THE AGENCY FOR ARABIC LITERATURE **RAYA**

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| NEW TO THE LIST

Yahya AMQASSIM The Raven's Claw
A unique novel, The Raven's Claw is "a major work, *comparable to Abderrahman Mounif's classic Cities of salt". Set in the 19th century, this epic novel is a magnificent insight into the origins of contemporary Saudi socio-political dynamics.*

Jana FAWAZ EL HASSAN 99th Floor
The Ninety-Ninth Floor is a love story that asks questions about the ability of passion to overcome hatred and difference.

Mahmoud HOSNI (Dar al saqi) Maps of Jonas
A 33 year-old man, a little girl, an old stranded, dying whale, and a blind cat: Their fates are tied in a post-apocalyptic world.

Ibrahim NASRALLAH The Second Dog War
A dystopian look at a not-so-distant future where technological advances serve an extreme form of consumerism, ultimately threatening life itself.

Youssef RAKHA (Interlink) The Book of the Sultan's Seal
An ode to Cairo, "city of the world", the novel is partly a tale of the fantastic, and partly a political pamphlet. The Book of the Sultan's Seal is a suspenseful and erotic read, a riotous examination of Muslim demise.

Habib SELMI Innocence
An illustration of the hypocrisy of Arab societies, who even though speaking of modernity and the need for change, still cling to obsolete traditions and values.

Mahmoud SHUKAIR (Interlink) Praise for the Women of the Family
A family saga, unfolding over half a century, the novel witnesses the rapid advance of modernity and the seeds of conflict beginning to grow in 1950s Palestine.

| FEATURED TITLES

Hoda BARAKAT The Night Post
An illegal emigrant writes a letter to his lover. A woman writes the man she awaits. A torturer on the run writes his mother… They all connect by coincidence, and converge towards the airport looking for a new start elsewhere.

Najwa BIN SHATWAN (Dar al saqi) The Slave Pens
Benghazi, Lybia, some time in the first half of the past century, Atiqa, now a free woman, hears the story of her mother's life as a slave and lover for the first time.

Hilal CHOUMAN (Dar al saqi) Once Upon a Time, Tomorrow
A fresh, funny and immensely clever take on what life is like for your average millennial in an unstable corrupt country – where anything is possible, and nothing can be relied upon.

Khaled KHALIFA Death Is Hard Work
In a divided Syria, Belbol needs to transport his father's corpse from Damascus to Aleppo.

Dima WANNOUS The Frightened
There is ultimately one kind of fear: The fear of fear. The psychological depths of fear and anxiety brilliantly explored in a novel set in contemporary Syria.

Samar YAZBEK 19 Women: Stories of Resilience from Syria
Yazbek focuses on the silent, or silenced, actors of the revolution: Women.

MORE TITLES

Sinan ANTOON Index
A novel about the disintegration of a homeland, and the impossibility to capture it. Antoon's fourth novel has been hailed as his best so far.

Sinan ANTOON Ave Maria
Antoon tackles the difficult topic of sectarianism in Iraq. Shortlisted for the IPAF 2013.

Sinan ANTOON The Pomegranate Alone
In the quietness of a corpse washer's work space, Antoon explores the multiple faces of violence in Iraq, and the power of the will to live. Long-listed for the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize 2014.

Hoda BARAKAT The Kingdom of This Earth
Barakat draws a cruel and tender portrait of her hometown, Bsharre, examining the nature of minorities.

Jabbour DOUAIHY Printed in Beirut
Through Farid Abou Chaar's desperate attempt to get published, the humorous story of the disintegration of publishing in Beirut.

Jabbour DOUAIHY American Neighborhood
How violence, caused by the fantasized love of a simple minded man, creeps into a small quiet town. Shortlisted for the IPAF 2013.

Youssef FADEL Joy
Casablanca in the 1980's, an enormous mosque being built in proximity of a very poor neighborhood forms the backdrop of a tragic love story.

Khaled KHALIFA There Are No Knives in the Kitchen of the City
Reading through Khaled Khalifa's latest novel, one can only wonder how life was possible under the Asad regime. Shortlisted for the IPAF 2014.

Mustafa KHALIFA The Shell
The shell is the literary memoir of a man who was unjustly jailed for 12 years in Syria, without a trial,.

Samar YAZBEK The Blue Pen
A unique powerful tale from Syria, through the eyes of a girl who cannot stop walking.

THE RAVEN'S CLAW

FICTION

The raven's claw
Saw al ghurab

Y. Amqassim
Dar al adab, Beirut, 2008, 384 pages

RIGHTS
Rights owner: The author
Represented by RAYA for world translation rights.

AVAILABLE MATERIAL
PDF file of the original Arabic version.
Full French translation.
French translator's introduction to the novel.

AWARDS AND DISTINCTIONS
The full French translation of The raven's claw was supported by a benefactor. It will be donated at no further cost to the acquiring French publisher.

AMQASSIM
Yahya

BIO
Yahya Amqassim was born in 1972, in the Al-Husseini valley, in the southern province of Saudi Arabia, Jazan. Law graduate of the King Said University in Riyad (2007), he worked in the Cultural office of the Saudi Embassy in Paris, He currently works with the ministry of education in Riyadh.

Yahya was among the 39 exceptional Arab authors identified by the Hay festival, in their "Beirut 39" literary festival, in 2010.

SOME OTHER WORKS
Amqassim wrote two short story collections, *The raven's claw* is his first novel.

| PRESS

| Al Jazira, 2008 "**Captivating and inspiring**"

| Mohammad Hasan Alwan, Al Watan, 2008 "The only Saudi novel to tackle these hidden mountainous parts, and a period that historians have overlooked, yet, without sacrificing its literary quality." - Alwan is the winner of the Arab Man Booker 2017

| Al Hayat, 2008 "A **unique** voice, unlike any other."

| **Al Hayat, 2008** "The author's first novel, yet one that indicates great experience."

| Raja' Alem, Al Riyadh, 2008 "In The raven's claw, (Amqassim) has engraved the history of Osseira and of the Al Husseini valley for eternity."

| Al Quds, 2008 "With **incredible imagination**, open to the strange and the supernatural, Amqassim crafts his novel keeping the balance between document and art, avoiding (the trap) of a historical record… A **successful** "literary narrative", written with **great skill.**"

| SUMMARY

A unique novel, set in parts of the Arabian peninsula that previously never appeared in literature, *The Raven's Claw* is **"a major work,** comparable to Abderrahman Mounif's classic *Cities of salt*. Amqassim's novel is more dense, more poetical, and more **efficient in its enchanting power"** (Luc Barbulesco, translator).

Starting in the 1800s, the novel describes the proud and powerful tribe of Osseira, who dominated the fertile Al Husseini valley, at the borders with Yemen, protected to the east by The Raven's Claw mountains. They resisted the Ottomans and Egyptians with success, and offered the same resistance to the expansion of Al Saoud. This last invader was however of a different nature, and ultimately succeeds in annihilating this people's unique way of life.

Featuring a multitude of secondary characters, the novel is centered on the cheikh, the tribe's powerful ruler, Aissa El Kheir, and his mother, Sidiqiya, the true leader of the tribe, a woman of undisputed authority, and great political intelligence, respected by all in the valley.

In this society, young men are to circumcise themselves when they turn 20. This rite of passage allows them to show their physical and mental force and therefore, their true value.

This rite was however forbidden by the Northern power of the Al Saoud's Emir, who sought to impose their interpretation of religion, and to extend their domination to the fertile valleys of Al Husseini. Hamoud, son of Aissa, attempts to circumcise himself at the novel's opening. Failing to keep this secret, he unwillingly provides the Emir with a golden opportunity to destroy the tribe, thereby leading the people of Osseira to their end.

The novel describes how a society that valued heroism, in men or women, and lived in harmony with the brute forces of nature, eventually gives in to the patient and perfidious attacks of the Emir, finally losing confidence in its own values. This epic tale forces the reader's admiration for its unusually charismatic characters, and sadly long gone way of life.

Set in the 19th century, *The Raven's Claw*, is a magnificent insight into the origins of contemporary Saudi socio-political dynamics.

| TRANSLATION EXCERPT:

By Luc Barbulesco

‘

Depuis des années il ne cessait de répéter à ses hommes, avec force et conviction, qu'il n'acceptait pas cette espèce de résignation qu'il leur voyait, mais il n'avait pas réussi à rallumer leur flamme ancienne, à les maintenir dans la position du refus et de l'intransigeance, il ne pouvait empêcher leur repli sur leurs intérêts domestiques, sur leurs champs, leur acceptation silencieuse d'un temps qui avait cessé de leur appartenir, et ce, alors que personne de leur lignée n'avait par le passé montré ce genre de soumission, même à l'époque, révolue, des Idrissides.

Seule sa mère devinait sa souffrance, provoquée par une blessure cachée dont lui-même ne pouvait s'expliquer la raison: comment se faisait-il qu'une communauté puissante comme la sienne se trouve soudainement confrontée à une situation qui les laissait incapables de la moindre réaction face aux empiètements d'un peuple qui jusque-là ignorait leur existence, et n'avait avec eux aucune espèce de lien? Et comment pourrait-il s'accommoder de cette situation humiliante, de cette angoisse qui l'étreignait au sujet de son fils unique? Il n'était pas concevable que sa cohorte, naguère si fameuse, pût en arriver à ce degré d'avilissement, qu'elle perdît si vite tout ce qui faisait sa gloire et sa fierté, devant un pouvoir nouveau et avide, qui leur était étranger. Combien tout cela le faisait souffrir, combien ce silence qu'il s'imposait par égard pour sa mère lui coûtait! (…)

Les vêtements que ces hommes portaient ressemblaient à ceux des hommes armés qui s'étaient présentés naguère, mais de couleur plus claire, ils avaient la barbe plus longue, et soignée, et il émanait d'eux un parfum curieux. Leur regard se posait, attentif, sur tout ce qui les entourait. Ils n'avaient pas même esquissé le geste de serrer la main ni prononcé de formules de bénédiction, comme c'est l'usage. Ils s'étaient bornés à saluer à haute voix en arrivant, avant d'aller s'installer à quelque distance, prenant position de telle sorte qu'ils pussent exercer leur surveillance. (...)

On avait remarqué aussi, chez les nouveau-venus, des expressions de colère et de refus à l'endroit des conversations que tenaient les gens du village, lesquels n'attendaient pas d'être sortis de la mosquée pour parler entre eux de leurs affaires quotidiennes. Cette attitude empreinte d'incompréhension et de sévérité, chez des gens qui après tout étaient des invités, ne laissait pas d'étonner leurs hôtes d'Osseira, étonnement mêlé d'irritation, lorsqu'ils avaient vu les étrangers choisir l'un des leurs pour diriger la prière du soir, sans prendre la peine d'en demander l'autorisation, et ce, dans une mosquée où l'on n'avait jamais vu quiconque diriger la prière autre que le cheikh de la tribu.

La mère écoutait ce que disait son fils à propos de ces gens étranges, sans se laisser distraire par les commentaires des autres; elle percevait en effet dans le ton de voix de son fils des indications implicites sur ces étrangers, alors que les remarques adventices ne faisaient que dissimuler ce noyau de crainte qui se trouvait au coeur du sujet. Quels que fussent les détails et les points particuliers évoqués par le cheikh, elle avait l'intuition de plus en plus nette d'une catastrophe inéluctable.

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AVE MARIA

FICTION

Ave Maria
Ya maryam

S. Antoon
Manshourat al jamal, Beirut, 2012
157 pages

SOLD RIGHTS
Turner, Spain (2014).
Hoopoe, AUC, World English (2017)
Sindbad, Actes Sud, France (to appear)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL
Complete English translation.

AWARDS
Ave Maria was on the shortlist of the International Prize of Arabic Fiction (or **Arab Booker**), 2013.

The pomegranate alone (The Corpse Washer) was awarded **The Arabic Literature Prize** 2017, World Arab Institute-Lagardère (France).

It was awarded the 2014 **Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize** for Arabic Literary Translation

It was long-listed for the **Independent Foreign Fiction Prize** 2014 (UK), and was the **Best Arab-American Novel** 2014 (USA).

ANTOON
Sinan

BIO
Sinan Antoon (Baghdad, 1967) is a poet, novelist, and translator. He left Iraq in 1991 after the Gulf War. He got his PhD from Harvard in 2006, and is currently associate professor of Arabic literature at NYU, New York where he now lives. He is the co-founder and co-editor of the e-zine *Jadaliyya* (http://www.jadaliyya.com/), which is published in Arabic and English.

SOME OTHER WORKS
I'jaam: An Iraqi rhapsody (2004), translated into Italian (Feltrinelil), Portuguese (Globo, Brazil), and English (City Lights).
The pomegranate alone (2010), translated into English (Yale University Press, 2013), French (Actes Sud, 2017).
Index (2015), translated into English (Yale University Press, to appear).

| PRESS

| **The Guardian,** "[Antoon] **faithfully reproduces the difficult conversations** between an Iraqi Christian family housed in Baghdad while the daily scenes of carnage are painfully recounted."

| **Al Jazeera,** "A novel about Iraqi agony. Iraq's history is condensed and **elegantly portrayed**."

| **Banipal,** "Sinan Antoon is **one of the most talented** of the younger generation of Iraqi writers to have emerged from the chaos of that country's recent history."

| **The National** "(Ave Maria) is a short read but one that l**ingers long in the mind**… [Antoon] has crafted **a novel of rare brilliance** which highlights the divisions within a family and their struggles within their city."

| **Elias Khoury**, "**A beautiful text**, a testimony of the time of mud and blood that besieges Iraq and the Arab East… in very **moving language**, this Iraqi novelist writes his country with the ink of pain."

| **Al-Ahram Weekly,** "[A] panoramic view of Iraq, its history, its iconography and its bitter present… Antoon is fast becoming not only the voice of the disaffections of modern Iraq, but also **one of the most acclaimed authors of the Arab world.**"

| **as-Safir,** "The first novel to broach the tragedy of Iraqi Christians… narrating Iraq's wounds in a beautiful language."

| SUMMARY

Antoon tackles the difficult topic of sectarianism in Irak.

Set in Baghdad in 2010, Ave Maria is 24 hours in Baghdad, in the lives of Yusef and Maha. Yusef is an old man who owns a large old house in Baghdad. With no family left, he hosts a young couple in the house's second floor, Maha, and her husband Lu'ay.

The novel sets off on a heated discussion between Maha and Yusef, both from the Christian minority. Having known better days in Baghdad, Yusef refuses to read current events through the prism of sectarianism. Maha, on the other hand, is a young woman who directly suffered from sectarian strife. She experiences the country's violence as a persecution. The heated discussion is quite unusual, as Maha, grateful to be hosted by Yusef, and respectful of his old age, has never expressed her disagreement so violently in the past.

Hurt, Yusef nevertheless understands the young woman's anger and pain. Early the next morning, he hopes to see Maha, to give her a chance to apologize, and mend things between them. But they do not meet, as Yusef leaves home before her.

That day is the anniversary of the death of Hinnah, Yusef's sister. A fervent believer, Maha intends to come to mass. Regretful of her behavior the night before, she goes over the reasons of her anger, and the details of her painful past. She would have liked to see Yusef in the morning, but their timings did not coincide. She plans to go early to church to see him and talk to him, but she ends up being a few minutes late, and sits at the back of the church, instead of sitting next to him.

Maha will never have a chance to apologize to Yusef. That day, during mass, the church was attacked by Islamists, and many died, among them Yusef.

With this novel Antoon tackles the difficult topic of sectarianism. Avoiding clichés, Antoon explores communautarian strife with a lot of sensitivity, delicacy and intelligence. Describing the phenomenon itself, Antoon also offers the perspectives different people have of events. The same religious tension can be read through the lens of a broader understanding of geopolitics. The brutality to which people are exposed however, seems to prevent them of thinking beyond communitarian lines, especially in the new generation.

| TRANSLATION EXCERPT: ENGLISH

By Maia Tabet

‘

I decided it was time for my monthly visit with Saadoun. I'd been missing him recently, and he was the last of my friends who remained alive. We'd met at a soccer match decades earlier, during the 1979 game between Zawraa' and Minaa' at al-Shaab stadium. We were seated next to each other in the covered section during the unfortunate match when Zawraa's star, Falah Hassan, was injured and broke his leg. In the middle of the second half, Falah was alone in the penalty area when Minaa's goalie ran toward him to cut him off. To avoid hitting the goalie's head with his foot, Falah leapt into the air in a half-twist and fell to the ground, immobilized. When Thamer Yusif, his offense teammate, approached and saw his mangled leg, he buried his head in his hands and wept. Players from both teams gathered around the injured star. The entire crowd stood up on the bleachers and a stunned silence descended over the stadium. Many people cried that day, as Falah was a star of international repute and Iraq's most famous player. They laid him on a stretcher, carried him to the ambulance that had driven onto the field from a side entrance, and whisked him away to Medical City Hospital.

Our passion for Zawraa' and our distress over Abu Tayseer, as Falah was known, brought us together, and during our first conversation we commiserated about the fate of his career and the future of the club without his offensive skills. Even though Zawraa' ended up winning that match by one goal, Saadoun was somber. Speaking loud enough for all the spectators around to hear, “This is cause for grief. Tonight, I'm getting drunk!” I agreed with him. “It really merits a bender.”

