



THE AGENCY FOR ARABIC LITERATURE RAYA

TWO THOUSAND AND TWENTY THREE
FALL CATALOGUE

| NEW TO THE LIST

Sinan ANTOON **Of loss and lavender**

Two Iraqi men seek refuge in the USA. Sami, an old retired doctor, and Omar, a young deserter who has had his ear amputated in punishment. Sami is ill with Alzheimer and losing memory, while Omar tries to forget the past that keeps haunting him. While we reminisce the traumatic past of Sami, through scattered pieces of his shattered memory, we also follow Omar, as he works on rebuilding himself. Lavender, the smell of a joyful past for Sami, and that of a hopeful future for Omar, will ultimately bring the two men together.

Inaam KACHAHI **The outcast**

The Outcast is the story of Taj al moulouk, or Taji, an Iraqi woman of Iranian descent, her young Iraqi friend Wedyan, and the love of her life, the Palestinian Mansour al Badi. We meet Taji, in Bagdad in the 1940s, a beautiful, free spirited, strong willed intellectual, who will surprisingly find her way to power, before losing it all. However, beyond these captivating historical figures and context, *The Outcast* is also a love story, a novel about passion, and the irony of life

| RECENTLY PUBLISHED IN TRANSLATION

Khaled ALESMAEL **Selamlik**

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

Khalil ALREZ **A sleepless giraffe in Damascus**

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

Jabbour DOUAIHY **Poison in the air**

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

Mansoura EZ ELDIN **The orchards of Basra**

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

Khaled KHALIFA **No one prayed over their graves**

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

Samar YAZBEK **The wind's abode**

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

| KEEP AN EYE ON

Asma AL ATAWNA Missing picture

Yahya AMQASSIM The raven's claw

Sinan ANTOON Index

Ahmed AWNI Some achieve greatness

Hoda BARAKAT Night Post

Jabbour DOUAIHY The King of India

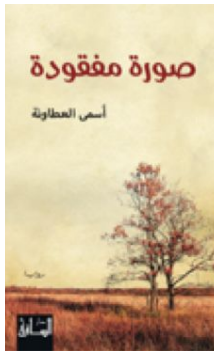
Youssef FADEL The life of butterflies

Khaled KHALIFA The notebooks of the bohemians

Dima WANNOUS And the family devoured its men

Samar YAZBEK The blue pen

MISSING PICTURE



FICTION

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

SOLD RIGHTS

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

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

Detailed synopsis
Arabic PDF
English translation sample

AWARDS & DISTINCTIONS

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

AL ATAWNA

Asma



BIO

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

SOME OTHER WORKS

Missing Picture is Al Atawna's first novel

| PRESS

Al Araby, Maha Hassan “Off the beaten track. Asma Al Atawna does not quench the thirst of the reader who expects to find a Palestinian novel abounding in the vocabulary of the Arab-Israeli struggle and struggle. Rather, she presents her individual suffering as a woman eager for freedom within a society that, while it is experiencing the crisis of occupation, and all its horrible details, (...) is traditional and conservative, suffocating its women...

She also blows up the clichés in which the Western reader is tempted to frame Palestinian women come from a camp - like a saint. A novel written truthfully, bravely without any fear of confrontation”

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

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

| SUMMARY

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

In the first part of the novel, Asma describes how she was able to leave, with the help of her boyfriend Jose, a Spanish archeologist. The young couple lives in Madrid with Jose's parents until he decides to become an Imam, and to marry her. Feeling trapped, and thinking that she left one prison for another, Asma seeks help from her French friend, Jean-Jacques, a correspondent she helped back in Gaza.

Eventually, Asma finds her way into French society. But whoever she is with, Asma seems to represent the Palestinian cause. Some people feeling obliged to express their sympathy, others feel the need to tell her that Israelis are also entitled to a life, and that the only solution to the conflict is the two-state solution. Though she wholeheartedly supports her people's cause, Asma is not a hero who fled home to speak for her people or to find a solution to the conflict. A rebel since her childhood, Asma wanted to escape her father, his public beatings and humiliations, her prying neighbors, and her older sister's fate. She wanted to live a life of her own choosing, in a small space of her own.

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

Softened by a successful escape, childhood dreams, and sweet friendships, and saddened by poverty, despair and the violence of the Israeli occupation that reverberates all the way into intimate human relations, Al Atawna's novel is a surprising read: honest, lucid and perspicuous. The author captures vividly the details of daily life in Gaza. Always just slightly offbeat, Asma provides the reader with a precious insight. Through Asma the adult, the reader understands the humanity and individuality of emigrants. Through Asma the 10 year old, the reader feels the great injustices inflicted upon children, and especially girls, in the most mundane details of daily life. A unique and bitter-sweet coming-of-age novel.

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE

by Robin Moger

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

"Good morning, class."

"Good morning!"

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

I was frightened of Miss Zeinab.

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

Dictation lessons were always terrifying:

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

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

Then the bell rang for the end of the lesson and she ordered us to lift our pencils from the page. Immediately, no additional strokes. Mona would be tasked with collecting up the exercise books and putting them on her desk in a pile to be marked. Mona eagerly did as she was told then returned to her desk and opened her geography book.

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

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

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

SELAMLIK



FICTION

Selamlik
K. Alesmael
Leopard, Sweden, 2018
75000 words

SOLD RIGHTS

Leopard, Sweden (2018)
Albino Verlag, Germany (2020)
World Editions BV, USA (English, to appear)
Forlaget Ti Vilde Heste, Denmark (to appear)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

Swedish, German and English translations.

AWARDS

Selamlik was shortlisted for the Skoutz Award (Germany), 2021.

ALESMAEL Khaled



BIO

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

SOME OTHER WORKS

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

| PRESS

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

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

Goteborg Posted Uncensored novel about shame, homophobia and violence.

Sydsvenskan The first homoerotic perspective about Syria and the war.

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

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

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

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

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

| SUMMARY

Depicted as a story of curiosity and lust in the German press, *Selamlık*, a work of autobiographical fiction by Alesmael, tells the journey of Furat as he makes his way from his home in Syria to Sweden via Turkey—a route taken by so many who fled the horrors of the Syrian civil war. *Selamlık* is, first and foremost, a very intimate account of this experience. While Furat waits in a Swedish refugee asylum for his status to be regularised, he contemplates his present life in limbo in Sweden and his past life in Syria: his mother and brothers, the dog they once owned, the time he realized as a teenager that he wasn't attracted to women like all of his classmates. The reader learns of his first sexual experiences, his first love story, and his exploration of the underground erotic scene of Damascus, a landscape made of dodgy cinemas, toilets in public parks, and, of course, hammams. Constantly playing with fire (homosexuality is illegal under Asad's regime) but compelled to live his sexuality, Furat ultimately leaves Syria out of fear of persecution by religious extremists. Yet, as he finally reaches his Swedish asylum, and shares his accommodation and even his room with other refugee men, Furat finds himself face to face with homophobia, and the ignorant belief that homosexuality is an illness Syrian men caught in Europe.

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

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE

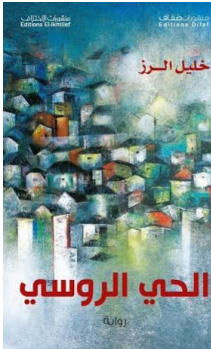
by Leri Price

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

"Your memory is fabric, Furat. It is disappearing behind the curtains of the bedrooms that have been gutted by fires in the war. It is sitting on the tablecloths that ceilings have fallen in on. Your memory, like a suitcase, is overflowing with the dresses and shirts that the security agents tossed on the ground like bodies without souls after searching the wardrobes. Remember how you used to lay your head on the soft pillow that your mother's own hands sewed and stuffed with feathers and lavender. Write about clothes and fabric, Furat, seeing as you haven't yet! Who will remember the vaulted fabric souq of Deir Azzour after the war burned it to the ground? Or Souq Al-Hamidiyya and the windows of the textile shops? Write about fabric, Furat. Write how you disappeared inside white bedsheets and wrapped them around your small body and paraded about like a little Greek boy, showing off and dancing for your mother and making her eyes vanish from laughing so hard. Write about the clothes that you left behind in Damascus like orphans. Write about the military uniform that you refused to put on when you refused to fight against your people. About the cotton pyjamas you left on the floor when you rushed out of your house in a panic in between bullets. Write about your shoes whose leather was eaten up by sea salt, write how your escape tore them to shreds. Write, Furat, because you survived the fire that took people and stone and cloth as its fuel. And for fuel, it is your duty to tell their stories."

