



THE AGENCY FOR ARABIC LITERATURE RAYA

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RAYA specializes in the representation of world rights of translation and adaptation of Arabic works since 2004.

NEW TO THE LIST

Hasan DAOUD	No road to paradise	<i>The mid-life crisis of a small town's Imam, and how he decides to choose his own path.</i>
Ibrahim NASRALLAH	The King of Galilee	<i>The story of Zaher Al Omar who fought the Ottoman Empire for independence in the 18th c. A captivating historical epic.</i>
Ibrahim NASRALLAH	The balcony of shame	<i>A clever depiction of the mechanisms underlying crimes of honor.</i>

FEATURED TITLES

Jabbour DOUAIHY	Chased away	<i>What if you were born a Muslim and brought up a Christian? Shortlisted for the Arab Booker (IPAF) 2012</i>
Kamal AL RIAHI	The gorilla	<i>The Tunisian revolution as it could have happened - and finally did. A gripping, humorous and poetic story revolving around a single man.</i>
Mohmmad ALWAN	Beavers	<i>The sharp portrait of a contemporary Saudi bourgeois family, through the eyes of the despised forty year old son.</i>
Khaled KHALIFA	In praise of hatred	<i>The crush of the 1982 uprising in Syria by the Assad regime. A young woman affiliated to the Muslim brotherhood tells her story.</i>
Samar YAZBEK	In the crossfire: Syrian revolution diaries	<i>Covering the first 5 months of the Syrian uprising. A meticulous and poignant text. Excerpt featured in The Guardian</i>
Samar YAZBEK	In her mirrors	<i>Centuries of Alawite violent history through 24 hours of a passionate love story.</i>

CLASSICS

Hasan DAOUD	180 Sunsets	<i>How violence, caused by the fantasized love of a simple minded man, creeps into a small quiet town.</i>
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FROM THE BACKLIST

Hilal CHOUMAN	Napolitana	<i>Set in the Beirut of the year 2010, Napolitana is a successful mix of fresh air, smartness and gravity.</i>
Jabbour DOUAIHY	June rain	<i>The dense account of a town wrapped in the cycle of revenge, Northern Lebanon 1957. Based on a true story.</i>
Samar YAZBEK	Cinnamon	<i>A portrait of Syria's social extremes, through the love story of a woman with her maid.</i>

BACKLIST

More titles available on the backlist

NO ROAD TO PARADISE

FICTION

No road to paradise
La tariq ila al janna

H. Daoud
Dar al saqi, Beirut (to appear)
xxx pages

RIGHTS

Rights owner. Dar al saqi.
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Sold rights. World rights available.

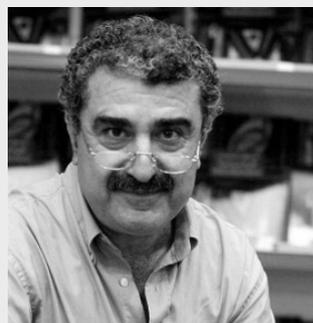
AVAILABLE MATERIAL

PDF of the novel, in Arabic.

REMARKS

Daoud's novel 180 Sunsets was long-listed for the IPAF (Arab Man Booker prize) 2010.

DAOUD Hassan



BIO

Hassan Daoud was born in a village of South Lebanon in 1950. He moved to Beirut with his family as a child and worked as a journalist in several newspapers before becoming the editor of Al Mustaqbal's cultural supplement.

SOME OTHER WORKS

Daoud published 8 novels, namely: The house of Mathilde (1983, translated into French, Actes Sud, 1998; English, Granta). Borrowed times (1990, translated into English, Telegram; French, Actes Sud, 2001). The penguin's song (1998, translated into French, Actes Sud, 2007). A light make-up for tonight (2003). The year of the revolutionary new bread-making machine (translated into English, Telegram, 2007).

| SUMMARY

The mid-life crisis of a small town's Imam, and how he decides to choose his own path.

In South Lebanon, a small town's Imam is going through a mid-life crisis. He was diagnosed with cancer, an illness the name of which he rather not pronounce, and is getting ready for surgery. This Imam with no name, to whom everyone refers as 'Al sayyed', the master, is scared of death and pain. He is also bored with his married life, but too coward to make a real change. Obsessively attracted to his brother's widow, he fantasizes about her strong body, knee-long skirts, high heels and manicured nails. He does have some sort of timid affair with her, but does not find it in him to go all the way. Perhaps he takes pity on his unhappy wife. Perhaps still he feels he is not performing his duties towards the town's mosque that has been slowly invaded by Islamic fundamentalists come from elsewhere, making him feel like a guest in his own parish. But mostly, the surgery he's been through makes him wonder if he is the same man with a different body.

Al sayyed is not a man of religion by vocation. Unlike his father, a powerful, charismatic, and loved man, his grandfather, or his great grand-father, al sayyed just obeyed his father's will, and went to Nejef in Iraq to study Islam. When he preaches, he lacks energy and reach, but the presence

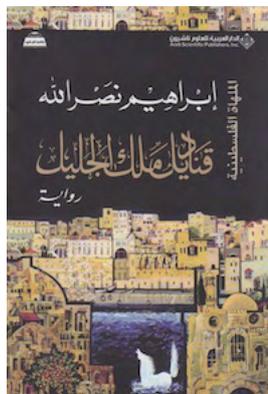
of his father kept fidels coming to the mosque. Now, his father is sick at home, dying in his bed. And nobody comes to the mosque anymore, until these foreigners came by.

The novel, written in the first person, as always with Hasan Daoud, instills a deep feeling of loss and apathy in the reader. What is the meaning of life, and why are we trapped sometimes, in schemes of things that we have not chosen? The narrator seems to ask himself. Until one day, at the very end of the novel, al sayyed decides to stop being 'al sayyed'. He removes the robe he has always worn, shaves his beard, and sets off to the street.

No road to paradise is the story of this liberation. How a 45 year old imam finally chooses the life he always wanted for himself. A very ordinary man who slowly realizes that his life is his.

This book is the sensitive and detailed account of the circumstances of this slow awakening.

THE KING OF GALILEE

HISTORICAL
FICTIONThe king of Galilee
*Qanadil malek al jalil*I. Nasrallah
Dar al arabiya li al ouloum, Beirut, 2011
555 pages

RIGHTS

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AVAILABLE MATERIAL

PDF of the novel, in Arabic.

REMARKS

Nasrallah's novel 'The time of white horses' was shortlisted for the IPAF (Arab Man Booker Prize) 2009.

NASRALLAH

Ibrahim



BIO

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

SOME OTHER WORKS

Nasrallah has published more than 11 novels. Some of which are: Prairies of fever (1985) -- translated into English (Interlink, 1993), Italian (Edizioni Lavoro, 2001). Danish edition by Underskoven in 2006 -- Shame (2010). The time of white horses (2007) -- translated into English (AUC, 2011).

| SUMMARY

The story of Zaher al Omar, who fought the Ottoman Empire for independence in the 18th century. A captivating epic tale.

