

BEAUTIFUL AND UGLY TOO is a firsthand account of life in the Crescent City told through poetry and essays. A third-generation New Orleanian, author Chuck Perkins was born and raised in the Pigeon Town neighborhood. This, his first collection of poetry, aims to provide an authentic description of living in New Orleans from the perspective of the Black working poor and an in-depth understanding of this unique city's history and culture. It also zooms out to offer a broader perspective of both race and class, as well as themes that connect us all as human beings.

Through it all, these poems do not glorify or vilify—they underscore the fact that nothing is perfect, we are all beautiful and ugly too.

“Chuck’s long-overdue collection of the poetry . . . makes no apologies. He is the stone and the butterfly raging against ‘the soulless marriage of unfettered avarice and technology’ and with equal force shouting out with ‘optimistic eyes’ the beauty he finds in the darkest corners of struggling existence, most especially his beloved New Orleans.”

—Marc Kelly Smith, poet, founder of the poetry slam movement in 1980s Chicago

“Chuck Perkins shows NOLA mojo from inside a Black man’s eyes, ears, heart. His sweet prose is memoir-strong, folklore-filled, with New Orleans traditions, fears, and fun. A fine storyteller.”

—Dr. Mona Lisa Saloy, Louisiana Poet Laureate 2021–2023

“From Congo Square to crack houses, jazz funerals to Tchoupitoulas Street, Chuck Perkins explores, in these evocative poems, the beautiful and the ugly of the world and our hometown of New Orleans.”

—Walter S. Isaacson, journalist, historian, and author of *The Innovators*

“In this marvelous collection, [Perkins] serves up a delicious portion of New Orleans imagery. But he counters that romanticism with a distasteful mouthful of drunkenness, despair, and undeniable racial inequity. In Perkins’s witty, word-hungry telling, his hometown is, well, ‘beautiful and ugly too.’”

—Doug MacCash, arts and culture writer for Nola.com and the *Times-Picayune*

“Chuck Perkins’s verses draw from the city’s ancient blues. . . . Like the city’s finest musicians, Perkins is able to capture the survivors’ humor and spirit of resistance with words that hit like uppercuts.”

—Jonathan Fischer, German journalist for *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*

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