

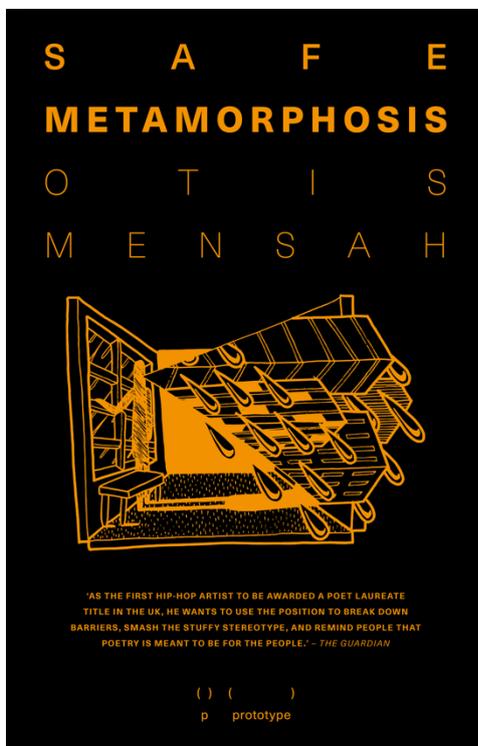
PRESS RELEASE: POETRY

# Safe Metamorphosis

Otis Mensah

Published: 15 June 2020 | Price: £10.00 paperback | ISBN: 978-1-913513-02-3  
Foreword by Magid Magid

**‘Otis represents all that is great about Sheffield, he’s dynamic, skilful and radical.’**  
*Magid Magid, former Lord Mayor of Sheffield*



*Safe Metamorphosis* is the debut poetry collection from Hip-Hop artist and spoken word poet Otis Mensah, Sheffield's first Poet Laureate.

Mensah's work challenges dominant modes of masculinity, and disrupts the elitism of poetry through its accessible, honest, raw and intimate language and rhythms. Free from the constraints of convention, Mensah writes in his own, unique voice, layered with rhythm and surreal imagery, unified by its fearless commitment to emotional honesty and its openness about the power and cost of creativity.

*Safe Metamorphosis* explores the transformations experienced in everyday life and the unspoken traumas caused by the uprooting of self as we are thrust from one identity-building state to another. The trauma of leaving school, 'growing up', the demise of a romantic relationship, the loss of faith in a purpose: common, formative experiences too often dismissed. The poems in explore metamorphoses at different points of our journey into adulthood, addressing the ways in which the associated upheaval of change and lost identity alters our sense of self and relationships with others.

For Mensah, poetry and Hip-Hop are a stimulus for philosophical reflection and introspection, and the poems in *Safe Metamorphosis* welcome us into the imaginative and highly observant mind of an artist committed to the healing and unifying power of communication.



**Otis Mensah**, self-proclaimed mum's house philosopher and rap psalmist, offers an alternative take on contemporary Hip-Hop and spoken word. Endeavouring to shed light on existential commonalities through vulnerable expression, Otis's work reads like a stream of consciousness, using aesthetic language to paint worlds of thought. Otis continues to release music independently, taking creative projects like Rap Poetics to the stage around the UK and Europe, as well as making his debut at Glastonbury Music Festival. Throughout his career, Otis has opened for heavyweights like Benjamin Zephaniah, Arrested Development, The Sugarhill Gang, Wu-Tang Clan affiliate Killah Priest, Lowkey, Open Mike Eagle, Chali 2na and Blu & Exile.

## Praise for *Safe Metamorphosis*

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'As the first Hip-Hop artist to be awarded a poet laureate title in the UK, he wants to use the position to break down barriers, smash the stuffy stereotype, and remind people that poetry is meant to be for the people.'

– **The Guardian**

'Mensah's voice orbits the poetics of hip-hop and spoken word, moving through modes of storytelling, social commentary, reflection and meditation. In the poem 'Daydream' he writes "Our dreams are worth much more than the attention we pay them." Here we find the beginnings of an urgent and dynamic new writer who brings to the page an innovative and acute sense of self, along with the wider world he embodies.'

– **Anthony Anaxagorou**

'Emerging from outside of the London echo-chamber, Otis Mensah's work has an old soul, but feels fresher than anything I've read this year. Complex and conscious yet accessible, it stands on the shoulders of all your favourite multi-syllabic emcees and vigorous poets from the last thirty years.'

– **Johny Pitts**

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### About Prototype

Prototype was founded in 2019 by Jess Chandler, co-founder of the independent publishing houses Test Centre and House Sparrow Press.

Established to continue and develop the work begun by Test Centre, Prototype is committed to creating new possibilities in the publishing of fiction and poetry through a flexible, interdisciplinary approach. Through the discovery of high-quality work across genres, Prototype strives to increase audiences for experimental writing.

*Safe Metamorphosis* is a key title in Prototype's growing poetry list, following collections by Astrid Alben, Ahren Warner and Robert Herbert McClean, and with titles forthcoming from Emily Critchley, Stephen Watts, Sophie Collins and Caleb Klaces.

Test Centre's back catalogue includes works by Derek Jarman, Max Porter, Iain Sinclair, Sam Riviere, Sophie Collins, Jack Underwood, Rachael Allen, Stephen Watts, Holly Pester, Wayne Holloway-Smith, Chris Torrance and Jonathan Meades.

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