Zaher al Omar al Zaydani is the youngest son of a tax collector for the Ottoman Empire, Omar al Zaydani, born and raised in Tiberias, Galilee, in 1689. When Omar al Zaydani dies, Zaher is a young man of about 15. All of Omar's sons, Saad, Yusef, Saleh and Zaher, gather in order to decide who will take over the father's role. The eldest son, Saad, should normally inherit this position, but is hesitant. No one wants to be the tax collector, since it is a risky business to collect taxes and keep the often capricious governors satisfied, at the same time, it is clearly a sign of power, and should stay in the family since it is a considerable source of wealth. They decide to leave this decision to fate. They each light an oil lamp. The first man whose oil lamp dies out will be the new tax collector. Zaher's fate is decided on this long night following his father's decease, when his lamp dies out, and he is designated the new tax collector. Zaher embraces his new role fully, thereby frustrating his older brothers who thought he would carry the burden of collecting taxes but at the same time, be easy for them to manipulate. Zaher is the witness to horrifying injustices resulting from the

unquestionable authority of the governors. He decides to pay the taxes that are due to the Empire, but prevent the governors of Sidon, then Damascus, from abusing and humiliating the population. Zaher's vision is that of an independent and peaceful country that would rule itself. It is the start of a life of struggle, full of wars, strategies, intrigues, and plotting, the aim of which is to take as much freedom as possible from the Empire and maintain stability.

Zaher al Omar is an important historical figure, emblematic of resistance and independence. The novel gets into the epic details of Zaher's quest for independence, depicting the different schemes he got into, in order to secure the success of his enterprise, but also the tensions around him, the jealousies, and finally the treasons, that will put an end to his life.

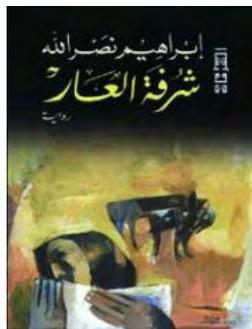
The novel, written like a tale is told, is divided into short chapters, each of which focuses on one particular event, making the reading of this thick historical book an enjoyable and captivating experience. Apart from the accurate historical events and characters, the book abounds in details of Zaher's peculiar and admirable personality, as well as many references to the time's customs, economics and politics.

| PRESS

| Ahmad Rafiq Awad Al-ayam al-filistiniya, February 2012

I must admit the great pleasure that the novel 'King of Galilee' gave me. Over 560 pages events followed each other, hearts and destinies fluctuated, as Ibrahim Nasrallah's pen flowed with narrative creativity, making use of color, smell and sound, weaving together poetry and wisdom, history and drama. I have to admit that I read an amazing novel by a great master, artist and researcher. The string of passion and tension is maintained throughout the novel, despite what the author is best known for, these short chapters with long titles, that are a mix between the density of poetry, and the heat of the short story. The novelist also combines forms of narrative and of visual scenes. These short successive chapters may be full of poetry and tension, but they also have something of cinema in that it keeps the thread of the drama connected, and grabs the attention of the reader... Ibrahim Nasrallah is a great writer. A master of this art.

THE BALCONY OF SHAME



FICTION

The balcony of shame
Shurfat al aar

I. Nasrallah
Al Dar al arabiya li al ulum, Beirut, 2010
240 pages

RIGHTS

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AVAILABLE MATERIAL

PDF of the novel, in Arabic.

REMARKS

Nasrallah's novel 'The time of white horses' was shortlisted for the IPAF (Arab Man Booker Prize) 2009.

NASRALLAH Ibrahim



BIO

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

SOME OTHER WORKS

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| SUMMARY

A clever depiction of the mechanisms underlying crimes of honor.

Manar is a young girl from a poor family of a nameless city that could be any Arab town. She has two older brothers, Abdel Raouf, and Amin, and a younger brother Anwar. Being the only girl, she is the joy of her father, Abou Amin, who becomes a taxi driver in order to enable the brightest of his children to pursue their studies, including Manar.

Manar lives in a traditional and conservative environment. Her life is marked by the constant tension with her oldest uncle who doesn't approve of her going to university, her fear of her brother Amin, and the timid relationship she tries to have with Issam, a more modern boy she meets at university.

Manar finally graduates and becomes a teacher at a public school. But her world is turned upside down the day her father is prevented from driving his taxi for health reasons. He can no longer drop her to work and bring her back home, or make a living, for that matter. Manar becomes the easy prey of a man seeking to harm her brother Amin. She is raped.

Manar is merely the instrument of a man's revenge, but her life is shattered. At first she shuts herself up, and doesn't let anyone in on her painful secret. But a few weeks later she realizes that she is pregnant. Unable to get an abortion, soon enough, everyone hears of her misfortune, and the family is disgraced. A big black flag, the flag of shame, is hung onto their balcony. This flag is hung as long as it takes for a man of the family to clean their honor in Manar's blood. Manar is jailed for her own 'protection', but is nevertheless treated like a criminal.

The balcony of shame is as much a fable as it is a novel. It cleverly depicts the psychological and social mechanisms behind the crimes of honor, oiled by a lenient legal system and a powerless police that, deep down, is sympathetic to the tradition. The author succeeds in detailing how easily and brutally a girl's life can shift, and shows with great transparency how women in so many parts of the world have very few rights, and fall a victim of criminal social conventions.

| PRESS

| Salman Zinedine, Al-Hayat newspaper, 2010

In The balcony of shame, Ibrahim Nasrallah peers into on a sensitive issue, touching upon the field of the sacred in our societies. He does so with clear skills, using his experienced sense of aesthetics... A unique text and story.

| Ginal Sultan, Al Safir, 2010

Nasrallah cares greatly about details, he introduces them with passion within a powerful plot... The events follow each other swiftly, allowing him to address and tie together both the roots and consequences of a patriarchal society's beliefs and its illusions of honor and chastity.

| Mahmoud Shakir, Al Quds, 2010

When I finished reading The balcony of shame, I read Henrik Ibsen's play over again, The doll's house... With a smooth language, and an uninterrupted suspense (...) Ibrahim Nasrallah offers us a novel in which he intensified all his expertise with aesthetics. A hot topic, in a very shrewdly written novel that addresses a contemporary worrying and sensitive issue, the crimes of honor.

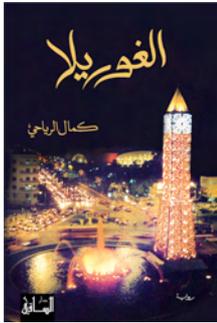
| Nazih Abu Nidal, Al Ra'i, 2010

This novel is a direct reference to the function and necessity of art (...), which understands the human world and changes it. Art can change the world, not through direct political speeches, but by the power inherent to it, that of the magic of creativity... A seducing magic that draws us to it without uncovering its secret. We're then receptive, perhaps without knowing, to the values of goodness, truth and beauty. That's exactly how I felt as I read with passion and eagerness The balcony of shame.

| Khaled Al Houroub, Al Ayam, 2010

With the voice of a butchered poem, and the great skill of a sad story maker, Nasrallah devastates us with his latest novel The balcony of shame. He strips us all down to the bone, he strips the neighborhood and its inhabitants, he dismantles the allegations to purity, he dwarfs the cheap shows of manhood, and finally uncovers the forgery of honor.

