Gardens of Fire
An investigative memoir
by Robert Kenny

Both an intensely personal memoir of loss and recovery, and a meditative analysis on the human relationship with fire, Gardens of Fire is an extraordinary book with a terrible beauty.

The Black Saturday bushfires of 7 February 2009 were the most catastrophic in Australia’s history; one hundred and seventy three people lost their lives and over two thousand homes were destroyed.

In Redesdale, Robert Kenny was prepared with a sound fire plan, but the reality of the fire was more ferocious and more unpredictable than he could have imagined – by the end of the day, his house and the life contained within were gone.

Gardens of Fire extends his experience of watching his life go up in flames to an investigation of the idea that, as humans, we are children of fire.

This is a remarkable and compelling narrative that explores European and Aboriginal mythologies of fire and the pragmatics of the fire of the hearth, alongside contemporary Australian building codes and the community response to Black Saturday.

‘...a tapestry of personal testimony, historical meditation and mythological reflection that is brilliant, moving and powerful.’ – Tom Griffiths, author of Forests of Ash

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Robert Kenny is an Australian poet and historian whose previous book, The Lamb Enters the Dreaming, won the 2008 Prime Minister’s Prize for Australian History, the Victorian Premier’s History prize and the Australian Historical Association’s W. H. Hancock Prize. He has published widely on the history of religion and science, as well as several volumes of poetry and fiction.

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ISBN 9781742585109
$29.99 pb 260 pages