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

A SLEEPLESS GIRAFFE IN DAMASCUS



FICTION

Al hayy al russi
K. Al Rez
Difaf, Beirut, 2020
286 pages

SOLD RIGHTS

Einaudi Stile Libero, Italy (forthcoming)
Editora Tabla, Brazil (forthcoming)
Timaş Yayınları, Turkey (forthcoming)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

Arabic PDF.
English sample.
Synopsis.

AWARDS

Shortlisted for the International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF) 2020.

| PRESS

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

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

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

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

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

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

ALREZ Khalil



BIO

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

SOME OTHER WORKS

Al badal, 2017
An Equal Measure, 2014

| SUMMARY

The Russian Quarter is a sweet, quirky, and unexpectedly moving novel about the Syrian civil war. Its setting, the Russian Quarter, is a fictional neighborhood on the eastern edge of contemporary Damascus next to rebel-held Ghouta. The unnamed narrator and his Russian girlfriend Nonna live in a rooftop room in the neighborhood's zoo, sharing their lives with a lively human and animal menagerie including a giraffe, who acquires a kind of mute prophetic power at the center of the Quarter community. Other denizens include the Russian former journalist Victor Ivanitch, a bigamist Syrian teacher of French, a theatre actor/watchmaker, a timid Russian pensioner and would-be novelist, a gangster named Borya, the Moroccan oud player Rashida and her local superhero boyfriend Essam, two wolves, three eagles, a hyena, the Afghan hound Raisa Petrovna, and the poodle Moustache. *The Russian Quarter's* deliberate prose lovingly knits a self-contained magical realist world, but Alrez also makes a point of exposing that imaginary ecosystem to the blunt force of real-world violence. As the war between the Russian-backed Assad regime and Ghouta's extremist rebels moves inexorably closer, neither the zoo residents' courage nor their cowardice is enough to protect the peaceful neighborhood. When the violence floods in, it is like a crashing wave swamping a tide pool whose colorful, delicate creatures the reader has unwittingly grown to love.

Part I, "The Giraffe," explores the narrator's twin relationships with the giraffe (who also reminds him of his mother, prompting another bemused flashback) and with his girlfriend Nonna, who develops many charming but destabilizing ideas about how to care for the giraffe (feed her scallions; show her films of acacia forests to cure her alleged fear of snakes; interpret the thoughts she is perhaps trying to communicate through such unlikely vehicles as Nonna's knitting).

Part II, "Essam," the central panel of the triptych, introduces the local tough guy Essam and his feud with Borya and narrates some strange events and omens in the Russian Quarter's life. It is organized into five chapters, the central and longest of which follows the Afghan hound Raisa Petrovna on a whimsical tour of the city to visit many of the book's other characters. This part ends at the same point as Part I: Nonna gets home from the Russian Cultural Center, carrying a bundle of scallions for the giraffe and some apple pancakes made by her father; she finds the narrator and the giraffe watching a 50-year-old archival soccer match on television; rockets join the artillery pounding Ghouta from the orchards of the Russian Quarter.

Only in Part III, "The Russian Quarter," does the narrative speed up, as the Quarter is dragged into the war. Essam has gone off to Ghouta, perhaps to join the rebels; his cat Gazelle ominously returns home without him. Soon a messenger arrives with Essam's body, shot through the chest. The inevitable decision to hold a funeral for the martyr Essam, risking the anger of Bashar al-Assad's regime, sets off a terrifying round of late-night visits (as the narrator and his friends attempt to enlist Borya and others in securing the funeral), a predawn funeral directed in high style by the watchmaker and thespian Abdel Jalil Hijazi, and then a car bomb at the zoo gate, which destroys the neighborhood. Burying Essam with dignity opens up the gates of hell and ultimately culminates in the death of the giraffe, shot in the head in the book's closing scene.

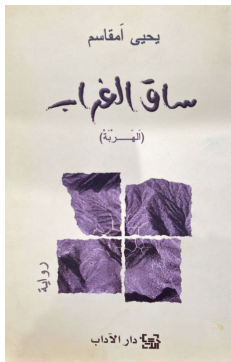
| TRANSLATION SAMPLE

by Margaret Litvin

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

I had always thought that the small space allotted to the giraffe was not adequate to her enormous size compared to the surrounding mass of the zoo and its animals. Passers-by in the next street had grown used to seeing her head towering over its walls and trees ever since I had moved into my friend Salih's room on the roof overlooking the zoo. Salih had disappeared from the Russian Quarter a few months before the war. Meanwhile I had disappointed my wife's hopes in me, and her father's hopes as well, by manifesting many unpraiseworthy traits (as they saw it) on which this is neither the time nor the place to expound. So when I began to feel superfluous and overlooked at home, in the house owned by my wife and her father, I decamped and left it to them without delay or regret.

THE RAVEN'S CLAW



FICTION

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

SOLD RIGHTS

Actes Sud (France, 2019)
Intelekti (Georgia, forthcoming)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

Full French translation.

AMQASSIM Yahya



BIO

Yahya Amqassim was born in 1972 in the Al-Husseini valley, in the southern province of Saudi Arabia, Jazan. A graduate in Law from the King Said University in Riyadh (2007), he previously 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 has written 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 have never before 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 Hussein valley, at the borders with Yemen, protected to the east by the Raven's Claw mountains. The tribe resisted the Ottomans and Egyptians with success, and also resisted against the expansion of Al Saoud. This last invader was, however, of a different nature, and ultimately succeeded in annihilating the tribe 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 twenty. This rite of passage allows them to show their physical and mental prowess, and, therefore, their true value. This rite is forbidden by the Northern power of Al Saoud's Emir, who seeks to impose his people's interpretation of religion and to extend his domination to the fertile valleys of Al Hussein. Hamoud, son of Aissa, the ruler of the Osseira tribe, attempts to circumcise himself at the novel's opening. Failing to keep this attempt a 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 this community, moved by values of courage in men and women alike, live in harmony with the brute forces of nature but eventually are defeated by the patient and perfidious attacks of the Emir, finally losing confidence in their own values. This epic tale inspires admiration for its unusual and charismatic characters and its sadly bygone way of life. Set in the 19th century, *The Raven's Claw* is also a magnificent insight into the origins of contemporary Saudi socio-political dynamics.

| TRANSLATION EXCERPT: FRENCH

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.

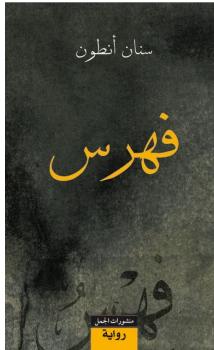
Seule sa mère devinait sa souffrance, provoquée par une blessure cachée dont lui-même ne pouvait s'expliquer la raison: comment se faisait-il qu'une communauté puissante comme la sienne se trouve soudainement confrontée à une situation qui les laissait incapables de la moindre réaction face aux empiètements 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'aviilissement, qu'elle perdît si vite tout ce qui faisait sa gloire et sa fierté, devant un pouvoir nouveau et avide, qui leur était étranger. (...)

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 cœur 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.

**INDEX -
THE BOOK OF COLLATERAL DAMAGE**



FICTION

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

SOLD RIGHTS

Hopefulmonster, Italy (2023).
Green Books, Malayalam (2019).
Yale University Press, World English (2019).

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

English translation.
Arabic PDF.

AWARDS & DISTINCTIONS

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 also awarded the 2014 Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize for Arabic Literary Translation, and 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.

| PRESS

Mathias Enard, author of *Compass* "Mixing the past and the present of Arabic literature, Sinan Antoon leads a hallucinatory investigation into the territories of memory and tragedies of Iraq. A deep reflection on exile and the power of books."