THE GORILLA



FICTION

The Gorilla
Al Ghorilla

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

RIGHTS

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RAYA agency has the world rights to this title.

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AVAILABLE MATERIAL

PDF file of the original Arabic version.

AL RIAHI Kamel



BIO

Kamel Al Riahi is a Tunisian journalist and novelist.

SOME OTHER WORKS

'Al mushret', 'Nouwares al thakira', 'Souriqa wajhi' and several literary studies. Many of his works were translated into several languages.

REMARKS

Al Riahi was selected among the 39 authors of the Beirut 39, Hay Festival in 2009. His novel 'Al Mushret' won the Golden Komar prize of the best novel in Tunisia in 2007.

| SUMMARY

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

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

The novel's timeframe is set between The Gorilla reaching the top of the tower, and the dramatic fall, followed by the calcination of his body -- a clear allusion to the historical

event that started the Tunisian uprising in December 2010. During this time, a patchwork of characters and stories is rhythmically woven chapter after chapter, until all the pieces fall into place, and an almost complete landscape unfolds before the readers' eyes.

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

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

Peter Clark - *Emerging Voices*, Saqi books, 2011

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Do you still see him recalling that day on which he took on the epithet “gorilla”? For more than thirty years the gorilla used to pause in front of the picture of Bourguiba smiling. It was there on the wall above the sandwich stall. He was smiling to him, waving at him with his white hand, the other hand holding a sprig of jasmine. The child gorilla below would chew at half a chunk of bread filled with harisa and sardine. His shirt was spattered with drops of oil as the man above smiled a smile that was like an open wound. Sparkling white. His hair was white. His smile was white. The palm of his hand was white. Even his suit was white. The oil with the smell of sardine trickled down the shirt of the little gorilla. Terrible feelings simultaneously of pride and self-disgust then coursed through him like two raging bulls, as he examined his own identity, turning it round and round like a strange coin. On the one hand he is the child of the most important man in the country and this idea makes him look up to that the man in the picture looking down on palaces, gardens, enclosures, meat and fruit. On the other hand he is of no known family and that he is no son, not even of a rat or a donkey, and that he dropped, new-born, into a pile of straw and was smothered by oil and sardine, and shame. He melts into a white smile like the skull of a man who has never

been heard of. He is simply one of the many children of Bourguiba.

When he was accused for the first time in his village of being one of the “children of Bourguiba” he gave a broad grin just like Bourguiba, as if he was confirming his parentage. But he did not smile after that when other words were hurled at him, such as pisser, bastard, foundling, whoreson. He then saw Bourguiba’s teeth as if they were the fangs of some wild beast advancing towards him to crush his bones. That day he ran away from the playground to the cemetery where he stood and wept at his father’s grave. He shouted and cursed until he lost his voice, as if he had dropped it down a deep well. Can you see him today as he remembers unzipping his pants and drenching the grave with hot piss? How much humiliation did he feel after that?

That evening he sat with his fair sister watching his “new” father giving his daily speech – “Directives of His Excellency the President” – on the black and white television screen. The screen made those two words – black and white – resemble each other. He realised that his sister was another adopted daughter. She was as white as milk whereas he was as black as charcoal.

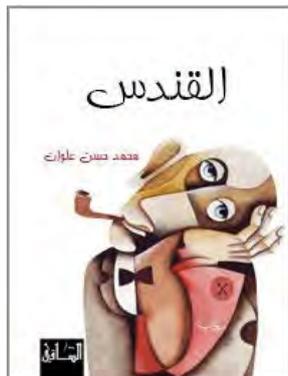
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| PRESS

| Elie Abdo Al-Akhbar, October 2011

We did not yet read a literary work, be it novel, poetry or theater, that would question creative writing, in style and substance, in the light of a new reality produced by the Arab revolutions... Perhaps the novel by the Tunisian writer and journalist Kamal Al Riahi, «The gorilla» (Dar al Saqi) fall in this category. The novel surprises the reader as soon as page one.

BEAVERS



FICTION

Beavers
Al qundos

M.H. Alwan
Dar al saqi, Beirut, 2011
319 pages

RIGHTS

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AVAILABLE MATERIAL

PDF of the novel, in Arabic.
French translation sample. English translation sample.

REMARKS

Alwan's short story was featured in The Guardian, 2011.

ALWAN

Mohammed Hasan



BIO

Born in Riyadh, Saudi Arabi in 1979, Alwan completed a BA in Computer information systems in Saudi Arabia, before obtaining a MA in Business administration in Portland, Oregon. He currently lives in Saudi Arabia.

SOME OTHER WORKS

Enough is enough (2002), Sophia (Dar al saqi, 2004), The choker of decency (2007).

| SUMMARY

An strikingly accurate and honest portrait of a Saudi bourgeois family in contemporary Riyadh.

A man in his mid forties, Ghaleb sits on the side of a river in Oregon, pretending to fish as he thinks back on the life he just left in Saudi Arabia. He observes a friendly beaver. Beavers remind Ghaleb of his family. With their big wet eyes, like those of his mother, the greedy hands of his half brother. They stick to each other and build dams, exactly like members of his family are stuck together... leaving him out of the flock. Ghaleb is not a beaver.

Born from a first failed marriage, Ghaleb is the family's loser. Son of a seemingly powerful man in Riyadh, the Saudi capital, Ghaleb does not live up to his father's expectations. Appreciated by his step mother, he is nevertheless not considered as a brother by the siblings born from his father's second marriage, let alone respected like an eldest brother should be. His own mother despises him for being his father's son.

Ghaleb refused to work with his father, he had other aspirations in life: writing a sociology PhD thesis, marrying the only woman he ever loved, being happy. But he failed at everything that mattered. Expelled from university, he never completed his studies. His father being originally from the countryside, he was not seen as worthy enough to

ask for Ghada's hand, who married a diplomat instead. He was just good enough to be a secret and forever hungry lover she would satisfy with a fast meeting in different cities of the world.

For years, Ghaleb has been escaping through travel. He'd hop into a plane and go anywhere, as far as possible from his family, whenever he needed to breath. But this time is different. This time, Ghaleb wants out. Somewhat like a teenager in need of attention, he waits for his family to miss him, knowing this will never happen. From a safe distance, he looks upon his past life with some tiredness, but mostly a crystal clear mind. Even his twenty year long affair with Ghada is called into question, as she shows up in an unexpected visit. He will go back to Riyadh a few months later only to attend his father's funeral.

Beavers is the vivid portrait of a recently enriched family in Riyadh, and a very lucid look on family in general: misunderstandings, disappointments, deceptions, money, relations of power, resentment and petty fights. Through Ghaleb's recent exile and his memories, the reader gets a substantial grasp of the Saudi society, Even more powerful, the narrator's extremely sharp and honest assessments.

