



WATERPROOF,
LIGHTWEIGHT,
GOOD IN
SNOW

Favel Parrett

That white boggled eye is on me, the other turned up wrong—a slither poking out from under the lid.

I feel sick.

‘She likes you,’ he says. Her father—drunk and sweaty and drinking more.

The girl punches my shoe, screeches loud like a monkey. I get out a notepad and pen, set them down on the floor and

I'm cold now. All the sweat from the long trek to the village is making me cold. I take a sip of butter tea. Hot and salty—the fat stays on my lips, coats my mouth and tongue.

'She doesn't speak,' he says. Her father—sitting cross-legged on the wide wooden boards.

She picks up the pen, scribbles hard packed circles of black lines. She punches my shoe. I turn the page, another fast scribble, another scream. I turn the page.

'I took her to Thimphu. Two days walk, then the bus. They said take her to Calcutta but I cannot afford it.'

She stops scribbling and there's that eye again.

'She has a hole in her heart. She will die and I will cremate her.'

Her face is about as close as it can get to my face now. That eye right in my face.

Look at me. I am here. I'm not dead.

Then she's gone. Crawls over to her father and plops down in the crook of his cross-legged knee. Like a seat, like a throne, she sits up straight with her arms to the sky.

'I will cremate her.'

I look down at my shoes. My brand new Colorado hiking shoes—waterproof, lightweight, good in snow. I didn't even need to break them in. They were perfect straight out of the box.

Favel Parrett is a Victorian writer who loves to surf in the Southern Ocean. She was recently awarded a mentorship from the Australian Society of Authors and is working on her first novel, *Crack wattle*.
