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## The Mandarin

By Aaron Kunin

Fence Magazine Inc, Division of Fence Books. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, The Mandarin, Aaron Kunin, "The Mandarin" does at least pretend to be an ordinary novel. It is set in places that no longer exist in Minneapolis - houses and apartments where one of the characters used to live, businesses and restaurants that have closed or moved elsewhere. Its narrator, Willy, writes boring novels that put everyone to sleep. The plot develops recursively rather than progressively, as a kind of theme-and-variations; usually one of the characters is in a house or a room, and the others are outside trying to get in. "The Mandarin" is written almost entirely in dialogue; as a result, actions and events tend to occur within a nimbus of uncertainty. Consciousness tends to be communal rather than personal. "The Mandarin" preserves the conventions of the novel: the speakers are individualized characters speaking in an identifiable situation. This means that, at any moment, the characters might stop talking and start doing something. Of course, they won't, but this option is always available to them.


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### Reviews

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