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE

Peter Clark - Emerging voices, Saqi books 2011

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There was a mirror in my apartment, so small that I sometimes had to wave to it to capture its attention. I'd chosen one this size, just big enough for a quick shave, and hung it low down, so my face wouldn't catch me by surprise. When I looked at it, it would reflect one side of my jaw and I would shave it. Then I would turn round, so that the other side came into view, and I'd shave that, then lift my head so that my upper lip and part of my nose appeared, and I'd shave there too. Then I would wash my face and flee from the bathroom like a prisoner fleeing a silent interrogation cell.

With a woman in my apartment, the mirror would have been bigger. Mirrors for me raised awkward and persistent

questions, like coming face to face with an old rival you haven't seen for years. That was why I had picked out a small and insignificant mirror, so that it wouldn't besiege me with questions bigger than myself that I couldn't answer. As I carried it out of the IKEA store, full of young couples trying to set up cheap love-nests, I thought to myself that it would do for a quick glance before going out, for people who deserved to see a better face than mine. It was never going to play any larger role in my life, anyway.

My face truly was a distorted map. It was a piece of parchment on which a crazed ruler had drawn the lands he had conquered and the history he had made, only to be smudged in the rain. The scars that the boys of the al-Murabba' neighborhood had inflicted on my left eyebrow were mixed up with those that my father had scattered at random on my temples, forehead and chin. The grass that grew there when my bedroom window looked East over a deserted palace courtyard in al-Nasiriyya mingled with the climbing plants that shielded my eyes from the midday heat of al-Fakhiriyya, when the sun would break into every Riyadh house, hitting the residents in the face.

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| PRESS

| Elie Abdo Al Akhbar, November 2011

The Saudi novelist Mohammed Hassan Alwan in his new novel «Beavers» (Dar Al Saqi) stays away from the clichés of the Saudi literature. His novel does not get into the topics of women's hardships, social repression, the influence of religious traditions, and political repression, dominating most of the new Saudi writings... Ghalib, Ghada, Badriya, Salman and the other characters, live the consequences of many of the disadvantages of the Saudi society. But this does not appear in the narrative directly, or in a crude discourse, as much as it appears in the behavior of the characters and their emotions... Alwan sought to dissolve information in the text, within a coherent narrative structure, using an aesthetic language, without it being rhetorical, however.

CHASED A WAY



FICTION

Chased away
Charid al-Manazel

J. Douaihy
Dar an-Nahar, Beirut, 2010

RIGHTS

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Sold rights. Italian (Feltrinelli, to appear). French (Actes Sud, to appear).

AVAILABLE MATERIAL PDF file of the original Arabic version.

REMARK. This title is shortlisted for the Arab Booker Prize (IPAF), that will be awarded in Abu Dhabi, UAE, in March 2012

DOUAIHY

Jabbour



BIO

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

SOME OTHER WORKS

Ayn Warda, translated into French (*Actes Sud*, 2010); *June Rain*, 2006, French (Actes Sud, 2010), Italian (Feltrinelli, 2010), German (Hanser, to appear) ; *Rayya-of-the-river*; *Autumn Equinox*, translated into English (Arkansas Press, USA).

REMARKS

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

| SUMMARY

What if you were born a Muslim, and brought up a Christian? What room is there for people who do not choose sides?

Born to a modest Muslim family of Tripoli, Lebanon, in the early sixties, Nizam Al Aalmi, couldn't suspect that the unconditional love that an old and rich Christian couple had for him would change the course of his life. When the civil war broke in Beirut in 1975, the handsome 20 year old man found himself in an impossible situation. An ordinary man, enjoying his youth and the wonders of a busy city, he did not have a cause, nor did he wish to fight. Born a Muslim, brought up a Christian, and finally baptized at the age of 17, he didn't naturally belong to any side. Trapped in the growing madness of the civil war, this poetic character is destined to be at the wrong place at the wrong time. He ends up losing his life at the hands of a Muslim militia, convinced that he was a Christian. Douaihy's sense of irony strikes the reader once again. Nizam's loss of his life is the simple result of a series of unrelated events, circumstances and coincidences. 'But isn't that just what life is?' Douaihy seems to say. In this novel, irony is also defined by the contrast between the light heartedness, dreams and illusions of the leftist revolutionary youth in the sixties, who

are taken by surprise and completely unsettled by the crude, unimaginable and meaningless violence of civil war. A dramatic shift of weight structures the novel and splits it into two halves: before and after 1975.

Even a dead man Nizam is a disturbing puzzle: where to bury him? Following what rite? Deeper ones, barely disguised, underwrite these pragmatic questions: Who is Nizam? Is he a Muslim young man? A Christian? This apparently simple question cannot in this case be easily answered. Can it ever? What does it mean to be a Muslim? A Christian? One of the author's recurrent themes, cultural and personal identity, here, once again, leads the story and is developed through Nizam's tragedy, with the help of half a dozen of characters, friends, family and lovers. Olga, the young attractive and extravagant Russian landlord; Yusra, the passionate activist and violent mistress; Jinan, the true love, fragile and hopeless; Vasco, the Christian bourgeois, leftist at heart, stuck on his wheel chair; Maysaloun, the loving and caring older sister; Khaled, the religious and intolerant younger brother; Raffoul, the miserable hotel owner. All ordinary people living an ordinary life, to which the reader identifies so easily, that the possibility of such violence and injustice seems even more unbelievable.

| P R E S S

| Mazen Maaroud, **Annahar**, January 2011: “Jabbour Douaihy’s “Chased away” is a reservoir of events and problematics, served to us in the form of fiction. It deserves to be read out loud... Douaihy is the only one to have explored the question of sectarian “differences”, in order to weave an impressive literary ground on its basis, which carries out the existential “difference” of a single individual.”

| Talal Khoja, **Annahar**, January 2011: “Jabbour Douaihy’s recent novel, from the perspective of an old leftist, represents an important opportunity to rediscover ourselves through and enjoyable, useful and influential read. I believe I wasn’t the only one who shed a few tears when Nizam was killed, and when none of his two worlds would welcome his remains. We all are still looking for him.”

| Mona Fayad, **Annahar**, December 2011: “Jabbour Douaihy’s transparent writing style, namely in the description of nature, reminds me with the greatness of Japanese novels: “he contemplates the purple walnut tree, the sun piercing through, making its green leaves transparent, engulfing them in the dust of a delicate gleam, which spreads out a long thread of light across the garden”.

| Melhem Chaoul, **Annahar**, January 2011: “In the absence of rules, and in this mortuary carnival, lives -or tries to live- Nizam. He is the product of social differences and of vagary. He is the Other. Nizam is the opposite of the Lebanese paradigm. Outside the constants, outside the fixed references, Nizam is a traveler of these compelling identities, a transient passerby, a mere spectator of history who does not try to take control, does not face its events, and in a perhaps deliberate naivete, mocks its absurdity.”

| Inaya Jaber, **Assafir**, January 2012: “An overwhelmingly prodigious imagery, is one of the features of Jabbour Douaihy’s writing style. The story, characters, secrets are in the novel’s structure. Words are austere, and the silence wide, but here, the strict structure is that of the facts, with their sharp angles and implications.”