At the end of the game, we headed out together, walking alongside the large crowd of spectators spilling out toward Andalus Square as we commiserated. We went into the first bar we found and spent the next three hours there, drinking and talking. We went over every one of Falah's offensive plays and all his best goals; we bemoaned his misfortune and Zarwaa's bad luck—his injury was obviously serious and we were sure he would never again return to the field even though he was at the height of his form. In spite of it all, I was determined that we should part on an optimistic note.

“To Abu Tayseer's health—may he recover and come back stronger!” I exclaimed, raising my glass in one last toast. Fully agreeing with my sentiment, Saadoun began repeating the words like an incantation to the wine gods. Falah Hassan went to Britain for treatment and the al-Watan's sports magazine ran a photo spread of him exercising with the British physiotherapy team helping with his rehab. He was back six months later, and at the first match he played at al-Shaab stadium he got down on his knees and kissed the ground before the start of play. Saadoun and I went to the game together, having become fast friends in the intervening months. That day, Saadoun teared up as he yelled at the top of his lungs, “I'll lay my life down for that golden orb,” referring to Falah's bald head. Was I recalling this now because I had been reading that after twenty years in America, Falah had just returned to Iraq for good and was running for president of the country's soccer association?

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INDEX

FICTION

Index
Fihris

S. Antoon
Manshourat al jamal, Beirut, 2015, 283 pages.

SOLD RIGHTS
Yale University Press, World English (to appear).

AVAILABLE MATERIAL
English translation sample. Translator's reading report.

AWARDS
Index was on the long-list of the International Prize for Arabic Fiction (or Arab Man Booker)

The pomegranate alone (The Corpse Washer) was awarded **The Arabic Literature Prize** 2017, World Arab Institute-Lagardère (France).

It was awarded the 2014 **Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize** for Arabic Literary Translation

It was long-listed for the **Independent Foreign Fiction Prize** 2014 (UK), and was the **Best Arab-American Novel** 2014 (USA)

Ave Maria was on the shortlist of the International Prize of Arabic Fiction (or **Arab Booker**), 2013.

ANTOON
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BIO
Sinan Antoon (Baghdad, 1967) is a poet, novelist, and translator. He left Iraq in 1991 after the Gulf War. He got his PhD from Harvard in 2006, and is currently associate professor of Arabic literature at NYU, New York where he now lives. He is the co-founder and co-editor of the e-zine *Jadaliyya* (http://www.jadaliyya.com/), which is published in Arabic and English.

SOME OTHER WORKS
The pomegranate alone *(*or *The corpse washer,* 2010*),* translated into English (Yale University Press); French (Actes Sud, 2017); Turkish (Aylak Adam, to appear). Malayalam (Green Books, to appear), Maceonian (Prozart, to appear).
Ave Maria (2012), translated into Spanish (Turner, 2014); French (Actes Sud, to appear)
I'jaam: An Iraqi rhapsody (2004), translated into Italian (Feltrinelil), Portuguese (Globo, Brazil), and English (City Lights).

| SUMMARY

The story of a book that cannot be written.

The Index lists all the things that perished in Iraq's 2003 war. Waddood, an Iraqi eccentric book seller is the author of the Index. He gives it to Nameer, the narrator, an academic who is about to get his PhD in literature in the US, and who, in the novel's opening, visits Iraq with a film crew as a translator. Nameer is disoriented by his visit to Iraq, and fascinated by Waddood and his work. He decides that the book he wants to write about Iraq should rest on Waddood's life. He starts collecting newspaper clippings in view of his writing project. But the book never sees the light of day, as the more Nameer reads about the desintegration of Iraq, the less he knows how to write about it.

As we follow Nameer's American life, we read with him parts of Waddood's Index. The parallel between the two voices are sometimes obvious, sometimes there are none. Ultimately, Nameer's voice grows closer and closer to Waddood's, as he loses faith in life more and more.

Ultimately, Antoon's last novel is the story of a book that cannot be written. In Waddoud's Index, things speak and narrate their own life and death. Often, these passages take the form of a charade, where the reader discovers the nature of the object only towards the end of the passage. As even objects are attributed emotions, the reader gets a strong sense of the true meaning of loss. Despite Nameer's life in the US being quite fulfilling on paper – a professor of literature in a respected New York institution, in a relationship with a wonderful young woman – he is consumed by this sense of loss.

Index is a novel about the disintegration of a homeland, and the impossibility to capture it. Antoon's fourth novel has been hailed as his best so far by the Arab press and was in its third edition barely six months after its publication.

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE: ENGLISH

By Jonathan Wright

‘

The Colloquy of the Birds

I can still remember the first time I flew.

"Come on. It's time!" my father said firmly before flying off. My mother pushed me gently toward the void with her beak and whispered, "Don't be frightened, my little one. You'll fly. We all fly. I'll be right behind you."

My three siblings were flying happily in the sky, oblivious to me. My heart was pounding, as if it were also worried its wings might let it down, as if, like me, it was torn between the fear inside me, which kept me in or close to the nest, and an overwhelming desire that compelled me to be like the grown-ups.

I moved forward warily to the edge of the branch, which dipped a little with my weight and the weight of my mother behind me. I didn't look down. I looked up, where my father was circling in a clear, cloudless sky. I spread my wings, then looked back toward my mother. She didn't say anything this time but her eyes gave me courage and she kissed my head with her beak. I remembered how she had often told me that we have strong wings and that my wings would one day carry me to distant lands. I looked ahead and plucked up all my courage and flapped my wings with vigor.

And I took off.

I couldn't believe myself. I flew with confidence, as if I had often flown before. The cold air swept past my white feathers. The whole sky was mine and the whole world was laid out below me. With a flip of a wing I could twist and turn, rise and fall. I kept flying till the sun bade us farewell. I was the last to come home that day.

I laugh now, and I'm embarrassed too, when I remember that moment and the fear that later left me. Here I am now, flying with the grown-ups for days on our journey to the warm lands.

* * *

(...)

He's not interested in being translated or published. So why is he sharing his manuscript with me so readily? Does he care that much what a stranger thinks? He's strange, this Wadood. I folded the letter up and put it in the notebook I had bought specially to record my impressions of this visit. It had large pages that were slightly brown. The edges were stitched and trimmed unevenly to look like an old book. It had a thick cover of buff leather and a thin red ribbon attached to the top of the spine as a place marker. The marker was still on the first page, where I had written just one word since arriving: Baghdad.

I envied Wadood his productivity. I don't know how to start. In the end all this concern, or rather obsession, with writing rituals and instruments leads only to blank pages and silence. This visit had of course been hectic and hurried and the pace of the work and the daily travel exhausted me physically and mentally, leaving me no time to write or even to think calmly. I hadn't yet started to deal with the whirl of scenes and people and ambivalent emotions. Even so I should have written something. One sentence at least. Every night I came back tired and sat on the bed. I picked up my pen but didn't manage to write anything. The first night was the only night I wrote anything – that one word *Baghdad*.

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THE POMEGRANATE ALONE

FICTION

The pomegranate alone
Wahdaha shajarat el roumman

S. Antoon
Al mouassassa al arabiya, Beirut, 2010
255 pages

SOLD RIGHTS
Yale University Press, World English (2014)
Sindbad, Actes Sud, France (2017)
Aylak Adam, Turkey (to appear)
Green Books, India, Malayalam (2017)
Prozart, Macedonia (to appear)
Kastaniotis, Greece (to appear)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL
PDF of the English translation.

AWARDS & DISTINCTIONS
The pomegranate alone (The Corpse Washer) was awarded **The Arabic Literature Prize** 2017, World Arab Institute-Lagardère (France).

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ANTOON
Sinan

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Ave Maria (2012), translated into Spanish (Turner, 2014); French (Actes Sud, to appear)
I'jaam: An Iraqi rhapsody (2004), translated into Italian (Feltrinelil), Portuguese (Globo, Brazil), and English (City Lights).

| PRESS

| **L'Express, 2017** "**Superb portrait** of a man carried away by the maelstrom of the Middle East… **beautiful narrative** carried by the **delicate style** of the Iraqi Sinan Antoon"

| **Alberto Manguel, 2013**, "*The Corpse Washer* is **one of the most extraordinary novels** that I've read"

| **The national, 2013,** "A compact **masterpiece**, a taut, **powerful and utterly absorbing** tale"

| **The Kenyon review, 2014, "**Sinan Antoon's The Corpse Washer offers a **moving** literary elegy… It must be read."

| **NPR, 2014,** "A stark portrait of contemporary Iraq."

| **Warscapes, 2014,** "**Powerful** companion for anyone trying to understand the drama of post-2003 Iraq or of war in general."

| **Three percent, 2013,** "**Remarkable** novel that in 184 pages captures the experience of an Iraqi everyman"

| SUMMARY

In the quietness of a corpse washer's work space, Antoon explores the multiple faces of violence in Iraq.

One does not choose to wash corpses. It is a work that needs to be done, for the world to go on as we know it, and for the deceased to be buried like we know how to bury. One inherits this profession from their father, or becomes a corpse washer out of necessity.

Jawad did not want to wash corpses. He wanted to be an artist. A student of the faculty of art at the university of Baghdad, he was esteemed by his instructors, who had hope in his remarkable talent. Art proved to be a difficult way to earn a living, especially in a country torn by war. As a teen ager, Jawad was introduced to the tradition of washing corpses by his father. Washing corpses is a delicate, methodic, almost aesthetic practice, that brings peace to the dead, and to their family. Jawad's father, a religious man, saw in this practice a noble task which contributed to maintain the worldly order. The corpses of Shiite believers are brought to him; he then stretches them

on the s tone table, washes them three times, using soap and camphor, following the washing ritual rigorously. The water used to wash the corpses is not disposed of like other used waters. Through a small canal, the water is led to the garden where it quenches a thirsty pomegranate tree.

For years, Jawad is haunted by the faces of the dead. For years, he resisted his father's will. After his father's death, in dire need of money, Jawad finally gives in. His practice, although rigorous, is however not aesthetic like his father's was. For Jawad, beauty is in the stone and metal he sculpts, in the drawings he makes, not in the religious duty of washing of corpses. But art has failed Jawad, and so has the world. The war in Iraq is raging, and the corpses he is asked to wash are often nameless, or terribly disfigured. As a corpse washer, Jawad has an intimate and unique understanding of the war in Baghdad. Like the pomagranate tree, he stands alone, and lives off death.

The pomegranate alone is a powerful and beautifully written novel by Antoon. In the quietness of a corpse washer's workshop, Antoon explores the persistence of life, and the multiple faces of violence. The violence in the street, made to the bodies of the victims, as well as the violence, less visible but perhaps even more devastating, in the minds and hearts of the Iraqis. As Jawad can no longer bare eating the fruits of the pomegranate tree, his own existence becomes insufferable.

| TRANSLATION EXCERPT: ENGLISH

By S. Antoon

‘

Raindrops begin to fall, and she closes her eyes. I wipe a drop off her nose with my index finger. Her skin is warm, which means she is alive. I start to caress her hair. I will wash her with the rain, I think. She smiles as if she'd heard my thought. Another drop settles above her left eyebrow. I wipe it off.

I think I hear a car approaching. I turn around and see a Humvee driving at an insane speed, leaving a trail of flying dust. It suddenly swerves to the right and comes to a stop a few meters away from us. Its doors open. Masked men wearing khaki uniforms and carrying machine guns rush toward us. I try to shield Reem with my right hand, but one of the men has already reached me. He hits me in the face with the stock of his machine gun. I fall to the ground. He kicks me in the stomach. Another starts dragging me away from the washing bench. None of them says a word. I

am screaming and cursing them, but I can't hear myself. Two men force me to get down on my knees and tie my wrists with a wire behind my back. One of them puts a knife to my neck; the other blindfolds me. I try to run away, but they hold me tightly. I scream again, but cannot hear my screams. I hear only Reem's shrieks, the laughter and grunts of the men, the sound of the rain (...)

Death is not content with what it takes from me in my waking hours, it insists on haunting me even in my sleep. Isn't it enough that I toil all day tending to its eternal guests, preparing them to sleep in its lap? Is death punishing me because I thought I could escape its clutches? If my father were still alive he would mock my silly thoughts. He would dismiss all this as infantile, unbecoming to a man. Didn't he spend a lifetime doing his job day after day, never once complaining of death? But death back then was timid and more measured than today.

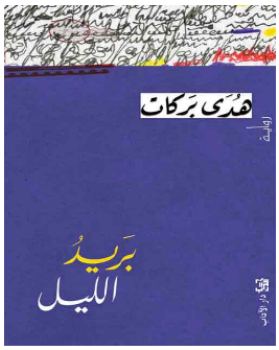
I can almost hear death saying: ''I am what I am and haven't changed at all. I am but a postman.''

If death is a postman, then I receive his letters every day. I am the one who opens carefully the bloodied and torn envelopes. I am the one who washes them, who removes the stamps of death and dries and perfumes them, mumbling what I don't entirely believe in. Then I wrap them carefully in white so they may reach their final reader—the grave.

But letters are piling up, Father! Tenfold more than what you used to see in the span of a week now pass before me in a day or two. If you were alive, Father, would you say that that is fate and God's will?

’

THE NIGHT POST



FICTION

The night post
Barid al layl

H. Barakat
Dar al-adab, Beirut, 2017 (to appear),
22,500 words.

SOLD RIGHTS
Actes Sud, Sindbad, France (to appear).
La nave di Teseo, Italy (to appear)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL
PDF file of the original Arabic version.
English translation sample.
Long summary.

AWARDS & DISTINCTIONS
Hoda Barakat's "The kingdom of this earth" 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.

Her chronicles *Letters from the stranger*, was awarded the Biennale Internationale of Amalfi Rivi, in 2007.

Her novel, *The tiller of waters*, was awarded the Naguib Mahfouz Medal of Literature in 2000.

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

| PRESS

| **Le Monde des Livres, 2015, Special issue for Charlie Hebdo** The clamor had reached my street. I leave in tears. I tell myself that I am not well. That I am exaggerating and that it's worrying. All this emotion! Since Wednesday January 7th at noon! Sadness? Or shame?

| **Le Monde des Livres, 2012** (about The Kingdom of this Earth) "The stories told here are full of errors, like childhood memories and village gossip usually are. This is one of **the strokes of genius of this kaleidoscopic boo**k, the almost ethnological dive of a writer in her own community: everything is truthful, nothing is quite true... The only stories we hear, is that of these peasants: minuscule, monstrous, sometimes luminous, but most often harsh and gray, like the stones of Mount Lebanon."

| 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-facetted 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 letter, 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.

Thus, we meet the woman to whom the first letter was addressed. She gathers her lover was heading to Paris and tries to catch him at the airport. How could he leave without a word?

We then find the Canadian lover the woman of the second letter was waiting for. After 10 hours of delay, as soon as the plane lands he decides to head back home, acutely aware of the ridicule of his gesture, and convinced she would not be waiting for him in that hotel room.

The Albanian refugee friend of the third letter's author is being deported. He was arrested and questioned for the death of the old French woman – whom he understands his Arab companion has murdered.

Next, comes the brother of the fourth letter's narrator. He is convinced his sister has killed their mother. I total disbelief of the woman she seems to have become, he swears to find her wherever she is.

And where is she? Where is she going? Where do we all go and how do we get there seems to be the novel's main question. The airport is the perfect illustration of the limbo where all these travelers-against-their-will find themselves.

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

‘

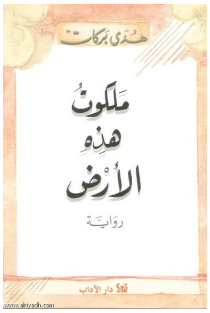
I was meaning to write to my mother about the moment she put me on the train, alone, a child of eight or nine. She gave me a loaf and two boiled eggs. Told me that my uncle was waiting for me in the capital, that I must get myself an education because I was the cleverest of all my siblings. And she said: 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. I have a deep desire to harm somebody—someone I do not know so that I might find no cause to spare them. Someone with whom I have not the slightest connection, so that I might unleash my desires without engaging my mind—since it seems to me, at times, that my mind is my greatest enemy.

Since the train took off… When that train took off a darkness fell on me that was like the sun going down in winter. I showed no fear, nor wept, but sank instead into the rank stench of the boiled eggs. I wanted to hurl the loaf away but didn't dare. It was early morning still—she had woken us roughly—but the train coursed through that sunlessness like it were a long tunnel without end.

’

THE KINGDOM OF THIS EARTH



FICTION

The kingdom of this earth
Malakout hathihi al ard

H. Barakat
Dar al-adab, Beirut, 2010, 348 pages

SOLD RIGHTS
Actes Sud, France (2012)
De Geus, Netherlands (2017).
Leopard, Sweden (2018)
Pandora publishing, Romania (to appear)

RAYA represents the author for world rights.

AVAILABLE MATERIAL
PDF file of the original Arabic version.
Full French translation.

AWARDS
The Kingdom of This Earth was shortlisted for the International Man Booker prize, 2015.

Hoda Barakat 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.

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BARAKAT
Hoda

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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.

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My master, my love (2004), translated into French (Actes Sud, 2007), Spanish (Bellacqua, 2009).
Night post (2017), French (Actes Sud, to appear)

| PRESS

| Le Monde des Livres, 2012 “The stories told here are full of errors, like childhood memories and village gossip usually are. This is one of the strokes of genius of this kaleidoscopic book, the almost ethnological dive of a writer in her own community: everything is truthful, nothing is quite true... The only stories we hear, is that of these peasants: minuscule, monstrous, sometimes luminous, but most often harsh and gray, like the stones of Mount Lebanon.”

| Le Monde des Livres, 2015, Special issue for Charlie Hebdo The clamor had reached my street. I leave in tears. I tell myself that I am not well. That I am exaggerating and that it’s worrying. All this emotion! Since Wednesday January 7th at noon! Sadness? Or shame?

| SUMMARY

In *The kingdom of this earth*, Barakat details the lives of the people of Bsharre, a small Maronite community in the Northern mountains of Lebanon, a fascinating microcosm of rebellious, devout, rude, grand, wild and malicious people. The novel spans from the beginning of the twentieth century until the eve of the Lebanese Civil War (1975).

