FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Newly translated work from the National Book Award–nominated

**Scholastique Mukasonga**

**IGIFU**

Translated from the French by Jordan Stump

In this new collection of short stories, Scholastique Mukasonga examines Rwanda through the habits, alliances, superstitions, and rituals that make up her characters’ lives, before and after the genocide. In one story, a child observes his father tenderly caring for his herd of cows, protecting them from poisonous plants, steep slopes, and cunning cattle thieves; teasing nearby cowherds about the superior health of his herd; bringing them fresh water from a nearby spring. In another, a woman begins to reckon with the loss of her entire family in the genocide first by attending the funerals of strangers and then by returning to Rwanda and to the place where she was raised. The gentleness of shared daily labor comes into sharp relief against the bitter meaninglessness of mass murder. Mukasonga masterfully renders these contrasts, and the many shades of life that come between them, in five sharply drawn stories, translated here for the first time into English.

**Praise for Igifu**

Haunted though they are by the memory of the unspeakable atrocities visited on her family and her people, these stories by Scholastique Mukasonga breathe upon a vanished world and bring it to life in all its sparkling multifariousness.
— J. M. Coetzee

A profound love of family and the Tutsi tradition infuses, suffuses, and animates Mukasonga's stories of the Rwandan genocide, the slaughter of her people. To mention "love" in the same sentence with "genocide" may appear odd, even indecent, but Mukasonga's brilliant writing (translated excellently by Jordan Stump) encompasses the two.
— Lynne Tillman

Mukasonga carefully attends to how individuals’ attempts to negotiate unspeakable tragedy can lead to sad, odd, and even grimly funny situations . . . Igifu is full of deeply human moments. Taken as a whole, it's an impressive and affecting work of art.
— *Publishers Weekly*, Starred Review

Reminiscent at times of Iris Origo, Mukasonga writes with world-weary matter-of-factness, her stories understated testimonials to the worst of times. Elegant and elegiac stories that speak to loss, redemption, and endless sorrow.
— *Kirkus*

**Praise for The Barefoot Woman**

*The Barefoot Woman* is simultaneously a powerful work of witness and memorial, a loving act of reconstruction, and an unflinching reckoning with the Rwandan Civil War. In sentences of great beauty and restraint, Mukasonga rescues a million souls from the collective noun 'genocide,' returning them to us as individual human beings who lived, laughed, meddled in each other’s affairs, worked, decorated their houses, raised children, told stories. An essential and powerful read.
— Zadie Smith
Mukasonga is a master of subtle shifts in register — a skill inherited, perhaps, from the Rwandan traditions of intricate courtesy and assiduous privacy that Stefania maintained. She turns everything over restlessly: In her prose, poignant reminiscences sharpen into bitter ironies, or laments reveal flashes of comedy, determination, defiance.

Radiant with love… The Barefoot Woman powerfully continues the tradition of women’s work it so lovingly recounts. In Mukasonga’s village, the women were in charge of the fire. They stoked it, kept it going all night, every night. In her work — six searing books and counting — she has become the keeper of the flame.
— Parul Sehgal, The New York Times

The Barefoot Woman is an elegiac tribute by Scholastique Mukasonga both to her mother, Stefania — the focal point of the book — and to what life was like for Tutsi residents in Rwanda before the devastating 1994 genocide… Ultimately, The Barefoot Woman is meant to serve as its own marker, not only of the atrocities that have been committed but also of the people these acts attempted to erase.
— Li Zhou, Vox

Born in Rwanda in 1956, Scholastique Mukasonga experienced from childhood the violence and humiliation of the ethnic conflicts that shook her country. In 1960, her family was displaced to the Bugesera district of Rwanda. Mukasonga was later forced to flee to Burundi. She settled in France in 1992, only two years before the brutal genocide of the Tutsi swept through Rwanda. In the aftermath, Mukasonga learned that 37 of her family members had been massacred. Her first novel, Our Lady of the Nile, won the 2014 French Voices Award, the Prix Renaudot, was shortlisted for the 2016 International Dublin Literary award, and in 2019 was adapted into a film by Atiq Rahimi. In 2017, her memoir Cockroaches was a finalist for the LA Times Charles Isherwood Prize. In 2019, The Barefoot Woman was a finalist for the National Book Award for Translation.

Jordan Stump has received the 2001 French-American Foundation’s Translation Prize, and in 2006, was named Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. He has translated the work of Marie NDaiye, Eric Chevillard, Marie Redonnet, Patrick Modiano, Honoré de Balzac, and Jules Verne, among others. He is a professor of French literature at the University of Nebraska.

To set up an interview with Scholastique Mukasonga, please write to Sarah Gale at sarah@archipelagobooks.org.

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by Scholastique Mukasonga
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