



THE AGENCY FOR ARABIC LITERATURE RAYA

FALL OF
TWO THOUSAND AND TWENTY-TWO

| NEW TO THE LIST

Mansoura EZ ELDIN The orchards of Basra

Hisham Al Khattab is Yazid ibn Abih. At least he thinks he is. Some 13 centuries separate the two, but in the despaired mind of Hisham Al Khattab, and through the magical power of dreams, Hisham is Yazid. In this almost historical fiction, dream and reality are one and the same, and the boundaries between reason and madness are dangerously shifting.

Khaled ALESMAEL Selamlik

Depicted as a story of curiosity and lust in the German press, Selamlik, autobiographic fiction by Alesmael, tells the journey of Furat from his home in Syria, to Sweden, via Turkey. A tragic tale, yet a tone characterized by its lightheartedness, its irony, and its outright humor.

Khalil ALREZ A sleepless giraffe in Damascus

The narrator has been living in the zoo of Damascus for a while, occupying a room with his girlfriend Nonna, on the rooftop of a small building. The narrator, Nonna, and the giraffe, by far the zoo's most popular figure, form a strange, yet happy family. Set in the margins of the Syrian civil war, the novel depicts a group of colorful people, trying, naturally, to hang on to joy and to life

Samar YAZBEK The wind's abode

Samar Yazbek comes back to one of her favorite topics: the marginalized rural community's transformation, its aesthetics and its faith. While the Syrian war indubitably offers the framework of this story, its heart is elsewhere. With this poignant story, Yazbek writes about the beauty and the cruelty of life, the destruction of worldly beauty and kindness, but also its resilience, the power of nature, and the elevation of the soul.

| FEATURED

Ahmed AWNI Some achieve greatness

The satirical coming of age story (or not) of a 30 year old privileged Egyptian man, on the back drop of the massive Egyptian revolution

Youssef FADEL The life of butterflies

Casablanca in the 1980s, Habiba and Salem, two siblings in their forties, are about to live their last week. One incident, in each case, will start a chain of events that will precipitate them to their deaths.

| KEEP AN EYE ON

Kamel AL RIAHI One night in Tunis (The Gorilla)

Alberto Manguel: "Kamel Rihai has dreamt up a political fable that is part a postcolonial King Kong, part a lewd Alice in Wonderland"

Jabbour DOUAIHY The King of India

A detective story set on the background of family and sectarian feuds, The king of India, explores with the right dose of irony, the meaning of attachment to the homeland.

Khaled KHALIFA No one prayed over their graves

Following the life story of two inseparable friends, Hannah and Zakaria, from the mid 19th to the mid 20th century in Aleppo, No one prayed over their graves, reveals a buzzing, multiconfessional, libertine, tolerant society, coming to grips with the various forms of death.

Aziz MOHAMMED The critical case of Mr. K

Insightful and sarcastic, this powerful story of a young man diagnosed with leukemia tackles modern Arab life. Shortlisted for the International Prize of Arabic Fiction 2018.

MISSING PICTURE



Fiction

Sura mafquda
A. Al Atawna
Dar al Saqi, Beirut, 2019
160 pages

SOLD RIGHTS

Sonia Draga, Poland (2021)
Lenos, Germany (2021)
Tohum Yayıncılık, Turkey (to appear)
Interlink, USA (to appear)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

Detailed synopsis.
Arabic PDF.
English translation sample.

AWARDS & DISTINCTIONS

This novel is the recipient of the AFAC grant for creative writing.

AL ATAWNA Asma



BIO

Born in Gaza in 1978, Asma Al Atawna is a Palestinian bedouin from the desert of Al Naqb, and a French citizen resident of Toulouse since 2001. Graduate of English literature from the University of Al Azhar, she then obtained her masters in geopolitics from Sciences Po, in Toulouse. While in Gaza, Asma worked at the Spanish press agency EFE. Today, she is a member of the board at the institute for experimental arts La Petite, in the cinema domain. Al Atawna is noticed for her involvement in art and gender issues.

SOME OTHER WORKS

Missing picture is Al Atawna's first novel

| PRESS

| Al Araby, Maha Hassan Off the beaten track. Asma Al Atawna does not quench the thirst of the reader who expects to find a Palestinian novel abounding in the vocabulary of the Arab-Israeli struggle and struggle. Rather, she presents her individual suffering as a woman eager for freedom within a society that, while it is experiencing the crisis of occupation, and all its horrible details, (...) is traditional and conservative, suffocating its women... She also blows up the clichés in which the Western reader is tempted to frame Palestinian women come from a camp - like a saint. **A novel written truthfully, bravely without any fear of confrontation**

| Amnesty Journal The courageous report of a woman who simply wants to be free. It is also a relentless description of the living conditions in Gaza, which are especially unbearable for women and girls.

| Der Tagesspiegel Al-Atawna describes the archaic structures of her homeland, but also the humiliations of the occupying army. Asmaa's struggle for her individual freedom provides astonishing insights into a world that we know little pointing to the Europeans who only see what they want to see.

| SUMMARY

Told in the first person, Asma Al Atawna's debut novel captures with beautiful and surprising honesty the life of an eponym young woman. The novel, is in two parts. The first part, entitled "Go away" starts with the tale of her escaping the open air prison that Gaza in Palestine has become. The second part, "Come back", goes over her childhood and late teens, until she decides to escape.

In the first part of the novel, Asma describes the way in which she was able to leave, with the help of her boyfriend Jose, a Spanish archeologist. The young couple lives in Madrid with Jose's parents, until he decides to become an Imam, and to marry her. Feeling trapped, and thinking that she did not leave one prison for another, Asma seeks help from her French friend Jean-Jacques, a correspondent she had helped back in Gaza.

Eventually, Asma finds her way into French society. But whoever she is with, Asma seems to represent the Palestinian cause: Some feeling obliged to express their sympathy, others feeling the need to tell her that Israelis are also entitled to a life, and that the only solution to the conflict is the two-state solution. Though of course she is a supporter of her people's cause, Asma is not a hero who fled home to speak for her people or to find a solution to the conflict. A rebel since her childhood, Asma wanted to escape her father, his public beating and humiliations, her prying

neighbors, and her older sister's fate. She wanted to live her life the way she wanted, in a small space she could say was hers.

The second part of the novel brings us back to the mid 1980's, where we meet Asma as a 9 or 10 years old child. A tomboy, Asma is part of a boy's gang. They meet in a nearby orchard in secret. There, she rides on Rami's motorbike, as she proudly tells the girls at school, and climbs on trees. She usually succeeds in concealing her whereabouts, and cunningly escapes her mother's surveillance, but not always. In these cases, the beating gets severe...

Both enlightened by her ultimate successful escape, childhood dreams and sweet friendships, and saddened by poverty, despair and the violence of the Israeli occupation that reverberates all the way into intimate human relations, Al Atawna's novel is a surprising read: honest, lucid and perspicuous. The author captures details of daily life that flesh out the people and the life in Gaza extremely vividly. As if always slightly offbeat, Asma provides us with a precious insight. Through Asma the adult, the reader gets a grasp of the humanity and individuality of emigrants. Through Asma the 10 year old, the reader gets to experience the great injustice inflicted upon children and especially girls, in the most mundane details of life in some parts of the world. An unusual bitter-sweet coming-of-age novel.

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE

by Robin Moger

‘

The bell rang and it was back to class. Mona would rush to her place in the front row, making sure her desk was pushed up to touch the teacher's. Then our class teacher, Miss Zeinab, came in and we sprung to our feet to return her greeting, chanting in unison, with such enthusiasm that the floor's loose tiles trembled:

"Good morning, class."

"Good morning!"

She ordered us to sit, and we sat. It was now so quiet that Miss Zeinab could have heard a fly land.

I was frightened of Miss Zeinab.

We called her Zeinab the Christian because she was. She was fat, wore skirts that barely covered her knees, and kept her hair short. Her thick glasses made her eyes look tiny. And she was tough. Tough as a nun in an orphanage. She always wore black. Her husband had been martyred in the Intifada and she took it out on us.

Dictation lessons were always terrifying:

"Ok! Everybody write, 'The rose is the image of elegance.'"

She approached Mona Al Astal and ran her finger along the sentence she was writing and call out some mistake. Then down the lines of desks and up the rows to keep an eye on the little cheats and, if she caught them, would make them stand in her favoured place of shame: by the window in the corner closest to her desk.

Then the bell rang for the end of the lesson and she ordered us to lift our pencils from the page. Immediately, no

additional strokes. Mona would be tasked with collecting up the exercise books and putting them on her desk in a pile to be marked. Mona eagerly did as she was told then returned to her desk and opened her geography book.

Geography now began. Locate Palestine on a map of the world.

As usual, Mona stuck her hand up first and began shaking it furiously. This annoyed me, and so I waved mine about, too, to annoy her. Feeling pain blossom in my futile wagging finger I turned to my neighbour Rihana and whispered,

"You'll see. I swear she's going to ask Mona to answer and act as if she hasn't seen me."

I supported my raised arm with my other hand and waved with renewed vigour. Miss Zeinab pointed to Mona:

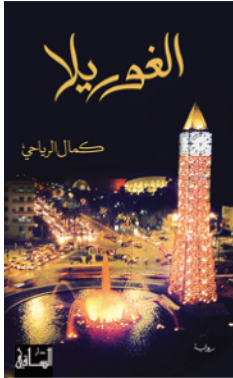
"As usual, Mona's the only one who's come prepared."

I was absolutely furious. If I'd had a grenade to hand I would have killed everyone in the room, with Miss Zeinab and Mona the first to go.

Nor was this the first time Mona had been singled out for praise. The majority of the teachers at these refugee schools reserved particular attention for the daughters of other instructors and school officials, while we, the girls from the camps, the daughters of labourers, were treated like vermin...

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ONE NIGHT IN TUNIS



FICTION

One night in Tunis
Al Ghorilla

K. Al Riahi
Dar al saqi, Beirut, 2011
192 pages

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AVAILABLE MATERIAL

PDF file of the original Arabic version. Full English translation.

AWARDS & DISTINCTIONS

Selected among the 39 authors of the Beirut 39, Hay Festival in 2009.
Short Story Prize, Cairo, Diwan al-Arab, 2005.
Comar d'Or Prize for best Tunisian novel 2007 for *The Scalpel*.

AL RIAHI Kamel



BIO

Kamel Al Riahi is a Tunisian journalist and novelist. Working as broadcaster and producer of radio and television shows, Al Riahi is an active figure of the Tunisian cultural scene, where he also initiated and founded Beit al-Riwaya (Center for the Novel), and runs a number of workshops in creative, journalistic and critical writing across the Arab world.

SOME OTHER WORKS

The Rouge's Lovers (*Ashiqat al-nadhl*). Dar al saqi) 2015.
The Scalpel (*Al Mishrat*) 2006
My face was stolen (*Suriqa wajhi*). Short stories. 2001
Seagulls of Memory (*Nawaris al dhakira*). 1999.

| PRESS

| **Alberto Manguel, author of *Fabulous Monsters*** "Kamel Rihai has dreamt up a political fable that is part a postcolonial King Kong, part a lewd Alice in Wonderland, and part a fierce denunciation of our mad, mad world. An extraordinary achievement."

| **Nicholas Blincoe, novelist, UK** "Scabrous and hilarious... kaleidoscopic, satirical and surreal."

| **Al Akhbar, 2011** The novel surprises the reader as soon as page one.

| SUMMARY

The Tunisian revolution in the making. An insight into the absurdity of life under dictatorship.

It's a warm August afternoon. A man has climbed up the metal tower clock in central Tunis. The tower clock was erected in the center of the city by the current president Ben Ali, after the previous President Bourguiba had passed away, and his statue removed. Climbing up the clock is forbidden, and this man has defied the restriction, waving to the crowd that gathered beneath him. He is Saleh, known as The Gorilla. A black man, an orphan, who grew up in the countryside and worked as a guardian of the deceased President Bourguiba's mosoleum. People he's had ties with recognize him, staring up the clock or on their television screens. Even the vicious police officer Ali Kilab (Ali The Dogs) recognizes him and sees in his presence up on the metal tower a great opportunity to take him down, take him in and eventually kill him — he has been hunting him for years. During the hours of The Gorilla's holding on to the tower clock, despite the electric chocks Ali Kilab sends him through the metal frame of the tower, the city is in ebullition. Something big is coming, a wave of discontent fed with fear and misery.

| TRANSLATION EXCERPT

By Raphael Cohen

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One o'clock in the afternoon; the wind busy rolling a dispirited beer-can down the deserted street; a massive silence linked the arch of the Sea Gate with the enormous clocktower where Avenue Mohamed V crosses Avenue Habib Bourguiba. The deserted capital's tranquillity was disturbed by a well-known headcase; the paranoiac circled the clocktower for the last time then started pushing people away, warning them of the poisonous hands of the clock high above. At imaginary enemies, he started to throw invisible stones, pieces of iron, houses, trees, crows, and goats, which he picked up from the marble base of the iron filigreed clocktower that flaunted itself like a whore in her last years on the game. People have forgotten the days of forced disappearances and fear; not a single person has disappeared for a year or more. They were enjoying the sacred siesta of August. The temperature was over fifty degrees and, out of its crotch, the midday devil combed crab lice picked up in transient lust.

