



**Barnburner.**

**Hoover, Erin (author).**

Oct. 2018. 96p. Elixir, paper, \$17([9781932418675](#)). 811.6.

**REVIEW.** First published October 15, 2018 (*Booklist*).

Hoover's first collection is a fitting attempt to kick down staid, prim, even academic poetic doors. These poems are preternaturally apt in their presentation of voices of rage, dejection, injustice, and fear. Collectively, they feel like a primal scream. But the speaker in "Reading Sappho's Fragments," which is almost an artistic manifesto, states it better, "My poems are / a murder story, clear immediately that / someone will kill / someone else." Through blunt narratives tinged with irony, Hoover captures the violent nature of our world, its past and present vicious acts committed against others and also against ourselves and the environment. "Nobody Wanted Such a River" brilliantly weaves personal history with the tragic nature of events surrounding the Susquehanna River, from the Paxton Boys' massacre of Susquehannock (Conestoga) Indians to Three Mile Island to how we poisoned the river, and the river poisoned back ("Tapwater isn't a form of dignity / until it is"). Hoover comes out swinging as she expresses her support for those who courageously fight both obvious and insidious forms of political and personal criminality.

— *Janet St. John*