IN PRAISE OF HATRED

مدیح الكراهية
فناء غلاية



FICTION

In praise of hatred
Madih al-karahiya

K. Khalifa
Dar al adab, Beirut, 2008 (2006)
390 pages

RIGHTS

Rights owner. The author.
RAYA agency has the world rights to this title.

Sold rights. French (Sindbad, Actes Sud, 2011), Dutch (De Geus, 2011), Spanish (Lumen, 2012), Italian (Bompiani, 2011), English (Transworld, 2012), Norwegian (Minuskel, 2011), Danish (Korridor Forlaget, to appear).

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

Full French translation.
Translation excerpt, English, 1 chapter.

KHALIFA Khaled



BIO

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

SOME OTHER WORKS

Guardians of treachery, The notebooks of the bohemians (2000).

REMARKS

In praise of hatred was among the 6 finalists to the Arab Man Booker Prize awarded in March 2008, Abu Dhabi.

| SUMMARY

The captivating story of an activist young girl, in the midst of the violent repression of the Islamist opposition by the Syrian regime, in the 1980's city of Aleppo.

Rarely to this day have Syrian authors tried to enlighten the tragic events that devastated Syria in the 1980's. *Praise to hatred* is a novel built on its author's recollection of this exceptional period of Aleppo's history. The intimate universe that the author has created is that of a bourgeois family. The narrator and main character, designated by the pronoun 'she', is a teen-ager. She undergoes the bigot influence of her aunts and uncles. Aiming for God's approval, she dresses in black and covers her head with the religious veil. She represses her blooming sensuality, wears bras filled with cardboard, and looks with horror to girls who dare reveal their arms and breasts in indecent clothing, as members of the ruling party boast with their uniforms and their weapons at college and in the streets. Following the footsteps of her beloved uncle Bakr, she enters the main opposition movement, the Islamist brotherhood, and finds her hatred to be her only source of strength and power in the face of a violent world she feels

lost in. It is in jail, paradoxically, that she somehow returns to an age of innocence and after her liberation, 7 years later, the hatred disaggregates in her heart, allowing her to straighten her life out, and to slowly learn friendship and love.

Many other characters make the richness of this novel. There is Maryam, the eldest who teaches to her teen-aged niece the taboo of the body; Marwa, her sister, who marries an officer of the 'Death brigade', destined to crush the Islamist Brotherhood. There is Safa, yet another aunt, a liberal who used to fully enjoy life, but ends up retired behind her 'burqa' after her marriage with Abdallah, a Mujahid of Kandahar and ex-communist fighter touched by the 'light of God'.

The characters of this novel are alive, very well integrated in a delimited space-time frame. Troubled by their questioning and their obsessions, they seem familiar and close to our own daily preoccupations.

| TRANSLATION EXCERPT: ENGLISH

by Max Weiss [available: part 1, pp 113-142]

Note: another English translation excerpt by Marlin Dick is also available [available: part 2, pp 222-248]

IN PRAISE OF HATRED

‘

The only one I knew was Heba, the bashful daughter of our schoolteacher who later became our spokesperson. Seven young girls respectfully listening to Alia as she urged us to hate the other sects while praising ours—the one closest to the Prophet of God—and cited the teachings of the great Imams and recounted for us the biographies of the shaykhs and the *mujahideen*. At the end of the meeting, she handed out pamphlets, requesting that we keep them secret. I'd read them in my room, thrilled, quickly hiding them whenever Safa came in to complain about her chronic headache or how she missed Abdallah, who wasn't coming back until the end of August. I wished August would end:

How I loathed that month for its stifling heat, because of which I'd end up soaking wet just by walking around beneath my thick black clothes. "My pores are just dying," I'd mutter to myself, as beads of sweat emitted their citrusy odor. I hated my body (...)

By the end of that summer, I was consumed by hatred, fueled by it. I felt like it was my salvation, as though it could grant me the sense of superiority I had always longed for. I'd carefully read the pamphlets that were handed out at every meeting, memorizing entire sections, especially the fatwas that accused all the other sects of being infidels. I got to know my seven comrades better and grew to love them. We shared our secrets with one another and exchanged books describing the horrors of the grave. (...)

"We need hatred in order to give our lives meaning," I mused while I celebrated my seventeenth birthday alone.

’

| PRESS

| The Guardian, 2012

The aunts are gloriously vivacious and nuanced creations, from Maryam, at war with her own "filthy and rebellious" body, to Marwa, a Juliet figure, chained to her bed to prevent her marrying an officer of the other sect... A secret police chief modelled on the president's brother is a chilling cameo.

| New York Times, 2008

The book, a Balzacian tale full of romance and murder that ranges from Afghanistan to Yemen to Syria, was promptly banned when it was first published here in 2006 (...) All that has given Mr. Khalifa, who is better known here for his television screenplays, a new prominence as one of the rising stars of Arab fiction, and a rare public voice on a largely forbidden topic.

| Avvenire, 2011

A new author in the world of Arabic literature, who has great literary depth, comparable to Faulkner and Garcia Marquez

| L'Espresso, 2011

A prose so powerful, it competes with the events of history, and yet, full of nuances, it makes the reader share the most intimate and contradictory feelings of the protagonists.

| Le Soir, 2011

Written with a precise language, a book on the Syria of the 1980s of infinite sadness.

| Al-Hayat, 2006

The novel is woven following the trail of hatred's smell, while the narration borrows the colors and motives of the tapestry to draw an immense fresco that tells us the story of a city.

| Al-Mustaqbal, 2006

It is a marvelous novel which haunted its author for 13 years. Khaled Khalifa broke political taboos when he published his novel in Syria (...) A cultural event, since the first edition of the novel was out of stock one month after its publication.

IN THE CROSSFIRE Syrian revolution diaries



DOCUMENT

In the cross fire: Syrian revolution diaries
Taqatoo niran: yawmiyat al intifada al suriya

S. Yazbek,
Dar al adab, Beirut, 2012

RIGHTS

Rights owner. The author.
RAYA agency has the world rights to this title.

Sold rights. French (Bouchet Chastel, to appear).
German (Hanser, Nagel & Kimche, 2012). English (Haus publishing, 2012)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

Arabic text, PDF
English translation, PDF

REMARK

* In the crossfire was #1 on Amazon's best seller's list, in its own category!
* Samar Yazbek authored a piece for the New York Times Op Ed (12.08.2012)

YAZBEK Samar



BIO

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

SOME OTHER WORKS

Child of Heaven (2002). *Clay* (2005). *Cinnamon* (2008). *In her mirrors* (2010).

| PRESENTATION

A unique account of the ongoing Syrian uprising.

