bedroom window.

The maintenance guy's ladder  
is propped against the sill.

I climb the ladder rung by rung,  
it shivers, I try not to look down.

A face appears in the glass.  
What are you doing, the face says.

I'm looking for my dad's, I say.  
I thought this was his window.

Aren't you Ken's boy, he says.  
No, I say. Chris's. Oh, Chris, he says,

he's dead. I know, I say. I thought  
you could be Ken's, he says.

Sorry, I say. Believe me,  
the face says, not my first rodeo.

I climb down. We haul the ladder  
to the next window and try again.

Better than the minivan you slept  
a winter in, American Legion

parking lot, siphoning gas for heat,  
but not much better. Cinder-block

apartment building on Homestead,  
a couple miles from mom's. Got in

through the window. Waded through  
the cans and bedding. Left it open

for the smell. Tried not to look  
at the stain. Tried to be respectful

like in a museum. Stood for so long  
in front of your dresser my brother

touched my elbow. Everything  
we touch, you touched. Your socks.

Your coat. The cash in your pockets.  
The cellophane from a fresh pack.

Zippo with a carving of a whale,  
proud ship in the distance.

We should have hired someone,  
I say. Me and Noah are dragging

your mattress out. Nah, he says,  
we got it. We force it

through the doorway  
and down the carpeted stairs.

We should have spared ourselves  
the bucket of vomit,

the empty plastic vodka jugs,  
the black rubber gloves the cops

left balled up on the dresser. Up  
and in, he says, and we heave

the mattress over the green lip  
of the dumpster. Might have been

worth the money, I say. Considering  
the therapy bills later.

I'll tell you what's wrong  
with us, he says, free of charge.

It surprises me how little  
I recognize what's here. How long

has it been for you, Noah says.  
Almost ten years, I guess.

Four for me, he says, stacking papers  
in a ShopRite bag. You think mom

wants any of this, I say. Would you,  
he says. I'll take whatever this is.

I hold up what looks like a mortar  
made of bronze. A car starts

on the second try. The window  
we crawled in through hangs crooked

in its frame. I want the sword, he says.  
He points to the corner of the kitchen



where a rapier leans in its scabbard,  
ornate and slim. Did you know dad

had a sword, I say. You don't remember,  
he says. No. I don't remember.

I think I was in California when you died.  
There's a window, the cop said,

but we can't be sure. Maybe it happened  
while K and I were having sneaky sex

then linking up with friends we missed, friends  
from when we used to live there.

Or while getting hammered touring  
our old spots—Baggy's, Heart

and Dagger, Eli's Mile High—and we tried  
to call it, but when we got back

the neighbors were still dancing in their  
Halloween best, so we started swigging

from a plastic handle and sharing cigs  
and shout-singing *Baby's black balloon*

*makes her fly.* Maybe then. Or when  
a bearded man in sequins piggybacked

our friend and we reached on tiptoe  
to pull ripe pomelos from the dark—

Typically we don't allow customers  
back here, she says, but I'll make

an exception, since we haven't processed  
the morning yet. Totes and boxes marked

DONATION are bound with rope  
and stacked neatly on giant rolling carts.

There he is, Noah says, pointing to the bin  
we dropped off before lunch.

We slip it out like a huge Jenga block,  
unsnap the lid. We're looking

for a velvet case we heard you kept three  
silver crosses in, you were always talking

about them, one for each of your boys.  
Button-ups, flatware. Stretched-out

tube socks. You sure they were ever  
in there, she says. Let me leave you

my number, I say, in case.

Oh, honey, she says. The chances of that.

René and I were doing some limb work,  
Noah says, on the tree out front, that twisty

pine at the corner of the house, taking  
a couple widows off it, and dad drives up

drunker than I've ever seen him,  
or close, in a red Ford Focus, gives me

the biggest hug he can considering  
he dropped twenty pounds since I last saw him,

and I'm the ground guy, holding the rope,  
puts his arm around my shoulder and just

kind of stands there, neither of us  
saying a word, not knowing after two,

three minutes he'll get back in the car  
and drive off, last time I'll ever see him,

'cause when you're the ground guy you got  
to focus on the guy in the tree, you mess up

and that limb swings out and hits the line  
bang the whole block goes dark.

You got the best years of him,  
Noah says, considering you're the oldest.

Luke says, He got a lot worse  
after you left. Hid in the basement, pissed

in the laundry sink. Pretended to be  
writing a book. He was a weak man,

he says, simple as that. When his truck  
got stolen, Noah says, is my theory.