These mountaineers are fiercely proud of their land, their saints, and almost sacred Cedar trees. Their pride and exclusive lifestyle nourishes recurring lethal conflicts with the Maronites of the neighboring town of Zgherta. This conflict shapes their lives, as well as the face of Lebanon.

With the story of this people, Barakat tackles the broad and difficult question of minorities in the Middle-East and elsewhere: Why are they relentlessly torn? Recluse, or in denial of their being a minority, they resist any national project that does not recognize their differences and their aspirations. Although following the broad lines of Lebanese and world history, with the shadows of Mussolini, De Gaulle and Pétain spread on several of its pages, this novel is however not historical. Religious myths and gossip are deeply kneaded in its story. It is not a sociological novel either. To the contrary. *The kingdom* is woven by the individual stories of the people of Bsharre, their fantasies, miseries, and accomplishments.

The two main protagonists and narrators, Salma and her little brother Tannous, alternate in telling the story, starting with their father's sudden death, shortly followed by that of their mother. Salma, the eldest, looks after her siblings, two brothers and three sisters, to the point where, forgetting herself, she never marries. Yet, Salma discovers maternal love and fulfillment with her sister's children, while Tannous, who also never marries, feels an irreducible void in his life. Gifted with a stunning voice he inherited from the males of his family, Tannous' destiny is determined by it. The story of this voice's evolution, suspected at boyhood, discovered in Bsharre's monasteries, then trained in Syria until it reaches its maturity, to ultimately fall out of fashion and in oblivion in Lebanon, is an illustration of the country's evolution and its decline.

There also is Najibé, the school teacher, Khalil, who gets drunk on *arak*, Martha, who dreams of marrying a French officer, the uncle Shehade, gone to Egypt after a movie star, Saba, the eldest bitter and useless brother, and many others. All these "minuscule, sometimes luminous, but most often harsh and gray" stories (Le Monde des Livres, 2012) evolve on the backdrop of an agitated regional and world history.

Through this tapestry of intertwined stories that Salma and Tannous deploy for the reader, *The kingdom of this earth* is the moving story of Bsharre. From a small lively and proud town often isolated by its snow storms and extreme climate, it ends up a half modernized, better connected, yet sad village, where lonely Salma and Tannous remember the hopeful days of the past.

| TRANSLATION EXCERPT: FRENCH

By Antoine Jockey (p.80).

LE ROYAUME DE CETTE TERRE

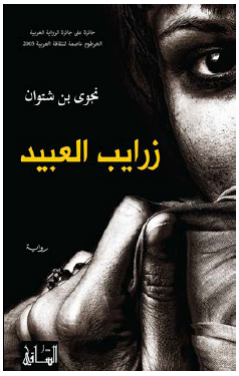
‘

Mon père était un homme bien qui adorait la Vierge et jeûnait chaque samedi pour elle. Certes, il vociférait à tout bout de champ. Une fois, je l'ai entendu dire : «J'enc… la barbe de Monseigneur.» Une autre fois, c'était le tour de l'évêque. Et quand Saydé, l'épouse de mon oncle, a dit que c'était saint Élie le Vivant qui avait guéri Saba la dernière fois qu'il était tombé malade, mon père l'a contredite en soulignant que c'était la sainte Chmouné, au couvent de laquelle il était allé pieds nus, qui avait exaucé ses prières. Et la voyant soutenir que c'était saint Élie, la paix soit avec lui, qui avait frappé la maladie de son épée, comme il l'avait fait avec la démone, mon père a sauté en l'air et s'est mis à lui dire : «J'enc… la barbe de saint Élie. Je te dis que c'est la sainte Chmouné.»

Mon père avait le sang chaud. Malgré sa foi, son calme et sa sagesse, il vociférait et insultait les saints pour vite le regretter et les prier de lui pardonner. Mais saint Élie en particulier ne pardonne pas. Il suffit de regarder ses yeux exorbités sur son image sainte pour savoir qu'il ne pardonne pas. D'ailleurs, il est connu pour son amour de la vengeance. Haineux, il fait toujours payer aux pécheurs leurs méfaits. Son épée est plus grande que lui et toujours souillée de sang. C'est pourquoi personne n'ignore sa fête et tout le monde fonce à son église pour la célébrer, même ceux qui ne l'apprécient pas trop."

’

THE SLAVE PENS



FICTION

The slave pens
Zarayib al abid

N. Bin Shatwan
Dar al saqi, Beirut, 2016
350 pages

SOLD RIGHTS
Rights owner. Dar al saqi.
Represented by RAYA for world translation rights.

AVAILABLE MATERIAL
PDF of the Arabic text.
Full English translation sample
Long summary.

AWARDS & DISTINCTIONS
The slave pens was shortlisted for the International Prize of Arabic fiction (or Arab Booker) 2017.

Najwa Bin Shatwan was in the Beirut 39 anthology (39 authors under 40 selected by the Hay Festival)

The full English translation was supported by a private benefactor. It will be donated, at no further cost, to the English language acquiring publisher.

BIN SHATWAN
Najwa

BIO
Najwa Bin Shatwan was born to an illiterate family in a poor isolated village in Libya, in the 1970s. She is given the opportunity to learn reading and writing in the local school, and takes it. At 24, she leaves her village for Benghazi, where she resumes her education at the University, in the faculty of Education. In 2003, she takes part in the Sharjah international creative writing contest, she wins the first prize in the play category. In 2009, she is questioned by the Libyan authorities on the basis of a short story she had published online (His Excellency, the Eminence of the void). While working as a lecturer at the University of Benghazi, she refused to take part in any state led cultural initiative. She left Libya in 2012 to continue her studies. She obtained her PhD in humanities (history) from La Sapienza (Rome) in 2017.
Bin Shatwan published plays, short stories collections and three novels.

SOME OTHER WORKS
Stories that are not for men (short stories), Dar al hadara, Cairo, 2003
The hair of horses, Dar al hadara, Cairo, 2006
Orange inside, Dar sharqiyat, Cairo, 2008
His excellency, the Eminence of the void, (short story, 2009). Published in English (Banipal magazine, 2011)
The queen (short stories), Libyan Culture Council, 2008. Published in Italian (Aracne, 2016)

| PRESS

| **About her, 2017** How writers can produce some of their best work under duress

| **Qantara, 2017** The importance of origins and identity

| **Shubbak, 2017** There would be no elaboration on the reality of the trade that used to buy, sell and barter human beings and rarely admission of how the ancestors may have been involved in the mistreatment of those held captive. Few Libyans have the courage to revisit that period with its many ghosts or to bring up the racism issues that still persist in the culture. Not up until now that the talented author Najwa Bin Shatwan has taken the task to heart by writing **a novel so powerful, beautiful and so sensitively fashioned** in the narrative voice of the slaves.

| SUMMARY

Benghazi, Lybia, some time in the first half of the past century, Atiqa now a free woman, hears the story of her mother's life as a slave and lover for the first time.

"The slave pens", by Libyan novelist Najwa Bin Shatwan is unprecedented in its tackling the life of slaves in Benghazi. A historian herself, Bin Shatwan nonetheless chose not to write a historical novel. While very well documented, the book is a work of fiction, with voluntarily blurred time references.

The story is that of Atiqa, the daughter of a woman slave, Tawida, and a free Libyan white man, Mohammad. It is also the story of Atiqa's mother Tawida, how she fell in love with her master, how their love story destroyed both their lives and beyond, and finally brought Atiqa to life.

The narrative structure of the book covers three different historical periods, highlighting the evolution of social structure. The adult Atiqa we meet works at the dispensary, a free woman married to a caring man she loves. Atiqa the child, grew up in the slave pens, free but exposed to all possible sorts of violence and abuse. While Tawida, the mother, was a slave in the Bin Shatwan household.

The author succeeds in creating a multilayered story, featuring many sub-plots that support the main narrative, as well as a multitude of secondary characters ranging from other slaves surrounding Tawida, to the Cheikh who plays a detrimental role in her life, and his son, a repressed homosexual; other children of the pens who mark Atiqa's childhood, namely Muftah, the baby boy Tawida saves and raises, and who, it turns out, is the one that motivates her taking the risk to flee the brothel where she was secluded.

Without being descriptive, the novel succeeds in representing Beghazi, people's looks, dress and conventions. The writing mostly focuses on the events, and is in this sense driven mostly by the action, making of the novel a captivating read.

This novel explores the complexity of Libyan contemporary culture and identity, largely ignored by the world today, and long forgotten by the Libyans themselves.

| TRANSLATION EXCERPT: ENGLISH

By Nancy Roberts

‘

"For your children's sake, I just ask you to hear me out. Please."

Out of his vest pocket he brought a document that had been rolled up and tied with a string. Slipping it under the door, he said, "God's peace be with you, Atiqa Bint Muhammad Bin Imuhammad Bin Abd al-Kabir Bin Ali Bin Shatwan. Your right's been restored to you. So take it, and don't refuse it."

He stepped away from the door, his eyes still fixed on it.

Deep inside her were things Atiqa didn't know how to describe. Without a word, her almond eyes summed up the story of a wretched slave woman's love for her master. With these eyes she retreated into her work as the mission doctor's assistant, most of her patients women and children. She rarely spoke with anyone. However, her outer silence was paralleled by an extended, angst-filled conversation with the Spirit about who she was, about the struggle to craft an identity out of two colors. What was she supposed to do with dark skin and almond eyes, and with a grief that belonged to no particular race or blood line?

Why are you reopening my wounds now, Hajj Ali? Why do stories surface when it's too late to do anything about them? To correct their details? To apologize for their painful parts? Atiqa wasn't one to reveal her perspective to a stranger, even if he'd shown up in person at her house to acknowledge her identity and her long overdue rights. So she closed the door on him, content to keep her distance.

Longsuffering and silent like her mother, like a boulder that endures the pounding of the salty waves year in and year out without being eroded away, Atiqa gave in at last to the insistent urging of the dignified, elegant Ali, who stood apart from the family that had spurned both her appearance and her person. She told him stories and he listened. On the other side of blood, pedigree and sorrow, he acknowledged her suffering, allowing her to voice her pain in his presence to the extent that she was able. He opened the doors that had been closed to her for so long, letting her choose where to situate herself in place, time, and perception. He embraced her regardless of how complicated her life was, no matter how winding her roads. He loved experiencing Muhammad through her. In her he saw Muhammad's eyes, and a bit of the gap between his teeth when she smiled.

He would love and commiserate with her proud, dignified sorrow. He would draw near to her without revealing his own secret. He would be close to her through a silent embrace, realizing that there was no use in resisting fate. However much he wished he could reach out and touch her spirit, he knew he mustn't try to come closer than the distance between them would allow.

’

ONCE UPON A TIME, TOMORROW

FICTION

Once upon a time, tomorrow

H. Chouman
Dar al-Saqi, Beirut, 2017
380 pages

SOLD RIGHTS

RAYA represents the proprietor Dar al saqi for world rights.

AVAILABLE MATERIAL
PDF file of the Arabic original.
English translation sample.
Long summary.

AWARDS
Beirut Limbo was long listed for the 2017 PEN translation award

CHOUMAN
Hilal

BIO
Hilal Chouman was born in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1982. He studied electronics and communications engineering in Lebanon, France, and the UK. Chouman is the author of four novels in Arabic. He currently resides in Dubai where he works in Software Consulting.

SOME OTHER WORKS
Stories of Sleep (Ma Rawahu Annawm, 2008), Dar malamih, 2010
Napolitana, Dar al adab, 2010
Limbo Beirut, Dar Al Tanweer, 2012 (Translated into English, University of Texas Press, 2016).

| PRESS

| **Al modon, 2017** Hilal Chouman decomposes and recomposes the love-hate relationship of Beirut and its people

| **7iber, 2017** It is as if Thomas Wolf in his film “Genius” was telling us about his new novel “It is America, all America, I want to capture everyting”

| **Al Quds, 2016** There is no stopping of thinking about all the possibilities after one has read this novel

| **Al Hayat, 2017** As if the reader was free to recompose the novel as he wished

| **Al Akhbar, 2017** Successfully captivates the reader

About Limbo Beirut (University of Texas Press)

| **Publishers Weekly, 2016** Carefully constructed novel tracks the confluence of a handful of emotional and anxious Beirutis

| **Words without borders, 2016** A novel that most definitely requires reading

| **Asymptote, 2016** Must-read

| **Qantara, 2016** A demand that the reader "balance in the uneasy space between being a voyeur and a participant

| SUMMARY

Once Upon A Time Tomorrow captures the bittersweet reality of post-war Beirut.

It is a fresh, funny and immensely clever take on what life is like for your average millennial in an unstable corrupt country - where anything is possible, and nothing can be relied upon.

Enter Khaled, a recently divorced journalist who doesn't know where his life is going. He throws himself into the task of trying to uncover what happened to his neighbor's wife who disappeared during the Civil War. The reader follows Khaled's investigation as it takes him on a wild goose chase through the city.

Along for the ride is the ever-present media: newspaper, TV and radio features alternate each chapter as they intertwine with the main narrative. News that echoes inside Khaled's studio from Dargham's apartment across the street, a radio interview of a pop star that comes on in a taxi, gigantic billboards line the roads promoting a new kind of pest control.

Of course, what's bad for living is great for literature! Drawing from the amusing and tragic absurdities of Beirut life, the novel is criss-crossed with the disappearance of cats, poisoning of water, presence of unknown gunmen on the roofs of the city, masked boys terrorizing their neighborhood, explosions, murder, and a pop star's promotion campaign. The stories reveal a level of absurdity that ordinary people just trying to get by have to face.

Along the way Khaled falls in love with one of his ex-wife's friends who joins him in his quest. And as he closes in on the surprising truth of the disappearance, he gets over his broken marriage and discovers the meaning of life.

In the words of Claire Persian "Beirut is a city of collisions. Bad drivers, sudden friendships, graffiti in a mess of languages. And yet, when enough chaos collides, it produces its own order".

| TRANSLATION EXCERPT: ENGLISH

by Jonathan Wright

‘

The Road to Aley

Roger called Khaled and said he would pass by to pick him up and take him to the mountain restaurant they liked in Aley. On the way, Khaled looked at the lights on the electricity poles while listening to the radio. He curled up on the front seat and slipped down. As his body slumped he focused on the street lights on his right. The lights flashed past with a steady rhythm, and then suddenly the rhythm was broken. One lamp was missing from the sequence, either because if was blocked out by an advertising hoarding or because it just wasn't working.

Khaled didn't feel drowsy or nauseous and he didn't have a headache. In fact he started to remember things more clearly. As usual, from behind the steering wheel, Roger asked him three times if he had fallen asleep. Khaled answered him the first time and the second time, then ignored the question the third time, so Roger inserted a CD and they spent the rest of the journey listening to Abdel Wahhab songs.

The road to Aley is less busy in winter. The restaurant owners don't see it as their season but they had come to know the two men and they welcomed them whenever they came. They made space for their car in a covered area behind the restaurant.

Next to their table the rain was beating against the windows. Roger did most of the talking while Khaled confined his responses to short phrases or nodded his head.

How many times did Roger ask him about Beirut and his work?

How many times before he mentioned Suha's name to him?

The Car Radio: A Rationing Initiative

Several municipalities in Mount Lebanon province had launched an initiative to help the Lebanese Ministry of Energy. At a news conference in Baabda town hall, the chairmen of the the municipalities announced that they were planning to ration the street lighting. Instead of having all the street lights on, they would start turning only half of them on.

In response to questions from journalists on how dangerous this step would be, and whether it would endanger Lebanese drivers, a member of the Sofar municipal council stepped in, introducing himself as an electrical engineer. He explained that the number of street lights that were usually on was more than necessary and that the lamp posts along the roads were very close together. Engineer "One Lamp On, One Lamp Off" added that the measure would have absolutely no negative effect on visibility on the roads at night, citing an experiment the municipality had conducted in a side street in Sofar.

The engineer went on to say that the measure would reduce the load on the power stations and divert the power to where it should be, i.e. in homes, especially as people needed heating in the current winter season, which was turning out harsh compared with previous years and was expected to get harsher, with expectations of another snow storm in the coming week.

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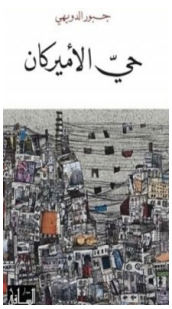
AMERICAN NEIGHBORHOOD



FICTION

American neighborhood
Hayyou al Amerkan

J. Douaihy
Dar al Saqi, Beirut, 2014
160 pages

SOLD RIGHTS
Sindbad, Actes Sud, France (2015).
Interlink, USA, World English (2018).

AVAILABLE MATERIAL
Complete French translation.

AWARDS
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 al-Douaihy is born in 1949, in Zgharta, a town in Northern Lebanon. He achieved his doctoral studies in literature in France, and is today a professor of French literature at the Lebanese University of Tripoli.