The novel's timeframe is set between The Gorilla reaching the top of the tower, and the dramatic fall, followed by the calcination of his body -- a clear allusion to the historical event that started the Tunisian uprising in December 2010. During this time, a patchwork of characters and stories is rhythmically woven chapter after chapter, until all the pieces fall into place, and an almost complete landscape unfolds before the readers' eyes.

The novel has a weblike structure. It holds in its center the main character at the top of the tower clock, where it all starts and ends. From that central and emblematic figure, each chapter goes in a different direction in time and in space, following the story of one of the multiple characters that all take part in the final revolutionary scene. The Gorilla, as many of the other characters, was involved in an aborted coup.

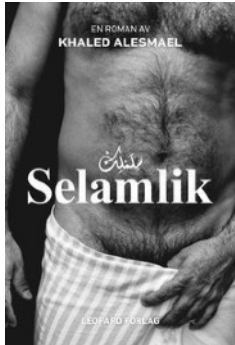
Al Riahi succeeds in creating a captivating atmosphere, partly violent, partly ludicrous with hints of strangeness that give it all a dreamlike feel. He depicts with great wit and a beautifully colorful and modern language a drifting Tunisian society. There is something extremely human and likable about The Gorilla. And his terrible death, although expected and ineluctable, resounds with a deep sadness.

Ambulance and police sirens suddenly massacred the slumbering siesta and everyone rushed, traces of drowsiness or dried semen stains still on them, to the street of streets. Something was happening at the monumental clocktower; cordons of police officers surrounded the place; rapid intervention forces, faces concealed behind impenetrable helmets, used batons to force back onlookers while car horns blared from every direction. Countless human beings looked up to the top of the stern clock. A remote figure – no bigger than a finger to the amazed crowd – ascended the clocktower as fast as a cockroach to announce the end of the world.

Necks strained to watch the intrepid climber who was holding on to one of the clock's hands at the top of the tower. He took a water-bottle out of his back pocket, drunk, and then poured what was left over his head. He removed his leather belt, secured himself to some iron rings, and turned to the ant-like crowds below.

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SELAMLIK



FICTION

Selamlik

K. Alesmael
Leopard, Sweden, 2018
75,000 words

SOLD RIGHTS

Leopard, Sweden (2018)
Albino Verlag, Germany (2020)
World Editions BV, The Netherlands (English, to appear)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

English translation sample.

AWARDS

Selamlik is shortlisted for Skoutz Award (Germany), 2021.

ALESMAEL

Khaled



BIO

Born to a Turkish mother and a Syrian father, Khaled was raised in Syria, and holds the Swedish citizenship since 2018. He has worked as a journalist in the Middle East, North Africa and several major European (correspondent for RFI in Damascus), and is an award winning filmmaker (his short film Coffee with sukkar received a special award at the Gothenburg Film Festival). Khaled currently lives in London, gives public talks about freedom of expression in conflict areas, migration, and LGBTQ+ issues, and also teaches Arabic literature at the Gothenburg literature. Selamlik is his first novel.

SOME OTHER WORKS

Gateway to the sea (2020). Leopard, Sweden.

| PRESS

| **Katharina Glück (Skoutz 2021 juror)** Alesmael manages to use an almost Spartan language to tell in an **incredibly sensual way about love, sex, Damascus, Sweden and everything in between.**

| **Aftonboladet** **Simple but poetic**, Alesmael captures great sadness, poking uncertainty and the beauty of the homophobic's eyelash.

| **Goteborg Posted** **Uncensored** novel about shame, homophobia and violence.

| **Sydsvenskan** The first homoerotic perspective about Syria and the war.

| **Amnesty Press** Despite the heavy topics the book deals with, it is still **filled with humor and irony.**

| **Dagens Nyheter** Selamlik **will be a classic** in the future.

| **Expressen, Jonas Gardell** Khaled's writing reminds me of the French **Jean Genet.**

| **Taz** You can smell the "slaughtered lemons" from the trees of bombed Damascus as well as the mixture of sweat and olive oil soap in the catacombs of the hammams. All of this without becoming pornographic, either in terms of horror or sex.

| **Vice** Khaled Alesmael generously gives us one of the first novels that gives us the insight of how to be gay in a war-torn country like Syria.

| **Deutschland funk culture** Khaled Alesmael has found his **own voice: precise and crystalline**, without any lyrical or metaphor exuberance.

| SUMMARY

Depicted as a story of curiosity and lust in the German press, *Selamlık*, autobiographic fiction by Alesmael, tells the journey of Furat from his home in Syria, to Sweden, via Turkey. A route taken by so many who fled the horrors of the Syrian civil war. Yet, *Selamlık* is first and foremost a very intimate account of this experience. While Furat waits in a Swedish refugee asylum for his situation to be regularised, he goes over his present Swedish limbo, as well as his past life in Syria: His mother and brothers, the dog they once owned, as well as the time he realized as a teen ager he was not attracted to women like all his class mates were. We discover his first sexual experiences, his first love story, and his exploration of the underground erotic scene of Damascus, a landscape made of dodgy cinemas, toilets in public parks, and of course, Hammams. Constantly playing with danger (homosexuality is illegal under Assad's regime), but compelled to live his sexuality, Furat ultimately leaves Syria for fear of persecution by religious extremists. Yet, as he finally reaches his Swedish asylum, and shares his accommodation, and even his room, with other refugee

men, Furat comes face to face with the most basic form of homophobia, the one based on ignorance, and the belief that homosexuality is an illness Syrian men caught in Europe.

The *Selamlık* is the room in large mansion and palaces under the Ottoman empire dedicated to welcoming male guests exclusively, as opposed to the *Haremlık*, which is the part of the mansion dedicated to wife and family. The *Selamlık* is also the name of a place in Istanbul, part hostel part brothel, where Furat meets Baklawā, a prostitute, and begins his search for a passage to Europe by boat. As the title indicates, the particularity of Alesmael's tone is its lightheartedness, its irony, and its outright humor. Despite the tragedy of it all, despite the violence and the pain, the novel remains colorful. Alesmael succeeds in maintaining the contrast, and providing a captivating read.

| TRANSLATION EXCERPT

By Leri Price

It was my last day in in the asylum. I soaked my naked body in a spot of April sunshine that was falling onto my bed. Piled up all around me were clothes I had bought from the various second-hand shops in Småland. I had forgotten how to pack a suitcase – in recent years, I had become the kind of person who was more used to escaping at short notice.

"Your memory is fabric, Furat. It is disappearing behind the curtains of the bedrooms that have been gutted by fires in the war. It is sitting on the tablecloths that ceilings have fallen in on. Your memory, like a suitcase, is overflowing with the dresses and shirts that the security agents tossed on the ground like bodies without souls after searching the wardrobes. Remember how you used to lay your head on the soft pillow that your mother's own hands sewed and stuffed with feathers and lavender. Write about clothes and fabric, Furat, seeing as you haven't yet! Who will remember the vaulted fabric souq of Deir Azzour after the war burned it to the ground? Or Souq Al-Hamidiyya and the windows of the textile shops? Write about fabric, Furat. Write how you disappeared inside white bedsheets and wrapped them around your small body and paraded about like a little Greek boy, showing off and dancing for your moher and making her

eyes vanish from laughing so hard. Write about the clothes that you left behind in Damascus like orphans. Write about the military uniform that you refused to put on when you refused to fight against your people. About the cotton pyjamas you left on the floor when you rushed out of your house in a panic in between bullets. Write about your shoes whose leather was eaten up by sea salt, write how your escape tore them to shreds. Write, Furat, because you survived the fire that took people and stone and cloth as its fuel. And for fuel, it is your duty to tell their stories."

That monologue swirled around my head every time I picked something up, folded it and put it in my bag. I recited these clothes as if they had been written long ago. It isn't fair that I write about every person I met on my journey and not about the fibres that clung to my skin along the way and kept watch every night. As soon as I decided to tell the tales of the clothes that I took out of Syria and brought to Sweden, the second-hand garments gathered around me like children, impatient for me to tell them stories about their peers.

A SLEEPLESS GIRAFFE IN DAMASCUS



FICTION

A sleepless giraffe in Damascus
Al hay al rusi

Khalil Al Res
Difaf, Beirut, 2020
286 pages

SOLD RIGHTS

World rights available

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

Arabic PDF. English sample.
Synopsis.

AWARDS

On the shortlist of the IPAF (Arab Man Booker) 2020.

AL REZ Khalil



BIO

Khalil Al Rez (1953) is a Syrian novelist, currently living in Belgium. After a degree in Arabic literature (University of Aleppo), Khalil moved to Russia to study theater. Between 1984 and 1993, Khalil lived between Moscow and St Petersburg where he worked as a translator and radio host. Khalil published 9 novels and 1 play.

SOME OTHER WORKS

"Al badal" - 2017

"An equal measure" - 2014

| PRESS

| **Al Akhbar** "A sagacious, deep novel ... *A sleepless giraffe in Damascus* is a novel of the imagined and the real, casting a glimmer of light on the darkness of war and life

| **The New Arab** "Khalil Alrez amazes us with his language that creates events; it is a language that is fresh, reckless, fast, that races against time and surrounds it as it masterfully constructs its world."

| **Independent Arabia** "Khalil Alrez has presented fine art in a narrative space full of touching tales and scenes, as if we had just come out of a captivating fantasy movie."

| **Rai' Al Youm** "A kind of dark comedy or satirical tragedy... One of the most elegant and significant narrative creative works I have read in recent years."

| **Awad media** "The reader will never relax, but will anxiously turn the pages with amazement and enjoyment. ... With excellent pictorial and descriptive ability, Alrez presents several cinematic scenes in which comedy and black comedy take their turns."

| **Al Ketaba** "The novel contains many ... scenes overflowing with sweetness that make us stand before them as we stand in front of a painting, contemplating its meanings and melting within the images of beauty scattered in it."

| SUMMARY

The narrator has been living in the zoo of Damascus for a while, occupying a room with his girlfriend Nonna, on the rooftop of a small building. The narrator, Nonna, and the giraffe, by far the zoo's most popular figure, form a strange, yet happy family. It hasn't always been this way. Before Nonna came into his life, the narrator and the giraffe were on their own. Well, sort of. Everyone came to visit her in the evenings, after hours. They would all gather on the narrator's rooftop: the depressed zoo director, Victor Ivanitch, Abu Ali Sulayman, the French teacher and clothing shop owner, along with his old poodle Moustache, Raisa Petrovna, the Afghan Hound, and sometimes Essam, the local hero — who once confronted Borya's mafia, and protected Artin's bar from his racketeering.

In these days, he, the narrator, was very obviously the giraffe's favorite. She would react differently to his presence, and he would not hesitate to hug her fury head bent over him on his rooftop, when he missed his deceased mother (whom he had never hugged). The giraffe has his mother's eyes, and like her, the giraffe would watch with him an archival Spain-Uruguay soccer match on TV. When Nonna came along, she seemed to have her own relationship to the giraffe, bringing her the fresh scallions she seems to love so much, and seemingly reading the giraffe's mind.

Why doesn't the giraffe sleep? Nonna wonders. Because of evolutionary reasons: She needs to stay alert and escape lions and other predators, explains the narrator. Obviously, the giraffe was born in captivity and has never encountered any of these predators. This is the reason why a brand new color TV is brought to the rooftop, for the giraffe to finally see the predators she unknowingly fears. It is not

always easy to find images of lions feasting on their prey on TV, and when the narrator and Nonna do find such images, the giraffe stares at the screen, unperturbed. What they mostly come across on TV are silent scenes of death and violence, unfolding in the neighboring Ghouta district — the roaring government planes are constantly in the background, along with the smell of burning plastic.

A sleepless giraffe in Damascus is a surprising and unexpectedly moving story. Set in the margins of the Syrian civil war, the novel depicts a group of colorful people, the inhabitants of the fictional "Russian quarter" (incidentally the novel's Arabic title), trying, naturally, to hang on to joy and to life, while brutal violence is unleashed a few hundred meters away.

Yet, despite these efforts, and precisely because of them, this community is ultimately dragged into violence, when one night, and for unknown reasons, Essam decides to cross over to Ghouta, and gets killed. As his body is returned, the need to bury him in dignity becomes existential: Not burying him in the way befitting their hero would amount to acknowledging the war and giving up their way of life. Burying him in the way he deserves however opens the gates of hell — and culminate in the death of the giraffe, shot in the head in the book's closing scene.

A sleepless giraffe in Damascus is a sweet moving portrait of a plethora of human and non human characters. In the self-contained magical realist world of the Russian quarter, war is akin to horrific abstract art showcased inside the safe frame of TV — until in one fateful night, it no longer is abstract, or framed, and all this colorfully loud community is forced out into the grim real world.