That was the tipping point. But he  
got it back, I remind them, plus everyone

chipped in, all those Home Depot  
gift cards. That made it worse, he says.

It was like he got smaller overnight,  
like someone threw water on him.



You heard about the rest: mom  
throwing him out, cops and everything.

He was Handy, he says. You were gone  
by the time he turned into Chris.

Chris, she says, oh you mean Handy,  
great guy, life of the party, the party

was always at his place, him  
and your mom's, plus he could fix

anything, he was amazing, leaky faucet,  
done, sticky door, done, lawn mower

won't start, done, and give him three  
of whatever, you name it, didn't matter

if he was blasted or what, give him  
a stapler, a pipe wrench, and a coffeepot

and he'd juggle them as long as you like,  
and every time you'd think no way, it's

over, he's finished, he'd float  
it all right in front of you, smooth

as a seal, then set them down easy one  
by one, it was magic, everyone clapping

and carrying on, can't believe you  
never saw it, that's how he always was.

The heart weighs 360 grams.  
Stenosis in the coronary, eighty  
percent occlusion. The valves  
are unremarkable. The ventricles  
are unremarkable. The brain weighs  
1,310 grams and is normal size  
and shape. The brain stem has  
the usual patterns on cut surface.  
Positive for duloxetine anti-  
depressant in the blood. Positive  
for nicotine. For ethanol.  
The genitals are those of a normal  
man. The scalp has no contusion.  
The skull has no fracture. The mustache

is a quarter inch, the beard  
is a half. The nose and facial bones  
  
are intact. The tongue is  
unremarkable. The airway is clear.

I held him together  
as long as I could, she says.

He stopped working,  
stopped coming upstairs.

He was like tissue paper  
coming apart in water.

Like smoke in my hands.  
It had nothing to do

with you, baby. You left  
when you had to.

I met a woman once  
who worked on pianos.

Said it was a hard job.  
The tools, the leverage.

The required ear. I love it,  
she said, but it's brutal.

The second I step away  
it's already falling out of tune.





# TUNING

I pull the last radishes,  
then bed the boxes down

with hay. This is the season  
of distances: weak light

in the lilacs, muffled bass  
in the idling Accord.

My father a plaque that rises  
barely above the grass.

That last time strangely  
available: vinyl booth, castanets

from a jukebox we couldn't see  
and the pale underside

of his wrist flashing . . .  
Cleaning out his place,

I found a watch  
in his underwear drawer,  
  
chipped bezel, leather band  
worn thin. It belonged  
  
to his father. Once, as a kid,  
I watched him press the cool  
  
back of it to his ear, then  
his cheek, I didn't understand.  
  
I bend and gather up  
the bolted kale. My old Trek  
  
clutters the doorway, gray  
flecked with gold. Another loop  
  
I'm caught in: suffering  
and calibration. The punishing  
  
miles, then the hours adjusting  
the neatly clicking gears.

# THERAPY

Early snow. Garbage  
trucks in the alley pushing  
slush around, chewing.

Gnawed by a hundred  
minor obligations, I draw  
a bath, then sit on the toilet

fully clothed. I want  
a therapist, I said to Meg,  
smarter than me. You

charm them, she said. You  
need a man, someone the age  
your dad would be now.

How old would you be now?  
I do the math and come up  
with a number so low

I check again. Nothing  
changes. I go out and drag  
the bins back to the house,

then lower myself  
into the lukewarm tub. I let half  
the water out and turn

the tap, mixing the original  
water with water that would  
scald me if I touched it.

# GOLDEN GATE

I could hear every bit of laughter passed  
between the dishwashers of the café

I shared a wall with, and one morning,  
touching that wall, felt it give wetly

under my hand. I called my landlord,  
knowing the apartment above me

was vacant—a space, I gambled, larger  
than the one I had, where every piece

of furniture touched. He surprised me  
by saying yes, I could stay there

during repairs. I made my calculations.  
You were giving up your perfectly

good spot in Denver. I had a month  
to convince him to come down on the rent.

I moved my bed up but left the rest,  
which workers covered with a tarp.