SOME OTHER WORKS
Chased away (2011) translated into Italian (Feltrinelli, 2012) and French (Actes Sud, 2013)
June rain, (2006), translated into French (Actes Sud, 2010), Italian (Feltrinelli, 2010), German (Hanser, 2013), Macedonian (Prozart, to appear).
Ayn Warda, (2008) French *(Actes Sud, 2010)*
Autumn Equinox*,* translated into English (Arkansas Press, USA).

| PRESS

| Kirkus review, USA, 2018 "Brisk and affecting novel"

| The National, UAE, 2018 "Graceful"

| Le Monde des Livres, France, 2015, "Douaihy's writing is of **extreme beauty**; concise but full of life; only slightly expansive but tinted with a bashful lyricism from which emerge ineffable emotions."

| L'Humanité, France, 2015 "The strength of American neighborhood lies on the author's **acute gaze** at these characters – using a concise style, with nothing superfluous – the lives of which seem to lie spontaneously on the page."

| Livre Hebdo, France, 2015 "This novel is Douaihy's **most accomplished, subtle, and captivating**"

| Le vif l'express, France, 2015 "There is no inevitability to fanaticism and redemption is possible".

| Le Monde des livres, France, 2015 "The American Neighborhood evokes a subject that is at the heart of current events"

| Transfuge, France, 2015 "The American neighborhood with its **elegant** and concise writing, uses flashback **masterfully**: it makes of the time that has passed and passes the keystone of this sharp and beautiful novel"

| SUMMARY

How a young man turns jihadist and back. The story of an unlikely friendship.

The so-called American district is, ironically, at the heart of the Bab al-Tebbeneh neighborhood, a cradle for Salafism in Lebanon. It is from Bab al-Tebbeneh, in the Northern city of Tripoli, that many jihadists are recruited and sent to Iraq to fight the Americans and their allies.

Ismail is one of these men. Son of Intisar and Bilal Mohsen, Ismail was a dreamy boy and a rebellious teenager, before turning into a conservative religious young man. Thirsty for recognition, Ismail accepts the mission set forth by the Islamic association "Al hadaya", and embarks on a journey through the Syrian desert into Iraq, where he is to blow himself up on a bus.
Intisar, his mother, suspects something terrible has happened to her son when he goes missing. Powerless, the mother of three, who shares a crowded house with her three children and a second family, believes her salvation can come from Al Azzam Family. Intisar, as her mother before her, works for this powerful and rich family of Tripoli as a maid.

All that remains from Al Azzam's past glory, is a beautiful Ottoman house, and a solid reputation. Abdel Karim, the only son, heir to the house, recently moved back from France. To the traditional home he now inhabits alone, Abdul Karim brings with him relics of his lost lover : Her large photograph and ballerina dresses, her bonsai trees, and his personal collection of classical music and wine. Lonely and heart broken, Abdel Karim was occasionally one of Intisar's playmates as a child. Between 'master' and 'servant', lies a complex trustful relationship woven in tradition and historical ties.

Abdel Karim met Ismail before. They even spent one memorable evening together. Ismail had probably never felt so close to anyone in his adult life. But that was before he went to Iraq, before he disappeared from the American district, and worried his mother sick.
Soon, the film Ismail had recorded prior to his suicide mission is broadcasted, and he is praised by all in the American district as a hero. His portrait is printed on large banners and hung around the neighborhood. Finally, Ismail gets the recognition he had longed for...
But Ismail is not dead. While on the targeted bus in Iraq, he changes his mind at the last minute. Instead of blowing himself up, he leaves the bus and decides to go back home. Ismail didn't expect to see his portrait on banners praising his martyrdom. Scared and trapped, he goes to Abdel Karim. Meanwhile, the city and its security apparatus have closed in on him. There doesn't seem to be a way out.

The story is told from a distance. The author depicts with great care the different faces of the city of Tripoli, and moves the different characters as pawns on a chess board. The social mechanisms that may lead one dreamy young boy to jihadism unfold before the reader.

Of all of Jabbour Douaihy's novels, American district is probably the one in which sarcasm is most structural. In this novel, irony is not just in the words, or in the situations, it is in the fate of the protagonist.
As in Rose fountain motel, Douaihy counterbalances cruelty with tenderness. Ismail is not a hero, and despite his evolving in an undesirable way, despite his occasional despicable intolerance, the reader is unexpectedly moved by this character.

| TRANSLATION EXCERPT

By Stephanie Dujols, Actes Sud 2015

‘

Abdel-Rahmân, surnommé "le Pendu" par allusion à quelque anecdote familiale oubliée, vit dans ce quartier dit "américain" en raison d'une école anglicane désaffectée dont, pendant des années, un bureau des redoutés "Renseignements de l'armée de l'air1" a occupé les bâtiments à moitié croulants. Le quartier surplombe le fleuve traversant la ville. Pour se rendre chez eux, les habitants n'ont d'autre choix que de gravir les multiples escaliers qui tracent sur la butte des sillons semblables à ces rigoles creusées par la fonte des neiges sur les pentes montagneuses. Ils s'entraident quand il faut transporter des meubles ou des malades, et ceux qui peuvent se le permettre louent les services d'un porteur pour remonter du marché aux légumes installé au pied de la colline. Le Pendu habite avec sa femme, plus âgée que lui, et leurs cinq enfants, une maison de grès qu'une famille marchande du souk aux Grains, de condition plutôt aisée, a abandonnée il y a un demi-siècle – leurs enfants sont partis s'installer à l'ouest de la ville, dans les quartiers huppés. On voit encore la trace d'une rose gravée dans un carré de marbre au-dessus de la grande porte d'entrée en bois de résineux et quelques vestiges d'ornementations le long de la corniche du plafond, détails témoignant du triste état de la bâtisse, mais aussi de la vie que le Quartier américain a pu connaître autrefois, avant d'être envahi par les pauvres des montagnes voisines, où la culture des abricotiers, ni d'aucun autre arbre fruitier, ne suffit plus à nourrir leurs familles. Faute de moyens, le Pendu a dû se contenter des deux chambres du rez-de-chaussée et du hall d'entrée, qui sert de pièce de vie dans la journée. Au milieu du hall, un escalier mène aux deux pièces de l'étage – escalier par où le colocataire, Bilâl Mohsen, entend monter par intermittence les hurlements que l'autre lance à la figure de sa femme et de ses enfants.

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PRINTED IN BEIRUT

FICTION

Printed in Beirut
Toubi'a fi bayrut

J. Douaihy
Dar al Saqi, Beirut, 2016
224 pages

SOLD RIGHTS
Sindbad, Actes Sud, France (2015).
Interlink, USA, World English (to appear).

AVAILABLE MATERIAL
English translation sample

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

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DOUAIHY
Jabbour

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SOME OTHER WORKS
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Ayn Warda, (2008) French *(Actes Sud, 2010)*
Autumn Equinox*,* translated into English (Arkansas Press, USA).

| PRESS

| Al Hayat, 2016 "This is the story of Beirut: that of a Greek god who has fled one of Ovid's books, and came to seduce before administering her fatal blow."

| Al nahar, 2016 "The novel excells"

| Al nahar, 2016 "The ironic tale of Lebanese press"

| Al safir, 2016 "Valuable and rare"

| Al mustaqbal, 2016 "Douaihy's language is the language of the greats"

| SUMMARY

Farid Abou Cha'r arrives in Beirut on a hot summer morning with his manuscript, looking for a publisher. He is turned down by all of them - "nobody reads anymore" he is told. And instead of finding a publisher, he is offered a job as a proof reader at the famous old print house "Karam Bros.", allegedly established in 1908. Disappointed at first, Farid accepts the offer, secretly hoping that his book will eventually be published.

A serious and committed worker, Farid nonetheless deeply despises the texts he is asked to proofread: catalogues for international brands, fashion magazines, medicine prospectuses... His manuscript, handwritten in a red notebook, never leaves him. Until one evening, it disappears from his desk. A couple of days later, his book reappears, manually printed in the old way, using the most sophisticated - though unreadable - font. Farid is of course pleasantly surprised. Little does he know that the person behind this 'gift' is no other but his boss' wife, Persephone, a very attractive young woman of Greek descent, who, out of boredom and frustration, plays a little seduction game with the athletic looking, and quite naive, young man. He is even less aware of the fact that his book was printed on the most expensive paper, precisely the paper Karam Bros. uses to print fake twenty euros bills. Consequently, Farid finds himself entangled in an international police investigation, in which Karam Bros. is a prime suspect - and connectedly, in the middle of a intrigue involving some dirty insurance money.

Through Farid, and the manuscript that no one ever reads, Douaihy tells the most interesting story of the Karam print house. Once a prestigious establishment where the printing of Lebanese constitution was entrusted, now, at least in appearance, it lives off gossip magazines and sportswear brochures. In truth, Karam bros. lives off the fake euro bills it prints. To take matters further: Karam bros. could not have been established in 1908 since the grand-father had initially stolen the printer from a Jesuit monastery at the end of World War I. And that grand-father's name was Karrum, not Karam. In this kind of play on appearances, Douaihy dizzies the reader who is repeatedly sent back to a different truth, until he realizes it is all fiction.

There might have been a time where poets, intellectuals, politicians, believed in the real value of ideas and in the exceptional and bright future of the region. This time, if it truly existed, is long gone. Still, it is to this era that Farid Abou Cha'r (born in 1980) sees himself as belonging: a man of innate talent -- another myth Douaihy gently mocks -- waiting to be revealed.

Featuring 36 chapters each of approximately 1000 words, *Printed in Beirut* has a strict rhythm, which structures a wealthy content, spanning from the beginning of the 20th century till the present. Though exploring a somewhat different style with this novel, Douaihy, as always, portrays society with biting irony.

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE: FRENCH

By Stéphanie Dujols

‘

Cet été-là, alors qu'une chaleur torride s'était abattue sur Beyrouth, on vit un jeune homme aux sourcils crochus, relevés comme s'il disait toujours non, descendre d'un autobus en tenant près du cœur, tel un bras en écharpe, un épais cahier à la reliure rouge, et se lancer d'un pas vif sur le trottoir, qu'il martelait de ses talons neufs en évitant les arbres plantés là comme des obstacles et les passants qui déambulaient sans se presser. S'engouffrant dans un immeuble à la façade rehaussée d'une sculpture de basalte sombre, dont un obus d'artillerie avait un jour accentué le côté abstrait, il arrangea sa cravate rouge criard devant le miroir de l'ascenseur, puis plongea son nez sous son aisselle droite pour renifler sa sueur, avant de se présenter à un homme à l'âge indéfinissable, dans son bureau orné d'une affiche allemande de l'Opéra de quat'sous.

Depuis le matin, l'homme trompait son ennui en mettant à l'épreuve cette mémoire légendaire tant vantée par ses amis : sans l'avoir sous les yeux, il tapait à un seul doigt la longue ode "suspendue" de Zuheir Ibn Abi Sulma, en plaçant scrupuleusement toutes les voyelles, et en sélectionnant une police différente pour chaque vers, jusqu'à épuiser la liste proposée par Windows. Il en était à ce vers célèbre, qu'il tapait en "andalou medium" :

Ce qu'est la guerre, vous le savez, l'ayant goûtée ;
Ce que j'en dis n'est pas de pures conjectures !

quand le grand jeune homme se campa devant lui. Son index droit resta figé en l'air. Il le regarda articuler :

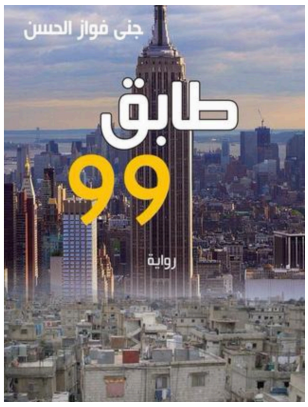
— Bonjour, Farid Abou Chaar !

Ce dernier pressa ses doigts épais sur la main de l'homme, qui prit son cahier en le dévisageant. Ayant ouvert la première page, il lâcha un sifflement, avant de lire à voix haute :
— *Le Livre à venir !* C'est un titre de Maurice Blanchot, dit-il en lui rendant son ouvrage.

Il ajouta que cela faisait bien dix ans qu'ils n'acceptaient plus de manuscrits écrits à la main, et que, de toute façon, ils avaient cessé de publier de la poésie ; la réserve en était pleine, ils distribuaient les recueils gratuitement. Comme le jeune homme protestait qu'il ne s'agissait pas de poésie, l'homme assis derrière son bureau répliqua qu'ils ne publiaient plus de prose non plus.

’

THE NINETY-NINTH FLOOR



FICTION

The Ninety-Ninth Floor
Tabeq 99

J. Fawaz Elhassan
Difaf Publishing , Editions el-Ekhtilef, 2014, 264 pages

SOLD RIGHTS
Rights owner: Interlink, USA
Represented by RAYA for world translation rights

Interlink (WEL, USA, 2015)
Tamyras Éditions (France, 2017)
Verlag Hans Schiler (Germany, 2018)
Atmosphere Libri (Italy, 2018)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL
PDF of the original Arabic text.
PDF of the full English translation.
Long summary.

FAWAZ AL HASSAN
Jana

BIO
Jana Fawaz Elhassan is a Lebanese award-winning novelist and short story writer. She has been working since 2008 as a journalist for leading newspapers and TV channels. In November 2015, she was featured on BBC's *100 Women Season*, an annual two-week series about inspiring women from around the world.

Elhassan's first novel won the Simon Hayek Award, and her second, *Me, She and Other women*, was shortlisted for the Arab Booker Prize. *The Ninety-Ninth Floor*, also shortlisted for the Arab Booker Prize, is her third novel.

| PRESS

| **Publishers Weekly** "Through **sharp, unabashed prose**, Elhassan lets the reader into the lives of Majd and Hilda… Elhassan's writing reveals the complex, emotional journey Majd must face… Anger, passion, and loss dominate the pages of this **gripping, emotional novel** as the protagonists face the bloody shadows of their pasts."

| SUMMARY

At times as cold and hard-edged as the skyscrapers in its backdrop, The Ninety-Ninth Floor follows the struggles and triumphs of Majed as he manages to make it in Manhattan at the turn of the century, after surviving the devastating 1982 massacre at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camp. A Palestinian born and raised in Lebanon, Majed makes a new life for himself in the glittery world of New York City's computer games industry. He never feels more satisfied with himself than when he is staring out of the window of his sleek, modern office on the ninety-ninth floor. But with all his success, Majed's past continues to haunt him. His relationship with Hilda, a Lebanese woman from a right-wing Christian family, exposes his innermost fears, worries, and dark secrets. A dancer who has also fled her own oppressive family and its ugly wartime histories, Hilda's love for Majed is meant to overcome their differences. She tries to reconcile these even as he fantasizes that her family members may have murdered his mother. A multi-voiced narration, The Ninety-Ninth Floor follows the stories of Majed and Hilda through the present and past in their own voices and those of the people who surround them.

An elegy both to the possibilities of New York City and also to Lebanon that both welcomed and shunned Palestinians, The Ninety-Ninth Floor is a love story that asks questions about the ability of passion to overcome hatred and difference. The novel sheds light on the aftermath of Lebanon's 15-year bloody civil war to reveal that the fighting may have ended, but the conflict didn't. It also maintains a particular focus on complexities of the Palestinian situation. It is as relevant to today as those time periods and speaks to situations in Lebanon, Palestine and the Middle East as a whole.

| TRANSLATION EXCERPTS

By Michelle Hartman

‘

To be Palestinian, either you forget your roots and deny your origins in order to advance in life, or you remain a bullet in the barrel of a rifle waiting to be fired in some direction, hostile to life, because it plundered your birthplace and forced you to invent a homeland.

To be Palestinian, especially in wartime, is to deny yourself your right to life, to wear sorrow as a skin, and not lose the love of your country.

To be Palestinian is to forget laughter and be committed to feelings of injustice and victimization, even if always remaining one of the Kharijites.

It is to be born in a shelter or a refugee camp and see everyone looking at you with pity or disgust, the majority considering you a burden. It's to wait for international aid and UNRWA donations, to fear having children—like Muhammad, my Auntie Zahra's son in the camp. Because he knows how hard it would be for his child to grow up Palestinian.

’

‘

Hilda dozed off, crying silently. I stood like a superhuman torturer contemplating the grooves of his victims' skin. When I was tired of being evil, and fed up with contemplating the torture I could cause her, I wished I could kneel down before those gray spots on her face and ask forgiveness.

But when I tried to surrender, to bend my knees out of reverence to her tears, I found myself unable to adapt my body, and I remembered something my father used to always repeat to me: ‘Everyone with a disability is also an oppressor’.

’

JOY

FICTION

Joy
Farah

Y. Fadel
Dar al adab, Beirut, 2016
350 pages

SOLD RIGHTS
Hoopoe, AUC, WEL (English, to appear).

AVAILABLE MATERIAL
PDF of the Arabic text.
PDF of the English translation.
Long summary.

AWARDS
Joy was shortlisted for the International Prize of Arabic fiction (or Arab Booker) 2017.

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 direct a short film and a feature film. He published 10 novels, some of which were translated.

SOME OTHER WORKS
A rare blue bird flies with me (Dar al adab, 2013). Actes Sud (France, To appear), Hoopoe, AUC (2015)
A pretty white cat walks behind me (Dar al adab, 2012). Actes Sud, (France 2014). Hoopoe, AUC (English, 2016)
Zoo (Fennec, 2008)
Mitrou Mouhal (Fennec, 2006)
Hashish (Fennec, 2000).
The king of jews (Arrabita, 1995)
Celestina (1993)
Aghmat (Fennec, 1989)
Pigs (1983)

| PRESS

| **Al hayat, Mouhammad Barrada, 2016** Ambitious and captivating

SUMMARY

Joy, Farah, is the name of a young girl come from the village of Azmor to Casablanca with the dream to become a singer. She meets the narrator, Osman, who just turned twenty, and they fall in love. Brief, but intense, their love story is interrupted by Farah's tragic death.