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE

By Margaret Litvin

On the roof of the zoo in the Russian Quarter, my 14-inch television set, balanced on its table near the giraffe's snout, was showing an archival soccer match between Uruguay and Spain. The rumble of nearby mortar fire had not stopped since early morning; my tea had gone cold waiting for the apple fritters baked by Denis Petrovitch, the clarinet teacher at the Higher Institute of Music, as I sprawled next to the giraffe watching tiny black-and-white goals filmed in Madrid half a century ago. The artillery was shelling neighboring Ghouta from the orchards of the Russian Quarter. But my ears were trained on the long, still-empty staircase behind the couch on which I lay, expecting it to fill with the sound of Nonna's elegant footsteps at any moment. She had gone to the cultural center in downtown Damascus to visit her dad. The full moon shone on me, and the screen's silver light reflected brightly in the giraffe's wide black eyes and flowed over her thick-fuzzed lips, which nearly touched the long-vanished players, the long-vanished spectators, and the long-vanished grass of the soccer pitch.

I had always thought that the small space allotted to the giraffe was not adequate to her enormous size compared to the surrounding mass of the zoo and its animals. Passers-by in the next street had grown used to seeing her head towering over its walls and trees ever since I had moved into my friend Salih's room on the roof overlooking the zoo. Salih had disappeared from the

Russian Quarter a few months before the war. Meanwhile I had disappointed my wife's hopes in me, and her father's hopes as well, by manifesting many unpraiseworthy traits (as they saw it) on which this is neither the time nor the place to expound. So when I began to feel superfluous and overlooked at home, in the house owned by my wife and her father, I decamped and left it to them without delay or regret. Salih's place was still vacant then and I filled it, with the warm blessing of the Afghan hound Raisa Petrovna and her owner Victor Ivanitch, my old colleague from the *Moscow News* translators' room two decades ago, who now ran the Russian Quarter zoo and edited the bulletin board known as its wall newspaper.

I had been no stranger to the giraffe even before I became her neighbor, for everyone had welcomed me into the zoo for a long time. Each time I approached the giraffe it made me happy to imagine that among all the hands extended to her through the fence she could spot mine. I felt she was not embarrassed of me, as she was for instance of Ivanova who swept away her droppings every day, and not skittish, as with the veterinarian Bashir Ghandoureh when he examined her from time to time.

SOME ACHIEVE GREATNESS



FICTION

Some Achieve Greatness
Jawaiz Lil abtal

Ahmed Awni
Mahrousa, Egypt, 2019
396 pages

SOLD RIGHTS

Textofilia, Mexico (Spanish, to appear)

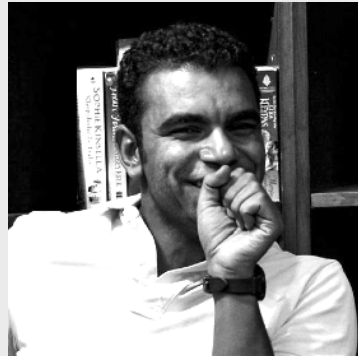
AVAILABLE MATERIAL

Arabic PDF. English sample by Adam Talib.

AWARDS

Winner of Sawiris Best Novel Prize in 2019

AWNI Ahmed



BIO

Ahmed Awni was born in Cairo, in 1988. He studied Mechanical Engineering and Creative Writing at The American University in Cairo. Currently, he lives between Cairo and Berlin, working as a freelance editor, and his second novel "In the factory of men" is set to be published in Jan 2022.

SOME OTHER WORKS

"Chronic worry" - short stories

| PRESS

| **Aljazeera** News named the novel one of its "Top 10 Books of 2019 from the Arab World"

| **Belal Fadl** ("Books I Enjoyed in 2019") al-Araby News "Some Achieve Greatness, Ahmad Awny's first novel, was the surprise of the year by far. It does the novel a disservice to say it is just a novel about the revolution. It's much more than that. [...] The most important thing about the novel for me is that it's a **fun book**, even though it picks over old wounds, or maybe that's what made it a fun book: **it picks over old wounds cleverly and earnestly. As soon as I started reading it, I couldn't put it down...**"

| SUMMARY

The satirical coming of age story (or not) of a 30 year old privileged Egyptian man, on the back drop of the massive Egyptian revolution

“Some achieve greatness” can be read as a satirical, and touchingly sincere novel about the Egyptian revolution that has held the hopes of a whole generation so high. But it is also very much the story of an individual young man’s heartfelt quest for meaning and his need to belong.

Within a couple of years, Ramy simultaneously loses his father to a stroke, is de facto appointed manager of the large factory he inherits, and becomes obsessively infatuated by a young woman for the first time in his life, as unprecedented massive protests shake the streets of Cairo. Yet, Ramy somehow refuses to grow up. As his old friends find purpose in life in prolonged studies, careers abroad, or family, Ramy has no special interest, no real motivation, and doubts his own feelings. Does he love Hadir, or does he just desire her badly? Isn’t he terrified at the idea of being her “official” boyfriend? Are the Cairo protests his true home? Or is this just a fantasy? And does he really want to belong to this group of new activist friends he sometimes observes from the unforgiving lens of an anthropologist? As a wealthy young Egyptian businessman, who has never known poverty, how deeply can Ramy relate to the protests? What is really at stake for him? How deeply can any of his activist, artsy, bohemian friends really relate to the protests, if they gave it an honest thought? How can Bassel, who works at his factory and is a leader of the movements on the street, take him seriously? Ramy tries hard, and would love to fit, but struggles for the protests to be more to him than just some kind of an exciting game.

This is until Boodi is grabbed off the street by the police and thrown into a van during one protest. Ramy immediately jumps into the van after him. Ramy wanted to be able to tell, in retrospect, the story of his arrest like so many other

admirable young men do. This “real” experience is bound to give him legitimacy. Terrified in prison, clearly a novice, Ramy is released barely 24 hours later, by a close friend of his late father, a minister in office. Confused, and tired by weeks spent on the street, crowned by 24 hours under arrest, upon his release Ramy instantly heads to the seaside where he owns an old boat inherited from his father. He retires for a month on the boat, alone, disconnected from people, news, and social media. When he decides to go back to Cairo a month later, Ramy finds his face stenciled almost on every wall around Tahrir square, along with the question “Where is Ramy?”

Eventually, our accidental hero finds out that his “friends” think he is still being held and tortured inside the prison where he was taken. Unbeknownst to him, Ramy, the legend, seems to have achieved great acts of generosity and bravery... He finds himself in a cruel ironic dilemma: If he tells them he was at the beach all this time, and that all their protests and actions were in vain, he will be everyone’s joke for the rest of his life. If he doesn’t tell, people will keep protesting, some will even die. Not to mention that he will also lose his life as he knew it.

Written from the perspective of the main protagonist, the novel opens on Ramy returning to Cairo and coming face to face with his stenciled portraits on the walls. The novel sets out to explore Ramy’s life, his thoughts, and this existential dilemma in depth, and explains how Ramy was ever able to get himself into this situation.

“Some achieve greatness” is a beautiful and surprisingly honest and insightful read on the revolutionaries of the 21st century. Beautifully written, funny, and biting satirical “Some achieve greatness” is also a novel about failing or refusing to grow up in a part of the world where becoming a worthy man sometimes implies making difficult, potentially life-threatening, decisions. Not everyone is meant to be a hero.

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE

By Adam Talib

You can’t rely on a Twitter revolutionary. The phrase rang in my ears as I tried to take a selfie. Who wrote that? In my head, I heard it in Boodi’s voice, but it didn’t sound like something he’d write. I couldn’t take a selfie. My fingers were too sweaty to work the touchscreen on my phone. Before I even had a chance to turn back, the world went topsy-turvy again. The sky was as black as asphalt and the ground beneath us was white. A cloud of teargas enveloped us as everyone scattered like ants. The slow ones fell and the faster ones fell on top of them. Only the nimble managed to leap over the others sprawled on the ground. I was in the first group who ran back toward the square and we were soon followed by others, but when a few seconds had passed and no one else emerged from the white cloud, we made way for the men who were dragging carpets spiked with nails, which they laid across the road.

When the gas cleared and I could finally see again, I spotted Hadir lying lifeless and alone in the street, like a captured chess piece. Boodi ran past me, jumping effortlessly over

the spiked carpet, and the next thing I could remember, I was sprinting forward as well. He got to her a second before I did. I picked Hadir up from the shoulders but before Boodi could lift her legs, three policemen pounced on him. One of them grabbed his arms, another his belt, a third wrapped his arms around his waist. They threw him in the back of a police van, which we hadn’t seen, although it was right beside us.

“Go on, pretty boy. You and her get out of here,” the largest of the three said to me.

I was still cradling an unconscious Hadir in my arms, but I laid her back down on the ground gently and when the officers ran off to arrest someone else, I jumped into the back of the van. I had chosen to do the one thing that would fix all that had come before and anything that still awaited me. I planned to turn thirty with a clear conscience.

THE CRITICAL CASE OF MISTER K.



FICTION

The critical case of Mr. K
Al hala al harija li al
mado'ou k

A. Mohammed
Dar al tanweer, 2017,
Beirut, Cairo, Tunis
269 pages

SOLD RIGHTS

Sindbad, Actes Sud, France (2021)
Hoopoe, AUC, WEL, Egypt (2021)
Shanghai Literature & Art, Simplified Chinese (2022)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

PDF file of the original Arabic version.
English Translation.

AWARDS & DISTINCTIONS

Mohammed's first novel, *The critical case of Mister K*, was shortlisted to the International Prize for Arabic Fiction 2018.

MOHAMMED Aziz



BIO

Aziz Mohammed is a Saudi writer and blogger, born in Al-Khobar city in 1987. He has written poetry and short stories, as well as film reviews for cultural magazines and specialist online websites. His debut novel *The Critical Case of K* was published in 2017 and was nominated in 2018 for the International Prize for Arabic Fiction, known as the Arabic Booker Prize.

| PRESS

| **Al Hayat** Saying [of Aziz Mohammed] that he is a "talented novelist" is not enough to describe this young Saudi writer. He has achieved a **unique, impressive and bold work**, in its technique, atmosphere, irony and expressive power.

| **Middle East Eye** Mohammed's debut is not only about illness, but also about the ways in which we make ourselves out of stories... **A fast and enjoyable read**, managing to thread a narrative needle between the sardonic youthfulness of the Diary of a Wimpy Kid stories and the dispassionate alienation of *The Metamorphosis*, all while keeping it grounded in the capitalist nightmare of 21st-century healthcare

| **Foreword Review** **Compelling . . . well-timed, humorous observations . . .**

| SUMMARY

The narrator is a young man in his mid-twenties who works at a large petrochemical corporation in Saudi Arabia. A social misfit, he dreams of becoming a writer. He soon discovers he has leukemia. The illness sheds a new light on his life, ultimately salvaging him from an existence he deeply despises.

"The critical case of Mister K" is written in the present tense, in the first person, in the form of a weekly diary spanning over 40 weeks. As the narrator starts writing his story, he sometimes refers to the imagined hero of his imaginary novel, "K" (in reference to Kafka).

The combination of very precise details and sharp insight into human relations; the total absence of pathos or melodrama and the narrator's biting sarcasm make of this book an unusually appealing read.

The novel eventually reveals how illness is in this case the opportunity for the narrator to define himself, to understand his place in society and in his family, to find the path to reconciliation, and finally free himself from the social norms that have constrained and crushed him all his life.

A difficult, not always likable character, the very ordinary narrator is thus even more convincing and coherent. His astute observations on people, their social ambitions (often explicit, in Arab societies), their relation to others and reactions to the illness, are striking and sometimes even humorous.

Living with his widowed mother, the narrator has a younger sister who achieved a "successful" marriage with a

wealthy and respected banker, and an older brother who is soon to achieve a successful marriage himself, through the matchmaking help of their sister.

A weakling as a young boy, the narrator had a poor health, which tried his father's patience. As a grown man, he is a voracious reader and a recluse, an attitude his mother condemns and perceives as immoral. Clever and cultured, the narrator doesn't fit in society. Acutely aware of himself, and of the absurdity of social norms, he loathes most his colleagues and their futile quest for power and recognition.

After an unusually strong episode of nausea the narrator undergoes a series of tests. This is how he discovers he is at an advanced stage of leukemia. He starts a chemotherapy treatment, which after 6 months will put him out of immediate danger, without curing him. The narrator, following his doctor's advice, will finally leave his home country and start a new life in Japan.

Tackling the illness of modern times, this book is a universal, powerful read. The lens of a traditionalist Arab society such as Saudi society, cleverly emphasizes the social dimension of illness.