Maaza Mengiste, author of *Beneath the Lion's Gaze* "Sinan Antoon is a master storyteller and *The Book of Collateral Damage* reaffirms his place amongst some of our very best writers. Vividly imagined and sensitively told"

The National "Formally daring, stylistically inventive... It challenges but it also impresses and enthrals"

World Literature Today "Unique"

Full Stop "Nameer bears a strong resemblance to the detached, restless narrators of Rachel Cusk's or Teju Cole's fiction: precise and hyper-observant, a collector of detail and anecdote" "profoundly moving"

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

Lavender (2023)

Ave Maria (2012), translated into Spanish (Turner, 2014); French (Actes Sud, 2018); Serbian (Laguna, 2020); Icelandic (Ugla Publishing, 2023), Editora Tabla (Brazil, to appear)

The Pomegranate Alone (or the Corpse Washer, 2010), translated into English (Yale University Press, 2014); French (Actes Sud, 2017); Turkish (Aylak Adam, 2017); Macedonian (Prozart, 2018); Malayalam (Green Books, 2019); Greek (Kastaniotis, 2019); Croatian (Petrine Knige, 2022).

I'jaam: An Iraqi rhapsody (2004), translated into Italian (Feltrinelli), 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 he is 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 for his writing project, but the book never sees the light of day. The more Nameer reads about the disintegration of Iraq, the less he knows how to write about it.

As we follow Nameer's American life, we read parts of Waddood's *Index* with him. The parallel between the two voices is sometimes obvious, sometimes nonexistent. Ultimately, Nameer's voice grows closer and closer to Waddood's, as he loses faith in life more and more.

Ultimately, Antoon's latest novel is the story of a book that cannot be written. In Waddood'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 of capturing it. Antoon's fourth novel has been hailed as his best so far by the Arab press and was in its third edition just six months after its publication.

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE

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 Waddood. 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.

OF LOSS AND LAVENDER



FICTION

Khuzama
S. Antoon
Manshourat al jamal, Beirut, 2023
256 pages

SOLD RIGHTS

World rights available.

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

Detailed synopsis (coming soon).
English sample (coming soon)

AWARDS & DISTINCTIONS

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

Sinan Antoon was also awarded the 2014 Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize for Arabic Literary Translation of his novel *The Pomegranate Alone*

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

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

Index (2015), translated into English (Yale University Press, 2014); Malayalam (Green Books, 2019), Italian (Hopefulmonster, 2023)
Ave Maria (2012), translated into Spanish (Turner, 2014); English (Hoopoe, AUC, 2019); French (Actes Sud, 2018); Serbian (Laguna, 2020); Portuguese (Editora Tabla, to appear)

The Pomegranate Alone (or the Corpse Washer, 2010), translated into English (Yale University Press, 2014); French (Actes Sud, 2017); Turkish (Aylak Adam, 2017); Macedonian (Prozart, 2018); Malayalam (Green Books, 2019); Greek (Kastaniotis, 2019); Croatian (Petrine Knige, 2022).

I'jaam: An Iraqi rhapsody (2004), translated into Italian (Feltrinelli), Portuguese (Globo, Brazil), and English (City Lights).

| PRESS

Mathias Enard Sinan Antoon leads a hallucinatory investigation into the territories of memory and tragedies of Iraq. A deep reflection on exile and the power of books

Addyar Language is a flexible tool in [Antoon's] hands... This is a beautifully-crafted text... sometimes even poetic.

Alaraby An attempt to recover from homelands.

| SUMMARY

New York 2003. Sami, an old retired Iraqi doctor recently moved in with his son Saad and his family in Brooklyn, New York. He is happy to be around his grandchildren after having lost his wife in tragic circumstances. Soon, however, his memory starts to fail him, and Saad has no other choice but to entrust him to a retirement home, where the young Carmen, a nurse of Puerto Rican descent, will take special care of him – he reminds her of her late grandfather.

New York, in the late 1990s. Omar, a young Iraqi man, lands in the US. He has run away from Iraq with a fake identity. He is a deserter, and like all deserters he was punished. One of his ears was amputated. In Baghdad, this is an unmissable mark of shame. He should have been tattooed with a piece of burning hot iron on his forehead as well, but for some reason, he wasn't. Omar dreams of a reconstructive plastic surgery to get his ear, and his dignity, back.

While Sami's past is fading with his withering memory, Omar does all that is in his power to forget, and bury his Iraqi identity. Seeking a fresh start in New Jersey as a farmer, Omar will pretend he is from Puerto Rico. The two narrative lines unfold independently. One man spends most of his half-conscious time reminiscing, through music, which Carmen puts into his ears, or through the scent of lavender, which she sometimes wears. The other is desperate to forge a different future for himself with his bare hands, in the lavender farm where he is employed. Until the three characters' love of lavender ultimately, in the novel's last pages, make them meet, finally providing Omar with an opportunity to get closure from his painful past : Sami is none other than the doctor who was forced to amputate his ear, and did not tattoo his face.

Mostly written in the third person from both Omar or Sami's points of view, a first person narration sometimes occurs, mostly in Sami's reminiscences. Shattered pieces of his memory are scattered throughout the book, slowly revealing to the reader the story of this character, and his post-war tragic losses. While the story unfolds mostly linearly, there are many backs and forth between the characters' Iraqi past and their American present, providing depth to the characters, and a unique perspective on exile.

As always, Sinan Antoon delivers a beautifully written moving story, with extremely relatable characters. He masterfully succeeds in putting chunks of ordinary, daily, reality on paper, with simple bare details. These render the characters' state of mind and the atmosphere so vividly, the result is a poignant and poetic read.

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE

Coming soon, by the author

SOME ACHIEVE GREATNESS



FICTION

Jawaiz Lil abtal
A. Awni
Mahrousa, Egypt, 2019
396 pages

SOLD RIGHTS

Textofilia, Mexico (Spanish, to appear)

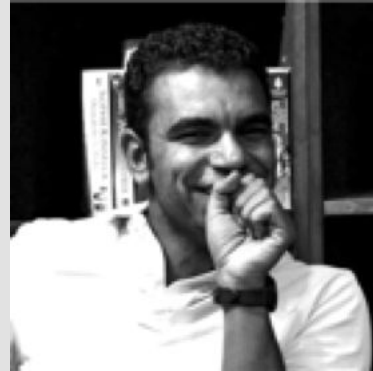
AVAILABLE MATERIAL

Arabic PDF
English sample

AWARDS

Winner of the Sawiris Best Novel Prize in 2019.

A W N I Ahmed



BIO

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

SOME OTHER WORKS

"Chronic Worry" Short story collection

| PRESS

Aljazeera News "Top 10 Books of 2019 from the Arab World"

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

| SUMMARY

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

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

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

This is until Boodi is grabbed off the street by the police and thrown into a van during one protest. Ramy immediately jumps into the van after him. Ramy wanted to be able to tell, in retrospect, the story of his arrest like so many other admirable young men do. This “real” experience is bound to give him legitimacy. Terrified in prison, clearly a novice, Ramy is released barely 24 hours later, by a close friend of his late father, a minister in office. Confused, and tired by weeks spent on the street, crowned by 24 hours under arrest, upon his release Ramy instantly heads to the seaside where he owns an old boat inherited from his father. He retires for a month on the boat, alone, disconnected from people, news, and social media. When he decides to go back to Cairo a month later, Ramy finds his face stenciled almost on every wall around Tahrir square, along with the question “Where is Ramy?”

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

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

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

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE

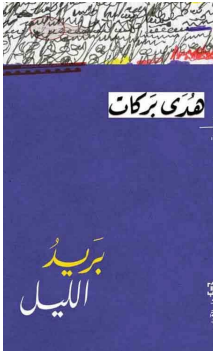
by Adam Talib

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

When the gas cleared and I could finally see again, I spotted Hadir lying lifeless and alone in the street, like a captured chess piece. Boodi ran past me, jumping effortlessly over the spiked carpet, and the next thing I could remember, I was sprinting forward as well. He got to her a second before I did. I picked Hadir up from the shoulders but before Boodi could lift her legs, three policemen pounced on him. One of them grabbed his arms, another his belt, a third wrapped his arms around his waist. They threw him in the back of a police van, which we hadn’t seen, although it was right beside us.