Joy is first and foremost a love story. It is also the story of people's lives and dreams being crushed by rampant religious extremism, combined with corruption in the Casablanca of the 1980s.

We meet Osman at the novel's opening, a broken man, the restless nights of whom are plagued with nightmares, that of a girl's body lying under his bed, a girl called Farah, the death of whom he feels responsible for. His wife is about to give birth to their first child, as he waits on a chair on his patio, watching the trains and cows pass by, and getting ready for the weekly visit of the Judge, thinking of the stories he would tell him -- the Judge likes his stories.

A few years ago, Osman was a different man. He used to live in Casablanca, with his mother, his two sisters Khadija and Habiba, Habiba's husband Abdallah and their daughter Karima. In that not so distance past, Osman works with his father on a construction site: A new mosque is being built on the sea front, vast and majestic, with marble floor, endless columns, and a wooden cupola the design and execution of which is assigned to his father.

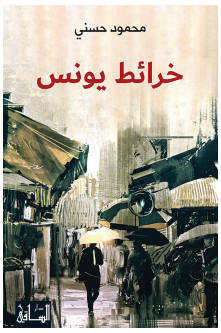
Osman hates this mosque. It is being built on the old public swimming pool they used to go to as children. One of their rare and favorite outings. Their uncle, Mustafa, would take them there. But now the pool is filled with earth, and their happy memories buried under the heavy marble. They have been building the Mosque for the past five years, and the construction has been very slow. Lack of funds seems to be the reason, and the people of this very poor neighborhood of Casablanca are constantly asked to donate for the completion of the mosque on a daily basis.

Such is the context in which Osman meets Farah. She had just arrived from Amor by bus, and was searching all the quarter's bars, looking for her singer friend.

Osman and Farah lived their love story in the Mosque's construction site, sharing the beautiful space, enjoying each other's company, spending evenings on the beach, watching the stars and hearing the waves. Farah had the most beautiful voice, he had never heard anything like it before. Stunning crystal like beautiful voice. But the rumor of someone singing - "Decadents and prostitutes" - in the Mosque spread like fire, triggering the tragedy, ultimately leading to Farah's death.

With this novel, Fadel tackles the 1980's in Casablanca once more, a period of political repression and social misery. This time, violence comes in the form of extreme poverty, coupled with extreme bigotry and corruption. Fadel's writing is rich and dense, featuring descriptions of neighborhoods the poverty of which exceeds imagination. Multiple characters populate the novel where we mainly follow Osman's love story with Farah, but also Abdallah's wicked transformation into a religious leader, the dreadful story of Mustafa's arrest, the creative madness of Osman's father, the necessary opportunism of Farah's singer friend, and many more.

MAPS OF JONAS



FICTION

Maps of Jonas
Kharaet Younes

M. Hosni
Dar al Saqi, Beirut, 2018, 144 pages

SOLD RIGHTS
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Represented by RAYA for world translation rights.

AVAILABLE MATERIAL
PDF file of the original Arabic version.
English Translation sample.

AWARDS & DISTINCTIONS
Hosni's first novel, Maps of Jonas, was supported by a grant from the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC)

HOSNI
Mahmoud

BIO
Hosni is an Egyptian writer, translator and cultural journalist interested in the literary movement, comparative literature, and cultural studies.
Hosni is a contributor to the "Qira'at" blog, and in the weekly *Cairo Cultural Journal.* He also writes literary critiques for *Ibda'a* magazine

SOME OTHER WORKS
Hosni has translated two novels into Arabic, Hemingway's "The old man and the sea", and Steinbeck's "The pearl", published by Afaq, Cairo, 2016

| REPORT

Huda Fakhreddine, Assistant Professor of Arabic Literature, University of Pennsylvania — "Mahmoud succeeds in finding a unique narrative voice which employs imagery, refrains and thematic motifs to create a distinct world. His awareness of form and its role in delivering meaning is quite impressive. The novel is divided into well thought-out chapters which together make up an intricate structure. The reader eventually arrives at this structure. Like a mosaic, the pieces fall into place and when the reader takes a step back, the novel's greater connections reveal themselves. And, Mahmoud executes all this without artifice.

The novel is founded on a philosophical hypothesis: What happens to the world if language were suddenly lost? Although this is a challenging and risky basis for a novel, Mahmoud pulls it off quite successfully. The novel's most impressive feature is the author's ability to create a mood of urgency which is sustained throughout the work"

| SUMMARY

A 33 year-old man, a little girl, an old stranded, dying whale, and a blind cat: Their fates are tied in this post-apocalyptic world where people have suddenly forgotten what it means to be human.

The once fisherman's Island just across the river was transformed into the preferred living place for the neighboring city's ruling class. Yunus (Jonas) just moved to the island. He is the new librarian and has been offered a room on the premises. He had just gotten accustomed to his new home when on the morning of the Winter solstice, everything started to go terribly wrong. No one came in that day, and when he went out for a walk, the shops were all closed, and there was no one to be seen. When he finally came across a man, he was eager to ask him what was going on. Except that the man was terrified, and incapable of uttering a single word. In his pajamas, barefoot, he looked like he had lost his mind. The man, Yunus realizes, is none but the city's governor. He was expected to give a speech earlier that day, and never showed on the radio, leaving everyone at the station confused and worried. Yunus takes him in. Things don't improve the next day, and Yunus finds a 10 year old girl who tells him that her parents had woken up dumb, and scared, before leaving the house. They have been missing since. Yunus takes her in as well, and starts thinking of a solution as food supplies will surely dry up soon.

The governor disappears, and Yunus sights other people in the island, the behavior of which is strange and worrisome. It is terribly cold, and the sky is grey and heavy, but it hasn't rained in a long time. Meanwhile, on the other side of the river, people are worried. No one has crossed the bridges from or to the island in days. No one has opened the highly secured electric gates from inside island. Attempts from the military to force the gates have failed, and the bridges have been destroyed. Oula, Yunus' former lover, is worried about him. She's been having these dreams again, dreams she had during her seven years with Yunus: She was a blind cat, that was hearing a far away soft wailing. Inside the island, Yunus also thinks of Oula. He also, has been having these dreams again, those he used to have when they were together: He was a blind whale, who spoke a language no one understood. He was utterly lonely in the big dark ocean, and could only sing his song in the hope that someone would hear him.

At the same time, a whale gets stranded in the river between the island and the city. Why has it come here, so close to land, taking the risk of getting stranded in a river that looks like it's drying up? What is this voice it has been hearing? A familiar voice, as if someone was finally understanding its song.

Yunus decides to take action. The water level is now low enough at the river mouth for them to attempt crossing it to get to the city. This is when he sees the stranded whale, like a reflection of himself. While he saves the little girl, his own fate seems tied to that of the whale. In this very original first work, Hosni succeeds in creating an unsettling novel. The reader follows Yunus and his attempts to save himself and the little girl with great interest and anxiety. The novel has mythical resonances, depicting a modern world which seems beyond salvation.

| TRANSLATION EXCERPT

By Huda Fakreddine & Roger Allen

‘

The day passed slowly. The sun rose to its highest point then retreated in exhaustion. That day no one had come into the library. That surprised Yunus, but it didn't bother him. He closed the Great Hall and went out to get something to eat. He was struck by the empty streets and parked cars, cold and lifeless. Shops were closed, and traffic lights blinked on and off, changing colors in a conversation with no one. Yunus didn't understand what
was happening. This was the first time he'd seen the island this way, more like a dead body, or at least unconscious. After more than half an hour of roaming, without encountering any signs of life, he glimpsed what looked like
a man's body brought in from the distant horizon. (…)
When he got there, he found a man, barefoot, dressed in nightclothes, and most likely half-drunk. The man didn't seem to notice anyone was there. When Yunus tried to attract his attention, the man looked panic-stricken, and his
panic only intensified whenever he heard Yunus's voice. As the man started to run away, Yunus tried calling him, but that only made him run faster. Yunus ran after him. He was faster and managed to grab him:
“What's going on, man?
Why won't you speak?” There was no answer. The man kept trying to block his eyes with his hands as a way of avoiding having to look into Yunus's eyes.
“I'm not going to hurt you, okay?” he went on. “Where do you live? Why are you barefoot? Can you hear me? Can you answer? I'm not going to hurt you…. Can you just help me understand why you're in this state?” The man didn't
answer any of those questions, but there was an obvious feeling of panic that showed in the way his body shook convulsively. Saliva slid from his mouth, and he started to cry, whimpering just like a baby. Yunus tried to calm him down. He sat him on the ground and took a seat beside him. As he tried to calm him, he began to suspect that the man in front of him looked very
like the city's governor: a man in his early sixties, although he looked a bit younger. He had light hair and was fair skinned. He clasped the man's face and lifted it up, wishing to examine it more closely. The man in front of him didn't merely look like the ruler of the city; he actually was.

DEATH IS HARD WORK

FICTION

Death is hard work
Al mawt aamalon shaq

K. Khalifa
Naufal, Hachette-Antoine, Beirut,
2015, 160 pages.

SOLD RIGHTS
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, USA, World English (to appear)
Faber, UK (to appear)
Bompiani, Italy (to appear)
Rowohlt, German (to appear)
De Geus, Netherlands (to appear)
Sindbad, Actes Sud, France (to appear)
Green Books, India, Malayalam (to appear)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL
English translation sample.

AWARDS
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 where he writes scripts for cinema and television.

SOME OTHER WORKS
There are no knives in the kitchens of the city (2014), French (Actes Sud), Dutch (De Geus, 2015), English (Hoopoe, AUC), Italian (Bompiani), German (Rowohlt, to appear).
In praise of hatred (2006), translated into Italian (Bompiani, 2011), French (Actes Sud, 2011), Netherlands (De Geus, 2011), Norwegian (Minuskel, 2011), Spanish (Lumen, 2012), English (Transworld, 2012), Danish (Korridor, 2013).
The notebooks of the bohemians *(2000)*

| SUMMARY

Bulbul's father just passed away in a Damascus hospital. His last request to his son was to be buried in his hometown of Aannabiya, in the province of Aleppo. Bulbul accepts his father's request only to be terrified by the enormity of this last wish after he passes away. Damascus, the Syrian capital, is under the control of the Assad regime while Aleppo is under the control of the rebels and extremist factions. Driving from one area to another, with a body in the car, is expectedly quite a difficult task.

With his brother Hussein and his sister Fatima, Bulbul heads to Aannabiya at dawn. Normally a trip of just a few hours, they hope to reach their destination in the night given the circumstances. They won't make it in less than 3 days.

The three siblings hadn't come together in years and Fatima sees in this road trip a sacred occasion to mend their broken ties. They have indeed grown quite apart. Fatima's marriage to a mediocre opportunist businessman, whom had once given her the illusion of social accomplishment, caused her family to despise her. Hussein, once the favourite son, a smart kid with a lot of ambition and potential, quickly gave in to easy dirty money and greatly disappointed his father. Bulbul, nickname for Nabil, was always the quiet one. Living a life of fear and trying his best to blend in in his Assad friendly rather rich neighborhood, he was terrified by his father's recent revolutionary profile.

Rightly so. The father's identity and his notorious involvement in the revolution is what caused them their first delay on their way to Annabiya. His name being blacklisted, an army checkpoint decided to "arrest" the body, until his name was cleared by some obscure central authority. It is only after a night of anxiety, and important bribery, that the three siblings were allowed to continue their journey with their father's body. This absurd yet painful episode is certainly not the last one of their trip. As more delays occur, the body starts decaying. With the smell of rot and death, the tension between the siblings builds up, exacerbating their differences, until it reaches its climax. The siblings and their father eventually reach Aannabiya, but by the time this happens, they are transformed, each of them having reached a point of no return.

In this journey, and through Bulbul's recollection of his father's last years, we discover the complex character of the latter: An austere teacher turned into a revolutionary hero in a town besieged by Assad's army, from which he had to be snuck out for health reasons. As the reader discovers the father's transformation in the years of the Syrian uprising, the reader also follows Bulbul's transformation in the three days of this journey: Bulbul finally breaks away from fear, and in this unlikely context, learns to live.

Through this journey, and with his characteristic visual and sensual writing, Khalifa depicts with accuracy what Syria has become. Violence is common currency and the sight of dead bodies on the side of the road, or the sound of approaching shells, barely moves the protagonists of the story. They have grown accustomed to death and its multiple faces. At the same time, with the father's rebirth as a revolutionary in his old age, and with that of Bulbul, who is freed of fear in the most gruesome circumstances, the book carries an unexpected and very welcome message of hope.

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE

By Leri Price

‘

Bulbul, later, regretted having not been more resolute. He should have told his father how difficult it would be to carry out his instruction in days like these. Battle casualties everywhere were buried in mass graves without having their identities picked out. Mourning ceremonies, even those of rich families, were curtailed to a few hours. Death was no longer a carnival worthy of proclaiming prestige; a few roses, a few mourners yawning in a half-empty living room for a couple of hours, someone reciting a few *suras* from the Qur'an in a low voice, and that was it.

Bulbul thought that a silent funeral removed the awe of the dead person. For the first time, everyone was equal in death. Rites and rituals meant nothing now: the poor and the rich, the officers and infantry in the regime's army, armed squadron commanders, fighters, the passers by and the unidentified, all were buried in pitiful processions. Death was no longer an act which commanded distress; it had become an escape which roused the envy of the living.

As for Bulbul, the story was very different. His father's body was a heavy burden. In a fleeting, sentimental moment Bulbul had promised to bury him in the same tomb as his Aunt Layla, who he didn't even know. He had thought that his father would ask for a safeguard of the rights of his new wife, Nevine, in the family home. The building had been totally destroyed in an air raid, apart from the bedroom where his father had passed his last days of love with Nevine before leaving the village of S with the help of opposition fighters.

Bulbul would never forget that scene. His father had been immaculate when the fighters brought him, and it was clear that they had looked well after their comrade who had chosen to stay with them, despite the siege which had been imposed on S, for more than three years. They bid him an affectionate goodbye, kissed him warmly, and saluted him.

’

THERE ARE NO KNIVES IN THE KITCHENS OF THE CITY

FICTION

There are no knives in the kitchens of the city
La sakakin fi matabekh hathihi al madina

K. Khalifa
Dar al ain, Cario, 2013
260 pages

SOLD RIGHTS
Sindbad, Actes Sud, France (2016)
De Geus, Netherlands (2016)
Hoopoe, AUC, US/Egypt, World English (2016)
Bompiani, Italy (to appear)
Rowohlt, Germany (to appear)
Prozart, Macedonia (to appear)
Deli Dolu, Turkey (to appear)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL
Full English translation.

AWARDS
This novel was awarded the Naguib Mahfouz Medal of Literature in 2014.

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In praise of hatred (2006), translated into Italian (Bompiani, 2011), French (Actes Sud, 2011), Netherlands (De Geus, 2011), Norwegian (Minuskel, 2011), Spanish (Lumen, 2012), English (Transworld, 2012), Danish (Korridor, 2013).
The notebooks of the bohemians *(2000)*

| PRESS

| The New York Times, 2016 "The sights, smells and horror of living in Aleppo **come pounding to life** in this book"

| Barnes and Nobel, 2016 "**Magnificent**... Khalifa encodes such a sensibility into his work"

| The Guardian, UK, 2016 "The writing is **superb** – a dense, luxurious realism pricked with surprising metaphors... A pleasure to read"

| SUMMARY

Reading through Khaled Khalifa's latest novel, one can only wonder how was life possible under the Asad regime.

Set between 1963, as the Baath party takes power, and 2005, "There are no knives" minutely describes how life was crushed by the brutal dictatorship.

One family is at the heart of this novel. The mother, originally from a rich clan of Aleppo, has payed the high price for marrying a man from a different religious community. Rejected by her family, she is also soon abandoned by her husband. A poor home and a bitter mother clinging to her aristocratic origins is the backdrop of this novel, where unfold the lives of Sawsan, Rachid and the nameless male narrator. All three are the children of this broken home, struggling for survival.

Although the pre-Baath era is barely evoked, Khalifa's book is the expression of a hopeless longing for a long gone graceful past. There is no beauty left in this world. Except perhaps in the violin that Rachid plays in his uncle's band. But even there, desperation lurks. "There are no knives in the kitchens of the city" is a surprising combination of ruthless violence and soft nostalgia.

| TRANSLATION EXCERPT: ENGLISH

By Elisabeth Jacquette

‘

Soad's ceaseless hallucinations in the weeks before she died made us think of our own fate. Our family portrait, hanging on the wall of the living room, became a psychological weight we tried to ward off, a shameful lie we couldn't conceal: a father who had abandoned us for an aging relic-hunter, the woman my mother had taught to make apricot jam, and a miserable sister whose delirium we did not understand. She would open her mouth, struggling to breathe, and even though our mother considered her a personal disgrace that should be hidden from the world, we loved her.

I had just turned ten years old, and knew nothing about death or dishonor. Sawsan shook her by the chest, as she used to do when they quarreled, but Soad didn't move. My mother waited until sunrise to carry her, wrapped in a woolen blanket, to the cemetery with her friend Nariman and Uncle Nizar. She told us that evening that Soad wasn't coming back, explaining offhandedly that death meant departure and eternal absence, but she didn't mention anything about how it felt to bury our disgrace with our own hands.