But beyond illness, this novel is also about modern life: Employment in large corporations and work in open space; relationships with colleagues and women; relationship with money; the absurd bureaucracy of important social institutions such as healthcare; the decay of modern Arab families, as well as the unthinkable pressure they can still exert on individuals.

| TRANSLATION EXCERPT

By Robin Moger

‘

In the oncology ward I spoke to other patients. One of them told me that if I pressed the doctor, he might let me go home. The others weren't quite so helpful. There was one sweet old woman who launched straight into a long and impassioned monologue, as though she'd just been interrupted and was picking up from where she'd left off. A blow-by-blow account of how she'd been cursed by the evil eye. Central to all her stories was the figure of her envious neighbour, a woman who was always round at her house, who had been coming round from the time of the Gulf War, and who in all that time had never once let the word God cross her lips. What had happened was that, no sooner had the neighbour spoken admiringly of her energy and good health, had praised her for being in such good condition at her age, than the woman had fallen ill. When she'd got the

results of the tests she had called the neighbour up and swore at her, and said prayers for her, and pleaded with her to put God's name in her mouth, at which the neighbour had answered back with insults and prayers of her own, without ever protesting the main charge, that she was the one who'd made her ill. Wasn't that proof enough? I didn't know how to respond. After telling me her tales she stayed silent for a few minutes, and I assumed she had exhausted her reserves of energy, only to find her turning to me abruptly and asking, And you? Who cursed you? as though she was asking what kind of cancer I had. No one, I said, and she was taken aback. But everyone knows that the cancer comes from envy!

I wondered if I should feel upset that it had occurred to no one to date that I might be the victim of envy.

;

THE NIGHT POST



FICTION

The night post
Barid al layl

H. Barakat
Dar al-adab, Beirut, 2017
22,500 words.

SOLD RIGHTS

Actes Sud, Sindbad, France (2018).
La nave di Teseo, Italy (2019).
Green Books, Malayalam, India (2019).
Orlando, Netherlands (2020).
Nashr Saless, Iran (2020).
Editora Tabla, Brazil (2020).
Oneworld Publications, World English Rights (2021).
Kedros Publications, Greece (2021).
Underskoven, Denmark (2021).
Moooi Pustaka, Indonesia (to appear).
Textofilia, Mexico (Spanish, to appear).

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

PDF file of the original Arabic version.
English translation sample.
Full French translation.

WINNER OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRIZE OF ARABIC
FICTION - IPAF or ARAB BOOKER - 2019!

AWARDS & DISTINCTIONS

Hoda Barakat was awarded the prestigious Al Owais prize in 2018. This prize honors major Arab writers and was previously awarded to Abdul Rahman Mouneef, Nizar Qabbani, Edward Said, Mahmoud Darwish, Adonis, Amin Maalouf, Elias Khoury to name only a few.

Hoda Barakat was shortlisted for the International Man Booker prize, 2015.

She was also decorated "Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres", by the French Ministry of Culture in 2002, and "Chevalier de l'Ordre du Mérite National" in 2008.

BARAKAT

Hoda



BIO

Barakat was born in Beirut, Lebanon in 1952. She graduated with a degree in French Literature from the Lebanese University in 1975. She worked as a teacher, translator, and journalist, before moving to Paris in 1989 with her two children, towards the end of the Lebanese civil war. She has lived there ever since.

In 2011/ 2012 she was in residence at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. In 2013, Barakat was appointed the first Arabic Scholar in Residence both at the University of Texas at Austin Middle Eastern Studies Program, and at The University of Virginia.

SOME OTHER WORKS

Hoda Barakat has published 5 novels, in addition to 2 plays and chronicles. All her novels were translated into several languages:

The stone of laughter (1990), translated into French (Actes Sud, 1996), English (Garnet, UK; Interlink, US, 1995), Dutch (Goossens, 1996), Hebrew (al Andalus, 2004).

The disciples of passion (1993), translated into French (Actes Sud, 1999), Italian (Jouvence, 1997), Spanish (Seix Barral, 2004), English (Syracuse University Press, 2005).

The tiller of waters (1998), translated into French (Actes Sud, 2001), English (AUC Press, 2000), Italian (Ponte alle grazie, 2003), Greek (Alexandra, 2004), Catalan (Pages, 2006), Danish (Underskoven, 2007), Swedish (Leopards, 2007), Norwegian (Aschenhoug, 2007), Macedonian (Prozart Media, 2019), Turkish (Tudem, 2021), Portuguese (Editora Tabla, 2021).

My master, my love (2004), translated into French (Actes Sud, 2007), Spanish (Bellacqua, 2009).

| PRESS

| **The Sunday Times, UK, 2021** Pick of the **best translated fiction** for February 2021

| **The Guardian, UK, 2021** "The recitations in **Voices of the Lost** are searing... vivid... powerful. Yet the construction of the novel ... creates an uneasy space where contrivance is an insistent part of the fabric"

| **New Internationalist, UK, 2021** "So many universal human themes are touched on in this outstanding novel that it is impossible in these few words to do them, or it, justice..."

- | **Senta AI, Brazil, 2020** “Despite being a short read, it is **extremely powerful** in its complex message”
- | **La Stampa, Italy, 2019** “A **thoughtful novel**, where migrants speak and the reader listens, with no violent confrontation”
- | **Avvenire, Italy, 2019** “**Very original literary project. A brave novel**”
- | **Il Messaggero, Italy, 2019** “**Touching**. These are lost lives, like the letters that never reach their destination. A loss that however unites the characters”
- | **Mediapart, France, 2019** “**A writer of her time**” who signs an “original and powerful” novel
- | **Transfuges, France, 2019** “**Immense novelist**”
- | **Al-Quds Al-Arabi, Sobhi Hadidi, 2018** “*The Night Post* is a bold adventure in its structure, the segmentation of narrative voices and the intersection of characters and destinies.” “**Barakat is a novelist from head to toe**”
- | **Asharq Al-Awsat, 2018** “**Barakat never writes a novel... that doesn't innovate**”
- | **The jury of The Sultan Bin Ali Al Owais Cultural Foundation, 2018** “**Barakat's work is overflowing with loss, absence, deception, violence and the search for meaning in the chaos around her. She writes with noble style**”

| SUMMARY

Barakat's latest novel is presumably set somewhere between Beirut and Paris. From one capital to the other, in this globalized violent world of ours, the novel's characters, all Arabs, travel to escape, to seek refuge, and converge towards the airport. Even the more fortunate ones seem to suffocate and to seek a fresh start elsewhere. But the refuge the West seems to offer is mostly an illusion, and the characters all have to face their failures.

Thus, while the novel hints at the classical theme of travel literature, we are far from the excitement of discovery and adventure. Travel here is an ultimate, desperate attempt to salvation.

In the same way, while the novel mainly consists of six letters, it is not epistolary, since each letter is intercepted by an unrelated person, who, after reading it, is compelled to write a letter of her own. An illegal emigrant writes his lover; a woman in a hotel awaits a man; a torturer on the run writes his mother; a woman writes her brother about their mother's death; a young homosexual man writes his father; and finally, the mailman leaves a note.

Each of these intimate letters are confessions addressed to one specific person, as a last desperate attempt to mend the broken pieces of a relationship. They each describe a failure, and themselves fail at their mission since none of them reaches their destination. Together, these letters describe the multiple aspects of the dysfunction of Arab societies; the multi-layered and multi-faceted

violence people are victim of, whoever they are: from urban educated women, to rural girls, to children of powerful people, and torturers. They all run, and all seek shelter in travel, the West seeming like the only place to run to, but this refuge turns out to be illusory. All these people are therefore all in transit at the airport at some point.

Following these five letters, one chapter, entitled “At the airport”, gathers all the voices of the different intended recipients of the letters. They seek the answers that the forever lost letters detain.

The novel's conclusion, entitled “Death of the mailman”, is a sixth letter written by a postman, as a note he intends to leave in the post-office, somewhere in an Arab country torn by war. There was once a time where people would welcome him and look forward to the ring of his bicycle's bell. These days are long gone, and there is no longer any mail to deliver.

In a resolutely modern and contemporary novel, Barakat illustrates the dissolution of Arab societies. The novel's unusual structure itself illustrates social failure. People seem to talk past each other, rather than to each other. As a result, wrongs are never made right, or even acknowledged.

Barakat explores the deep dysfunctions of Arab societies, that, over the years, have crushed people from all walks of life.

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE

By Robin Moger

‘

I was meaning to write to my mother about the moment she put me on the train, alone, a child of eight or nine. She gave me a loaf and two boiled eggs. Told me that my uncle was waiting for me in the capital, that I must get

myself an education because I was the cleverest of all my siblings. And she said: Don't be afraid. Don't cry.

And I, it has to be said, have been afraid and petrified, alone and lonely, and hostile, ever since that train took off.

’

POISON IN THE AIR



FICTION

Poison in the air
Summon fi al Hawa'

J. Douaihy
Dar al Saqi, Beirut, 2021
208 pages

SOLD RIGHTS

Actes Sud, France (to appear).
Interlink, USA, World English (to appear).

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

Arabic PDF

AWARDS

The King of India was shortlisted for the Arab Book Prize (IPAF) awarded in Abu Dhabi, UAE in April 2020!

June rain was shortlisted for the Arab Booker Prize (IPAF) awarded in Abu Dhabi, UAE in 2008.

Chased away was shortlisted for the IPAF in 2012. Chased away was awarded the Young Arabic Literature prize in Paris, 2013.

DOUAIHY Jabbour



BIO

Jabbour Douaihy (1949-2021) was born in Zgharta, a town in Northern Lebanon. He achieved his doctoral studies in literature in France, and was a professor of French literature at the Lebanese University of Tripoli.

SOME OTHER WORKS

The King of India (2019). French (Sindbad, Actes Sud, 2021), English (Interlink, USA, 2022).

Printed in Beirut (2016), French (Sindbad, Actes Sud, 2015), English (Interlink, USA, 2018), Ukrainian (Nora Druk, 2020), Italian (Brioschi, 2021).

American neighborhood (2014) French (Sindbad, Actes Sud, 2015), English (Interlink, USA, 2018), Macedonian (Prozart, 2019).

Chased away (2011), Italian (Feltrinelli, 2012) and French (Actes Sud, 2013)

June rain, (2006), French (Actes Sud, 2010), Italian (Feltrinelli, 2010), German (Hanser, 2013), Spanish (Turner, 2015), Macedonian (Prozart, 2018), English (Interlink, USA, 2019).

Ayn Warda, (2008) French (Actes Sud, 2010)

Autumn Equinox, English (Arkansas Press, USA, 2001).

| PRESS

| **Al Jadid, Elie Chalala, 2021** Douaihy wrote several novels throughout his life, and though he never intended this role, critics and friends regarded him as the narrator of Lebanese life. He wrote about aspects of Lebanese life that history books could only dream of capturing, detailing Lebanon throughout its various historical moments to its current state of dystopian ruin and collapse, a world seen vividly in his last novel, "Poison in the Air."

| **L'Orient Littéraire, Elias Khoury, 2021** The air of this novel is filled with the poison of disappointments, and these are the disappointments of a Lebanese generation that searched for meaning and did not find it...

| SUMMARY

Narrated in the first person, Jabbour Douaihy's last novel reads like a long letter going over the narrator's life, from childhood to death. We meet him in a small Christian town, where civil violence erupts, and he smells "the poison in the air" for the first time. He then moves with his family to a popular (sunni) neighborhood of Beirut, an only child with his parents, and his old aunt, only to be compelled a few years later to flee yet again in the context of a now more generalized civil war.

His impoverished family, his unemployed and unfaithful father, as well as the death of his dear aunt punctuate his life as a teen ager. Having decided to join the Fedaiyin (who defend the Palestinian cause) as a young adult, he discovers he is not made of the stuff of heroes. A student in literature, his appetite for reading makes him more knowledgeable than his teachers, and he loses interest, roaming the streets of the city instead of attending class. Then a teacher himself, a young (Shia) colleague piques his curiosity, and after several platonic walks in the city, he asks her to marry him. The disastrous marriage where he ends up beating his condescending wife, leads him to jail. A free man a few years later, the narrator who inherits a silent rifle from one of his only — recently deceased — friends, plays at shooting trucks in their tires from the room he rents in the top floors of a nearby building.

Soon tired of this pointless life, he retires in the mountain, where he rents another small room overlooking the city port. Though it is not named, the Covid-19 pandemic context is identifiable. A now old man, the narrator stays in,

refuses to see anyone, and has his grocery delivered at the door. Until one day, he hears a deep explosion, accompanied by pink plumes over Beirut's port. There ends the letter, as well as his life.

Following closely the evolution and transformation of Beirut, the rightly titled "Poison in the air" sometimes feels like a reflection on the end of a city as it was once known. As if the poison that was emitted decades ago, eventually got the best of Beirut, and of the narrator's mind. Fast paced and with no interruption, the novel flows in the present tense. In light of its ending, the reader cannot escape the feeling of a note left by a man who decides to take his own life.

Somehow also a tribute to a disappeared way of life, Douaihy's novel is in some parts tinted with nostalgia. The long passage describing his adolescent love during a summer in the Lebanese mountains, like the adventurous and glamorous life his aunt once had, or his extended stay at a Beirut hotel and his love affair with the owner's wife, all add color and sweetness to a novel that follows the several stages of Beirut's deterioration.

As always, Jabbour Douaihy surprises us with yet a new writing style. The themes of colorful Lebanon, with its violence and contradictions remain close to his heart. Though sadness here takes over sarcasm, several moments in the book offers us the joy of his exquisite irony.

THE KING OF INDIA



FICTION

The king of India
Malek al hind

J. Douaihy
Dar al Saqi, Beirut, 2019
191 pages

SOLD RIGHTS

Sindbad, Actes Sud, France (2021).
Interlink, USA, World English (2022).

