



Nevada Humanities Announces Book Selections for 2021 Nevada Reads Program

Free programming featuring books by authors Kendra Atleework and Aimee Nezhukumatathil to take place throughout Nevada in 2021

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 13, 2021—LAS VEGAS, Nev—Nevada Humanities has announced the book selections for its statewide 2021 *Nevada Reads* program. *Nevada Reads* will feature two memoirs—[*Miracle Country: A Memoir*](#) by Kendra Atleework, and [*World of Wonders: In Praise of Fireflies, Whale Sharks, and Other Astonishments*](#) by Aimee Nezhukumatathil. Programming featuring the selected books will take place throughout the state in 2021, including online book clubs, outdoor adventures, virtual discussions and workshops, and community partnership-led initiatives. Program details will be announced throughout the year. *Nevada Reads* is a statewide book club that invites Nevadans to read selected works of literature and then come together in their communities to share ideas and perceptions inspired by the books they have read. Visit nevadahumanities.org for news and information.

“2021 is a year of rebuilding and recovery for all of us. This is a year to emphasize the human story, and we have chosen these two memoirs to remind us of the importance of wonder and the value of listening and looking closely at our many natural landscapes and outdoor places during moments of difficulty and hardship,” said Christina Barr, executive director of Nevada Humanities. “We are excited to present new *Nevada Reads* programming opportunities that will impart a greater appreciation of the natural world and remind us of our responsibilities to the land and one another.”

Nevada Reads is a program of Nevada Humanities and is made possible with support from Nevada State Library, Archives, and Public Records; the Institute of Museum and Library Services; and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Those interested in reading the 2021 *Nevada Reads* books and participating in the scheduled programming are encouraged to request the books at their public library or purchase them now. Books will soon be available for borrowing from libraries across the state, throughout the year. Book descriptions and information about their respective authors follows.

***Miracle Country: A Memoir* by Kendra Atleework, Workman Publishing.**

Kendra Atleework grew up in Swall Meadows, in the Owens Valley of the eastern Sierra Nevada, a beautiful, if harsh, landscape, prone to wildfires, blizzards, and gale-force winds. After Kendra’s mother died of a rare autoimmune disease when Kendra was just 16, her once-beloved desert world came to feel empty and hostile, as climate change, drought, and wildfires intensified. The Atleework family fell apart, even as her father tried to keep them together. Kendra escaped to Los Angeles, and then Minneapolis, land of tall trees, full lakes, water everywhere you look. But after years of avoiding her troubled hometown, she realized that she needed to come to terms with its past and present and had to go back. *Miracle Country* is a moving and unforgettable memoir of flight and return, emptiness and bounty, the realities of a harsh and changing climate, and the true meaning of home.

Kendra Atleework was born and raised on the dry edge of California at the eastern base of the Sierra Nevada mountains. She moved away for a decade, mostly spent being homesick and researching the

place she left behind—the product of which is *Miracle Country*. She is the recipient of the Ellen Meloy Desert Writers Award and was selected for *The Best American Essays*, edited by Ariel Levy. She received her MFA in creative writing from the University of Minnesota and now lives in her hometown of Bishop, California.

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

Aimee Nezhukumatathil is the author of the *New York Times* best-selling collection of illustrated nature essays, *World of Wonders: In Praise of Fireflies, Whale Sharks, and Other Astonishments*, finalist for the Kirkus Prize in non-fiction. She also has published four award-winning poetry collections and other awards for her writing include fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, Mississippi Arts Council, Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters Award for poetry, and the National Endowment of the Arts. Her writing has appeared in the *New York Times Magazine*, *ESPN*, and twice in *Best American Poetry*. She is professor of English and Creative Writing in the University of Mississippi’s MFA program.

About Nevada Humanities, Nevada Reads, and Nevada Center for the Book:

Nevada Humanities is one of 56 independent, nonprofit state and territorial humanities councils affiliated with the National Endowment for the Humanities. With offices in Reno and Las Vegas, Nevada Humanities creates public programs and supports public projects statewide that define the Nevada experience and facilitate the exploration of issues that matter to the people of Nevada and their communities. For more information about Nevada Humanities visit nevadahumanities.org.

Nevada Reads and **Nevada Center for the Book** are programs of Nevada Humanities that are made possible with support from Nevada State Library, Archives, and Public Records; the Institute of Museum and Library Services; and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Library of Congress’ *Center for the Book* promotes books and libraries, literacy and reading, and poetry and literature.

To learn more about Nevada Humanities, *Nevada Reads*, and *Nevada Center for the Book*, visit nevadahumanities.org. Download the **Nevada Reads media kit** at: nevadahumanities.org/press-room.

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