When the work was done, I went on  
squatting in those bright upstairs rooms—

the windows are unreal, I told you—  
for weeks, pestering the landlord

every few days, going to his house,  
walking with him in his garden, trying

to explain. He relented at last, grumpily,  
and I moved the rest of my stuff

before he could change his mind. You came  
with everything you owned, and suddenly

we lived together. That first morning  
you noticed a red access ladder

I had missed outside the kitchen window.  
We climbed, one going first,

the other handing our coffees up  
and clambering after, and that high

we could see the bell tower at Berkeley,  
eucalyptuses in the hills and traffic

careening down Alcatraz, hint of salt  
on the wind, and though we would leave

this place, too, and soon, when the rent,  
despite our pleading, ratcheted

beyond us, if you craned your neck a little,  
perched delicately in the distance—

No fucking way, you said—was the Golden Gate,  
stitching the city to the headlands looming

across the bay, and we were moved  
to silence by it, gripped by a pure, clear idea

beyond experience, and stood a long time,  
touching shoulders, touching knees.

# GRAND LAKE

In the next place they slept  
with the windows open,

square-paneled panes  
that faced a slope of ivy

and pine straw and swung  
cleanly on their hinges,

screenless. But it felt as if  
they lived underground,

a burrow across which  
the headlights descending

the steep driveway just  
on the other side of the wall

swept in the crisp dark,  
maneuvering the gap



between buildings.  
They were getting away  
with something, they felt,  
though he was newly  
divorced and they were paying  
heavily for the privilege  
of this tiny ground-floor  
studio by the lake.  
They got to know  
their neighbors some,  
were invited over once  
for pinot and gossip  
by a woman who'd held on  
to her apartment, she said,  
since '98, outlasting a series  
of aggrieved landlords  
who refused repairs, and so  
heated her few rooms

by turning her oven on high  
and leaving the door open.

Mostly, though, they kept  
to themselves. They were tired,

and wary of entanglement.  
They worked and touched

quietly and made reasonable  
requests. Each morning

they took their coffee out  
to the garden, which did not

belong to them. At night,  
the wheels, which could crush

so easily, passed inches  
from their sleeping heads.

# DOORS

We get them from warehouses  
at the edge of the city, paging through

upright stacks, slumping one  
heavily against the others and breaking

out the tape measure to see, or if  
it can be made right with a table saw

and a chisel. It's mostly my thing—  
K goes along, even spots the one

for the bedroom, cut-glass knob  
catching light as it swings.

She knows the doors we have are fine.  
They open freely, they latch closed.

She also knows I'm a maniac who can't  
be stopped. She drags out a paneled turn-

of-the-century oak with mismatched  
knobs, a half-length insert of beveled

glass. We lean it against the others,  
her outline distorted by the waves.

# NEW YEAR

Hungover and regretting  
my every idiot decision, I slip out  
for a smoke, startling

my neighbors, who appear  
to be tearing off their back porch  
with a crowbar and a hacksaw.

A new year and not much  
to show for it except a sore  
lower back, an addiction

to trash TV and Russian novels  
on tape—I stopped reading  
the news, stopped calling home.

I recused myself. Even this  
soft pack isn't mine, forgotten  
by a friend in the late stages

of a party cranked to eleven  
by the sublimation of despair.  
I should be grateful,

I guess, for the bright  
morning, the smoke that makes  
my breathing visible. And they

seem happy. My neighbors.  
Good for them. High  
on their ladders, backlit by fog.

A growing pile of scrap  
in the slush below. They cut  
wildly, clanging against the rungs,

it's thrilling to watch.  
Sawdust gathers in the creases  
of their jackets. Where they pry

the rotten timber away,  
the brick is a brighter  
shade of red beneath.

