

2022 BOOKS TO BRIDGE THE REGION

Books to Bridge the Region (B2BR) is a reading initiative encompassing the Northwest Indiana counties of Jasper, Lake, La Porte, Newton, Porter, Pulaski and Starke. Its mission is to connect our communities through reading and to promote literacy in our seven counties. It is our hope that families/

communities will read together, and that readers of all ages can enjoy the conversations generated by these books. B2BR is an all-volunteer group whose members represent a variety of organizations and institutions such as universities, adult education, public libraries, literacy organizations/coalitions, book stores, media, etc. B2BR welcomes new members who are interested in promoting literacy and fostering reading among residents of the Calumet Region.

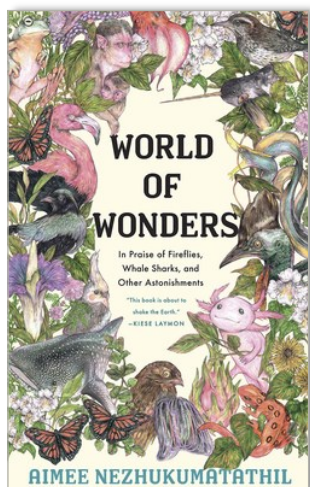
For B2BR's 13th year we will join Indiana Humanities' initiative, ***One State / One Story: World of Wonders: In Praise of Fireflies, Whale Sharks, and Other Astonishments*** as our reading selection. Throughout the year, we'll have opportunities to come together to read, discuss and discover author Aimee Nezhukumatathil's collection of 28 short essays celebrating the natural world and all its wonders.

One State / One Story

One State / One Story: World of Wonders has been made possible through a grant from Indiana Humanities in cooperation with the National Endowment for the Humanities and is offered in partnership with the Indiana State Library and Indiana Center for the Book.



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT
FOR THE HUMANITIES



2022 TITLE: *World of Wonders: In Praise of Fireflies, Whale Sharks, and Other Astonishments* by Aimee Nezhukumatathil

ABOUT THE BOOK:

This is a collection of 28 essays about the natural world, and the way its inhabitants can teach, support, and inspire us. Beautifully illustrated by Fumi Nakamura, each chapter provides a record of the author's own experience as a woman of color living in America by connecting her life experiences with the creatures and plant life she explores.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

As a child, Aimee Nezhukumatathil (neh-ZOO / KOO-mah / tah-TILL) 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, she was able to turn to our world's fierce and funny creatures for guidance.



Aimee Nezhukumatathil; photo by Caroline Beffa Photography. Courtesy of Milkweed Editions.

She has four previous poetry collections: *Oceanic* (Copper Canyon Press, 2018), *Lucky Fish* (2011), *At the Drive-In Volcano* (2007), and *Miracle Fruit* (2003), the last three from Tupelo Press. Her most recent chapbook is *Lace & Pyrite*, a collaboration of epistolary garden poems with the poet Ross Gay. Her writing appears in several literary magazines. 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. **Website:** <https://aimeenez.net/>

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR:

Fumi Nakamura was born in 1984 in a small town outside of Shizuoka, Japan. Fumi grew up surrounded by mountains and the ocean and this environment has had a lasting effect on her work. She moved to the United States just before her 12th birthday with her mother and brother. Fumi spent her teen years in Northern California where she graduated from San Jose State University with a BFA Pictorial Arts degree in 2007. Fumi currently lives in the New York City area where she is a freelance illustrator and designer in addition to being part of Takashi Murakami's KaiKai Kiki production company. **Website:** <http://www.miniminiaturemouse.com/>

READER'S GUIDE: <https://milkweed.org/file/4394/download?token=q-Mk2LsH>

AWARDS AND REVIEWS for *World of Wonder*: Barnes & Noble 2020 Book of the Year; University of Mississippi 2021 Common Read Selection; 2021 Yale School of the Environment Orientation Selection; 2021 Nevada Reads Selection; 2021 Kansas Notable Book; New York Times Best Seller; Kirkus Prize Finalist for Nonfiction; Southern Book Prize Finalist; and on the Best Book of 2020 lists at NPR, Esquire, BookPage, and New York Public Library; Wall Street Journal Holiday Gift Pick for 2020; and many others.

