



# Natural Wonders : A Novel

Angela Woodward, Foreword by Stacey Levine



Winner of the FC2 Catherine Doctorow Innovative Fiction Prize. In *Natural Wonders*, Jenny is given the task of assembling a memorial edition of her recently deceased husband Jonathans lecture series about the physical history of the earth. With little knowledge of his work or of Jonathan himself, Jenny constructs from his fragmentary and disorganized notes her own version of our planets past. Presented as a series of lectures, Jennys earth history is an amalgam of stories from science and about scientists—a Serbian mathematician and his theory of the ice ages, a Swiss doctor camped on a glacier, the mysterious *materia pinguis* thought to have drifted down from stars to form fossils. Into these stories she interweaves scenes from their marriage as well as material she finds on Jonathans shelves. In her history, an explanation of continental drift becomes enmeshed with a schoolboys erotic encounter with an older woman. Icebergs in an Andean lake launch a womans jealous affair with a third-rate actor, and H. G. Wellss Island of Dr. Moreau is dramatically recounted in new form. *Natural Wonders* mixes mythology, popular fiction, and a misfired romance with the story of the earth hurtling around the sun. From intimately human to geologic to cosmic, it explores change, love, and loss.