# NIGHT HERON

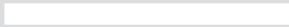
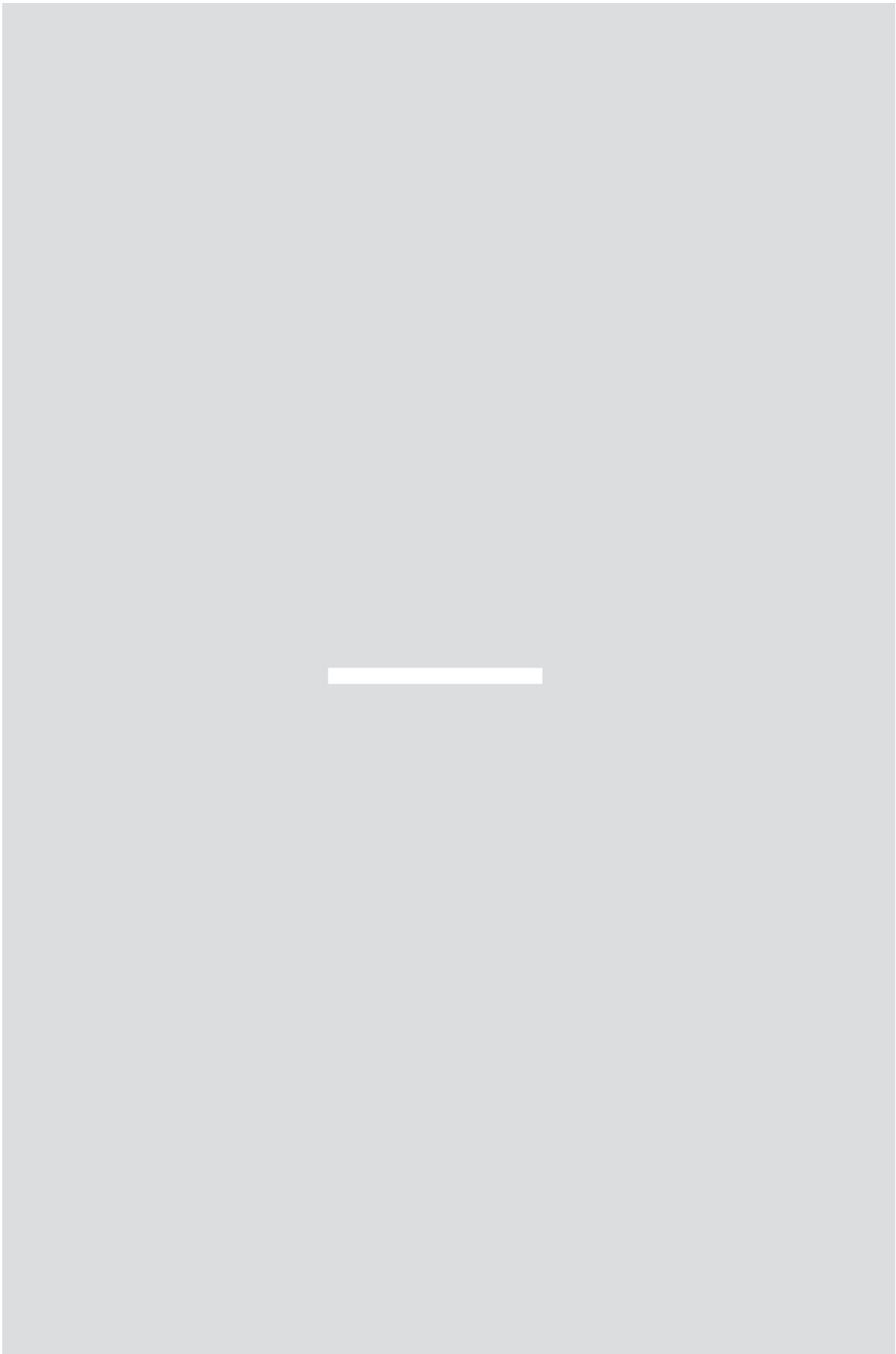
What now? You'd flown in  
from a Midwest city named  
for its rowdy summertime  
abundance lying saying you  
were coming to visit friends  
in San Francisco and I had taken  
the train from chilly Oakland  
to meet you and we rode north  
carefully not touching I took you  
to the tiny one-room apartment  
I had escaped to after the  
divorce and fried us nervously  
some potatoes in a cast-iron pan  
a little rosemary which we  
did not eat because you kissed  
me hard and we went in a rush  
to the mattress I bought off a guy  
in a semi-famous band and had only  
the day before gotten off  
the floor and onto the pinewood  
bed frame I'd found and hoisted

on my back and carried  
down out of North Berkeley arms  
wide weaving through the side  
streets toeing the centerline to avoid  
snagging the buckeyes leaning out  
it was about suffering  
in public it was dramatic  
sure but the dramas of my life  
those days were pitched  
as high as I could stand higher  
sometimes I said breathless *I want  
to taste you* and you said *please  
yes* and later out at the edge  
of the lake huddled against  
the damp wind hot grease  
soaking through a paper bag  
licking salt from each  
other's fingers obscenely a night  
heron peered up at us from  
the reeds small hunched dipping  
its shining beak in the shallows not  
particularly beautiful but a heron  
nevertheless the same one  
we were sure we saw perched  
on the awning outside the theater  
whose marquee shouted slogans  
like WE LIVE IN A FAKE  
DEMOCRACY and PREVENT UN-