CREDITS: *World of Wonders: In Praise of Fireflies, Whale Sharks, and Other Astonishments* written by Aimee Nezhukumatathil; illustrated by Fumi Nakamura. Cover art of *World of Wonders* courtesy of Milkweed Editions. Photo of Aimee Nezhukumatathil by Caroline Beffa Photography, courtesy of Milkweed Editions.

INDIANA HUMANITIES HAS SELECTED “UNEARTHED” as a new multiyear thematic initiative that encourages Hoosiers to discover and discuss their relationships with the natural world. Unearthed asks participants to discuss these questions:

1. What does Hoosier environmental history reveal about Indiana’s landscape and its people today?
2. How can the humanities help us understand our relationship with the natural world?
3. How does our understanding of nature affect our actions toward the environment?
4. How is environmental change impacting our understanding of humanity’s legacy? Are we being good ancestors?

<https://indianahumanities.org/programs/unearthed/>

<https://indianahumanities.org/community-read-world-of-wonders/>

RECOMMENDED READINGS: Other adult titles that complement this theme:

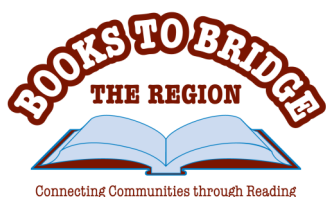
- *Curiositree: Natural World* by A.J. Wood
- *Inside Animal Hearts and Minds: Bears That Count, Goats That Surf, and Other True Stories of Animal Intelligence and Emotion* by Belinda Recio
- *State of Wonder* by Ann Patchett
- *How to Be a Good Creature: A Memoir in 13 Animals* by Sy Montgomery
- *Life on Earth* by David Attenborough
- *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens
- *The Nature of Nature: Why We Need the Wild* by Enric Sala
- *The Overstory: A Novel* by Richard Powers
- *Zoology: Inside the Secret World of Animals* edited by Smithsonian
- *Underwater Wild: My Octopus Teacher's Extraordinary World* by Craig Foster

Some children’s titles that complement this theme:

- *Olwen Finds Her Wings* by Nora Surojegin and Pirkko-Lissa Surojegin
- *Little Narwhal, Not Alone* by Tiffany Stone and Ashlyn Anstee
- *Animal Atlas for Kids: a Visual Journey of Wildlife from Around the World* by Michael A. Dispezio

EVENTS: We encourage you to attend any of the related events presented by Books to Bridge partners throughout Northwest Indiana. These programs may be in person, virtual, or hybrid. They may include book discussions, presentations, and video screenings. We also encourage you to create your own events. If your organization wishes to include your events on the Books to Bridge calendar, please send details to books2bridge@gmail.com

COLORING SHEET BOOKMARKS: Books to Bridge the Region is pleased to present a coloring book and coloring sheet bookmarks of original illustrations by **Robert Bussie**, librarian at the Lowell Public Library. Inspired by the creatures featured in *World of Wonders*, Bussie’s playful illustrations are perfect for children who want to explore nature. The bookmarks may be downloaded at <https://books2bridge.org/>



Thank you to our funder, Purdue University Northwest.

Take a moment to Like us on Facebook!

Visit www.books2bridge.org to see upcoming events, as well as resources from past years:



2007: “Our Choices, Our World”

2008: “Journeys and Quests”

2009: “Family Matters”

2010: “Put Your Nose in a Book, NW!”

2011: “Learning From Our Past; Empowering Our Future”

2012: “Where in the World Are You From?”

2013: “Forces of Nature: What Would YOU Do?”

2014: “Ordinary Heroes, Extraordinary Deeds”

2015: “Secrets We Keep”

2016: “Read IN-diana”

2018: One State/One Story: *Frankenstein*

2019: “Be True to You”