It’s useful to think of wonder as both an action and an emotion. For example, to wonder is to ponder, be curious, explore, consider, and ruminate. To wonder is to fathom ideas and concepts that require time and contemplation to comprehend; wonder is the motivation that pushes us to examine and explore the world we live in. To quote Adam Smith: “Wonder, therefore, and not the expectation of advantage from its discoveries, is the first principle which prompts [human beings] to the study of Philosophy, of that science which pretends to lay open the concealed connections that unite the various appearance of nature” (*The History of Astronomy*, 1795). To experience “wonder,” then, as an emotion or state of being, is to be struck by the rare or unexpected, the vast and unexplained – to be enamored by the workings of that which we strive and struggle to understand. It is a condition that is characterized by pleasure and delight rather than fear or frustration; and thus, it is a state we should endeavor to find ourselves in as often as possible.

Poet Aimee Nezhukumatathil, our ACTC Visiting Writer from October 14-16, engages wonder often in her work through encounters with nature, but she also ponders the small, seemingly mundane daily parts of life with a sense of wonderment. Many poets do this – the act of making strange, of turning something we think we know into something we have not ever truly encountered before. This transformation can be wonderful, and can make us see our world in new and amazing ways. As the Romanticists have shown us in their work, this act of imaginative transformation echoes the unique perception of childhood, and thus, it would seem that children’s literature would be a fruitful realm to find wonder present. Other texts that could work with wonder might include those that depict the interface between human beings and nature, science, technology, or the divine.

**Fall 2013 Events**

**Monday, October 14, 2013**  
Aimee Nezhukumatathil Poetry Reading  
7:30pm, Anderson Student Center Woulfe Alumni Hall North

Poet Aimee Nezhukumatathil read selections of poetry from her three most recently published collections: *Miracle Fruit* (2003), *At the Drive-In Volcano* (2007), and *Lucky Fish* (2011), all published by Tupelo Press. A book signing was held immediately following the reading.
Tuesday, October 15, 2013
Aimee Nezhukumatathil Craft Lecture for ENGL 121 Students
7:30pm, O'Shaughnessy Educational Center Auditorium

ACTC Visiting Writer Aimee Nezhukumatathil lectured on the theme of wonder and discussed how she incorporates her own sense of wonder into her poetry. This lecture is available as a streaming video.

Wednesday, October 16, 2013
Film: Beasts of the Southern Wild (2012, 93 minutes)
7:00pm, JRC 126 Auditorium

Directed by Benh Zeitlin and adapted from Lucy Alibar’s one-act play, Juicy and Delicious, this magically provocative and controversial film places the curiosity and wonder of a little girl amid violence, poverty, indifference, and the harrowing specter of the end of the world.