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

THE NIGHT POST



FICTION

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

SOLD RIGHTS

Actes Sud, Sindbad, France (2018)
La nave di Teseo, Italy (2019)
Green Books, Malayalam, India (2019)
Orlando, Netherlands (2020)
Nashr Saless, Iran (2020)
Editora Tabla, Brazil (2020)
Oneworld Publications, World English Rights (2021)
Kedros Publications, Greece (2021)
Underskoven, Denmark (2021)
Moooi Pustaka, Indonesia (2022)
Textofilia, Mexico (Spanish, to appear)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

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

AWARDS & DISTINCTIONS

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

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

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

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

BARAKAT

Hoda



BIO

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

In 2011/2012, Barakat was in residence at the Wissenschafts- kolleg zu Berlin. In 2013, she 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 five novels, in addition to two plays and chronicles. Her novels have been translated into several languages:

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

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

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

My Master, My Love (2004), translated into French (Actes Sud, 2007), Spanish (Bellacqua, 2009).

| PRESS

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

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

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

Senta AI, Brazil, 2020 “Despite being a short read, it is extremely powerful in its complex message”

Avvenire, Italy, 2019 “Very original literary project. **A brave novel**”

Il Messaggero, Italy, 2019 “**Touching**. These are lost lives, like the letters that never reach their destination. A loss that however unites the characters”

Mediapart, France, 2019 “A writer of her time” who signs an “**original and powerful**” novel

Al-Quds Al-Arabi, Sobhi Hadidi, 2018 “The *Night Post* is a bold adventure in its structure, the segmentation of narrative voices and the intersection of characters and destinies.” “**Barakat is a novelist from head to toe**”

Asharq Al-Awsat, 2018 “Barakat never writes a novel... that doesn’t innovate”

| SUMMARY

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

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

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

Each of these intimate letters are confessions addressed to one specific person, as a last desperate attempt to mend the broken pieces of a relationship. They each describe a failure, and themselves fail at their mission since none of them reaches their destination. Together, these letters describe the multiple aspects of the dysfunction of Arab societies; the multi-layered and multi-faceted violence people are victim of, whoever they are: from urban educated women, to rural girls, to children of powerful people, and torturers. They all run, and all seek shelter in travel, the West seeming like the only place to run to, but this refuge turns out to be illusory. All these people are therefore all in transit at the airport at some point.

Following these five 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.

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.

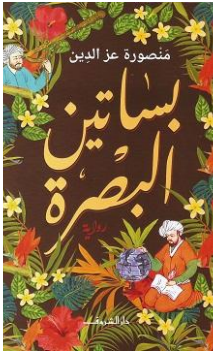
| TRANSLATION SAMPLE

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.

THE ORCHARDS OF BASRA



FICTION

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

SOLD RIGHTS

Sindbad, Actes Sud (France, 2023)
Aadeh (Iran, to appear)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

Arabic PDF
English translation sample

AWARDS & DISTINCTIONS

Emerald Mountain, winner of the Best Arabic Novel award at Sharjah International Book Fair in 2014.

The Orchards of Basra, finalist for 2023 Lagardère - IMA Arab Literature Prize.

Beyond Paradise, shortlisted for IPAF in 2010, making Ez Eldine the youngest writer to ever make the shortlist.

The Orchards of Basra, longlisted for the same prize in 2022.

A Walk in Shanghai, winner of the Ibn Battuta Prize for travel literature in 2021.

In 2009, Ez Eldin was selected for the Beirut39 Festival selection of the 39 best Arab authors below the age of 40.

EZ EL DINE

Mansoura



BIO

Mansoura was born in the Delta in Egypt in 1976. When she turned 18, Mansoura left her small village and headed to Cairo, where she lived on her own, to study journalism. Her first day at the American University of Cairo was the day Naguib Mahfouz was near-fatally stabbed in October 1994. After graduating, she joined the cultural weekly *Akhbar al-Adab*, thanks to famous Egyptian writer Gamal Al Ghitani who liked her first short stories and helped her get them published. Today, Mansoura is the deputy editor in chief of *Akhbar al-Adab*. Mansoura has published six novels and three short story collections to date. Her work has been noticed worldwide.

SOME OTHER WORKS

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

A walk in Shanghai (novel, 2021, Al mouassassa al arabia lil dirasat wal nashr), Simplified Chinese (Beijing Normal University Press, to appear)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

| PRESS

Le Monde des Livres "A polyphonic story where she **brilliantly** mixes the codes of ancient Arabic writing and those of the contemporary novel. A labyrinthine narration where one gets lost, as in the alleys of an Arab medina, with delight."

Orient XXI "Evoking a radiant past, but without any nostalgia, "The Orchards of Basra", alternating between scenes, eras, and inner monologues, and **skillfully** handling language levels, **masterfully** revives illustrious characters from the history of Islam to engage in a close dialogue with the living."

Le Regard Libre "Mansoura Ez-Eldin offers us a metaphorical text, between past and present"

Transfuge "Mansoura Ez-Eldin's novel has the intensity and mystery of a **marvelous gem**."

Mare nostrum "Her **superbly mastered novel** is a confirmation of her talent as a storyteller."

L'Orient littéraire

Captivating and remarkably translated novel

Le Courrier de L'Atlas

An **exalted** novel that sublimates the powers of dreams and fiction.

Via books

To be discovered without delay

Al Ahram

"One of her generations most distinct and accomplished voices... .. A complex and deeply researched work that draws heavily on the Arab-Islamic canon, this novel plays with notions of reality and reason.

| SUMMARY

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

An unemployed skillful young man, Hisham, like so many others, could not be hired anywhere after he graduated from the chemistry department. He didn't have the connections needed to secure a position in one of the large oil companies. And so Hisham lives with his frustrated mother, making ends meet through finding and reselling old and rare books. A passion that leads him to the nicknamed "Al Zandiq" (or "The atheist"). Al Zandiq is a fervent defender of a modern revisionist view of Islam — though his appearance, and that of his wife and daughter, would say otherwise — and he therefore lives under constant threat. Soon Hisham and Al Zandiq become close associates. Hisham gradually becomes his informal research assistant, finding rare books for his mentor's work and papers, and sometimes even sharing his valuable insights. At first, Hisham feels proud that someone finally seems to value his worth and intellect. But soon, as with all the others, Hisham is given no credit, his ideas are stolen and his work is taken for granted. Yet, it is through his work with Al Zandiq, that Hisham gets to know more about Yazid ibn Abih.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE

by Paul Starkey

Yesterday I ate a moon.

I remember a street on which a few people were scattered, like extras in a silent film in which I was the only hero, spying on them through a hole in a wall separating me from life. I remember raising my head toward the sky and seeing a double moon, or to be more precise, a moon with its own reflection beside it, the two clinging together as if there was a hidden mirror joining them.

Afterwards, I noticed two other reflections of the pair, one on the right and the other on the left. I was surprised that my sky should have six moons in it, or rather, three pairs of moons, but it was only a mild surprise, like opening the door to our apartment and finding a black cat waiting on the stairs.

I didn't notice until later that the sky the previous night was coloured with a touch of turquoise worthy of a precious stone, and only then did it occur to me that I had eaten the moon. I had a loaf of bread in my hand, on which I had put the moon (or was it a boiled egg?). I folded the bread and started to eat until I had finished it. I didn't dare look upward afterwards. Dark settled in, and I concluded that the light of my life had disappeared with the eaten moon.

THE LIFE OF BUTTERFLIES



FICTION

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

SOLD RIGHTS

Green Books, India (2022).
Tohum Yayıncılık Turizm Reklam, Turkey (2023).