WANTED PRESIDENCIES  
WITH HAND COUNTED PAPER  
BALLOTS and later the cabin  
we rented with friends  
in Calaveras snowmelt vaulting  
the redwoods to magnificent  
heights drinking rye and each  
of us practicing our best  
wolf howl at the waning  
moon which was ridiculous yes  
but once we started it became impossible  
to stop waking up next morning  
hoarse and happy and you moved west  
and we lived together in a studio  
overlooking the café dumpster  
and then back east on a dream  
of a house and a garden and then  
my father died and at almost  
the same age yours did and both  
from drink and an unnameable  
sadness I went back to Connecticut  
alone three and a half days  
my mother said before anyone  
had found him in his apartment  
on the far side of town and going  
with my brother which we  
should not have done and dragging  
the mattress out and clearing

the maggots off the ceiling  
with a shop vac and so on and later  
you came and we walked through  
the basement of my mother's house  
I wanted to show you where for  
a while he lived and how and you  
slung your arm around my waist  
and we moved slowly together bare  
fluorescent bulb shining  
on the Budweiser ashtray  
the carpentry tools I would  
inherit the ratty couch he crashed  
on for years you held up  
an old calypso record he loved  
and sang out softly *Jump in the line*  
*rock your body in time* and I  
sang back softly *Okay I believe you*  
and after a while mom at the top  
of the stairs shouting *What*  
*are you kids doing down there*  
and climbing the steps you pinch  
my elbow and ask if I'm  
okay and I hear myself  
say yes which is not a lie though  
I'm not listening I'm letting  
myself feel how astonishing how  
astonishing what our love can make  
of a place like that



# MISSING IT

It's a new life: the tidy  
brick bowfront joined

to its neighbors, the long  
yard clotted with ivy

and vasevine we tore out  
and burned in a heap,

edge of her shovel turning up  
a Twix wrapper, shards

of brick, a marble made of hot  
pink plastic. We miss

our old city, we say:  
the poppies bushing up

at the light posts, throwing  
the windows wide to let in

the cold, the high  
electric whistling

of the rails—and the light,  
we say, god, the light

most of all. We miss it,  
we say, hammering

garden boxes together  
from a friend's trashed fence.

The light—as we plant squashes  
and peas, and give them

a trellis to climb.



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Gratitude to the editors of the following publications in whose pages these poems first appeared:

*American Poetry Review*

“Night Heron”

“Tester”

“Shoulder Season”

from “Fixer” [We’re breaking into your apartment]

from “Fixer” [It surprises me how little]

from “Fixer” [I think I was in California when you died]

from “Fixer” [Typically we don’t allow customers]

from “Fixer” [You got the best years of him]

from “Fixer” [Chris, she says, oh you mean Handy]

from “Fixer” [The heart weighs 360 grams]

*The Atlantic*

from “Fixer” [Better than the minivan you slept] as

“Museum”

*Los Angeles Review of Books*

“Day Moon”

*The New Yorker*

from “Fixer” [I held him together] as “Piano”

“Therapy”

*Oxford American*

“Real Money”

Pioneer Works Broadcast

“Golden Gate”

“Grand Lake”

*Poetry*

from “Fixer” [René and I were doing some limb work]  
from “Fixer” [We should have hired someone]

*Smartish Pace*

“Missing It”

*What Things Cost: An Anthology for the People*

“Model”

*The Yale Review*

“Tuning”

Thank you to the National Endowment for the Arts and the Maryland State Arts Council for the support that made many of these poems possible.

To the first readers of these poems for their advice and encouragement, especially Sam Ross, Megan Fernandes, Brian Tierney, Will Schutt, Hafizah Geter, Grady Chambers, Mikko Harvey, Rosalie Moffett, Callie Siskel, Noah Warren, Phillip B. Williams, and my brothers, Luke and Noah Kunz.

To Tim Weed and Julia Jensen, for the gift of those January days in which this book began to reveal itself.

To my former teachers, especially Mark Jarman and Elizabeth Spires, for their continued guidance.

To my editor, Jenny Xu, and my agent, Rob McQuilkin, whose faith in my work has been life-changing.

To Anders Carlson-Wee and Sam Cheney, whose patience and vision shaped this book profoundly.

And to my love, Katie Moulton, who astonishes.