

TÉA MUTONJI SHUT UP, YOU'RE PRETTY



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Winner of the Edmund White Award for Debut Fiction; Finalist for the Rogers Writers' Trust of Canada Fiction Prize; Finalist for the Publishing Triangle Award; a Globe and Mail and The Walrus Best Book of the Year

In Tea Mutonji's disarming debut, a woman contemplates her Congolese traditions during a family wedding, a teenage girl looks for happiness inside a pack of cigarettes, a mother reconnects with her daughter through their shared interest in fish, and a young woman decides to shave her head in the waiting room of an abortion clinic. These punchy, sharply observed stories blur the lines between longing and choosing, exploring the narrator's experience as an involuntary one. Tinged with pathos and humour, they interrogate the moments in which femininity, womanness, and identity are not only questioned but also imposed.

Shut Up You're Pretty is the first book to be published under the imprint VS. Books, a series of books curated and edited by writer-musician Vivek Shraya featuring work by new and emerging Indigenous or Black writers, or writers of colour.

TÉA MUTONJI is an award-winning poet and writer. Born in Congo-Kinshasa, she now lives and writes in Scarborough, Ontario where she was named emerging writer of the year (2017) by the Ontario Book Publishers Organization. *Shut Up You're Pretty* is her first book.

Praise for SHUT UP, YOU'RE PRETTY

The stories are vivid and unsettling in their detail... Mutonji writes with grit and quick-witted humour. The ease with which these stories unfold is a facet of the author's craft: the prose holds its emotion in the same way the characters hold their pain. -*Quill and Quire* (STARRED REVIEW)

A sense of assuredness permeates Mutonji's writing in *Shut Up You're Pretty*. Through a series of 18 strikingly raw vignettes, Loli's identity flows like the Congolese river she is named after. -*Toronto Star*

Shut Up You're Pretty is a chronicle of millennial malaise, gendered and seaming with a discontent that does not sleep on the status quo of any page. Tea Mutonji is a writer who is assured and measured with a style all her own, holding a hand up to greats like Hurston and Kincaid. She takes back the 21st century in this delicious feast of stories as vivid and taut as they are understated. --Canisia Lubrin, author of *Voodoo Hypothesis* and *augur*

Tea Mutonji's timely, original, and absorbing stories compose a shattered and shattering bildungsroman. Her lyric, dramatically charged fragments are linked by rich and vital prose, captivating and urgent storytelling, and an eye for the strange and striking detail. Probing the mundane, the traumatic, and all the struggles in between with authenticity, intelligence, and art, *Shut Up You're Pretty* is a stunning debut. -Daniel Scott Tysdal, author of *Predicting the Next Big Advertising Breakthrough Using a Potentially Dangerous Method*

Each story is a separate, richly-described glimpse into an aspect of the protagonist's life, and together they form a whole picture of a young woman who is struggling to understand herself and her world. -*Book Riot*

This book asks us to witness the journey of a girl into womanhood, holding in her arms the fragile understandings of femininity as a commodity, femininity as a caretaker, femininity as a storyteller. Dulled by the residue of trauma and sharpened by the expectations of the streets, Tea's characters are painfully and beautifully rendered in these gritty, must-read stories. --Catherine Hernandez, author of *Scarborough*

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