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

Arabic PDF
Detailed synopsis
English sample

AWARDS

The King of India was shortlisted for the Arab Book Prize (IPAF) awarded in Abu Dhabi, UAE in April 2020!

June rain was shortlisted for the Arab Booker Prize (IPAF) awarded in Abu Dhabi, UAE in 2008.

Chased away was shortlisted for the IPAF in 2012. Chased away was awarded the Young Arabic Literature prize in Paris, 2013.

DOUAIHY

Jabbour



BIO

Jabbour Douaihy (1949-2021) was born, in Zgharta, a town in Northern Lebanon. He achieved his doctoral studies in literature in France, and was a professor of French literature at the Lebanese University of Tripoli.

SOME OTHER WORKS

Poison in the air (2021)

Printed in Beirut (2016), French (Sindbad, Actes Sud, 2015), English (Interlink, USA, 2018), Ukrainian (Nora Druk, 2020), Italian (Brioschi, to appear).

American neighborhood (2014) French (Sindbad, Actes Sud, 2015), English (Interlink, USA, 2018), Macedonian (Prozart, 2019).

Chased away (2011), Italian (Feltrinelli, 2012) and French (Actes Sud, 2013)

June rain, (2006), French (Actes Sud, 2010), Italian (Feltrinelli, 2010), German (Hanser, 2013), Spanish (Turner, 2015), Macedonian (Prozart, 2018), English (Interlink, USA, 2019).

Ayn Warda, (2008) French (Actes Sud, 2010)

Autumn Equinox, English (Arkansas Press, USA, 2001).

| PRESS

| Literary Hub, CrimeReads Selected among “The best international crime fiction” ... this one takes place in Lebanon, where a newly returned prodigal son is found murdered. Did his cousins kill him to rob him of a valuable painting, or is the answer more complicated? The investigator assigned to the case is not so sure and perhaps more interested in solving the riddle of the murdered man's life than the mystery of his death. **Moody, poetic, and intellectual, The King of India is the perfect introspective read.**

| L'Orient Littéraire, Melhem Chaoul Douaihy sneaks into the intellectual debate about the possibility or not of detective fiction in Arabic. His story shows a possibility in this genre, but where will it lead in fine?.... Douaihy does not hesitate to introduce in his novel the ingredients of the crime novel, with networks of mobsters, gangs, restaurant chains covering money-laundering activities, love and betrayal, etc.... The police plot is only an alibi for Jabbour Douaihy to discover – or perhaps to denounce – this counterfeit web that envelops us: counterfeit history, social relationships, fortunes and beliefs. Thus, by venturing into the polar genre in Arabic, Jabbour Douaihy may have dug its grave.

| Independent Arabia Douaihy manipulates the threads of collective memory, between absence and presence... **Douaihy's is an endless literary world.**

| **Al Sharq Al Awsat** So many entry points to the core of the novel.... A creative framing of the Lebanese sectarian mosaic... An insight into the identity crisis experienced by the various Lebanese components

| SUMMARY

Zakaria is back to Tall Safra, his mountainous Lebanese hometown, after a decade spent abroad. Quiet and secretive, he keeps an empty wine bottle with a curious label, "Mary", and a long tube, in his locked room. He says he plans to plant some vines, in their family owned land of Mahmoudiya, an old family dream, rendered impossible by even older gruges with neighboring land owners. A couple of months later, Zakaria is found shot dead, against the trunk of a tree, in that same land.

The investigation into his death begins, while people in the village, including his sister Marta, have already decided that Zakaria's cousins are responsible. The latter feel they were wrongfully disinherited by their grandfather, and consider themselves rightful co-owners of the land. They therefore have a motive to murder Zakaria. But they are not the only ones: Following a sectarian blood-shed in Mount Lebanon in the 1860s, the Druze family of Al Naked was disowned, and the land given to the family of the victim, their Christian partner, Zakaria's family. Perhaps Zakaria's return and his desire to cultivate the land has stirred ancient buried resentment.

As inspector Kamal Abou Khaled investigates, the reader discovers Zakaria's past, his love of women, the Chaghal painting he stole from one of his lovers and was ment to sell to someone in Lebanon (did he know the painting was a fake?), his passion for Jane Moloy, the daughter they had together and that he raised alone in the USA. The reader also discovers how Mary, Zakaria's

daughter died in a shooting at her school, making the hypothesis of suicide a plausible one.

Inspector Kamal's investigation also leads the reader into the meaning of land ownership. A beautiful chapter, at the heart of the novel, explains the laws and circumstances around Mahmoudiya's sad fate and its dying trees. Sectarianism sometimes runs so deep, that it makes it impossible for anyone to enjoy the land, or even for the land to live.

Though very much about Lebanon, its social and sectarian divides, the inepties of its institutions, and its constant quest for "statut-quo", the story also unfolds in France where Zakaria spends several years, and the USA, where, already at the turn of the 20th century, Zakaria's grandmother Filomena had sailed, on her own, to escape a curse she was convinced laid upon the family. She returns several years later, built a house, and, it is believed, buried a treasure in the house's foundations: "The treasure cannot be retrieved without destroying the house!" Yet another reason (or another strategy?) to deepen the attachement to the land, but unfortunately at the same time, cultivate bitterness.

Douaihy's novel features many colorful characters, some of them romantic anti-heroes, like Zakaria, some of them true adventurers, like Filomena, others fragile, like Marta, and others still cynical, like the inspector Kamal, whose intelligent eye deciphers the story, and who will ultimately pragmatically prefer social peace to truth.

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE

By Paula Haydar

Zakariyya son of Ibrahim Mubarak returned at the outset of summer, along with the season for cherries and goat cheese. He returned to his birthplace, Tel Safra, that town sitting on a plain 700 meters above sea level, where valley and mountain fruits thrived equally well. In peaceful times, Arab tourists from the Gulf flocked to it...

He arrived at nightfall, unannounced. He appeared in the doorway of his parents' house like a bewildered ghost who'd lost his way. His sister Marta let out a cry of joy that reverberated through the town. It awakened her sick aunt Raheel who was sitting up asleep in the chair in the living room, and it rolled down to the bottom of Hajal Valley. Marta finally got over the shock, only to start pounding her brother's chest with her fists. Then she hugged him and breathed in his smell while chiding him, "If I'd run into you in the street, I wouldn't recognize you. Look how skinny you are! Come here! I'll take care of you." Aunt Raheel was sitting exactly where she had been before he left. He kissed her on the head while she laughed. Marta informed him that during the summer Raheel had been spending the whole night there and refused to wear new clothes.

Marta cried tears of joy over Zakariyya's arrival and then scolded him for coming back. Then she hugged him all over again and offered to help him unpack his things. But he

wouldn't allow it. He carried his suitcases to his parents' room himself. He walked over to the window and pushed against the iron bars... He opened the big suitcase. He pulled out a metal tube from the bottom of it and inspected it from all directions without opening it, making sure it had survived the long trip. With great care, he also picked up a dark glass bottle packed in his bag that had a cork stopper like a wine bottle and on which he had written "Mary." He placed it on the night table...He locked the door with the key and went back to spend the evening with Marta.

He smiled with effort as she brought him food that he did not eat. She talked incessantly... She asked him which countries he liked that he thought she should visit, but before he could answer, she told him she'd kept the few letters he'd sent and that she used to read them over and over to their mother. Suddenly she wanted to know if he had gotten married and if he had children. He didn't answer.

THE ORCHARDS OF BASRA



Fiction

Basatin al basra
M. Ez Eldine
Dar al shorouk, Cairo, 2020
163 pages

SOLD RIGHTS

French - Sindbad, Actes Sud (to appear)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

Arabic PDF.

English translation sample (coming soon)

AWARDS & DISTINCTIONS

Beyond Paradise was shortlisted for the Arabic Booker Prize (or IPAF) in 2010, making En Eldin the youngest writer to ever reach the shortlist.

The Orchards of Basra was longlisted for the same prize in 2022

In 2009, she was selected for the Beirut39, a Hay Festival selection of the 39 best Arab authors below the age of 40.

EZ EL DINE Mansoura



BIO

Mansoura is born in the Delta in Egypt in 1976. A graduate in journalism from the University of Cairo, she is today the deputy editor in chief of a cultural weekly (Akhbar al adab). Mansoura published 6 novels and 3 short story collections to date. Her work has been noticed world wide.

SOME OTHER WORKS

The Atlas of Disappearance (novel, 2022, Dar al shorouk)

Shelter of Absence (short story collection, 2018, Mamdouh Alwan / Sard)

The Play of Shadow (novel, 2017, Dar Al Tanweer)

The Emerald Mountain (novel, 2014, Dar Al Tanweer,). French (Actes Sud, 2017). Serbian (Geopoetika, 2019). Farsi (Dar Sales, to appear).

Towards Madness (short story collection, 2013, Dar Merit)

Beyond Paradise (novel, 2009, Dar El Ein). German (Unions Verlag, 2011). Italian (Piemme, 2011).

Mariam's Maze (novel, 2004, Dar Merit). English (AUC, 2007)

Flickering Light (short story collection, 2001, Dar Merit)

| PRESS

| **Al Ahram** "This is Mansoura Ez-Eldin's fifth novel. **One of her generations most distinct and accomplished voices...** Set between Iraq in the second century of the Hijra and Egypt in 2011, Basatin Al-Basra is Ez-Eldin's first historical novel properly so described, even though here as elsewhere her focus is more literary than anything.

...The novel is made up of six chapters each in the voice of a different character, and it revolves around a victimised contemporary Egyptian who imagines himself as an eighth-century character in order to retell his experience of injustice and defeat in a story that involves the emergence of Mu'tazili thought in the city of Basra. **A complex and deeply researched work of metafiction that draws heavily on the Arab-Islamic canon, this novel plays with notions of reality and reason.**

| SUMMARY

Hisham Al Khattab is Yazid ibn Abih. At least he thinks he is. Some 13 centuries separate the two, but in the despaired mind of Hisham Al Khattab, and through the magical power of dreams, Hisham is Yazid.

An unemployed skillful young man, Hisham, like so many others, could not be hired anywhere after he graduated from the chemistry department. He didn't have the connections needed to secure a position in one of the large oil companies. And so Hisham lives with his frustrated mother, making ends meet through finding and reselling old and rare books. A passion that leads him to the nicknamed "Al Zandiq" (or "The atheist").

Al Zandiq is a fervent defender of a modern revisionist view of Islam — though his appearance, and that of his wife and daughter, would say otherwise — and he therefore lives under constant threat. Soon Hisham and Al Zandiq become close associates. Hisham gradually becomes his informal research assistant, finding rare books for his mentor's work and papers, and sometimes even sharing his valuable insights. At first, Hisham feels proud that someone finally seems to value his worth and intellect. But soon, as with all the others, Hisham is given no credit, his ideas are stolen and his work is taken for granted. Yet, it is through his work with Al Zandiq, that Hisham gets to know more about Yazid ibn Abih.

He dreamt of him one night. He had dreamt of falling jasmine flowers, a recurring dream, but this time, this man was in his dream, he knew his name, he knew who he was. More than that: He was this man.

"Where have you heard of him?" asked his mentor suspiciously. The question was hard to answer, and Hisham was evasive. But a few days later, Al Zandiq allowed him to consult an old manuscript where the life of Yazid was in part told.

Somehow, Hisham knew more about Yazid than the book revealed. A more intimate knowledge. And an even more intimate connection.

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE

By Paul Starkey. Coming soon

Similarly to Hisham, Yazid was a poor man with an appetite for knowledge. In the Basra (Iraq) of the 8th century, Yazid got to attend the gatherings of the most luminous and respected men of knowledge of his time. Their company would enlighten him. Yet, Yazid, a poor basket-maker, belonged to a completely different world, with no hope of riches or power.

As Yazid and the men of his time, Hisham gives a lot of importance of dreams and their interpretation. Yazid's close wealthy friend, Malek bin Oudi, the copyist, is a famous dream interpreter of his time, and would be consulted by many on the meaning of their dreams. Like Hisham, Yazid also has a recurrent dream of jasmine flowers on the grounds of the orchards of Basra. According to The Great Book of Interpretation of Dreams attributed to the Imam Muhammad bin Sirin, jasmine flowers are a bad omen. And when Yazid told his dream to his mentor, the latter was taken, as jasmine foretold worry and sadness, "The Ulama, or men of knowledge and science, are gone", he added. This is the beginning of the end, for Yazid and Hisham, both of whom commit crimes that will bring their life to a halt.

In this almost historical fiction, dream and reality are one and the same, and the boundaries between reason and madness are dangerously shifting. Similarly to the life of Yazid bin Abih, the life of Hisham is tainted with violence. A violence so crude, it strangely gives reality to the tales of the 8th century.

With her fluid writing, Mansoura Ez Eldin beautifully shifts from contemporary Egypt to ancient Iraq, fleshing them both out with few but so specific details, that the scenes come alive in the reader's mind. Like the jasmine that repeatedly falls to the ground, there seems to be no end to the downfall of the likes of Hisham and Yazid, or to the fall of Ulama, the men of knowledge.

