

Born with a congenital muscle disorder, Shaka spends her days in her room in a care home outside Tokyo, relying on an electric wheelchair to get around and a ventilator to breathe. But if Shaka's physical life is limited, her quick, mischievous mind has no boundaries: She takes e-learning courses on her iPad, publishes explicit fantasies on websites, and anonymously troll-tweets to see if anyone is paying attention ("In another life, I'd like to work as a high-class prostitute"). One day, she tweets into the void an offer of an enormous sum of money for a sperm donor. To Shaka's surprise, her new nurse accepts the dare, unleashing a series of events that will forever change Shaka's sense of herself as a woman in the world.

Hunchback has shaken Japanese literary culture with its skillful depiction of the physical body and its unrepentant humor. Winner of the prestigious Akutagawa Prize, it's a feminist story about the dignity of an individual who insists on her right to make choices for herself, no matter the consequences. Formally creative and refreshingly unsentimental, *Hunchback* depicts the joy, anger, and desires of a woman demanding autonomy in a world that doesn't always grant it to people like her. Full of wit, bite, and heart, this unforgettable novel reminds us all of the full potential of our lives, regardless of the limitations we experience.

SAOU ICHIKAWA graduated from the School of Human Sciences, Waseda University. Her bestselling debut novel, *Hunchback*, won the Bungakukai Prize for New Writers, and she is the first author with a physical disability to receive the Akutagawa Prize, one of Japan's top literary awards. She has congenital myopathy and uses a ventilator and an electric wheelchair. Ichikawa lives outside Tokyo.

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READ BY YURIRI NAKA



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AUDIO

SAOU ICHIKAWA

HUNCHBACK

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