In this document, Samar Yazbek offers a precise and personal account of the Syrian uprising, started in March 2011. The book covers the uprising's first 5 months. Samar Yazbek describes her experience of the events as they unfold on the ground, and the exceptional pressures she was subjected to. She meets with released detainees, records their testimony, and explains who the revolutionaries are, where they come from, how they got organized.

With her usual finesse and minuteness, Samar recounts the horrors of violence. 'I will only believe my own eyes' is the precept that motivates her actions. As soon as she hears the rumors of a protest and the consequent repression, she books a taxi and goes on the ground, looking for a confirmation. She discusses with the protesters, the villagers, and sometimes even the policemen and militaries, trying to shed some light on the incidents.

Week after week, she records the events. Each chapter is a detailed account of the rumors she was able to verify in person, of information she was able to take from the medias or from close friends, and events she experienced.

Written in the first person, this text is a unique and precise document of the popular uprising in Syria, where, today still, international media has a limited access.

Literary but simple and fluent, her writing style powerfully vehicles emotion, images and information. It also gives a palatable voice to the text. The reader easily slip into the narrator's shoes, as she slowly opens for us a window on exceptionally violent and complex events.

| TRANSLATION SAMPLE

Taken from Part Two, translated into English by Peter Theroux, published in The Guardian on 03.08.2011

‘

Two huge men entered the room. They stood in readiness, in plainclothes. One of them stood to the right and the other to the left. With a signal from his eyes, each of them seized me by the shoulders, though not roughly. They seized me as if I were some object, easy for them to move. I did not resist when they started to lift me out of my chair. I even stood up, surprised at what was happening. Would they finally arrest me, putting this nightmare to an end? That would be easier on me than this madness.

He gave the officer a jaunty look, and I looked at him not knowing what was next. I tried to read some good news in their eyes, body movements, and demeanor. Talk doesn't interest me. He was neutral, looking some spot in the spacious room. The two of them put a band of cloth over my eyes, or that is what I assumed, because my world suddenly went black. Moments later, I was blindfolded, scenting a strange smell from the cloth. A strong arm seized me, an arm sure of its grasp of my elbow, of its push and pull. It moved sluggishly. Then I straightened up and shouted, "Where are you taking me?"

He answered calmly, and I heard a certain buzz.
"For a little drive, to improve your writing."

’

| PRESS

| Le Monde, 2012

Decoding the stakes of this multifaceted crisis discourages you? Read Samar Yazbek.

| CNN, 2012

The reader watches brave women in Damascus who keep hold of signs, "No to Death, Yes to Life" while male security officers attack them. They listen in on conversations among Alawite who meet, in secret (...) They hear the story of a journalist who was in hiding, afraid the regime will punish him for documenting protests.

| The National, 2012

Yazbek's is not a crafted memoir but an immediate record of three months of fear, torture, intimidation and, eventually, flight from her home told through diaries that stop and start, sometimes repeat, and always offer another detail of popular will and regime cruelty. Its importance is in its existence.

| Arablit, 2012

There is something about the intersection of literature and real life that compels readers to keep searching for books that resonate with, and expand beautifully on, the current moment — without cheapening either the literature or the moment. Syrian novelist and TV host Samar Yazbek's "A Woman in the Crossfire: Diaries of the Syrian Revolution" is one of these rare books.

| The Guardian, 2012

The Syrian novelist Samar Yazbek recognises government thugs as soon as they get out of their car: "Puffed-up muscles, tattoos, broad chests, an arrogant gaze, death." She has the novelist's eye for telling detail.

| Tanges-Anzeiger, 2012

Her diary slowly grows into a chronicle of horror – but also a record of unimaginable courage.

IN HER MIRRORS



FICTION

In her mirrors
Laha maraya

S. Yazbek
Dar al-adab, Beirut, 2010
292 pages

RIGHTS

Rights owner. The author.

RAYA agency has the world rights to this title.

Sold rights. Italian (Castelvecchi, 2011)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

PDF file of the original Arabic version.

YAZBEK

Samar



BIO

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

SOME OTHER WORKS

Child of Heaven (2002). *Clay* (2005). *Cinnamon* (2008), translated into Italian (Castelvecchi, 2010), French (Buchet Chastel, to appear). *In the cross fire: Syrian revolution diaries* (to appear), translated into French (Buchet Chastel, to appear)

| SUMMARY

A modern Greek tragedy set in contemporary Syria. Centuries of the Alaoui's violent history through 24 hours of a devastatingly passionate love story.

The president is dead and the capital hesitates between fear and mourning. At the same time, Said the president's ex strong man is in his hometown. He follows the funerals on TV, and worries for his future. Miles from him, Laila, freshly released from jail, comes into the city. Weakened, turned down by all, she still thinks of him, Said, her powerful lover. How could he have left her in jail all of these years?

This book is the narrative of the multidimensional passionate love story between Laila and Said. Laila is the grand daughter of an Alaoui leader who resented the way some Alaouis brutally got to power. She has grown with her grand father's religious and mystical beliefs, based on re-incarnation. In this perspective, it is not she, who was drawn to her family's enemy, Said. Their story is transcendental. It is the repetition of a previous passionate love story, started at the times of the persecution of the Alaouis. Each of these love stories, of which she has been aware since her very early age, is marked by death and violent separation. As if their two passionate souls were doomed.

Once again, Samar Yazbek gives her novel an almost mystical dimension the ambiguities of which provide the narrative with thickness and characters with psychological depth. Laila's passion determined by history may either be the result of her clairvoyance, or the consequence of her sick mind. In either case, Laila floats above ground; a poetic butterfly, crushed by the tremendous love of a ruthless man and destiny.

Once again a free woman, Laila can only think of going to Said and confront him. Will they meet again? Will she love him? Will she kill him and let him die under the blade like he has in their previous lives? These burning questions drive the reader through the story. The novel's narrative spans from the morning of Laila's release to the next, as she heads to her old lover.

Yazbek's detailed writing and the specificity of her descriptions convey powerful emotions that characterize this modern Greek tragedy, set on a historical and esoteric fascinating background.

| PRESS

| Mohammad Berrada Al Hayat, September 2010

A novel with a great linguistic wealth, a seductive plot and a humanistic vision’.

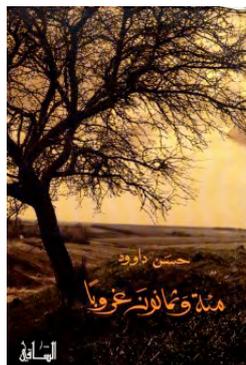
| As Safir, February 2011

Samar Yazbek, is one of these Syrian novelists who have been able to leave a firm mark on the map of Syria’s new novel. Since “Child of heaven”, through “Clay”, “Cinnamon” and, finally, “In her Mirrors”, she has managed to create for herself a special place, with the use of a diversity of writing techniques and by attending to issues with unprecedented boldness.

| Al Hayat, September 2010

The novel’s stake is on digging deep into sectarianism – another aspect of its greatness. It is bound to provoke some commotion, but also to encourage dialogue.

