

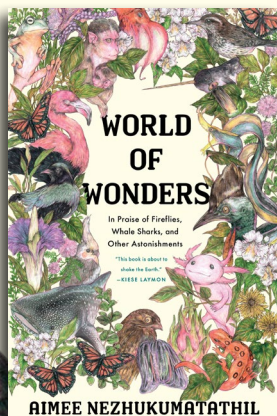


World of Wonders

In Praise of Fireflies, Whale Sharks, and Other Astonishments
by Aimee Nezhukumatathil

Discussion Guide

1. *World of Wonders* is Aimee Nezhukumatathil's first work of nonfiction. How does her background as a poet influence the writing of the book?
2. Nezhukumatathil writes about her identity as an Asian American woman—often seen as an outsider by those around her. In what ways does she come to terms with feeling the pull to 'blend' in with her white classmates and friends?
3. *World of Wonders* speaks to the beauty and surprise of the natural world, along with the responsibility we hold toward it; Nezhukumatathil emphasizes the dangers facing nature as she wrestles with humanity's impact on it. Where does her concern stem from? In what ways do you connect with her message?
4. There is a quality of nostalgia and reflection to *World of Wonders*. What memories resonate with you? As Nezhukumatathil reflects, what does she learn about herself?
5. From her parents teaching her about fireflies to being a professor at the University of Mississippi, Nezhukumatathil's life is highlighted with her dedication to education. How does this dedication translate in her writing?
6. Motherhood is a prominent theme in *World of Wonders*. What is the connection being made between Nezhukumatathil's experience as a mother and the call to protection she feels for her children and the world around her?
7. Nezhukumatathil writes of the influence of her Filipina and Indian heritage. How have culture and the traditions of her family shaped her?
8. *World of Wonders* captures a certain universality about life in each essay—the joy in the little things and the awe found in the world. What images resonate with you? What wonders stand out to you through the reading of this book?
9. Nezhukumatathil moved from one place to another, migrating across the United States, much like the monarch butterflies she writes about. What has this taught her about the importance of home, and what does it teach you?
10. Nezhukumatathil writes, "There is a time for stillness, but who hasn't also wanted to scream with delight at being outdoors?" (95). How do you see these two sides of Nezhukumatathil in her writing?



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