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

PDF of the Arabic text
English translation sample below

AWARDS & DISTINCTIONS

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

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

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

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

FADEL Youssef



BIO

Author, screenwriter and producer Youssef Fadel was born in 1949 in Morocco. After having worked in shipping for five years, he published a play that led him to prison in 1974. His alleged Marxist activities then led him to prison for another six months in 1974-1975. Youssef obtained 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 has also directed a short film and a feature film. He has published ten novels, some of which have been translated.

SOME OTHER WORKS

Stars and dust (Dar al mutawassit, 2021)
Like an Angel in the Dark (Dar al adab, 2018)
Joy (Dar al adab, 2016), Actes Sud (France, 2019)
A Rare Blue Bird Flies with Me (Dar al adab, 2013), Actes Sud (France, 2017), Hoopoe, AUC (2015), Francesco Briochi (Italy, 2019), Prozart (Macedonia)
A Pretty White Cat Walks Behind Me (Dar al adab, 2012), Actes Sud, (France 2014), Hoopoe, AUC (English, 2016)
Zoo (Fennec, 2008)
Hashish (Fennec, 2000), Editions Afrique-Orient (Maroc, 2013)
Mitrou Mouhal (Fennec, 2006)
The King of Jews (Arrabita, 1995)

| PRESS

Aujourd'hui Le Maroc

"Fadel is a valued asset of modern Moroccan literature."

The New Yorker of a better world."

"Fadel's books are full of hopeful, human interactions; through these, the reader is able to catch a glimpse

I SUMMARY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

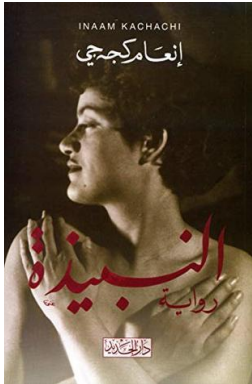
I TRANSLATION SAMPLE

by Alexander Elinson

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

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

THE OUTCAST



FICTION

An nabiza
I. Kachachi
Dar Al Jadid, Beirut, 2017
325 pages

SOLD RIGHTS

Brioschi, Italy (2022).
Pardes Publishing, Israel (2021).
Nashr Saless, Iran (2019).
Gallimard, France (forthcoming).

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

AWARDS

The Outcast was shortlisted for the 2019 International Prize for Arabic Fiction.

Tashari was shortlisted for the 2014 International Prize for Arabic Fiction.

The American Granddaughter was shortlisted for the 2009 International Prize for Arabic Fiction and is Winner of the Lagardère Award in France.

| PRESS

Ida2at Inaam Kachachi cleverly succeeds in intertwining broader Arab concerns with the specific struggles of her characters

Elaph Intricately and intelligently woven... The novel [is] a vivid spectacle that lingers sweetly in memory.

Raseef22 Inaam Kachachi depicts historical individuals and events, yet weaving them so intricately with the threads of imagination that we can no longer discern the real from the imaginary.

KACHACHI

Inaam



BIO

Inaam Kachachi was born in Baghdad in 1952, and studied journalism at Baghdad University, working in Iraqi press and radio before moving to Paris to complete a PhD at the Sorbonne. She is currently the Paris correspondent for London-based newspaper Asharq Al-Awsat and Kol Al-Usra magazine in Sharjah, UAE.

SOME OTHER WORKS

Tashari (2013), English (Interlink, 2022), Italian (Brioschi, 2018).
Farrsi (Morvarid, 2018), French (Gallimard, 2016).

The American Granddaughter (2008), English (Interlink, 2022), Italian (Cicorivolta, 2013), English (Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation Publishing, 2010), French (Liana Levi, 2009), Chinese (Shanghai 99).
Streams of Hearts (2005), Farsi (IHirmand, 2014), Italian (Baldini Castoldi, 2007).

Paroles d'Irakiennes (2003)

Lorna, her years with Jawad Selim (1998)

| SUMMARY

The Outcast is the story of Taj al moulouk, or Taji, an Iraqi woman of Iranian descent, her young Iraqi friend Wedyan, and the love of her life, the Palestinian Mansour al Badi. While the novel opens in contemporary Paris, where Taji, an old woman in her eighties watches news from the Arab Spring with a passion and reminisces of her past, the story unfolds mostly in the middle of the twentieth century, a period of turmoil in Iraq and Palestine.

We meet the free spirited Taj al moulouk in Baghdad in the 1940s, a young woman whose way to power is paved by her surprising strong will, literary skills, and scrumptious beauty. But her independence, appetite for life, and ways with men, come at a cost, and Taji will lose everything in Bagdad, from which she is led to Karachi, where she is recruited as a broadcaster on an Arabic speaking radio station. This is where she meets her new colleague, the intellectual Palestinian Mansour Al Badi. Taji and Mansour have their expert knowledge of Arabic poetry and their homelessness in common: Taji longs for Bagdad, while Mansour's family has recently been exiled to Lebanon. Mansour and Taji are passionately in love with each other, but Mansour's respectfulness keeps Taji at a distance, and they part, yet again displaced by the harsh circumstances of life. Mansour only dreams of landing a position anywhere, and call Taji to his side, but life, again, has it otherwise. Mansour will find his way to Venezuela, and ultimately to Hugo Chavez' side, while Taj will end up married to French war hero Cyrille champion. Taji and Mansour will never have a chance to meet again, until this day.

A skilled diplomat, Mansour attends a conference at UNESCO in Paris. Wedyan, Taji's only friend, reaches out, in the hope to reunite the two old lovers. Wedyan, an Iraqi musician who sought asylum in Paris, lives with the ghosts of her past: Her unique love, Youssef, and her violin. Having lost her hearing under torture in Iraq, Wedyan is deprived of her only two sources of joy. She spends her time between her music students, and Taji, her connection to home.

Through Taj al Moulouk's extraordinary life (based on a true historical figure), as well as through the lives of Mansour al Badi and Wedyan, Kachachi skillfully recounts a critical turning point of Arab modern history, and reminds the readers of the intellectual and progressivist cultural hub that Bagdad once was. However, beyond this captivating historical context, *The Outcast* is also a love story, a novel about passion, and the unpredictability or irony of life. Powerful emotions weave these three destinies together, offering to the reader a rich, brightly colored and deeply moving story.

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE

by Sawad Hussain (published in ARABLIT)

It was a moment in life she hadn't experienced before. And she didn't think she would come to know it, even later on. She was seated, on the train, next to the window, when she saw her past rush toward her and fling itself into the seat that faced her. It gloated as it looked into her eyes, snatching her away from the monotony and febleness of the years gone by. Would she pretend it wasn't there or change her seat altogether? She told herself to get up, make her way to the emergency alarm, and pull its red tongue. She would hear the screeching of the wheels as they scraped against the railroad tracks, spewing sparks. She would open the door, leap out, and run along the sidewalk – but its eyes locked hers and bound her hands.

She relaxed her tightly shut eyelids and surrendered herself to plumes of white, teased cotton. A bad dream is what it was, brought about by a commonplace question with an answer that seemed just as normal. She didn't understand at first, what the police officer stationed by that door had told her. But his words stoked a dormant ember, buried deep in her chest. She was curious why he was guarding that hospital room in particular, and not the rest of the long corridor. She asked him about the patient lying down inside: who could it possibly be?

Sometimes the inpatients of this Parisian military hospital were army officers. But such patients never required a police officer, clad in blue uniform, standing at the ready at their doors. Maybe he was high-ranking, or someone of importance from an ally country. Kings, heads of state and party leaders were known to come here for treatment. Some of them died in their beds here. In such circumstances, it was announced they took their last breath in their own nation, and the funeral procession would accordingly stream out of their home. Behind curtains, surgeries and treatments would take place, France fulfilling its duty of hospitality, for the benefit of its allies...and at times for its foes. Who was the patient behind that door? A criminal wounded while on the run? Or roughed up during an interrogation? Maybe they were fixing him up before putting him on display for the judge.