THE LIFE OF BUTTERFLIES



FICTION

The life of butterflies
Hayat al farashat

Y. Fadel
Dar al Mutawassit, Milan, 2020
380 pages

SOLD RIGHTS

Green Books, India (to appear).
Tohum Yayincılık Turizm Reklam , Turkey (to appear).

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

PDF of the Arabic text.
English translation sample coming soon.

AWARDS

The Life of Butterflies, longlisted for the International Prize of Arabic Fiction (or Arab Booker) 2021.

Hashish, winner of the Morocco Grand Atlas Prize 2001 (organized by the French Embassy in Morocco).

A Rare Blue Bird That Flies with Me, shortlisted for the International Prize of Arabic Fiction 2014 and winner of Morocco Book Prize (Prix du Maroc du Livre) 2014.

Joy, published under the title *N'appelle pas, il n'y a personne*, shortlisted on IMA Arab Literature Prize 2020.

FADEL Youssef



BIO

Youssef Fadel, author, screenwriter and producer, was born in 1949 in Morocco. After having worked in shipping for five years, he publishes a play that leads him to prison in 1974. His alleged marxist activities, lead him to prison for another six months, in 1974-1975. Youssef obtains his French baccalaureate as a free candidate in 1976. He taught French for twenty years, and resigned in 1999.

Youssef has written for television, cinema, and theater. He also directed a short film and a feature film. He published 10 novels, some of which were translated.

SOME OTHER WORKS

The king of jews (Arrabita, 1995)

Hashish (Fennec, 2000), Editions Afrique-Orient (Maroc, 2013)

Mitrou Mouhal (Fennec, 2006)

Zoo (Fennec, 2008)

A pretty white cat walks behind me (Dar al adab, 2012), Actes Sud, (France 2014), Hoopoe, AUC (English, 2016)

A rare blue bird flies with me (Dar al adab, 2013), Actes Sud (France, 2017), Hoopoe, AUC (2015), Francesco Briochi (Italy, 2019), Prozart (Macedonia)

Joy (Dar al adab, 2016), Actes Sud (France, 2019)

Like an angel in the dark (Dar al adab, 2018)

| PRESS

| **Aujourd'hui Le Maroc** "Fadel is a valued asset of modern Moroccan literature."

| **The New Yorker** "Fadel's books are full of hopeful, human interactions; through these, the reader is able to catch a glimpse of a better world."

| SUMMARY

It's early on a Saturday the morning, just before dawn. Habiba, a beautiful forty year-old single woman leaves her apartment to walk to the sewing factory where she works, like every morning. She dislikes crowds and avoids public transportation. And as every morning, a twenty year-old young man, Hani, waits for her across the street. For the past three months, Hani has been waking up before dawn, to wait for Habiba in front of her building, and walks her to the factory. The first few weeks, he walks behind her, and gradually comes closer. Until that morning. It is raining on this summer day, and funnily, Hani has an umbrella. Habiba and Hani speak for the first time. Hani is a wrestler who moved to the city from the countryside about a year ago. He is getting ready for the catch championship about to take place a few days later.

Unlike the other women of her age, Habiba wears pretty, short, colorful dresses, and walks tall and straight. It's impossible not to notice her, and many men have their eye on her, including the factory's manager, and later, she will find out, her neighbor the Judge Saqr.

Salem, Habiba's brother, is a popular singer. He sings in the Don Quixote bar, and composes songs. His voice is known to all, and loved by all. Until that fateful Saturday morning, where he decides to go the public radio station of Rabat to record his new song. That morning, the military attempt a coup (which will be contained by the King barely a few hours later), and take over the radio station to broadcast it on the waves. Salem is forced to read the coup's announcement, and his famous voice resonates in every single household of Morocco.

This is how the last week in the lives of Habiba and Salem begin. These two episodes will start a chain of events, which, a week later, will lead the two siblings to their deaths. Like the life of butterflies, Habiba and Salem's lives are short, and fragile. Both penniless, they seek beauty and meaning in a world that doesn't value or understand either. As always, Youssef Fadel poignantly depicts how people

trying to survive as individuals, following their own unconventional paths, are cruelly crushed by a ruthless and intolerant society.

From these two points on, then, the lives of Habiba and Salem precipitate into death. As Salem's voice is now associated to the failed coup, all the doors close in his face and he becomes a persona non-grata. Including with his young attractive fiancée Fatma whose sole ambition in life is to marry a rich man and buy herself beautiful clothes. As he becomes cumbersome, and an undesirable musician, Salem will disappear, and found dead the next day, mysteriously poisoned after a dinner with Fatma, who, on the day of his disappearance celebrates her marriage with an old man.

As for Habiba, the day after the coup is her 40th birthday. She decides to wear her beautiful blue silk short dress, go to the movies, and treat herself to a drink at a fancy cafe. Hani sees her and goes into the theater after her. In the dark theater, they will kiss and touch, and burn with desire for each other. Except that sitting behind them, in her full black dress and veil, is one of Habiba's neighbors. She follows her in the street, and accuses her "*I saw everything, you whore!*" This accusation will resonate in Habiba's few remaining days, covering her with shame, and infusing her with fear and apprehension. The woman will use this incident to blackmail her, and force her into Judge Saqr's bed. The faith of the woman's son lies in the hands of the judge, and in exchange of Habiba, he might be willing to let her son go.

The novel alternates between different characters, and each chapter is told from the perspective of either Salem, Habiba, Hani, or Habiba's lustful employer Hajjar. The narration being in turn in each of their voice, or in that of an omniscient narrator. Delving into these characters' hearts and minds, Fadel portrays their way of thought in convincing and captivating detail, revealing the painful barbarity of the Moroccan patriarchal society of the 1980s.

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE

By Alexander Elinson

They continued to stand in front of one another, for a long time, or so it seemed. Then the woman dressed all in black got very close to her and said from behind her hijab, "You know what you did, you whore." She had been in the theater, and she had seen everything. She must have been sitting in the seat behind her. Directly behind her, and she had seen. What did she see, and what didn't she see? "Everything," as she said, with a threatening tone in her voice that made her legs shake. Too late. Because the woman turned her back to her, and disappeared into the bazaar. The theater wasn't as dark as she had thought. The light reflecting off of the screen had lit up the room bright as day. Faces were revealed. Movements were exposed. And the sounds? All the sounds that eager kisses and thirsty lips made.... She would not faint because of what happened. The din surrounding her got quieter. Voices grew more

distant, corresponding to the gentle sadness of the falling evening. The insult remains inside her and leaves her with a bitter taste. A feeling of insult and impotence. That is what remained after the woman had disappeared. That's it.

Then she realized that she was running. Fleeing without any hope of finding the proper way out. Without any hope of being saved from the threat that the woman in black posed. She looked all around her, to see if anything in particular in those passing by betrayed their knowledge of what had happened in the dark theater of the Kawkab Cinema.... Deep down inside she had a feeling that everyone knew what had happened to her in the theater, and outside of the theater.

NO ONE PRAYED OVER THEIR GRAVES



FICTION

No one prayed over their graves
Lam yusalli 'alayhim ahad

K. Khalifa
Naufal, Hachette-Antoine, Beirut
2019
348 pages

SOLD RIGHTS

Bompiani, Italy (2021)
Pax, Norway (2021)
Rowohlt, Germany (2022)
Farrar, Straus & Giroux, World English (to appear)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

English translation sample.
Chapter by chapter summary.

AWARDS

Death is hard work was on the shortlist of the National Book Award 2019.

In praise of hatred and *There are no knives* were each shortlisted for the Arab Man Booker Prize.

In praise of hatred was on the long list of the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize 2013.

There are no knives was awarded the Naguib Mahfouz medal of literature in 2014.

KHALIFA Khaled



BIO

Khaled Khalifa was born in 1964, in a village close to Aleppo, Syria. He is the fifth child of a family of thirteen siblings. He obtained a Bachelor degree of law and currently lives in Damascus.

SOME OTHER WORKS

Death is hard work (2015). FSG, USA, World English (2019). Faber, UK (2019). Bompiani, Italy (2019). Rowohlt, Germany (2018). De Geus, Netherlands (2018). Sindbad, Actes Sud, France (2018). Green Books, India, Malayalam (2019). Sonia Draga, Poland (2019). Prozart, Macedonia (2019). Angustura, Iceland (2019). Kastaniotis, Greece (2020). Pax, Norway (2020). Intelekti, Georgia (2020). Filip Tomáš - Akropolis, Czech Republic (2021). Clio, Serbia (2021). Houpa Books, Iran (2022). Tudem, Turkey (to appear). Batzer & Co, Denmark (to appear). BRaK, Slovakia (to appear).

There are no knives in the kitchens of the city (2014). De Geus, Netherlands (2015). Actes Sud, France (2016). Hoopoe AUC, English (2016). Bompiani, Italy (2018). Prozart, Macedonia (2018). Pax, Norway (2019). Rowohlt, Germany (2020). Delidolu, Turkey (2020), Angustura, Iceland (2021)

In praise of hatred (2006). Bompiani, Italy (2011). Actes Sud, France (2011). De Geus, Netherlands (2011). Minuskel, Norway (2011). Lumen, Spain (2012). Transworld, English (2012). Korridor, Denmark (2013). Pax, Norway (2020).

| PRESS

| **Al nahar** A real human epic, using the flood to tackle human anxiety, and the illusion of survival (...) [A novel about] the predicament of life itself.

| **Al arabiya** The novel is free from the pressure brought about by the current Syrian events, but includes them in its details, through the concern of identity and the question of meaning

| **Mnassat al Istqlal al thaqafiya** Remarkable ability to frame all those miniatures, details and events (...) in a rich and authentic language capable of transporting the heavy load of disasters and tragedies, without losing its strength or elegance.

| SUMMARY

Hanna and Zakaria reached Hosh Hanna, their village located not far from Aleppo, on a dreadful morning of December 1907, a few hours after the flood. The river had taken the lives of most of the villagers, including their loved ones, Hanna's wife and baby, as well as Zakaria's baby, not to mention destroyed most of the homes, and Zakaria's precious stables. Their insatiable pursuit of pleasure is what saved them from drowning. As per usual during the winter season, Zakaria and Hanna had spent the night in the Castle, several kilometers away. That building, commissioned by Hanna and designed by their architect friend Azar, was the palace of luxury, a place where Hanna, Zakaria and their friends would spend time laughing at life - and death - drinking the best wines, and enjoying the company of the most beautiful women. This life of carelessness ended with the flood. From a powerful, libertine, and rich land owner, Hanna will turn into a mystic, obsessed with death and the meaning of life. While he only seeks to be free from human constraints and as close as possible to nature, Hanna will find he has gone from being a slave of the Castle, to being a slave of the Monastery of Zahr El Rumman. He is the one to have commissioned both buildings, and while pleasure is what kept him a captive of the Castle, people's faith and thirst for miracles (aided by the ambitions of Marianna, another flood survivor), made sure he would never leave the Monastery.

While the flood is the cornerstone of the novel and of Hanna's transformation, the former, which ranges from the 1880's to the 1950's, with the death of Hanna, is punctuated by catastrophes (such as an earthquake in the

1880's, or the famine in the 1910's), wars, and violent political tensions that caused people to die by hundreds.

Along with death, love is the heart of this novel: The impossible love that caused the Muslim Aicha and the Christian Michel to die at the hand of a jealous Ottoman officer - a tale that lived on the tongues of the city folks long after the events, and also doomed Michel's family; the love of the Christian Hanna for his dear friend Zakaria's sister, the Muslim Suad; the love of Maryam, an Armenian refugee, for Michel, the second son of Zakaria, named after their slaughtered friend.

Going through Hanna's childhood, following the massacre of his family by Ottoman officers, which led him to being raised by the Bayazidis (his father's business partner and Zakaria's family), through to his death, the novel covers Hanna's personal as well as Aleppo's societal transformations during this time.

Beyond the deeper, and timely, considerations of the novel regarding the meaning of life in the face of recurrent mass graves, No one prayed onto their graves, is the beautiful and captivating depiction of the Aleppine society at the turn of the 20th century. The reader discovers a liberated modern people, many of which embraced progressive ways of life; a diverse people, with Muslims, Jews, and Christians, united in their love for their city, and their dream of a bright future.

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE

By Leri Price

‘

Hawsh Hanna - Aleppo
January 1907

The village of Hawsh Hanna was totally silent when the storm came and the waters rose.

Within a few hours, the houses of the small village were destroyed, their inhabitants drowned alongside their tattered clothes. No one survived the flood apart from Mariana Nassar and Shaha Sheikh Musa, the wife of Zakariya Al Bayazidi. They both clung to a branch of a walnut tree, suspended between the iron pillars of the lighthouse that guided boats to the depths of the river. Two penniless fishermen saved the women and took them to a nearby village at dawn, after everything had quietened down.

