



House and Fire (APR Honickman 1st Book Prize)

Maria Hummel

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"A child is very ill; there is a hospital. . . . The subject is as basic as a bowl and a nail, wood and a house, and a house on fire." —Fanny Howe, from the introduction

House and Fire is a mother's love song to her stricken young son, written over the years of his hospitalizations for an acute immune disorder. Maria Hummel is a poet of dazzling formal mastery, whose eerie, radiant lyrics and stories evoke the pediatric ward, California life, and the immortal, endangered world of childhood. This unforgettable debut was selected by Fanny Howe.

From "House and Fire":

for thirty-three years

I didn't make anything

with my body

and then your brother

and then he sickened

watching him sleep hooked to tubes

an empty envelope inside me

fills each dawn with one long love letter

by night

it's mostly apology

A former Wallace Stegner Fellow in Poetry, **Maria Hummel** is the author of two novels and poetry and prose in *Poetry*, *Narrative*, and *The Open Door: 100 Poems, 100 Years of Poetry Magazine*. She teaches at Stanford University and lives in San Francisco, California.

Fanny Howe has written many books of poetry, and her *Selected Poems* (UC Press, 2000) won the Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize.

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