NO ONE PRAYED OVER THEIR GRAVES



FICTION

Alam yusalli 'alayhim ahad
K. Khalifa
Naufal, Hachette-Antoine,
Beirut, 2019
348 pages



SOLD RIGHTS

Bompiani, Italy (2021)
Pax, Norway (2021)
Rowohlt, Germany (2022)
Farrar, Straus & Giroux, World English (2023)
Delidolu Tudem Egitim, Turkey (to appear)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

English translation sample
Chapter by chapter summary

AWARDS

No One Prayed Over Their Graves longlisted for the 2023 National Book Award.

Death is Hard Work was a finalist for the 2019 National Book Award.

In Praise of Hatred was on the long list for the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize 2013.

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KHALIFA Khaled



BIO

Khaled Khalifa (1964-2023) was born in a village close to Aleppo, Syria. He is the fifth child of a family of thirteen siblings. He obtained his bachelor's degree in law, and he currently lives in Damascus where he writes scripts for cinema and television.

SOME OTHER WORKS

An Eagle on the Table (2022).

Death is Hard Work (2015), FSG, USA, World English (2019). Faber, UK (2019). Bompiani, Italy (2019). Rowohlt, Germany (2018). De Geus, Netherlands (2018). Sindbad, Actes Sud, France (2018). Green Books, India, Malayalam (2019). Sonia Draga, Poland (2019). Prozart, Macedonia (2019). Angustura, Iceland (2019). Kastaniotis, Greece (2020). Pax, Norway (2020). Intelekti, Georgia (2020). Filip Tomáš - Akropolis, Czech Republic (2021). Clio, Serbia (2021). Houpa Books, Iran (2022). Tudem, Turkey (2023). BRaK, Slovakia (2023). Batzer & Co, Denmark (to appear).

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

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

The Notebooks of the Bohemians (2000).

| PRESS

The Economist "Love stories—thwarted, tragic or ecstatic—help bring a many-stranded plot together.... **Richly embroidered...** [Khalifa's] galloping narration restores life and soul to a city that has become a byword for devastation. Leri Price... has produced an English text of **grace, pace and gusto**. Aleppo's "immortal" monuments may have been bombed to rubble, but, thanks to Mr Khalifa, those "great stories" endure"

Chicago Review of Books "Through its intimacy and grace, *No One Prayed Over Their Graves* is a heart-wrenching and beautiful exploration of change in Syria" - (a July must-read)

Washington Post "A gorgeous new novel from Khaled Khalifa, one of Syria's most celebrated novelists... Lush, elegiac... Márquezian... A novel of abundance and generosity . . . At stake is the act of storytelling itself: gossip, religious narrative, war photography, any narrative in which bigotry can reside . . . The pain of witness surfaces across the story."

The Wall Street Journal "A beautiful novel . . . Khalifa's partnership with Leri Price is one of the most fruitful writer-translator pairings in literature today. The recent destruction of Aleppo provides unspoken context, charging the exploration of ruin and aftermath with further heartbreak."

Kirkus Reviews "Elegantly written . . . the extraordinary closing pages, poetic and prophetic, speak to the possibility of building a "kingdom where life is fresh and tender and the fish never die" . . . A small epic that blends magic realism with grim realities, always memorably." (starred review)

Publishers Weekly "Lyrical . . . [the book is] carried along by Khalifa's ornate writing, often in the style of Middle Eastern classical poetry and lucidly translated by Price . . . There's beauty on each page"

The Brooklyn Rail "All these voices combine to sustain four-hundred pages of historical fiction scrupulous in its detail yet breathtaking in its scope, and altogether magnificent."

The Guardian "No One Prayed Over Their Graves is a vast, sprawling saga that depicts, among other things, the birth pangs of modern Syria... Khaled Khalifa enthusiastically portrays Aleppo's beauty, chaos, cosmopolitanism and licentiousness. The city he presents to the reader is ripe with possibilities for freedom, reinvention, friendship and illicit love

The New York Times "[Khalifa's] novels are filled with accounts of massacres, great displacements, mass graves and sharp discord between liberals and fundamentalists — the tone of his work is often antic. There's a freight of comedy and sensuality. You sense this writer asking, as Philip Roth did in his Kafkaesque novella "The Breast" (1972), "What is a catastrophe without its humorous side?"

| SUMMARY

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

While the flood is the cornerstone of the novel and of Hanna's transformation, the former, which ranges from the 1880's to the 1950's, with the death of Hanna, is punctuated by catastrophes (such as an earthquake in the 1880's, or the famine in the 1910's), wars, and violent political tensions that caused people to die by hundreds.

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

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

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

THE NOTEBOOKS OF THE BOHEMIANS



FICTION

Dafater al qurbat
K. Khalifa
(Dar Ward, Damascus, 2000)
Naufal, Hachette-Antoine, Beirut,
2020, 224 pages.

SOLD RIGHTS

World rights available

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

French sample

AWARDS

No One Prayed Over Their Graves longlisted for the 2023 National Book Award.

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KHALIFA Khaled



BIO

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SOME OTHER WORKS

Death is Hard Work (2015). FSG, USA, World English (2019). Faber, UK (2019). Bompiani, Italy (2019). Rowohlt, Germany (2018). De Geus, Netherlands (2018). Sindbad, Actes Sud, France (2018). Green Books, India, Malayalam (2019). Sonia Draga, Poland (2019). Prozart, Macedonia (2019). Angustura, Iceland (2019). Kastaniotis, Greece (2020). Pax, Norway 2020). Intelekti, Georgia (2020). Filip Tomáš - Akropolis, Czech Republic (2021). Clio, Serbia (2021). Houpa Books, Iran (2022). Tudem, Turkey (2023). BRaK, Slovakia (2023). Batzer & Co, Denmark (to appear).

No One Prayed Over their Graves (2019), Italian (Bompiani, 2021), Norwegian (Pax, 2021), German (Rowohlt, 2022), World English (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2023), Turkish (Delidolu Tudem Egitim, Turkey, to appear)

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

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

The Notebooks of the Bohemians (2000).

| SUMMARY

Merging reality with an epic tale, the author outlines a few people's lives in a microcosm called Annabiya, a half-real, half-imagined small town of northern Syria, where boredom, hopelessness and instability rule.

The characters, trapped in their dull daily lives, dream of escaping their miserable and constrained fate. The unexpected arrival of the Qorbats, nomads with a more liberal and bohemian lifestyle, will achieve just that. With this tribe, a light air of freedom will blow over Annabiya, fascinating young and old, and overturning their routine. An invigorating vim of sensuality and exuberance hence rules the village, allowing glimpses of a possible liberated, joyful and erotic lifestyle, ultimately leading to tragedy.

The novel takes the form of chronicles logged in four notebooks by the young narrator, key character, and holder of all the village's secrets. There are no dialogs, only a rich narration, which weaves together a network of relationships and events. In this novel tinted with magical realism, imaginary phenomena and actual secrets are told side by side, in a way that takes no account of chronology. What holds the narration together, is the story of this large family of Annabiya matters.

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE: FRENCH

Rania Samara

Premier carnet

Tentes, mousseline et tamis

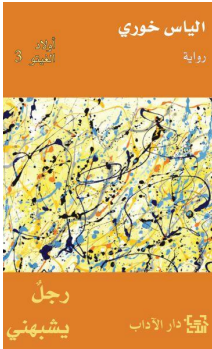
Tapi dans un angle de la pièce, Hadi Annabi observait les étrangers et se rappelait ses trente ans d'absence, au bout desquelles il était revenu à Annabiya, métamorphosé, le visage frais, les mains propres, nettes et soignées. Il avait ramené dans sa valise des choses que personne n'avait pu voir et parlait de choses que personne n'avait comprises. Il disait que le fer flottait sur l'eau et avançait comme une bête de somme chargée d'hommes, de coton et de sésame. Il disait aussi avoir vu l'empreinte du pied du Prophète, gravée dans le marbre au musée d'Istanbul et que le Sultan s'unissait à une femme différente chaque jour. Il racontait que plus de cinq cents hommes, femmes et enfants étaient morts à Damas en l'espace de deux heures, lorsqu'un firman avait été proclamé, ordonnant l'exécution des otages dans le grand caravansérail, situé à l'est de la ville, sur la route de Bagdad. Les assassins, une vingtaine d'hommes, achevaient les prisonniers avec des tubes en métal, chargés de balles qui dégageaient une odeur de poudre et faisaient jaillir les flammes du bout du cylindre dressé comme un bec de dindon. Mon aïeul, Souelem IV, se leva pour aller chercher une bassine d'eau dans laquelle il fit voguer un morceau de fer qui tomba au fond de la bassine instantanément parmi les rires des Annabi et les protestations de Hadi qui répétait sans cesse que le fer s'appelait navire, et que l'eau s'appelait mer. Ils murmuraient qu'il était devenu fou.