Before Mariana Nassar fainted, she saw the bodies of her mother, her son, and her four brothers floating along the river alongside other corpses: her neighbour and her six children, other impoverished women who lived nearby. She saw the fiancé of Yvonne, who was currently in Aleppo

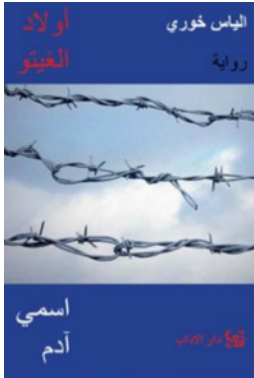
having her wedding dress made, indifferent to the rumours circulating about her fiancé's assault on her virginity in her father's mill. The village priest of the small church was smiling as he usually did, and beside him was Hanna's son, not yet four, his mother Josephine Al-Laham clutching him tightly. Their corpses were bobbing and dipping in the current as if they were dancing.

Mariana knew most of the drowned. They were her students, her neighbours, friends of her family from the neighbouring villages, her own friends. All of them passed close by her. An entire life was buried in the river; she wasn't sure if she had really survived herself. She closed her eyes in resignation, imploring Jesus as she held onto the solid tree. She noticed that next to her, Shaha was holding the body of her son to her heart.

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MY NAME IS ADAM

CHILDREN OF THE GHETTO-V1



SOLD RIGHTS

Actes Sud, Sindbad (2018, France)
 Polirom (2018, Romania)
 Archipelago (2019, USA)
 Karakter (2022, Poland)
 Editora Tabla (2022, Brazil)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

PDF file of the original Arabic version.
 English translation

AWARDS & DISTINCTIONS

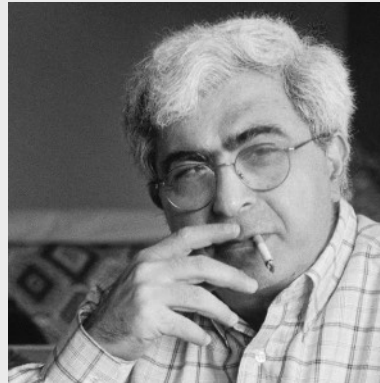
Gate of the Sun (1998), an epic re-telling of the life of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon since the 1948 Palestinian exodus, received the Palestine Prize and was named Le Monde Diplomatique's Book of the Year in 2000.

As though she were sleeping was awarded the French "Prix du roman" in 2008.

Khoury was a Global Distinguished Professor at New York University between 200 and 2014.

KHOURY

Elias



BIO

Elias Khoury is a 1948 born Lebanese novelist. Currently editor of the Beirut based Journal of Palestine Studies quarterly, Khoury is also a professor of comparative literature, who namely taught at Columbia University and New York University. Khoury is a public intellectual, who plays a major role in the Arabic cultural scene and in the defense of the liberty of expression and democracy. His oeuvre (14 novels, 3 plays, and 4 books of literary criticism) is widely translated.

SOME OTHER RECENT WORKS

Children of the ghetto 2 (2019) & *3* (2021). Editora Tabla (Brazil, to appear)

Broken Mirrors: Sinalcol (2012). MacLehose (2012, UK), Archipelago (2012, USA), Actes Sud, Sindbad (2013, France), Feltrinelli (2014, Italy), Alfaguara (2015, Spain).

As though she were sleeping (2007). Archipelago (2012, USA), MacLehose (2011, UK), Actes Sud, Sindbad (2008, France), Leopard (2007, Sweden); Aschehoug (2011, Norway), Suhrkamp (2012, Germany)

Yalo (2002) Leopard Forlag (2002, Sweden); Actes Sud, Sindbad (2004, France); Ambo (2004, Netherlands); Aschehoug (2007, Norway); Archipelago (2008, USA); Record (2008, Brazil); MacLehose Press (2009, UK); Club Editor (2009, Catalan / Spain); Einaudi (2009, Italy); Suhrkamp (2011, Germany); Alfaguara (2011, Spain); Wydawnictwo Karakter (2014, Poland); Aschehoug (2019, Norway); Textofilia (Mexico, to appear)

Gate of the sun (1998) Aschehoug (2001, Norway); Actes Sud, Sindbad /Le Monde Diplomatique (2002, France); Klett-Cotta (2004, Germany); Einaudi (2004, Italy); Harvill Secker (2005, UK); Leopard (2005, Sweden); Archipelago (2006, USA); Taschenbuch Verlag (2007, Germany); Picador (2007, USA); Club Editor (2007, Spain); Record (2008, Brazil); Alfaguara (2009, Spain); Kottayam Publishers (2010, Malayalam / India); Anthos (2010, Netherlands); Quetzal (2012, Portugal); Nashr-e Ney (Iran, 2021); Textofilia (Mexico, to appear).

| PRESS

| **New York Times, 2019** "Powerful" "extraordinary book" that "gives us a glimpse of the unspeakable".
 "Comparisons — between Warsaw and Lydda, between the fall from Eden and the Nakba — lead us not into

[conclusions, but deliver us from binaries.]”

| **Los Angeles Review of Books, 2019** “A masterpiece of structure, vision, and imagination.”

| **Mediapart / En attendant Nadeau 2018** “An overwhelming book of rare beauty”

| **Haaretz, 2018** “One of the **greatest writers of our times** and perhaps the greatest Arabic-language writer of this generation, **definite Nobel Prize material**” “**remarkable literary skill**” “**poignant**” “**close to perfection**”

| SUMMARY

My name is Adam, the first part of the trilogy “Children of the ghetto”, opens with a preface where Elias Khoury tells how, in New York where he is invited to teach literature, he meets Adam Dannoun. As his student Sarang Lee takes him to her friend’s Israeli restaurant, the “Palm tree”, to eat a falafel sandwich, he is struck by the beauty of the restaurant owner: Adam Dannoun man speaks both Hebrew and Arabic fluently. He is a Palestinian and an Israeli citizen from the region of Lydda (Lod). With Adam’s probably none accidental death in a fire, Sarang Lee gives Adam’s notebooks to her teacher. Elias Khoury then sends these to be published in Dar al adab, Beirut Lebanon, without some hesitation.

The notebooks (the novel we read), are Adam’s attempt to write his story. A story that cannot be told, and which he tries to tell repeatedly. Adam Dannoun is a man of multiple identities. He is a Palestinian-Israeli who emigrated to New York. A man who adopted Israeliness and the Hebrew language after abandoning who he believes is his mother, Manal. He is also a Palestinian born into Arabic, which only traps him into the silence of the Nakba’s tragedy. “He is at once refugee and writer, survivor and chronicler, historian and one who despairs; who loves and leaves; who is born into death and ends his own recorded life” (Avraham Burg, 2018).

As Manal raises him in the ghetto of Lydda, various men come to play the role of his father. Ma’moun, the clever blind man, got close to his heart. Ma’moun, who had to abandon the young boy when he was around seven, meets him again in New York, years later, and tells him a part of his story that shatters Adam to the bones: Adam’s mother Manal, is not his mother. The newborn Adam was found on the dried-up breasts of his dead mother, left behind by the trail of refugees who were abandoning their city, Lydda. The infant is brought back to Lydda somehow, and into the fenced compound that the conquering Israeli forces built in the heart of the city. This is the ghetto where he spends his childhood.

| TRANSLATION EXCERPT

By Humphrey Davies

I don’t recall ever reading anything about the relationship between anger and writing but my decision to write my own story was a result of rage, a savage rage that overwhelmed my being and that had two, unconnected, causes. One was my meeting with Blind Ma’moun, who took me by surprise with his ambiguous story about my parents which meant nothing to me at first but which began to assume terrifying proportions following the visit of Israeli director Chaim Zilbermann to the restaurant and his invitation to attend the showing of his film “Intersecting

“He depicts the atmosphere and feelings of the time as if he were there himself, recording everything as it happened: the color of the flies that buzzed around the dead and the stench of the bloated corpses, the taste of the stagnant water, the taste of the oranges rotting in the fields and the smell of fear. As in some of his other books, Khoury gives himself the freedom to roam between his role as narrator and being part of the narrative. He controls his protagonists and they also control him. Sometimes when the tempest of the novel subsides a bit, his own autobiographical foundations are revealed: “I know the narrator of “Gate of the Sun” personally.” (Avraham Burg, Haaretz, 2018)

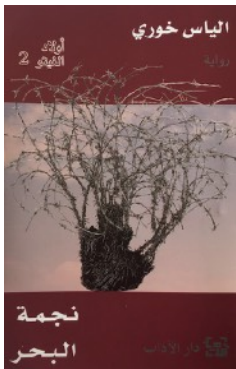
“My name is Adam” is not a novel in the classical sense. “A novel of many false starts” (Tom Zoellner, LARB, 2019), the book dives deep into Adam’s very soul. In Khoury’s words : Adam “was serious about *not* writing a novel. And he didn’t, in the classical way we think a novel is to be done. The first draft was about [Waddah al Yaman] who died in the box. And then he met with an Israeli filmmaker, and he thought the filmmaker didn’t tell the whole story about a soldier who committed suicide. And then he met with Ma’moun, a blind man, whom he knew when he was a kid. At that moment, he decided writing fiction was meaningless and he had to tell the real story. In figuring it out, he had to put many things together, literary criticism, contemplations, jumping from one subject to another. He was writing in a free way because he never thought it would be published. This structure takes us back to the beginnings of the novel, before the naturalists and the realists and Émile Zola and Flaubert [...] And it takes us also to the beginnings to the Arabic novel [...] He put memoirs, poems, literary criticism, all these things in one story. So in this sense, it’s an attempt to go beyond the formal structure of the novel. This takes us back to the major book in all literature, which is *The Arabian Nights*, which are stories, of course. Put together many elements and it opens one narrative to another as if you are putting two mirrors in parallel.”

Glances”. There, and this was the second cause of my rage, I witnessed the story of my friend Dalia being torn to pieces, followed by the author of the novel *Gate of the Sun* standing next to the bald Israeli director, introducing himself as an expert on the story of Palestine, and lying.

Both of them told lots of lies, and I couldn’t restrain myself from shouting and leaving the cinema, Sarang Lee at my side. She took hold of my arm and led me to the café, but instead of supporting me, she started explaining that I was in the wrong. It’s true. I was in the wrong, and what I’ve written is a record of my mistakes.

STELLA MARIS

CHILDREN OF THE GHETTO - V2



FICTION

Stella maris - Children of the ghetto 2
Awlad al ghetto 2 - Najmat al bahr

E. Khoury
Dar al-adab, Beirut, 2019
474 pages

SOLD RIGHTS

Archipelago, USA (to appear)
Editora Tabla, Brazil (to appear)
Actes Sud, France (to appear)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

PDF file of the original Arabic version.
English translation sample.

AWARDS & DISTINCTIONS

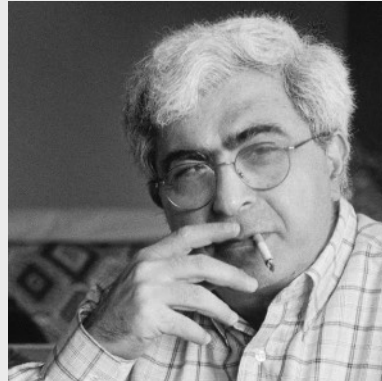
Gate of the Sun (1998), an epic re-telling of the life of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon since the 1948 Palestinian exodus, received the Palestine Prize and was named Le Monde Diplomatique's Book of the Year in 2000.

As though she were sleeping was awarded the French "Prix du roman" in 2008.

Khoury was a Global Distinguished Professor at New York University between 200 and 2014.

KHOURY

Elias



BIO

Elias Khoury is a 1948 born Lebanese novelist. Currently editor of the Beirut based Journal of Palestine Studies quarterly, Khoury is also a professor of comparative literature, who namely taught at Columbia University and New York University. Khoury is a public intellectual, who plays a major role in the Arabic cultural scene and in the defense of the liberty of expression and democracy. His oeuvre (14 novels, 3 plays, and 4 books of literary criticism) is widely translated.

SOME OTHER RECENT WORKS

Children of the ghetto 2 (2019) & 3 (2021). Editora Tabla (Brazil, to appear)

Broken Mirrors: Sinalcol (2012). MacLehose (2012, UK), Archipelago (2012, USA), Actes Sud, Sindbad (2013, France), Feltrinelli (2014, Italy), Alfaguara (2015, Spain).

As though she were sleeping (2007). Archipelago (2012, USA), MacLehose (2011, UK), Actes Sud, Sindbad (2008, France), Leopard (2007, Sweden); Aschehoug (2011, Norway), Suhrkamp (2012, Germany)

Yalo (2002) Leopard Forlag (2002, Sweden); Actes Sud, Sindbad (2004, France); Ambo (2004, Netherlands); Aschehoug (2007, Norway); Archipelago (2008, USA); Record (2008, Brazil); MacLehose Press (2009, UK); Club Editor (2009, Catalan / Spain); Einaudi (2009, Italy); Suhrkamp (2011, Germany); Alfaguara (2011, Spain); Wydawnictwo Karakter (2014, Poland); Aschehoug (2019, Norway); Textofilia (Mexico, to appear)

Gate of the sun (1998) Aschehoug (2001, Norway); Actes Sud, Sindbad /Le Monde Diplomatique (2002, France); Klett-Cotta (2004, Germany); Einaudi (2004, Italy); Harvill Secker (2005, UK); Leopard (2005, Sweden); Archipelago (2006, USA); Taschenbuch Verlag (2007, Germany); Picador (2007, USA); Club Editor (2007, Spain); Record (2008, Brazil); Alfaguara (2009, Spain); Kottayam Publishers (2010, Malayalam / India); Anthos (2010, Netherlands); Quetzal (2012, Portugal); Nashr-e Ney (Iran, 2021); Textofilia (Mexico, to appear).

| PRESS

| **Haaretz, 2018** "One of the **greatest writers of our times** and perhaps the greatest Arabic-language writer of this generation, **definite Nobel Prize material**"

| SUMMARY

As in the first part of this trilogy, *Stella Maris*, unfolds on the thin thread of the end of the love story between Adam Dannoun, an Israeli citizen from Palestine, and Dalia Ben Tsavi, an Israeli of Polish and Iraqi descent.

