



# Light, Descending: A Novel of John Ruskin

*Octavia Randolph*

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## **A Tale of Art and Obsession - Historical Novel Society Indie Novel of 2015 Longlisted**

*Includes Book Group Discussion Guide*

*Light, Descending* brings to life Victorian art and social critic John Ruskin (1819-1900), a passionate and tormented genius whose career as art critic, social reformer, and benefactor and nemesis to some of the greatest names of 19th century art ended in near-universal public acclaim and madness.

Octavia Randolph, author of the best-selling *The Circle of Ceridwen Saga*, portrays Ruskin's artistic genius, political struggles, and frustrated private passions in a vivid and haunting recounting of the great man's life. From his life-long defence of the painter JMW Turner, to Ruskin's unconsummated marriage to Effie Gray, to his patronage of artists Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his fiancée, Lizzie Siddal, and Lizzie's death by self-administered drug overdose; to Ruskin's love affair with the teenaged Rose LaTouche, and her early death, which broke Ruskin's mind; and the infamous libel trial brought against Ruskin by James McNeill Whistler, *Light, Descending* sweeps the reader from bustling London to a decaying Venice to wild Alpine heights as it chronicles Ruskin's ecstatic triumphs and blighted happiness.

Based on letters, diary entries, and Ruskin's own voluminous published writings, and peopled with some of the most compelling personalities of the 19th century, *Light, Descending* is a tour-de-force novel about the man Mohandas Gandhi said "made me transform my life."

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