Tapi dans un angle de la pièce, Hadi Annabi observait les étrangers et se disait qu'il ne pourrait plus traverser la route de l'Est où était la ville aux lumières qu'il avait aimée. Hadi Annabi ne se nourrissait plus que d'herbes sauvages, il est mort après avoir perdu la raison à force de chercher à l'ouest du village la montagne où étaient enfouis l'or et les squelettes des membres de la caravane qui avait perdu son chemin alors qu'elle faisait la collecte de la taxe dans la contrée. La caravane avait été emportée par une pluie torrentielle, sa disparition avait menacé de faillite la trésorerie du Calife Abdelmalek Ibn Marwân.

Les Annabi avaient gardé le bonnet rond de Hadi et sa canne vernie dont le pommeau représentait une tête de monstre légendaire à la gueule fermée. En fouillant dans sa valise, ils avaient trouvé des tissus bizarres et des objets mystérieux cliquetants et chatoyants, ils les brûlèrent en conjurant le sort. Et moi, je ne cessais de chercher les sources de l'histoire au milieu des ruines de l'Histoire qui nous étaient parvenues par hasard. Des mortels et des décombres...

Annabiya, village perdu au milieu des terres, entre les doigts des montagnes qui l'enserraient de trois côtés et qui s'ouvraient au sud sur les terres arides et les grottes. Personne n'avait prêté attention à ce « crachet » – selon l'expression d'un préfet – estimé, lors du recensement du gouvernement ottoman de 1783, à quelque quatre cents âmes qui avaient dénigré leur inscription sur les registres, même sur celui des allocations gracieusement accordées aux villages qui déclaraient leur allégeance à la Sublime Porte.

A MAN LIKE ME
CHILDREN OF THE GHETTO - V3



FICTION

Rajol Yoshbihouni
E. Khoury
Dar al Adab, Beirut, 2023
504 pages

SOLD RIGHTS

Editora Tabla, Brazil (forthcoming)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

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

AWARDS & DISTINCTIONS

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

As Though She Were Sleeping was awarded the French "Prix du roman" in 2008.

Khoury was a Global Distinguished Professor at New York University between 2000 and 2014.

KHOURY

Elias



BIO

Elias Khoury is a Lebanese novelist born in 1948. Currently editor of the Beirut based Journal of Palestine Studies quarterly, Khoury is also a Professor of Comparative Literature, who has taught at Columbia University and New York University. Khoury is a public intellectual who plays a major role in the Arabic cultural scene and in defending freedom of expression and democracy. His oeuvre (14 novels, three plays, and four books of literary criticism) is widely translated.

SOME OTHER WORKS

Children of the Ghetto 2 (2019), Actes Sud, (2023, France); Archipelago (to appear), Editora Tabla (Brazil, to appear).

Children of the Ghetto 1 (2016), Actes Sud, Sindbad (2018, France); Polirom (2018, Romania); Archipelago (2019, USA); Karakter (2021, Poland); Editora Tabla (2022, Brazil).

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

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

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

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

| PRESS

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

| SUMMARY

As in the first two parts of this trilogy, *A Man Like Me* mainly follows one narrative thread: the end of the love story between Adam Dannoun, an Israeli citizen from Palestine, and Dalia Ben Tsavi, an Israeli of Polish and Iraqi descent.

At the book's opening, we find Adam in the shock of Ma'moun's revelations: That he was not his mother Manal's son. That Ma'moun had found him as a baby, clutched to the breast of a dead woman laying under a tree, during the “march of death”, on a dreadful summer day of 1948. Thousands of Palestinians were thrown out of Lydd, onto the road to nowhere. This is when Ma'moun saw the baby, picked it up, and returned to Lydd, where he gave it to Manal. At first, Adam could not believe this story which seemed to come straight out of a novel. But a strange apparition – or was it a dream? – leads him to a small book stall in New York, where he finds a book by a Palestinian Protestant pastor, telling the story of this march of death, and evoking the baby on the breast of his dead mother. So there was a baby. At that exact time and place. And that baby, if he is to believe Ma'moun, is him. Who is he, then, he wonders as he looks at himself in the mirror? The question suddenly takes on many different meanings. And the answer to this layered question comes through the multitude of people Adam met throughout his life, in New York or in Palestine. From Juliano Mer-Khames, the director and actor, and his Freedom Theater in Jenine, to Khalil (the male nurse and main protagonist of Khoury's novel “Gate of the sun”) and his last battle in Jerusalem, to Rashid Hussein, the iconic Palestinian poet who emigrated to the USA, and of course Dalia.

In this third volume of the Children of the ghetto, Elias Khoury seems to have reached the heart of Adam's story, disentangling the threads of Adam's personal identity. Mixing fiction and reality, Khoury provides some elements to solve Adam's riddle. And the answer seems to echo all around Adam, bouncing off the faces and stories of all the people he met. It is as if Adam Dannoun, in his efforts to write his story and pinpoint who he was, had destroyed himself. Or, as if Adam disintegrated after the end of his love story with Dalia, who somehow, was the one to keep all the pieces together.

A tribute to love and to Palestinians, “*A Man Like Me*” is a fluid read, in the eloquent, modern, yet simple language that characterizes Elias Khoury's writing. The reader is led from story to story, holding the thread of Adam's own narrative that is skilfully weaved in, getting

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE

by Jonathan Wright

Who are you?

I sit in my little apartment in New York, completely alone. I can't even see my reflection in the mirror. I can see a white haze shaped like the face of a man who looks like me. I have to believe this man's claim that he is me.

Adam bin Hassan Dannoun chose exile for countless reasons, but I have my doubts about the things he says. He can say what he likes, appropriating other people's voices and retelling the story of the link between his being in exile and the sense of alienation he felt in his home country.

But I know that the prospect of living in exile opened up for him suddenly when he met Noam Hesherman, his friend and colleague from when they were students at Haifa University, and agreed to join him at the Palm Tree restaurant in New York. There's only one reason why he was so enthusiastic about moving to New York, and that's Dalia, the woman who had an Iraqi mother and a Polish father.

Or let's say he decided to move when his relationship with Dalia, which had lasted ten years, came to an end. When Dalia disappeared from his life, all his ties to that “here” were severed and he had to move on to “there”.

Under the shower that scorching July morning he felt that the water running over his skin had washed away his feelings, as if love were a text written on pieces of paper and the ink dissolved when water touched it.

He saw the inky stains of love all over his body. He turned the tap on full and the ink ran into a small blue pool on the bathroom floor. He dried himself and got dressed with a feeling that he had lost weight. He wanted to go to the café by the sea to have his morning coffee to the steady rhythm of the waves.

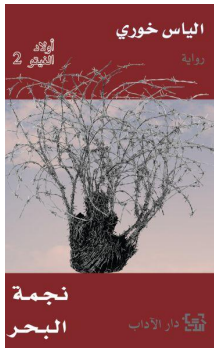
He had a cup of black coffee, lit a cigarette, and looked far out at the blue sea. In the distance he could see his own face in the frothy white surf that ran up the sandy shore and then dispersed.

A sudden sorrow made all his joints ache and he felt that his sense of lightness was just an illusion. A sadness came over him and he was like someone who has lost their shadow. At that moment Adam felt death creeping up on him.

He well remembered how that love had started to sweep him off his feet. He and Dalia had never grown tired of reminiscing about those first moments when they met in Eshaya's bar and how their eyes had marked out a force field of desire with help from words that resembled silence.