Adam has decided to write his story, that of the “New Adam”, which, he would like to believe, starts when he runs away from home at 15, to go as far as possible from his childhood in the ghetto of Lydda, and from his mother Manal. The New Adam is in a painful quest of a restful identity, one that keeps eluding him. “I want to become a Jew”, he tells Gabriel, the Israeli garage owner who offers him his first job. “This is impossible” he is told. This “present - absentee” (as all Palestinians who were expelled from their homes and still live in Israel are called), thought he could become a “present Israeli - absent Arab” for his plan to succeed. He soon realized this could never be. Paradoxically, even if he wanted to, Adam could not voice his Arab identity. “All Arabs are liars”, Gabriel’s wife explains”, while they are in fact reduced to silence.

A tall blond man, Adam is easily mistaken for an Ashkenazi Jew at University where he seeks to study Hebrew literature, a tale reinforced by his “being from the ghetto”. A brilliant student, he soon becomes friends with his professor of Hebrew literature Yakov, who selects him with three other students to go on a field trip to the Warsaw ghetto and Auschwitz. Trapped, Adam goes along, and

discovers the horror of the Holocaust, another tragedy that cannot be told. Yet, one fellow student knows he is an Arab, Isabella. She ultimately exposes him, and Adam is expelled from Yakov’s class.

These years at University will mostly teach Adam how to conceal himself. The present - absentee soon learns how to become invisible. But his contradictions cannot be resolved, and as hard as Adam tries to run away from the ghetto into which he was born, and from his past, eventually ending up in New York where he writes his story, he can never escape.

In revealing the contradictory identity of the “Arabs of Israel”, Elias Khoury also weaves together in an unprecedented way, the Holocaust and the Nakba, both phenomena being determining factors of the Israeli and the Palestinian identities. Khoury grasps with great sensitivity, the heart of the Palestinian tragedy: After they lost their land and their homes, life as they knew it, the Palestinians fell silent, and were furthermore reduced to silence. It is this silence that Khoury explores: The true tragedy is that this silence can never be broken. There are no words to describe horror: “Language betrays us”, Adam will reflect.

Conceptually powerful and stimulating, *Stella Maris* is also a poignant, captivating and compelling narrative, with convincing characters made of flesh and blood, unfolding in a complex, thoroughly researched world, into which the reader is unavoidably drawn.

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE

By Humphrey Davies

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After the tours of the ghetto were over, Adam told Nadia that her translation hadn’t been needed, because the rhythm of the guide’s voice had been enough for them to understand everything—a voice that would come close to choking, then die away as it recounted the history of a place that had been erased. He told her he’d felt he was choking when they arrived at the remains of the wall that had hidden the ghetto from the city, at 55 Sienna Street and 62 Złota Street. The ghetto had been enclosed by a wall, three metres high, topped with barbed wire. He said that the children had been the ghetto’s first heroes, because they’d taken on the smuggling of food stuffs from the Aryan zone to the ghetto.

He said that children were the bearers of life and therefore the first to die.

He said that life bestowed by a killer appears meaningless in the midst of debasement, hunger, and disease. It takes its meaning from itself and no longer needs words of any kind. Its meaning exists within it and requires no added meaning.

Did Adam say these things to Nadia, or is he imagining today that he said them? Or is he saying them only now, when death has reached maturity within him?

It is incumbent on the writer of this text, as he recounts the story of his life, to ask himself why he is revisiting this trip to

Warsaw, and why he stammers, loses his way with words, and finds himself incapable of writing. Wouldn’t it be better for him to ignore it? Isn’t it simply a recapitulation of events that occurred during the days of the Warsaw Ghetto? And isn’t his account of the trip to Auschwitz just an attempt to say what can’t be said? And what can he say, after all that has been said?

The writer of this text knows that his testimony adds nothing new to “the banality of evil” when it transforms itself into a crime. Even God, who “forgives whomever He pleases,” has lost his capacity for forgiveness and wrapped himself in the cloak of absence.

The voice of the guide began to fade away, and Adam felt that he’d lost the capacity to listen, and the silence wrapped his ears in a soundless ringing.

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THE WIND'S ABODE



FICTION

The wind's abode
Maqam al rih

S. Yazbek,
Al Mutawassit, Milano, 2021
144 pages

SOLD RIGHTS

Stock, France (to appear).
World Editions BV, The Netherlands (English, to appear).
Unionsverlag, Germany (to appear).
Ordfront, Sweden (to appear).
Orlando, The Netherlands (2022).
Green Books, Mayalam, India (to appear).

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

English translation sample.

AWARDS & DISTINCTIONS

Yazbek was awarded the **PEN Pinter prize** (UK, 2012), the **PEN Tucholsky prize** (Sweden, 2012), and the **PEN Oxfam-Novib prize** (Netherlands, 2013) for her book *In the crossfire*.

The Crossing received the French "**Best Foreign Book award**", in 2016. It was on the shortlist of the prestigious French **Médicis award**.

The Blue Pen was on the third and final selection of the **Femina (2018)** and on the long list of the **National Book Award (2021)**.

YAZBEK Samar



BIO

Born in 1970 in Jable, Syria, Samar Yazbek studied literature before beginning her career as a journalist and a script writer for Syrian television and cinema.

SOME OTHER WORKS

19 Women French (Stock, 2019), Swedish (Ordfront, 2019), Italian (Sellerio, 2019), Ukrainian (Nika-Centre, 2021).

The Blue Pen French (Stock, 2018), Swedish (Ordfront, 2017), Danish (Kristeligt Dagblads Forlag, 2017), Norwegian (Cappelen Damm, 2018), Dutch (Orlando, 2019), Romanian (Pandora, 2020), English (World Editions BV, 2021), Malayalam (Green Books, 2021), Unionsverlag, Germany (to appear), Sonia Draga (Poland, to appear), Hakusui-Sha, Japan (to appear)

The Crossing English (World - Rider Books, Ebury, Penguin Random House, UK, 2015), German (Nagel & Kimche, Hanser, 2015), Swedish (Ordfront, 2015), Norwegian (Cappelen Damm, 2015), Spanish (Stella Maris, 2016), French (Stock, 2016), Portuguese (Portugal - Euthalia, 2016), Polish (Karakter, 2016), Greek (Kastaniotis, 2017), Danish (Kristeligt Dagblads Forlag, 2016), Italian (Sellerio, 2017), Complex Chinese (Walkers, 2017), Simplified Chinese (Shanghai Translation Pub. House, 2018), Macedonian (Prozart, 2018), Malayalam (Green Books, 2019), Japanese (Hakusui Sha, 2020), Romanian (Pandora, to appear)

In the Crossfire French (Bouchet-Chastel, 2012), English (Haus, UK, 2012), German (Nagel & Kimche, Hanser, 2012), Dutch (Nigh & Ditmar, 2013), Turkish (Timas, 2013).

In her Mirrors (2010) Italian (Castelvecchi, 2011).

Cinnamon (2008), Italian (Castelvecchi, 2010), English (Arabia books Haus, 2013), French (Bouchet-Chastel, 2013), Swedish (Ordfront, 2013), Norwegian (Cappelen Damm, 2013), German (Nagel & Kimche, 2014).

Clay (2005).

Child of Heaven (2002).

| PRESS

| **Al-Quds Al-Arabi** This is the tale of man coalescing with nature, of man as the offspring of nature... [Yazbek] brings this story to life in a **very unique style**, which condensates or expands time in turn, using a **language that is both highly literary**,

as well as colloquial and vital, animated with the pulse of the people.

| **Iraqpalm** With a language greater than the current moment of war, and through a broad narrative that relies on the character's stream of consciousness, Samar Yazbek examines the relationship of man to violence.

| **Independent Arabia** Samar Yazbek has written an **elegantly wrapped and powerful novel, with a fluid, subtle language, a slow pace and a translucent beauty.**

| SUMMARY

Ali, a 19 year old soldier in the Syrian army, is laying on the ground underneath a tree. He has a vision, that of a funeral. Is this his funeral? Is that woman hugging the coffin Nahla, his mother? As he comes to his senses, Ali remembers: This was his brother's funeral. About a year ago perhaps. At that moment, Ali realizes he must have been hurt by the bomb the army dropped on them by mistake earlier that day.

Yazbek's latest novel concentrates on these hours of Ali's life. As he tries to locate the pain, to identify the injury, Ali works his way closer to the tree. His ultimate desire is to fly up to one of its branches. Trees have always been his haven, his home. Trees have no secret to him. Up there, he would be safe from wild animals after sunset. All that while, Ali goes over the various episodes of his life, leading to the conclusive encounter with an army checkpoint where he is drafted, or rather abducted.

Through Ali's childhood and teens, we discover the misery of that traditional Syrian Alawite village, but also the richness and beauty of its cultural and religious heritage. Through Ali's vocation to be the village's next Cheikh, or religious reference, the novel explores the secrets of the Alawite faith, its relationship to nature and the elements (the moon, rocks, trees and wind), as well as its peacefulness. The contrast with the Alawite

governing mafia and the cruelty of the war is stark, and painful.

Nothing destined Ali to violence. A silent and contemplative child, unfit for school, many thought he was an idiot. The strange story of his birth, where the wise and old Hmayrona made her entrance into his life, seemed to have destined him to mysticism, and to a special relationship to the surrounding nature. A strong and agile boy, Ali would run barefoot on rocks, leave his feet hanging from the windy cliff, and climb up trees so swiftly, one would think he was flying.

Once again, Yazbek tackles the Syrian war, but this time, from a distance. With *The wind's abode*, Samar Yazbek comes back to one of her favorite topics: the marginalized rural community's transformation, its aesthetics and its faith. While the Syrian war indubitably offers the framework of this story, its heart is elsewhere. With this poignant story, Yazbek writes about the beauty and the cruelty of life, the destruction of worldly beauty and kindness, but also its resilience, and the elevation of the soul.

Similarly to Ali's, the words of this novel are sparse. No scene or description is superfluous, and Yazbek's writing is as delicate as Ali's gaze upon the world. With *The wind's abode*, Yazbek offers her finest novel to date.

| TRANSLATION EXCERPT

By Leri Price

Just a small leaf. His tangled eyelashes wouldn't let him see it beneath the afternoon sun.

A leaf, nothing more. Lobed and green, it appeared in front of his eyes like a curtain whenever he slowly and laboriously moved his eyelids. A leaf brushing his long, mud-spattered lashes. A leaf he couldn't see clearly through the soft grains of soil swimming in the water of his eyes, chafing and burning. If he opened his eyelids again, the leaf would fall into his left eye. The entire world was that leaf. No sound, no smell. He couldn't feel his other eye. Was he still alive? Perhaps! Did he have a body? Where was it, in that case? His sense of existence extended no further than the narrow strip of faint light concealed by black lines – he was

indifferent as to whether they were his eyelashes or his nightmares, as the darkness would soon settle within him again. He was slowly plunging into some deep and unknown place. His gravity was negated and he could feel his head swinging – perhaps he was falling into a grave. Was this his funeral? Was this his head?

The leaf fell so his eye could see. His eye was wandering in the air, watching a body plunge into a hole. His body was inside a coffin he couldn't see (but he knew it was his body), and the hole wasn't deep enough for fear, but it was deep enough for the disappearance and the disintegration that would take place after the soil was piled upon it. A single eye, then.

| CO-AGENTS

DUTCH

Mado Kooy Literary Agency
hanna@kooyagency.nl

ENGLISH

Rocking Chair books
samar@rockingchairbooks.com

FRENCH

The Italian Literary Agency
italianliterary.com
claire.sabatiegat@italianliterary.com

GERMAN

The Italian Literary Agency
italianliterary.com
claire.sabatiegat@italianliterary.com

GREEK

Iris
irisliteraryagency.gr/en

JAPANESE

Tuttle-mori
tuttle-mori.com

ITALIAN

The Italian Literary Agency
italianliterary.com
claire.sabatiegat@italianliterary.com

POLISH

Book/lab
literatura.com.pl

PORTUGUESE

Kerrigan
antoniakerrigan.com

SCANDINAVIAN LANGUAGES

Mado Kooy Literary Agency
hanna@kooyagency.nl

SPANISH

Kerrigan
antoniakerrigan.com

TURKISH

Kalem Agency
kalemagency.com