We didn't believe our sweet Soad was gone, and I told Sawsan we should go out looking for her – she might be hiding in the lettuce fields as she used to do, or down by the nearby railroad tracks, fashioning swords out of rail spikes and waving them at invisible travelers.

When the train passed by our house, its whistle would let out a stirring melody, and Soad would open the door and rush out to count the train cars. Delighted, she would tell us that the train driver could fly – she would swear she had seen his wings, and we would nod our heads, believing her completely. We imagined the train soaring over the fields after it disappeared around the bend, ascending into the heavens. When we asked her where it eventually pulled into the station, she told us with the solemn air of someone who had expected such a question that he would keep on flying until he died. She pointed to her slender body with childish glee, just the way I would do.

We walked through the lettuce fields until we came to the cemetery, and when we asked the groundskeeper where Soad's house was, he pointed to a mound of dirt. Sawsan struck the dirt with her hands furiously, struggling against her defeat. I ordered her not to cry and told her we had to go back before nightfall. We walked home in the pouring rain, and without an ounce of regret I told Rashid that Soad hated us, that she would never return because he had snatched her wooden train away from her, and Sawsan sided with me gleefully. That night I had a dream, a dream I told no one: Soad was driving a long train that carried a group of wingless birds; their beaks were long and they serenaded her with songs she liked. Her hair was long and white and she gazed out, smiling, an angel seen by no one.

Later, I told Sawsan about my dream, about the image of Soad with her long white hair that came to me again and again, and she laughed and took me back to the graveyard. We brought wildflowers and stood next to the blank tombstone, and I listened to her voice telling me with great solemnity that Soad was here: she couldn't laugh or breathe and the worms were devouring her body. I understood after her long explanation of what death looked like that death is the absence of those we love.

’

THE SHELL

FICTION

The Shell
Al-Qawqaa

M. Khalifa
Dar al adab, Beirut, 2008
383 pages

SOLD RIGHTS
Sindbad, Actes Sud, France (2007)
Ilimyurdu, Turkey (2009)
Lit Edizioni, Italy (2014)
Interlink, USA (2017)
Ediciones del oriente y del mediterraneo, Spain (2017)
Aschehoug, Norway (to appear)
Weidle Verlag, Germany (to appear)

Cinema adaptation rights sold to Fiyaka.

AVAILABLE MATERIAL
French translation. English translation samples. Arabic PDF.

REMARKS
The Shell was featured in the literary journal Asymptote.

KHALIFA
Mostafa

BIO
Mostafa Khalifa was born in 1948 in Syria. He began his law degree in 1973. Pursued by the secret services in 1977, he went underground before being arrested in 1981. After 13 years in prison, Khalifa was released in 1994 only to graduate with his law degree 3 years later. He now lives in France after being sentenced to exile in 2005.

| PRESS

This novel was listed among the best debut novels of 2017 by The Booklist

| Library journal, USA, 2017 "Highly recommended"

| Booklist, USA, 2017 "Superb debut novel"

| Publishing perspectives, USA, 2016 One of the top 2015 books! … altogether mesmerizing"

| Il Sole 24 Ore, Italy, 2014 "Primo Levi, but also and above all Kafka are in this novel"

| Avvenire, Italy, 2014 "Chilling description of torture... similar to Dante's circles"

| La Repubblica, Italy, 2014 "A bitter reflection on the horrors of which humans are guilty."

| Il Fatto Quotidiano, Italy, 2014 "An essential reading"

| **RFI, France, 2012** **"**Terrible unparalleled testimony of the repression during the long reign of President Assad

| **Rue 89, Le Nouvel Observateur, France, 2008** **"**Bitter, straightforward, and without embellishment, the story of Mostafa Khalifa throws a harsh light on the arbitrariness that governs and regulates the life of an entire society. The Kafkaesque situations eventually end up making us discover a laughable and despotic regime."

| SUMMARY

The shell is the literary narrative of a man who was unjustly, and without a trial, jailed for 12 years in Syria.

In 1982, the narrator Musa heads back to Syria after a few years spent in France studying art and film direction. At the airport, he is flagged by the police, who take him away for interrogation. He was overheard in Paris, criticizing the regime. From this moment on, his descent into hell begins.

He is jailed with political opponents, all of whom are from the Muslim Brotherhood. Disbelieving his ill fate, Musa is convinced that there must be a mistake. He cannot be member of the Mulsim Brotherhood, since he is of a Christian family, and is himself an atheist. This claim, that he made on several occasions to try and convince the military police and intelligence officers of their mistake, will cost him years of isolation among his cell mates, who consider atheism the greatest of all sins. Tortured by the guards and shunned by the other prisoners, the narrator eventually retreats further into misery, forming a protective shell around himself, a shell for which the book is named.

Among the various detention centers, Musa will experience the infamous Tadmur Military Prison, a detention center described as a "kingdom of death and madness" by poet Faraj Bayraqdar and the "absolute prison" by dissident Yassin al-Haj Salih. With its stripped-down prose punctuated by introspective, poetic reflection, The Shell offers an extremely minute description of the author's years in detention. In it, he details the unimaginable brutal torture at the hands of the prison guards and military police, as well as the social fabric of prison life.

The Shell is Khalifa's first book, and has been lauded as one of the finest examples of Arabic prison literature.

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE: ENGLISH

By Paul Starkey

THE SHELL

‘

April 21
I slowly opened my eyes, almost choking from the smells that surrounded me. I was stretched out on the floor in a forest of legs and feet, crowded together, with the smell of dirty feet, the smell of blood, the smell of festering wounds, and the smell of a floor that had not been cleaned for a long time. The heavy breath of people standing jammed together. I found out shortly afterwards by a process of counting and observation that there were eighty-six of us. I looked at the ceiling and calculated that the room was no
more than twenty-five square meters!

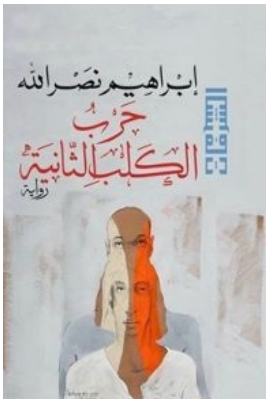
Conversations were conducted in a whisper, which meant that a continuous buzz dominated everything. I wanted to stand up to breathe some air. There were dreadful pains through my entire body. I summoned all my strength, but when I tried to stand on my feet I screamed in pain. The people around me noticed and several hands stretched out, grabbed me under my arms and helped me up. I stood leaning on the outstretched arms. “Patience, brother!” said a young man standing beside me. “Patience. It’s hard, but it will pass!” “Whoever is with God, God will be with him,” said someone else. “Don’t despair, my brother!”

The pain eased a little with the movement, and I looked around me. Grown men, younger men, boys of twelve and thirteen, middle-aged men and older men… I turned to the man who’d tried to strengthen my resolve a little earlier and asked him: “Who are these people? Why are we here? Why are these people standing here?” The man looked at me in astonishment, almost doltishly, as if to say, “How to explain something so obvious?” But instead he answered with a question: “Don’t you know what’s going on in the country?”

When I was in France I had heard news of political demonstrations going on in Syria, and of a party called the Muslim Brotherhood that was responsible for terrorist incidents both here and there. But I hadn’t attached much importance to these reports, which remained vague, and I didn’t know the details. I had never taken much interest in news reports, or organized political activities, despite the fact that at secondary school and afterwards I was close to some Marxists and was influenced by their ideas—and especially the ideas of my uncle, who occupied an important leadership position in the Communist Party, so it appeared. “No, I don’t know. What’s going on?” I replied. “Why, don’t you live in your own country?” I wanted to put an end to all these questions, so I replied in a way that I thought would answer them all at once. “No, I’ve been living in France. And now I’ve been back…” (I looked at my watch) “for just fourteen hours.”

’

THE SECOND DOG WAR



FICTION

The Second Dog War
Harb al-kalb al-thânya

I. Nasrallah
Dar al arabiya li al ouloum, Beirut, 2016
345 pages

RIGHTS
Rights owner. The author
RAYA agency represents this title for world rights.

AVAILABLE MATERIAL
PDF of the novel, in Arabic.
English translation sample (by Nancy Roberts).

AWARDS AND DISTINCTIONS
The Second Dog War is shortlisted for the International Prize of Arabic fiction (or Arab Man Booker) 2018
The King of Galilee was longlisted for the International Prize of Arabic fiction (or Arab Man Booker) 2013.
The time of white horses was shortlisted for the IPAF (Arab Man Booker Prize) 2009.

NASRALLAH Ibrahim

BIO
Born in 1954 in a Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan, Ibrahim Nasrallah worked as a journalist for 18 years before dedicating himself to writing in 2006. Cinema is a great influence on his work, and he eventually published two books of film critique. A poet as well as a novelist, he won the Sultan Owais Award, the most prestigious award of poetry in the Arab world.

SOME OTHER WORKS
Nasrallah has published a dozen novels, some of which: ***Prairies of fever*** (1985), translated into English (Interlink, 1993), Italian (Edizioni Lavoro, 2001) and Danish (Underskoven, 2006).
The time of white horses (2007), translated into English (AUC, 2011)
The Lanterns of the King of Galilee *(2011),* translated into English (AUC, 2015).

| PRESS

| ***Alquds Alarabi Newspaper*, March 7, 2018 – *Waciny Laraj*** "In a symbolic, hypothetical world, which is **reminiscent of Italian author Dino Buzatti's *Tartar Steppe***, the daily tragedies are written in secret."

| ***Al-Ketaba*, February 25, 2018 –** "With an accessible language, an intense narrative and brief graceful sentences, *The Second Dog War* jumps over the walls of boredom usually brought on by dark sci-fi stories and their gloomy worlds […] The author excels at exploring a very sensitive message, in the depths of the human psyche, then formulating it in a story unbound by space-time limitations; while still keeping **a thrilling narrative**."

| ***Al Rai Newspaper*, May 27, 2017 –** "In his latest novel, *The Second Dog War*, Nasrallah unleashes his imagination to reach new horizons, thus emphasizing his well-established skills in narrative craftiness."

| ***Alquds Alarabi Newspaper*, March 6, 2017 –** "Through its fantastical and satirical atmosphere, which overlooks a not-too-distant future replete with many highly sophisticated forms of technology in various aspects of life, education, cinema and media, *The Second Dog War* destroys the myth of 'the progressive human being;' one who uses historical mechanisms for progress on the intellectual and moral levels. […] On the contrary, the novel denounces a society where the new technologies are ripe for oppression, violence and terror."

| SUMMARY

A dystopian look at a not-so-distant future where technological advances serve an extreme form of consumerism, ultimately threatening life itself.

The book opens on a scene of devastation: Following the First Dog War, natural resources are rapidly dwindling, leaving the world in a state of decay. The First Dog War, it turns out, was triggered by a fight between two dog owners, over the animal's price. The violence soon got out of control, leading to the crumbling of traditional governments. These have been replaced with local Castle managements, who rule mercilessly. Using the pretext of avoiding another war, they seek to erase people's memories of the past to better control them.

Amidst the oppression, Rached, who belongs to a rebel militia, is caught and tortured for days. He comes out of this experience a changed man. He marries Salam, the gorgeous sister of his torturer, and starts running money schemes that benefit the Castle, to prove his loyalty. His most successful idea is to privatize ambulances, and send them to the highest bidding hospital in record time. Rached is promoted to manager of the best local hospital, and falls in love at first sight with his secretary. Having been obsessed with his wife's beauty and how to reproduce it since the early days of their marriage, he decides to get his new lover a state-of-the-art surgery that gives her his wife's face.

It all goes downhill after this fateful event: Both the secretary and Salam find out they now have the same face, and doppelgängers start appearing everywhere, including in Rached's building, where his neighbor the weatherman turns into an exact copy of him – and even sleeps with his wife.

Thus begins the Second Dog War: An argument between Rached and his doppelgänger the weatherman escalates into a fight. The weatherman is killed. The Castle decides to exterminate all doppelgängers and only keep the originals. Clearly, the distinction is not always possible, and Rached is mistaken for his double and arrested. He is tortured to death in prison by his brother-in-law.

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE

Translated by Prof. Wen-chin Ouyang (SOAS)

‘

—‘This is exactly what I want to say. What worries me most is not that people are all beginning to look alike. I worry about more important things. I don't really want to think any more about it unless it becomes a reality. I called my wife early in the evening and told her not to open the door to anyone who looked like me. What do you think happened?’

Rashed remembered the weatherman who came to look like him. He suddenly heard himself shouting, ‘I will kill him!’

—‘Exactly what I thought, I will kill him,’ the driver said.
—‘Let's all go home. I don't think there is a need for us to drive around any more. Go home after you take me to my house. Go home and rest.’

(…)

The driver went quiet for a while then asked, ‘do you think there'll be another war?’

—‘No, I don't think so.’
—‘You're not sure then?’
—‘I don't think there'll be another war. But tell me, did you see your wife today? I mean did you see her face?’
—‘I already told you, Sir, that she spoke to me from behind the door.’
—‘Did you ever think that she might have turned into another woman, and that your children now look like other children? People don't necessarily have to turn into our look-likes, you know, and we could easily turn into the look-alikes of other people.’

The driver turned around to look at Rashed, and Rashed turned around to look at the driver the same moment, and Rashed screamed, ‘No, no, this can't be happening!’

The driver looked exactly like him. The driver, very surprised, asked, ‘what, what happened, Mr. Rashed?’

—-‘Let me off here, right now!’

’

THE BOOK OF THE SULTAN'S SEAL

FICTION

The book of the sultan's seal
Kitab al tughra

Y. Rakha
Dar al shorouk, Cairo, 2011
509 pages

SOLD RIGHTS
Rights owner. Interlink (USA)
Represented by RAYA for world translation rights.

Interlink, USA (WEL, 2015)
Zoe, Switzerland (French, 2016)
Verlag Hans Schiller, Berlin (to appear, 2018)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL
PDF file of the original Arabic version.
PDF file of the full English translation.

AWARDS & DISTINCTIONS
Rakha's work in English, featured in McSweeney's and the Kenyon Review.

RAKHA Youssef

BIO
Born in Cairo in 1976, Rakha earned a BA in English and philosophy from Hull University, England. He works as a reporter, copy editor and cultural editor at Al-Ahram Weekly, the Cairo based English-language newspaper.

SOME OTHER WORKS
Rakha has published several other books: A collection of short stories, a photo travelogue (*Beirut, some place*, 2006) nominated for the "Lettre Ulysses Literary Reportage Award", two books of travel, and a collection of poems and essays.
His novel ***Crocodiles*** was published by Seven Stories Press (WEL, USA, 2015).

| **PRESS**

| **Publishers Weekly** "Rakha's novel is quite inventive, with colorful Ottoman history lending ample pizzazz to the narrative."

| **Le Courrier** "Ouvrage riche et multiforme"

| **Anton Shammas author of *Arabesques*** "Published in Arabic in the spring of 2011, Youssef Rakha's *The Book of the Sultan's Seal* gave him an immediate spot in the Hall of Fame of modern Arabic literature: a stunning achievement for a first novel. This novel realizes, at long last, one of the dreams of modern Arabic novelists since the mid nineteenth century: to formulate a seamless style of modern narration that places the novel in the world, Faulkner-style. A special tip of the hat should go to Paul Starkey, the bold and masterful translator."

| **Mona Anis, Al-Ahram Weekly** "A chronicle of the decay of the city and a call to arms… the inter-textual references in this thoroughly hybrid text are astonishing … [*The Book of the Sultan's Seal*] is an outstanding first novel by an author who has a special ability to deal with modern and classical material, both Arab and western, with equal ease."

| **Muhammad Salim 'Abbada** "A great novel, the ultimate in eloquence…"

| SUMMARY

Mustafa Çorbaci, thirty year old Egyptian journalist, just broke up with his wife. One evening at work, he sees a colleague transform into a strange character, who tells him he is none other than the last Ottoman Sultan, come to entrust him with a mission: Find one of the seven parchments of Marie's Surat, in order to vivify Islam. Thus starts Mustafa's journey, which will lead him to the unexpected rediscovery of erotism and passion.

The Book of the Sultan's Seal is made up of nine chapters, each centered on a drive Mustafa takes around greater Cairo in the spring of 2007. Together these create a portrait of Cairo, shedding light on the contemporary Arab Muslim's desperation for a sense of identity. An ode to Cairo, "city of the world", the novel is partly a tale of the fantastic, and partly a political pamphlet. *The Book of the Sultan's Seal* is a suspenseful and erotic read, a riotous examination of Muslim demise.

It also tackles pressing questions: What does it mean to be a young muslim in today's global world? What is they way to an Islam that is alive, liberated from its rituals and prohibitions, which hinder its spirituality? The way to a renaissance, according to Çorbaci's journeys seems to be through love, poetry, calligraphy, and the cultural diversity within Islam.

| TRANSLATION

Translated by Paul Starkey

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Mustafa Nayif Çorbacı said:

Dear Rashid, your emails are intermittent, if they come at all. And I've grown tired of phone cards. But I have a story I must tell you before it sours. How shall I get it across? I've got a lot to tell you, not just the story. You'll find my news really strange. It may even depress you. I laugh when I imagine you whimpering with distress. You were with me the evening I bought a coffee before going to see the girl, remember? It doesn't matter whether you bother to read these words, really. You don't like reading Arabic (assuming that this is Arabic in the first place). I worry that the few people who read, don't read in Arabic. I don't blame them. Even those people who know no other language except Arabic waste all their energy on rotten translations, translations of translations. English rules. Look how our uncles, the Turks, found peace after they adopted the Latin alphabet!