STELLA MARIS

CHILDREN OF THE GHETTO - V2



FICTION

Awlad al ghetto 2 - Najmat al bahr

E. Khoury

Dar al Adab, Beirut, 2019

474 pages

SOLD RIGHTS

Actes Sud, Sindbad, France (2023)

Archipelago, USA (forthcoming)

Editora Tabla, Brazil (forthcoming)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

PDF file of the original Arabic version

English translation sample

AWARDS & DISTINCTIONS

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

As Though She Were Sleeping was awarded the French "Prix du roman" in 2008.

Khoury was a Global Distinguished Professor at New York University between 2000 and 2014.

KHOURY

Elias



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SOME OTHER WORKS

Children of the ghetto 3 (2023). Editora Tabla (Brazil, to appear).

Children of the Ghetto 1 (2016), Actes Sud, Sindbad (2018, France); Polirom (2018, Romania); Archipelago (2019, USA); Karakter (2021, Poland); Editora Tabla (2022, Brazil).

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

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

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

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

| PRESS

Mathias Enard, 2023 Even the stories, the narratives are inexorably mixed, through words. Stella Maris develops the links between Shoah and Nakba, between Jewish and Palestinian catastrophes... Taking advantage of a trip organized for students, Adam Dannoun leaves for Warsaw; he visits the Ghetto museum, goes to Auschwitz. The atrocities of the ghettos, the unspeakable violence of extermination hit him hard. He feels both the pain of his deception (Adam is not Jewish) and the suffering of the deceased. Where do violences meet, how do pains communicate? **Stella Maris does not fear likenings – but likenings are not comparisons...** The point of contact between the ghetto of the Shoah and that of the Nakba, their terrible connection, is death; death and the need to honor the dead.

Le Figaro, 2023 The Lebanese writer offers a **Palestinian epic, lyrical and melancholic**, where poetry soothes the misery of mankind.

Haaretz, 2018 One of the greatest writers of our times and perhaps the greatest Arabic-language writer of this generation, definite Nobel Prize material... Remarkable literary skill... Poignant... Close to perfection

| SUMMARY

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

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

A tall blond man, Adam is easily mistaken for an Ashkenazi Jew at University where he seeks to study Hebrew literature, a tale reinforced by his “being from the ghetto”. A brilliant student, he soon becomes friends with his professor of Hebrew literature Yakov, who selects him with three other students to go on a field trip to the Warsaw ghetto and Auschwitz. Trapped, Adam goes along, and discovers the horror of the Holocaust, another tragedy that cannot be told. Yet, one fellow student knows he is an Arab, Isabella. She ultimately exposes him, and Adam is expelled from Yakov’s class.

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

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

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

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE

by Humphrey Davies

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

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

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

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

THE BLUE PEN



FICTION

Al macha'a
S. Yazbek
Dar Al Adab, Beirut, 2017
208 pages.



SOLD RIGHTS

Ordfront, Sweden (2017)
Kristeligt Dagblads Forlag, Denmark (2017)
Stock, France (2018)
Cappelen Damm, Norway (2018)
Orlando, Netherlands (2019)
Pandora, Romania (2020)
Green Books, Malayalam, India (2021)
World Editions BV, The Netherlands (English, 2021)
Hakusui-Sha (Japan, forthcoming)
Unionsverlag (Germany, forthcoming)
Sonia Draga (Poland, forthcoming)
Ketebe (Turkey, forthcoming)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

English translation sample
Full French translation

AWARDS

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

The Winds' Abode was a finalist for the 2023 Lagardère - IMA Arab Literature Prize.

Yazbek has been part of the Royal Society of Literature International Writers program since 2022.

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

The Crossing received the French "Best Foreign Book Award" in 2016. It was on the shortlist for 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 script writer for Syrian television and cinema.

SOME OTHER WORKS

The Winds' Abode (2021), Dutch (Orlando, 2022), French (Stock, 2023), Swedish (Ordfront, 2023), English (World Editions BV, to appear), German (Unionverlag, to appear), Malayalam (Green Books, to appear).
19 Women (2018), French (Stock, 2019), Swedish (Ordfront, 2019), Italian (Sellerio, 2019), Ukrainian (Nika-Centre, 2021).

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

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

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

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

Clay (2005).

Child of Heaven (2002).

| PRESS

Le Monde, France “Amongst all the works that come to us from Syria or from the diaspora, this novel has a unique timbre that mixes absolute realism and wonder.”

L’Express, France “A novel, **touched by grace** and fed with the dazzlement of childhood.”

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.”

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 Nyheter, Sweden “**An invaluable voice from Syria.**”

| 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 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 skilfully, and her favorite stories are Saint-Exupery’s “Little Prince” and “Alice in Wonderland.”

Rima was content with her life in a Damascene neighborhood, despite the rising tension she could sense between her brother and mother, and the faint sound of faraway explosions she could sometimes hear. 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 somewhere 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 story is simple and straightforward: 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 SAMPLE

by Leri Price

I don’t know if you care how the paper feels, or whether you are like me and run your fingers over its surface, and it is no use adding anything else about my fingers and how I trace them over the lines my hands have written.

I am thinking something now, and it is that if every sheet of paper piled up in these card-board boxes were laid out flat, they could make a paper aeroplane the size of the plane circling over my head. But don’t think that my worries might mean much to anyone but me.

THE WIND'S ABODE



FICTION

Maqam al rih
S. Yazbek
Al Mutawassit, Milano, 2021
140 pages.

SOLD RIGHTS

Orlando, The Netherlands (2022)
Stock, France (2023)
Ordfront, Sweden (2023)
Green Books, Malayalam, India (2023)
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Unionsverlag, Germany (forthcoming)

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SOME OTHER WORKS

19 Women (2018), French (Stock, 2019), Swedish (Ordfront, 2019), Italian (Sellerio, 2019), Ukrainian (Nika-Centre, 2021).

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

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

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

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

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

Clay (2005).

Child of Heaven (2002).

| PRESS

Daghens Nyether - Samar Yazbek provides a **magnetic voice** to the unbearable with a magnetic language

Kif Kif - "Samar Yazbek successfully transports Syrian reality, with all its horrors, and in all its splendor, into the living room... The poetic, visual sentences turn this story into **a true-to-life film.**"

Le Monde des Livres - "Samar Yazbek's writing **evokes Giono... her best novel to date**"

Les Echos - "Through this poetic story told in a **remarkable lyrical form**, the author provides us with a **powerful portrayal** of the soul of her fragmented country"

L'Humanité - "The Syrian writer Samar Yazbek continues, with great courage, her tireless exploration of the suffering inflicted upon her people"

Livres Hebdo - "Samar Yazbek does not tackle the conflict head-on... **she subtly wraps it in a poetic universal tale**"

Liberation - "This novel has everything from (Rimbaud's) "Sleeper in the Valley"... Yazbek restores the humanity of those who up until now, are only seen as the brutal forces of the regime."

L'Orient Littéraire - "In *The Winds' Abode*, **Samar Yazbek's writing is exquisitely painful.**"

Independent Arabia - "**Elegantly wrapped and powerful novel**, with a fluid, subtle language, a slow pace and a **translucent beauty.**"

| SUMMARY

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

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

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

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

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

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE

by Leri Price

Just a small leaf. His tangled eyelashes wouldn't let him see it beneath the afternoon sun. A leaf, nothing more. Lobed and green, it appeared in front of his eyes like a curtain whenever he slowly and laboriously moved his eyelids. A leaf brushing his long, mud-spattered lashes. A leaf he couldn't see clearly through the soft grains of soil swimming in the water of his eyes, chafing and burning. If he opened his eyelids again, the leaf would fall into his left eye. The entire world was that leaf. No sound, no smell. He couldn't feel his other eye. Was he still alive? Perhaps! Did he have a body? Where was it, in that case? His sense of existence extended no further than the narrow strip of faint light concealed by black lines – he was indifferent as to whether they were his eyelashes or his nightmares, as the darkness would soon settle within him again. He was slowly plunging into some deep and unknown place.

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