180 SUNSETS



FICTION

180 sunsets
Mi'at wa thamanun ghuruban

H. Daoud
Dar al saqi, Beirut, 2009
288 pages

RIGHTS

Rights owner. Dar al saqi.
RAYA agency represents this title for world rights.

Sold rights. French (Actes Sud)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

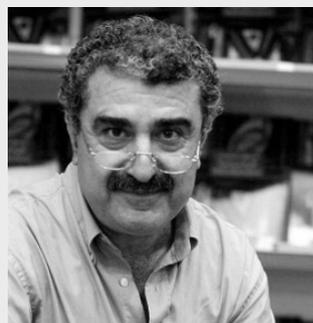
PDF of the novel, in Arabic.
PDF of the novel, in French (coming soon)

REMARKS

180 Sunsets was long-listed for the IPAF (Arab Man Booker prize) 2010.

DAOUD

Hassan



BIO

Hassan Daoud was born in a village of South Lebanon in 1950. He moved to Beirut with his family as a child and worked as a journalist in several newspapers before becoming the editor of Al Mustaqbal's cultural supplement.

SOME OTHER WORKS

Daoud published 8 novels, namely: The house of Mathilde (1983, translated into French, Actes Sud, 1998; English, Granta). Borrowed times (1990, translated into English, Telegram; French, Actes Sud, 2001). The penguin's song (1998, translated into French, Actes Sud, 2007). A light make-up for tonight (2003). The year of the revolutionary new bread-making machine (translated into English, Telegram, 2007).

SUMMARY

Salma, Taysir, Walid, and his fat older brother, are the main characters -and in turn, narrators- of this very truthful depiction of a small Eastern Mediterranean town. Life is still in Al Zahraniya, the topography of which, according to Walid's nameless brother, determines its atmosphere and its inhabitants' destiny: Two rows of closely stuck together low-rise houses on the sea side, separated by one main road.

Nothing much happens in Al Zahraniya. Walid and his brother sell plastic toys, and live together close to their shop. Just above the shop, lives Abu Aatef with his wife, his daughter Salma, his daughter in law and her young children. Nobody likes Abu Aatef. He spends his days on the balcony, watching people and lurking at young women. "They are dirty", thinks Walid's brother to himself, "stacked like cattle in such a tiny space". Still, ever since he got a glimpse of Abu Aatef's wife naked, he keeps fantasizing about her. He hates her manly voice that he can hear through the walls when she shouts. He hates her dragging heavy legs. But he dreams about being alone with her, in a room where a couch would be the single piece of furniture.

Tony, Mikha, Joseph and Milad form a gang of young men who spend most of their days beneath the big electric pole, at the beginning of the main road, facing the toy shop and Abu Aatef's house. Often, they also go to the beach with Renée, Bernadette and some other girls.

"They're not rich, but they don't look poor", thinks Salma to herself as she watches the girls walk by. Taysir, the town's idiot, is another of the gang's favorite games. They laugh at his deformed head and tease him about the birds he raises and sells in a nearby town. Salma, somewhat confined to her house, wants to be part of the fun. She amuses the youth down the road by making signs to Taysir from her window. Until one day, Salma is caught at her window, showing him her beautiful breasts.

The novel culminates in these few minutes where Salma is seen playing a secret dangerous game with Taysir. This event, leading to Taysir falling madly in love with Salma, triggers the disruption of the town's fragile balance at a time where civil war is already raging in other parts of the country. Communitarian tension slowly creeps in, as words like 'christians', 'muslims', 'them' and 'us', start being used, along with military jackets and fire guns.

Hassan Daoud makes an astoundingly detailed and accurate account of an Eastern Mediterranean town, with its warmish light, sticky smells, and dusty heat, which are all an integral part of the novel's suffocating atmosphere. He also portrays with great sensitivity the characters' humanity, as well as their evolution in times of tension, convincingly detailing the mechanisms that unavoidably lead to violence.

| P R E S S

| Husein Bin Hamza, **Al Akhbar**, March 6th, 2009: "The author of the 'Penguin's song' succeeds in creating a very rich world in every new work"

"Daoud's way of writing provides his work a kind of eternity in the reader's memory."

| Ahmad Maghribi, **Assafir**, September 4th, 2009: "The author is keen on weaving a beautifully hidden fabric, in an impressively smart way."

"The writing is almost manipulative, it is so delicate in the intertwining of the allusions, the specificity of the dramatic structure, and the mixture of description, narration and emotion."

"This is perhaps one of the rare Arabic novels that connects to post-modernism."

| Abbas Baydoun, **Assafir**, December 21, 2009: "'180 Sunsets' is a literary monument."

"'180 Sunsets' is the completion of the Daoud-ian game, in its achievement of the fine balance between silence and revelation, obvious metaphors and thin weaving, daily smoothness and personal intrigue."

| Thana Atawi, **Awan**, 2009: "Hassan Daoud's work may be a 'literary monument', as the author and poet Abbas Baydoun said, or perhaps is it a work of art, according to the poet Bassam Hajar. It is, without a doubt, a captivating and influential novel."

NAPOLITANA



FICTION

Napolitana

H. Chouman
Dar al-Adab, Beirut, 2010
153 pages

RIGHTS

Rights owner. The author.

RAYA agency has the world rights to this title, except for Italian.

Sold rights. All rights are available.

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

PDF file of the Arabic original.

CHOUMAN

Hilal



BIO

Hilal Chouman was born in Beirut, Lebanon in 1982. He works as a social media strategist in a telecom company. Hilal has published several short stories in dailies and cultural supplements, where he also occasionally contributes as a journalist.

SOME OTHER WORKS

The story I was told in my sleep (Malamih, Cairo, 2008)

| SUMMARY

Set in Beirut of the year 2010, Napolitana is a modern successful mix of fresh air, smartness and gravity.

“How can a girl with whom I was for a long while, leave me, get married and have a child within a year?” Napolitana’s main character wonders. Haitham is an almost depressed, unhappy, anti-hero in his late twenties, living in the confined space of his room and his computer screen.

Having come across his ex girlfriend at the landmark Napolitana pizza place on Hamra street in Beirut, with her husband and child, he is pushed further away from self confidence. It is in such circumstances, during a party, that Haitham allegedly meets Yumna, a woman in her mid forties with who he will have an affair. This affair remains a very private matter, as none of his two only friends, the couple Hani and Amal, would ever think it possible for him to go on such an adventure, let alone seduce an older and attractive woman. While a friend of Hani’s, a strange bond ties Haitham to Amal. She finds comfort in his unthreatening presence. He is almost unknowingly attracted to her, obsessed as he is with the beauty spot on her neck. With this constellation of three women, the reality of which sometimes tends to fade away as it cristallizes in blurred dreams, behind windows, or in snapshots publised on facebook, Haitham’s universe is sealed. His life oscillates between the web, where he very attentively

follows the blog of an unknown young man, and these women, who sometimes seem more fantasized than real. Some sense of urgency, perhaps Haitham’s deep dissatisfaction with himself -- his chicken legs and sloppy belly, his boyish harmless looks and his being invisible to the outside world -- will drive him to shatter this world of his into pieces. A destruction that strangely coincides with the dissapearance of his virtual friend’s blog. In this sense, Napolitana is a novel of initiation revisited, with a bold modern fabric.