Nonetheless, the fact is that I'm no longer dazzled by that rotten island you live on—England, indeed—forget that shit, man! I'm just writing this, and imagining someone reading it, someone with a really strong and genuine connection with me, a connection transparent enough to transcend every detail of life and reality. Someone I'm connected with outside time, I mean.

Because from the day I left my wife till now, I've actually died and been resurrected, or, more likely, at least become a completely different person. I tell you, I want to write to someone whose connection with me transcends my personal identity.

You, alas, are the only one. (…)

I'm now in my seat on the airplane, the engines turning faster and faster as we take off, the asphalt burning under our wheels. And the dawn is orange juice as I write to you: "The world has collapsed around me and I don't know what to do. Family, children. I've been struggling for three months. Hope is an elastic thing. If you keep clinging to it, you don't get anywhere. I cast it aside and carried on. There was a lot of talk in the office. Gestures from my divorced female colleagues. More than one colleague is getting married and I am bad luck. Change and stability. Happy as a criminal who's gotten away with it, and sad as a house. Ever since my father died, perhaps, I've gotten used to misfortune. The memory wrings my heart, and regret returns. But hope is elastic and I have to go on. I'm not clinging to anything now."

Today is April 19, a hot Thursday. Exactly twenty-one days since I left the marital home in Maadi—the period in which the nine events of my story happened one after the other. I didn't leave Greater Cairo during this period. I feel as though in three weeks I've crossed the whole globe, once from east to west and once from north to south. And as I crossed it, this way and that, I was also treading through five centuries, to and fro. Do you understand me, Rashid? But you can't understand me until you read on.

The metal body that I'm inside has climbed and is suspended in the sky, with everything in it. The plane's nose lifts a bit, but we don't feel it. We just feel—or rather, I feel—that I have completed the first stage of a journey that is far longer than you can imagine. Through the oval window, Cairo gets smaller and fades into the distance. Its features shrink into lines, circles, and lengths stretching into nothingness. It looks like a map, becoming more and more detached, quickly changing into a symbol or a talisman. This sprawling city of twenty million souls, just a horizontal talisman whose meaning is impossible to understand.

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INNOCENCE

FICTION

Innocence
Bakāra

H. Selmi
Dar al adab, Beirut, 2016
206 pages

SOLD RIGHTS
Rights owner. The author.

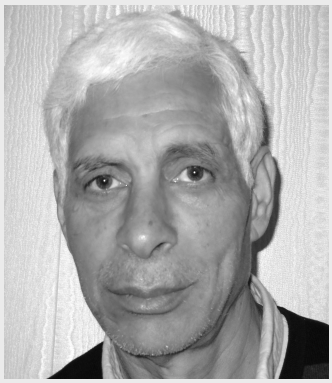
Sindbad, Actes Sud, France (to appear)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL
PDF file of the original Arabic version.

AWARDS
Smile, you are in Tunisia was on the short list of the IPAF (or Arab Man Booker) 2012.

The scent of Marie-Claire was on the short list of the IPAF (or Arab Man Booker) 2009.

SELMI
Habib



BIO
Habib Selmi was born in Tunis in 1951. A graduate of Arabic literature, from the Sorbonne University, he currently lives in Paris, where he teaches and writes for the press.

SOME OTHER WORKS
The stranger's night (1999), translated into French (Actes Sud, 2008).
Bahia's lovers (2002), translated into French (Actes Sud, 2011) and German (Lenos, 2006).
The scent of Marie-Claire (2008), translated into French (Actes Sud, 2011), English (AUC, 2009 and Arabia Books, Haus, 2010), German (Lenos, 2013) and Italian (Mesogea, 2013).
Smile, you are in Tunisia (2010), translated into French (Actes Sud, 2013) and German (Lenos, 2013).

| PRESS

| **L'Orient littéraire, December 12, 2017** **"**Habib Selmi is captivated by the very real phenomena of everyday life to which he manages to give a more general density. He uses well-known social facts as an exemplification process. His refined language cultivates the extreme economy of means and seeks the 'inimitable simplicity."

| Al-Akhbar, March 7, 2017 "Selmi continues to dismantle the fragility of Arab consciousness, imagination and dreams through the subject of virginity and sex and their place in this consciousness. In his tenth novel, he does not give up his refined narrative style and his faint worlds, trying to approach the contradictions and collapses of Tunisian society through the friendly relationship between the main characters of his novel."

| SUMMARY

Al-Bashir and Mustafa are old and close friends. So close, that Mustafa was Al-Bashir's designated "minister" during his wedding night: He was nearby, in case Al-Bashir needed his experienced advice on deflowering his bride, Mabruka. Al-Bashir, it turns out, did need Mustafa's advice. But the wedding night remained the two friends' secret. Until the day the Revolution reaches their remote village in Tunisia, and a vicious rumor spreads. According to the rumor, which started around a shop where some of the villagers hang out, Mustafa is the one who deflowered Mabruka, instead of Al-Bashir, some thirty years ago.

At first, none of the two friends who have been meeting everyday under the same tree for years, dares bring up the rumor during their daily encounters. They are however both very upset. Al-Bashir, now a rich and powerful cattle merchant, wonders if Mustafa is the one to have betrayed their secret – might he have shared the details of that night with his wife? Mustafa, knowing that he is not the one who betrayed his friend, is torn between pity for his situation, and anger at the possibility that Al-Bashir might have lied to him – regarding how he deflowered his bride, perhaps with the help and advice of someone other than Mustafa.

As the gossip grows, the characters who are affected by it react differently: Manubia, Al-Bashir's mother-in-law, is mad. Convinced that Mustafa is the one who started the rumor, she wants him dead to avenge her son-in-law's honor. Mahbuba, Mustafa's intelligent wife, realizes that the only person who might benefit from spreading the rumor is the shop keeper, who has complained that Al-Bashir sold him the place for much more than its worth. Meanwhile, Mustafa remembers how he had desired Al-Bashir's wife, before her wedding and during her wedding night. With the rumor, he feels guilty of a crime he did not commit. In parallel, out of revenge, Al-Bashir looks at Mahbuba's big breasts with lust. Confrontation between Manubia and Mahbuba follows, escalating the tension, until finally Al-Bashir dares to open the subject. Reassured by his friend's denial, he now knows Mustafa is innocent. Meanwhile, Manubia still wants to kill Mustafa, and almost convinces her husband Hamed to help her. But Hamed changes his mind at the very last minute. And – almost – everything goes back to normal in this small village of Tunisia where mere echoes of the Revolution were used to challenge the establishment.

Narrated by multiple voices, from the intimate perspective of various characters, *Innocence* is ultimately an illustration of the hypocrisy of Arab societies. Even though they speak of modernity and the need for change, they still cling to obsolete traditions and values, which among other things, limit women's place in society, confining them to their household.

PRAISE FOR THE WOMEN OF THE FAMILY

FICTION

Praise for the Women of the Family
Madih li nisa' el 'a'ila

M. Shukair
Naufal, Beirut, 2015, 208 pages

RIGHTS
Rights owner: Interlink (USA).
Represented by RAYA for world translation rights.

Interlink (World English, USA, to appear).

AVAILABLE MATERIAL
PDF file of the original Arabic version.
Full English translation, coming soon.

AWARDS
***Praise for the Women of the Family* was shortlisted for the International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF), or Arab Man Booker, 2016.**

SHUKAIR Mahmoud

BIO
Mahmoud Shukair is a Palestinian writer, born in Jabal al-Mukabbar, Jerusalem, in 1941. He writes short stories and novels for adults and young adults. He is the author of forty-five books, six television series and four plays. His stories have been translated into several languages, including English, French, German, Chinese, Mongolian and Czech. He has occupied leadership positions within the Jordanian Writers' Union and the Union of Palestinian Writers and Journalists. In 2011, he was awarded the Mahmoud Darwish Prize for Freedom of Expression. He has spent his life between Beirut, Amman and Prague and now lives in Jerusalem.

SOME OTHER WORKS
Mordechai's Mustache and His Wife's Cats (2004), translated into English (Interlink, 2007).
My cousin Condoleezza (2004), translated into French (Sindbad, 2008).
J***erusalem Stands Alone*** (2010), translated into English (Syracuse University Press, 2018).

| PRESS

| Al Jazeera, September 2, 2016 "Shukair gives women the space to open up, trying to capture every detail, in response to the changes that Palestinian women have endured, and to the deliberate distortions that sought to erase their identity."

| Raseef 22, February 2, 2016 "In a revolving narration chronicling the chatter and gossip of the tribe women, Mahmoud Shukair writes a parallel biography of the city of Jerusalem and its transformations, against the backdrop of the disintegration of the Abd al-Lat clan and the loss of its glory."

| SUMMARY

Mohamad, a 42-year-old Palestinian, is a court stenographer, and the youngest of 11 siblings. He has been entrusted by his father Mannan, once a shepherd, and today leader of the clan, to reunite its scattered members, take the lead, and look after its women. The Al-Abd al-Lat clan has left the desert and is in the process of leaving its Bedouin customs behind. The members of the clan struggle with these changes, scorning the women who embrace modern life: when Rasmia accompanies her husband to a party, Najma wears a dress and Sana gets a tan on her white legs, they set malicious tongues wagging; meanwhile, Wadha, the sixth wife of Mannan, the chief of the clan, still believes that the washing machine and television are inhabited by evil spirits.

Mohamad's dream is to write a novel or a play. After several failed writing experiences, and feeling powerless when it comes to leading the tribe, Mohamad finally resorts to writing the tribe's story, as a means to actually reunite it. The novel is the outcome of this attempt, and is the story both of the tribe and of Mohamad's difficulty at writing it.

Narrated in the first person, the novel nonetheless features a multiplicity of voices, all embedded in Mohamad's narration. Each of these multiple and systematic incursions is introduced by Mohamad, who in these moments becomes the listener and recipient of the family's oral history.

Opening in 1982, with the news of the Sabra and Chatila camp being besieged in Beirut, the novel goes back in history, up until the 1940s, when Mohamad was born, just a few years before the *Nakba* (the Palestinian exodus from what is now Israel). War, political disagreement, poverty and frustration have lead the different members of this big family to Amman, Beirut, or Brazil. Some have gotten rich conducting shady businesses, others have died at the hand of extremist Zionists, others still have run away. Most got married, sometimes more than once, and many had children.

In this family saga, unfolding over half a century, the reader gets a glimpse of the winding history of the Palestinian people. Set after the *Nakba* in a time of political and social change, the novel witnesses the rapid advance of modernity and the seeds of conflict beginning to grow in 1950s Palestine.

| TRANSLATION EXCERPT:

By Jonathan Wright

‘

I had to call off the trip. Sana grumbled then lapsed into silence, as she usually did when anything took her by surprise. She started to busy herself inspecting the clothes she had packed in the suitcase. She took them out of the suitcase and put them back in the wardrobe. With a mixture of sadness and a sense of loss she looked at the swimming costume I had bought her a few days earlier.

When we had made a trip to the Dead Sea together, I had worn my swimming trunks and swum in the water. Sana had her own private ritual: she took off her shoes and held her dress up above her knees. The water washed over her legs and made the hem of her dress wet. When the women of the family gathered together one evening she told them what she had done, as evidence that she didn't observe the code of modesty. I sympathised with her and she sympathised with me because I had to carry the weight of the family on my shoulders, the burden that my father had entrusted to me. For some time Sana and I had been looking forward to taking a break from the family and its worries.

I am Muhammad bin Mannan al-Abdallat, known as Muhammad the Youngest, to distinguish me from two brothers to whom my father gave the same name in honour of his own father, Sheikh Muhammad who was a man of considerable importance in the desert. The other brothers, known as Muhammad the Elder and Muhammad the Younger, went in opposite directions, and my father took an aggrieved attitude towards them. On numerous occasions he told his sons openly that he placed his confidence in me and held out hope that I would reunite the family, protect the women of the family from harm (what had happened to my sister Falha and the worry that caused my father had been quite enough), and perform glorious feats that would exalt the name of the Abdallat clan, which had expanded and branched out and now had members scattered everywhere. When I told him I was going to marry a divorced woman who was three years older than me, he looked at me and said: "You're joking of course." "Not at all," I said, "I'm not joking." He saw this decision of mine as a severe reversal. He almost lost confidence in me and put me in the same category as my brothers, Muhammad the Elder, Muhammad the Younger and Fuleihan, who had himself committed many grave offences. It was then 1962. He was still giving me one piece of advice after another and assuring me I could choose a beautiful virgin from among the girls of Ras al-Naba or from one of the villages around Jerusalem, but I wasn't persuaded.

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THE FRIGHTENED

Fiction

The frightened
Al khaifoun

D.Wannous, 2017, Dar al adab, Beirut
176 pages.

SOLD RIGHTS
Harvill Secker, Penguin Random House, UK, WEL (to appear)
Knopf, USA (to appear)
Signatuur, A.W. Bruna, Netherlands (to appear)
Gallimard, France (to appear)
Blessing, Random House, Germany (to appear)
Baldini & Castoldi, Italy (to appear)
Norstedts, Sweden (to appear)
Mevsimler, Turkey (to appear)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL
PDF of the Arabic. English translation sample.

WANNOUS
Dima

BIO
Dima Wannous is a Syrian author born in 1982. A student of French literature and translation at the University of Damascus and the French Sorbonne, she wrote in multiple Arab (Al Safir, Al Hayat) and foreign (Washington Post) newspapers. She managed the cultural section of the electronic magazine "Modon" between 2012-2014, and currently prepares and presents a cultural television show.

SOME OTHER WORKS
Details (Dar al mada, 2007), translated into German (Nautilius, 2015), and *The chair* (Dar al adab, 2009).

| P R E S S

| Al Hayat, Abdo Wazen, February 24, 2017 "**A clever narrative game** in which the image of both narrators and alleged writer (Waseem) are so similar that they become like an open, unobtrusive maze, where **the reader discovers the pleasure of loss and discovery**."

| The New Arab, Jamal Shahid, February 10, 2017 "Dima Wannous' novel The Frightened **excels** at depicting repercussions and interchanges between people, times and places… **a marvel to read!**"

| Asharq Al-Awsat, April 4, 2017 "Dima Wannous' novel resembles Syria in its pre-revolution anxiety."

| Souriyati, Mohammad Abu Remman, November 19, 2017 "The novel truly delves into the psychology of fear. It goes **beyond different events and developments in Syria, all the way to the inner world**, the psyche, depicting common and intersecting places between the private and the public, the imagined and the real, the specific and the general. Together, all these threads make up the story of fear, and the fearful; a story that denounces the reality of living in such an atmosphere, regardless of profession, confession or any political stand. Indeed, everyone in this 'Arab city' is afraid, no matter how hard they try to fight it […] It's not your fear alone, Dima, we are all 'Frightened'."

| SUMMARY

The Frightened announces one of the great young talents in the Middle-East; Dima Wannous.

Contemporary, unique, and totally fresh, *The Frightened* captures what ordinary life is like under a dictatorship in a voice that is both captivating and spare. **Elias Khoury** has written with a personal endorsement as well as written a review in Al Quds newspaper **calling the novel 'captivating' 'excellent' and 'brilliant'.**

When Suleima meets Nassim in the reception area of her psychiatrist's office, they become involved in a tenuous relationship for years. When the war breaks out and he emigrates to Germany, he suddenly goes quiet. Until one day he sends her his latest manuscript. She reads with increasing interest, only to realize that the story he tells is very close to her own.

The reader switches from Suleima's narration of her present and her past, to Nassim's narration of what appears to be Suleima's life, looking in turn both at her and her reflection; not exactly the same, but so similar it is dizzying. Is she really the woman in the manuscript?

All of the trouble from her past comes bubbling up; her relationship to her mother, her attachment to her father and her incapacity to accept his death, the difficulties of growing up as the daughter of an Alawite father and a Sunni mother. A family crushed by the tyranny of dictatorship.

Everywhere around her, and within her too, life seems to fold back into itself - just as the story does. Trapped, broken, anxious, Suleima goes on a journey with the manuscript to make sense of what happened, who she is, and what she's become.

She sees her fear of death, her fear of loss, her fear of crowds, and realizes that ultimately there is only one kind of fear; the fear of fear. The fear, not of punishment, but of being afraid. The fuel of dictatorship.

In the backdrop of her own personal drama, the violence of Syrian history and the current war resonates and unfolds.

The Frightened is an immersive and captivating novel that speaks of this generation and in its voice.

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE

By Elisabeth Jaquette

‘

Exactly fifteen years ago I was sitting in Kamil's clinic.

I was sitting in his really tiny clinic, which stretched and swelled and expanded to fit dozens of patients. A few of the people came for appointments they'd made weeks before, or even earlier. Most came from outside Damascus, without an appointment. Some sat on the scattered chairs, others spilled onto the narrow steps outside. I smoked and watched the people around me. The secretary, who was unusually sweet, read her printed lectures and studied diligently for midterms. Every so often, she'd steal a glance at me and smile. Leila. She probably had things on her mind, even though she was sweet. A person can be both sweet and troubled. A young secretary working her way through college. Supporting her family, which was suffering like so many others.

When Leila's father died a few years ago, her mother came down with all kinds of health problems. Her mother had been an active woman, pretty, flitting through life with her svelte fifty-something body. Then her husband died and she got high blood pressure, diabetes, kidney disease, and hypothyroidism. She transformed into a limp bedridden thing. Leila's divorcée sister and her two-year old daughter also lived with them. And their brother who had lost his mind years earlier.

