

## ***Patches of Godlight***

*by Janette Fernando*

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### **Reviewed by Ian Keast**

*Any patch of sunlight in a dark and deep wood will show you something about the sun which you would never get from reading books on astronomy. These pure and spontaneous pleasures are 'patches of Godlight' in the woods of our experience. CS Lewis, Letters to Malcolm*

*Religions are poems. They concert  
our daylight and dreaming mind, our  
emotions, instinct, breath, and native gesture*

*into the only whole thinking: poetry.  
Nothing's said till it's dreamed out in words...  
Les Murray, Poetry and Religion*

The cover painting by Pieter Ridder, superbly represents CS Lewis' quote which provides the title for Janette Fernando's collection, ***Patches of Godlight***, - 'poems, prayers, contemplations'. Her Introduction provides her own biographical material, and the background for this collection. Travelling to Holland in 1995, to trace family roots, she decided to keep a journal :  
*'My journal took the form of letters to God, and I have continued writing occasional entries ever since. I've reflected on a diversity of topics and feelings...ways of seeing God and seeing myself'.*

***Patches of Godlight***, is a personal, inspiring and honest encounter with life, in all its shades and hues, in God's world. Much is covered- travels to Europe, various parts of Australia, relationships, faith, questions about light and dark- through a variety of text- journal, (in letters to God), many photos, as well as poetry. The book's impact owes much to the layout and design by Cameron Semmens.

As an example, I am drawn to the sensitive reactions to the events on September 11, 2001.

*From the letter to God, ...Ashes to ashes, and dust to dust-the dust everywhere, whether natural or manmade, as our towers of Babylon have crumbled, and it's what we'll return to. Your feet were sandalled in dust as you walked with us, among us, one of us. A shaft of sunlight shows the myriad specks of dust that are so often invisible in our lives...*

From the poem, *September 11*,

*The damned dust of death  
settles over New York  
unsettles the world*

*Twin towers of Babel  
surrender to terror  
their feet made of clay...*

*The phoenix will rise  
but what will it look like  
-a bird bringing peace?*

The strength of image and word is evident in ***Patches of Godlight***.