Haitham is not a loveable character, but he is extremely real, and the reader relates to him with great ease. Chouman with his exquisite and unique voice, positions himself as well as his work very clearly in post-war Lebanon. The book is an interesting balance between the implicit deep existential anguish of a thirty year old, and the futility of his personal drama. There is no tragedy here, just a subtle hint of gravity that comes with the uneasiness of growing up and will lead to an even lonelier, but perhaps also more confident, main character.

Chouman’s writing is indeed positively modern, using short, straightforward yet surprisingly poetic sentences. Integrating very naturally references to technology and English idioms into a beautifully fluent Arabic, Chouman succeeds in re-creating very accurately the atmosphere of Beirut in the year 2010, at it is lived by its youth.

| PRESS

| Aasem Badr Al din, Mulhaq Al Nahar, 04.2012

f the Lebanese novel, at the time of its genesis, is that of civil war, as in the experiences of Elias Khoury, Hoda Barakat, Rabih Jaber, Hassan Daoud and others, a new generation is being established, which builds its experience, to some extent, in the denial of the war and its exclusion from the narrative. Generalizations are not desirable, but nevertheless, new literary experiences are attempted away from that war. I think for example of Hilal Chouman in "What I was told during my sleep" and "Napolitana", and of Alexadra Shuraitah in "Always Coca-Cola" and "Ali and his mother Russian.

Chapters of Napolitana were published in leading Arab literary supplements (Akhbar al adab, Cairo; Al Safir al thaqafi, Beirut)

The book was adapted into a short film sequence by Mazaj TV.

JUNE RAIN



FICTION

June rain
Matar Hzayran

J. Douaihy
Dar an-Nahar, Beirut, 2006
325 pages

RIGHTS

Rights owner. The author
RAYA agency has the world rights to this title.

Sold rights. French (Actes Sud, 2010), Italian (Feltrinelli, 2010); German (Hanser, to appear), English (Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation, to appear)

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

Complete translation, French.
PDF file of the original Arabic version.

DOUAIHY Jabbour



BIO

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

SOME OTHER WORKS

Chased away, translated into Italian (Feltrinelli, to appear); *Ayn Warda*, French (*Actes Sud*, 2010); *Rayya-of-the-river*; *Autumn Equinox*, translated into English (Arkansas Press, USA).

REMARKS

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

| SUMMARY

Inspired by a true story, this novel goes over the universal tale of a bloody revenge, set in the northern Lebanon of the 1950's.

Northern Lebanon, June 1957. The novel is set in the aftermaths of a planned shooting that took the life of dozens of male members of the al-Semaani clan, and occurred in the church of Burj al-Hawa.

The novel starts off on the afternoon of the shooting. It carefully and quietly lays down the story's very dramatic context: Children are hurried back home from school. Nobody dares tell them what had happened. They, along with the reader, only sense the extent of the drama in the silence that accompanies them in the school bus, and welcomes them in the village.

The shootings' aim was purely political, but its consequences were a social disaster. Both clans live in the same very small town, its streets tightly intertwined. The al-Semaani clan however, lives mainly on one side of the central road, while the al-Rami clan lives on the other. For years, this road will be perceived by the town's inhabitants as a green line no one was allowed to cross, except for the priest. As violence escalated, an intestine war was triggered. Snipers were posted on both sides, and in the typical logic of the Italian vendetta, people were executed

for revenge. Married couples were separated, as wives were asked to leave husband and children and go back to their own clan, on the other side of the green line. We discover the complexity of the story, its versions varying from teller to teller. We get to know its victims, witnesses, actors, through one character's investigation, Eliyya.

Eliyya, son of Kamila and Youssef al-Semaani is born 9 months and 2 weeks after his father's murder. The couple was married for 15 years, and Kamila never bore a child, until Youssef dies. This late birth is the cause of harmful gossip. When he turns 18, his mother sends him away from Lebanon where war is raging. Eliyya departs for New York where he is enrolled as a student. He only comes back in the 90's, a man of 42 years old. He hasn't seen his mother for 20 years, and only comes back to investigate, how his father had died some 40 years earlier. Eliyya is in a quest for a long lost identity.

Douaihy's detailed sensitive account of that society is halfway between realism and caricature, a tribute to his hometown, a detailed record of a part of its history that is still unmentionable, and a legacy to its daughters and sons. However dramatic the context and story, Jabbour Douaihy's sense of humor is still perceptible. His sarcastic and affectionate eye grasps the essential absurdity and cruelty of a situation, too often observed in different parts of the world.

| TRANSLATION EXCERPT: FRENCH

By H. Ayoub and H. Boisson

PLUIE DE JUIN

‘

Elle réagit comme piquée par un serpent :

-Me faire opérer des yeux ? Pour quoi faire ? Le paysage, je le connais pas cœur. Et puis, qu'est-ce que j'aurais à

regarder ici ? La femme d'Ibrahim al-Halabi, cette grosse vache qui vient se dandiner sur le toit de sa maison pour étendre ses sous-vêtements ? Ou bien la façade de la maison d'Abou-Mansour, qui est toute pelée ? (...)

Elle était donc de retour... A peine ouvrait-elle la bouche que des rafales de feu partaient dans toutes les directions.

’

| PRESS

| Elena Loewenthal, **Tutto Libri, La Stampa**, Italy 09.2010: “Douaihy offers a highly original portrait, sometimes poignant and sometimes sarcastic, a Middle East still to discover.”

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| Tiziano Gianotti, **D, La Repubblica della donna**, Italy 07.2010: “Choral and black, Jabbour Douaihy's novel with its multiple voices, is one of the beautiful surprises of the season.”

| Elsa Kammerer, **Etudes**, France 07.2010: “One does not enter in this novel without feeling a persisting discomfort, and one does not get out of this novel untouched”. “June Rain is a powerful novel that we can only but recommend.”

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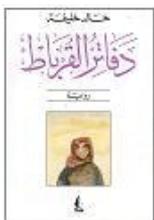
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| CO-AGENTS' LIST

DUTCH

Wandel Cruse
wandelcruseagency@gmail.com

ENGLISH

Rocking chair books
samar@rockingchairbooks.com

FRENCH

Vigevani
marcovigevani.com

GERMAN

Vigevani
marcovigevani.com

ITALIAN

Vigevani
marcovigevani.com

KOREAN

Duran Kim
durankim.com

PORTUGUESE

Kerrigan
antoniakerrigan.com

SCANDINAVIAN LANGUAGES

Wandel Cruse
wandelcruseagency@gmail.com

SPANISH

Kerrigan
antoniakerrigan.com

TURKISH

Kalem Agency
www.kalemagency.com