The brother was twenty-one when he fell in love with another student at the College Of Fine Arts. That's where I studied too. His girlfriend was the daughter of a low-ranking officer who lived in the Mezzeh 86 neighborhood. One day the son of the chief of an intelligence branch happened to see her at college. Leila didn't tell me which branch it was. That part wasn't important. The point was he had eyes for her too, and wanted to take her on a date to his father's 'break.' 'Break' was what kids of government officials called the gardens on the edge of Damascus given to all high-ranking officers. Where they could go in their free time and spend days off with their families. But she turned him down. By this point she and Leila's brother were already dating. Then one morning, Leila's brother was kidnapped while out of the house. He disappeared for a whole week. And returned an empty body. “They hung him from his feet for days, dangling upside down, until his mind poured out, down to the last drop.” I remember the phrase well. It's what Leila told me once when no one was in the clinic except her and me. She said he came back without his mind. From then on, her brother shut himself in his room. He'd sit there next to the open window, look out onto the crowded street in Masaken Barzeh, and holler at people. “Have you seen Hafez Assad?” He'd ask them. “If you see him, call him over. Tell him I won't leave my room until he comes to visit me in person.” No one paid attention to what he said. Crazy. Lost his mind. He'd urinate out the window and point his penis right at whoever was passing by, oblivious to their insults and curses.

Leila spent her days in that tiny clinic, around people who resembled her brother in one way or another. People with stories just as strange. She studied, scheduled appointments, drank plenty of Nescafe with milk, and smoked voraciously.

Then she went home to care for her mother, that limp bedridden thing; her only sister, the divorcée; her niece; and her brother, who was confined to his room and his madness.

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19 WOMEN:TALES OF RESILIENCE FROM SYRIA

Non-fiction

19 imra'a: Suriyyat yarwayn
S.Yazbek
Al Mutwassit, Milano, 2018, 280 pages

SOLD RIGHTS
Stock, France (to appear 2019)
Ordfront, Sweden (to appear, 2019)
Sellerio, Italy (to appear, 2019)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL
Detailed long summary. Arabic PDF. Coming soon: English translation sample.

AWARDS & DISTINCTIONS
This author 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.

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
The blue pen French (Stock, to appear), Swedish (Ordfront, 2017), Danish (Kristeligt Dagblads Forlag, to appear 2018), Norwegian (Cappelen Damm, 2017).
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), Romanian (Corint books, to appear), Danish (Kristeligt Dagblads Forlag, 2016), Complex Chinese (Walkers, to appear). Simplified Chinese (Shanghai Translation Pub. House, to appear). Italian (Sellerio, to appear). Macedonian (Prozart, to appear)
In the crossfire translated into French (Buchet-Chastel, 2012), English (Haus, UK, 2012), German (Nagel & Kimche, Hanser, 2012), Dutch (Nigh & Ditmar, 2013), Turkish (Timas, 2013).
In her mirrors (2010), translated into Italian (Castelvecchi).
Cinnamon (2008), translated into Italian (Castelvecchi), English (Arabia books, Haus), French (Buchet-Chastel), Swedish (Ordfront), Norwegian (Cappelen Damm), German (Nagel & Kimche, to appear).
Clay (2005).

| SUMMARY

In this non-fiction book, Samar Yazbek tackles two topics that are close to her heart: Syria, and women. In her previous works on the Syrian uprising, Yazbek gave us an unprecedented view on the Syrian conflict, reminding the world that those who were suffering the civil war were ordinary people who just want to get by and lead dignified normal lives.

In *19 women: Stories of resilience from Syria*, Yazbek focuses on the silent, or silenced, actors of the revolution: Women. While they were massively present on the field, and often even on the frontline, the women of Syria had to fight not only the Regime, or ISIS or other Islamist rebels; they had to fight the whole of a patriarchal society, including male revolutionaries.

For 3 years, Yazbek recorded testimonies of over 60 women. She would meet them in the various European cities where they had fled, or over skype. All these women are from the former middle class, they are all educated and hold university degrees. They all took part in the uprising, because they all had a dream for their country, their families, and for themselves, as women. Yazbek's book sheds a different, complex, light on the revolution, raising important questions pertaining to Syria's social structure, and the role it played in the failure of the uprising.

Apart from the introduction where she explains her project and how she went about it, Yazbek willingly pulls herself out of this book. Each chapter is written by a different narrator, and while Yazbek rewrites the testimonies to give them coherence, she respects each woman's voice and particularities.

BOOK STRUCTURE

1) EDUCATION FOR ALL: RESISTING THE REVOLUTIONARIES
Sarah, 21, Mou'damiya – In response to a growing need, Sarah creates an education center, and grows increasingly powerful in her area. This displeased the local council. She's had to resist the pressures exerted by revolutionaries.

2) THE REVOLUTION: A WOMAN'S DREAM
Maryam Hayed, 21, student in psychology, Damascus - Maryam used to work for the red crescent. A rebel, she was against the veil and other religious traditions. She took part in the revolution to fulfill her dream of becoming a truly free woman in Syria. She was vocal, and in 2013, she was arrested, brutally tortured, sexually molested. She is now a refugee in France.

3) THE MECHANICS OF WAR
Dima, 37, graphic designer, Damascus – Dima worked both on the civil and military fronts. She moved funds and secured money and arms for the Free Syrian Army. She coordinated between the factions and the central council with the aim to unite all the rebels. She saw how the revolution transformed and got so disgusted that she stopped all military activity and dedicated herself to civil work. Her work was however not tolerated by the Islamists. She fled to Turkey.

4) HOSPITAL WARS
Zein, 20, medical nurse, Aleppo – Despite the disapproval of her family, Zein supported the revolution working as a medical nurse in a hospital in the area controlled by the rebels. All her family left the bombed out city of Aleppo, but she remained out of conviction. The hospital was understaffed, half destroyed, constantly missing medicine, and even bombarded, but she remained. Until one day Zein got arrested, jailed, and gang raped in custody.

5) HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: GIVING BIRTH IN JAIL
Doha Achour, 52 – Doha worked as a humanitarian activist during the revolution. She has always been politically active. In 1993, she was arrested, and remained several years in prison. She was 2 months pregnant when she got arrested, and gave birth in jail, almost dying in the process. This chapter provides historical depth to the Syrian uprising, briefly reminding how life was under the Asad regime.

6) EDUCATION FOR ALL: RESISTING ISIS
Suad, 25, Deir el zor – Suad was a psychology student when the uprising started. As other women in this book, she immediately saw the need to provide schooling to children, to protect them from outside violence, and secure a minimum of education. Deir el zor was however under ISIS control during the events she describes, and she resisted them bravely.

7) WITH OR AGAINST ASAD? THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH
Leila, 27, Homs Karm El Zeytoun – Leila is part of a family who has historically supported the Asad regime. Instead of letting herself convinced by the regime's convenient version of the violent events taking place in her neighborhood, she decides to investigate and uncover the truth behind them. She analyzes the spread and use of misinformation and fear. Trying to force her family to see the truth, will only cause her trouble. While no revolutionary will fully trust her because of her ethnic origins.

8) CROSSING THE SEA
Amal, 40 years old – Amal leaves Syria and seeks refuge in Europe. She attempted to cross the sea 10 times before succeeding. This chapter details her journey and the different aspects and people involved.

9) REFORMING ISLAM LEADS TO JAIL
Amina Khawlani, 35, history graduate, Daraya – Amina is a religious intellectual who worked in a religious research center for reforming Islam. The center's work was never appreciated by the regime for who this moderate view of Islam was not convenient (at a time where the regime was violently clamping down on the Muslim brotherhood). She was arrested in 2013.

10) RELIGION AND POWER: "AL QABISIYAT"
X, 25, Damascus – The anonymous narrator was part of a religious group called "Al qabisiyat". The chapter develops the function of this group and the way it seeks influence over the rich.

11) MEDICAL RESISTANCE: JAIL AND TORTURE
Lina Mohammad, 29 – Lina was arrested and brutally tortured. Despite the fear and suffering, she persisted her political activities as much as she could, which consisted in getting medicine inside besieged Ghouta.

12) MEDICAL RESISTANCE: RESISTING ISIS
Mona Fraji, 42, Raqqa, English teacher – Mona worked in medical and humanitarian aid. Raqqa is under ISIS rule, and Mona had to resist the occupier. The chapter details the horror and absurdity of life under ISIS.

13) BEING AN ALAWITE: RESISTING JABHAT AL NUSRA AND FIGHTING SECTARIANISM
Roula, late 20s, Lattakie – Roula is an Alawite however non-sectarian woman. The chapter also reports two testimonies of women who were arrested by Jabhat al nusra, or who had to interact with them closely. The chapter illustrates how sectarian divide has increased.

14) LIFE UNDER SIEGE
Reem, 50, Mistry of information – Reem has lived in Barza since 1987. There were unrests in the town starting in the early 1980s, because of a law that was forcefully enforced on the population, namely that of forbidding the *hijab.* This historical perspective explains why, in the revolution, the town was strongly repressed until it was finally besieged. Reem describes life under siege, and the solidarity amongst the town's people despite the fact that Reem has never covered her hair and is not religious.

15) FRONTLINE: EDUCATION AND INFORMATION AS RESISTANCE
Alia, 23, student in engineering, Aleppo – Alia stayed in Murat al naaman on the frontline, and created an association there with her husband, the purpose of which is to educate, women especially, and broadcast information on the war.

16) HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: EDUCATION AND THE REGIME
Houthami Hadi, 77, Homs - Houthami used to manage the school of Hama. The chapter details how she struggled with education under the Asad regime, after the 1970 coup.

17) "YOU'RE EITHER WITH US OR AGAINST US": REPORTING ON WAR
Zeina Arhim, 32, Damascus – A student in London, Zeina went back to Syria when the uprising started, with the dream to take part to the change. Working as a reporter, she talked to all sides of the conflict in an attempt to offer an honest complete view on the war. This got her into trouble.

18) "YOU'RE EITHER WITH US OR AGAINST US": MEDICAL ASSISTANCE
Fatma, 27, student in pharmacy, Al Qanaytra – Fatma helped all people without discrimination as a nurse and pharmacist. This led her to being arrested. She was brutally tortured, every day, for months

19) NOTHING WILL STOP US FROM EMPOWERING WOMEN
Faten, 24, Douma – Faten created an association for the education of children, eventually welcoming hundreds of them in its centers and schools. Islamist factions exerted extreme pressures on her, trying to prevent her from doing the work she dedicated herself to. The social backwardness brought about by war and poverty depressed her deeply. She witnessed many massacres, the worse of which was the slow death of a dozen of 6 to 9 year-old girls, who were mutilated by bombs dropped on their school; the school the narrator had created to protect them and educate them. Whatever the hardships, the narrator concludes, nothing will stop them to move forward.

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE
Chapter 1, by Robin Moger

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I was sometimes asked to assist with operations. On one occasion, a friend of mine emerged from the theatre and handed me a plastic bag. I looked and there was a man's foot inside. I nearly collapsed. "Put it aside for a moment," my friend said, "we need to bury it." I was like a sleepwalker. Sometimes I would tell myself that this was a nightmare. The image never left my mind: a human foot in a plastic bag.
I still have nightmares to this day. The one I have most is about the tomatoes. During the siege we planted several tomato plants in our garden and one of the plants produced two small tomatoes. My mother washed them and chopped them to make a salad with the vine leaves we ate: the tomatoes would make it nicer to eat, she said. My brother picked up the tomato and said that he was dying to eat it. "Don't you dare!" my mother said, "That's for the salad and everyone needs it. We only have those two." Then my brother asked me to photograph him clowning around with the pair of tomatoes. Laughing, I took a picture. A few days later, my brother and his wife, along with all their children, were killed by an artillery shell. To this day my mother still says, "If only I'd let him eat the tomato," and in my nightmares I see chopped tomatoes dripping like blood across the sky.

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THE BLUE PEN

Fiction

The blue pen
Al macha'a

S.Yazbek, 2017, Dar al adab, Beirut
208 pages

SOLD RIGHTS
Stock, France (to appear, 2018)
Ordfront, Sweden (2017)
Cappelen Damm, Norway (to appear, 2018)
Kristeligt Dagblads Forlag, Denmark (2017)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL
English translation sample. Detailed synopsis.

AWARDS
This author 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.

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
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), Romanian (Corint books, to appear), Danish (Kristeligt Dagblads Forlag, 2016), Complex Chinese (Walkers, to appear). Simplified Chinese (Shanghai Translation Pub. House, to appear). Italian (Sellerio, to appear). Macedonian (Prozart, to appear)
In the crossfire translated into French (Buchet-Chastel, 2012), English (Haus, UK, 2012), German (Nagel & Kimche, Hanser, 2012), Dutch (Nigh & Ditmar, 2013), Turkish (Timas, 2013).
In her mirrors (2010), translated into Italian (Castelvecchi).
Cinnamon (2008), translated into Italian (Castelvecchi), English (Arabia books, Haus), French (Buchet-Chastel), Swedish (Ordfront), Norwegian (Cappelen Damm), German (Nagel & Kimche, to appear).
Clay (2005).
Child of Heaven (2002).

| PRESS

| **Gotborgs-Posten, Sweden** An ingenious character and a literary approach on the verge of the unimaginable. Samar Yazbek's novel is brave on many levels, writes Mattias Hagberg.

| **Arbetarbladet, Sweden** *The Blue Pen* is a deeply original, almost surreal fantasia, written in a simple, clear style. But the surrealistic stroke is raised, because the evil and the suffering surrounding Rima is real to such a great extent. … A novel like *The Blue Pen* filters through all our conscious and unconscious blinkers.

| **Kristeligt, Denmark** *Five star review!* "We others can only read - and cry."

| Weekendavisen, Denmark The book left this reader very touched; beyond the cruel reality it describes, it is because of Yazbek's sense of details.

| Dagens Nyhether, Sweden Invaluable voice from Syria

| Sveriges Radio, Sweden The text is true - literally true, that is. How can you truly describe a rational chemical warfare? By letting the process behind the sense of the text break. A radical and visionary move made by Samar Yazbek.

| Gefle Dagblad The reader comes so close to war

| SUMMARY

Rima is a girl from Damascus who cannot stop walking. She has no control over her legs that are automatically set in motion the moment she is free to walk. This strange characteristic has determined her life. Because her mother was always afraid of losing her, Rima grew up tied to her wrist by a thick rope. Or, when her mother was busy cleaning the school, she was confined to the school's library under the supervision of the librarian. When she got a little older and her mother couldn't take her along anymore, Rima was tied to her bed at home, this one room where she lived with her mother and brother. The rope was long enough for her to explore the entire room, but it was short enough to ensure she would never leave it. Rima is a hungry reader, continuously nourished by the friendly and generous school librarian, but she refuses to speak and her tongue has a mind of its own. It will not utter a word or scream when she wants it to. Rima draws skillfully, and her favorite stories are Saint-Exupery's "Little Prince" and "Alice in Wonderland".

Rima was content with her life in their neighborhood in Damascus, despite the raising tension she could sense between her brother and mother, and the faint sound of far away explosions she could hear from time to time. But one day, everything changes. A soldier shoots both her and her mother at a checkpoint. Her mother dies. Rima is injured. When she awakens, she isn't sure where she is. It looks like a hospital, but there are bars at the window, and she is handcuffed to the bed. The nurses are rude and nasty, and all the other girls are mistreated. Her brother is called upon to take her home. He comes to take her, but instead of going home, he takes her someplace else. This other place is hell on earth.

Is it possible that this new place and their home are in the same city? Here, people are torn to pieces by shells that fall from the sky. Here, people disappear one after the other. Here, one night, it rained stink bombs that liberated a strange fume. It tinted the buildings purple, and made people sleep in the strangest postures, with orange foam coming out of their mouths. Eventually, her brother also disappears, and she finds herself in the care of Hassan, her brother's friend.

Today, Rima is in the basement of what must have been a print house. She waits for Hassan who said he wouldn't be long before tying her to the metal frame of the ceiling window. But Hassan is late, and Rima is scared. While she waits for him, she writes and draws her story with the only blue pen she found. She will write as long as the ink in her pen allows.

The blue pen is a unique, moving and powerful tale from Syria. Rima's tale is a simple and straightforward one: she wants to go home, use her crayons to draw, and read her favorite books. Rima wants to live, and walk freely. But wherever she is taken to, she is constrained, and there is nothing but destruction. Trapped in Rima's head, the reader gets a first hand sensory and emotional take on the Syrian war. There are no politics, and no sides to that story, except Rima's.

Though people usually think she is crazy or mentally ill, the reader can see how Rima is the wisest of them all. A genuine defender of life, Rima does not understand the violence, and continues to seek beauty in people and the mundane details of life. The reader desperately wants her to survive, a fragile little butterfly that floats above horror, as if she were the last remaining piece of beauty in this world. The last omen of hope.

With *The blue pen* Yazbek offers a surreal depiction of the horrors taking place in Syria, giving the reader a palpable grasp of the large scale tragedy that still eludes most of us.

| TRANSLATION EXCERPT

By Leri Price

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I can remember the moment I found out that I had a separate brain in my feet. At the time I was four years old, and I used to go with my mother to the school where she worked. I would be tied up in the cleaners' room. My mother was responsible for cleaning the toilets and the classrooms and she prepared coffee and tea for the staffroom and the office. The school was in the middle of Damascus. We needed to take two buses to reach it from our house, which was at the end of Jaramana Camp in southern Damascus.

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