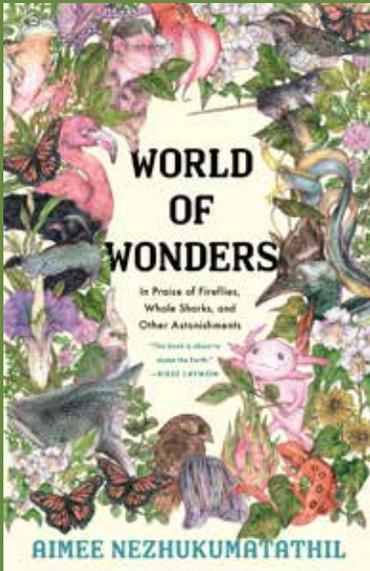


2021 Summer Reading



Aimee Nezhukumatathil (neh-ZOO / KOO-mah / tah-TILL) has four previous poetry collections, and her most recent chapbook is *LACE & PYRITE*, a collaboration of epistolary garden poems with the poet Ross Gay. Her writing appears twice in the Best American Poetry Series, *The New York Times Magazine*, *ESPN*, *Ploughshares*, *American Poetry Review*, and *Tin House*.

Honors include a poetry fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Pushcart Prize, a Mississippi Arts Council grant, and being named a Guggenheim Fellow in poetry. In 2021, she became the first-ever poetry editor for *SIERRA* magazine, the story-telling arm of The Sierra Club. She is professor of English and Creative Writing in the University of Mississippi's MFA program.

UNIVERSITY
HIGH SCHOOL

O F I N D I A N A

How we emerge from the pandemic-marked school years matters, and it is for this reason that we have chosen *World of Wonders: In Praise of Fireflies, Whale Sharks, and Other Astonishments* for our summer reading. What *World of Wonders* does beautifully is remind us as we begin to reenter the world to look up, to look around, and to look for beauty. It allows us to see ourselves through the lens of nature, to think about what astonishments have been part of our lives and have marked our identities. It reminds us in its subtle way that we too are astonishing.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER AS YOU READ

- What wonders from the book stand out to you?
- What little things bring you joy? What experiences in the world cause you to feel a sense of awe?
- What did you love as a little kid? What did you talk about or collect or draw? How does that connect to who you are today? How do you imagine it connecting to the you of the future?
- How do you personally connect with the messages in the book?
- Has an experience with nature changed you, perhaps even how you view something?
- If you were writing an essay about something in nature that resonates with you, what would you write about? How would you relate that aspect of nature to your own life?

ABOUT *WORLD OF WONDERS: IN PRAISE OF FIREFLIES, WHALE SHARKS, AND OTHER ASTONISHMENTS* FROM THE PUBLISHER, MILKWEED EDITIONS

From beloved, award-winning poet Aimee Nezhukumatathil comes a debut work of nonfiction—a collection of essays about the natural world, and the way its inhabitants can teach, support, and inspire us.

As a child, Nezhukumatathil called many places home: the grounds of a Kansas mental institution, where her Filipina mother was a doctor; the open skies and tall mountains of Arizona, where she hiked with her Indian father; and the chillier climes of western New York and Ohio. But no matter where she was transplanted—no matter how awkward the fit or forbidding the landscape—she was able to turn to our world's fierce and funny creatures for guidance.

“What the peacock can do,” she tells us, “is remind you of a home you will run away from and run back to all your life.” The axolotl teaches us to smile, even in the face of unkindness; the touch-me-not plant shows us how to shake off unwanted advances; the narwhal demonstrates how to survive in hostile environments. Even in the strange and the unlovely, Nezhukumatathil finds beauty and kinship. For it is this way with wonder: it requires that we are curious enough to look past the distractions in order to fully appreciate the world's gifts.

Warm, lyrical, and gorgeously illustrated by Fumi Nakamura, *World of Wonders* is a book of sustenance and joy.