

Yale Book News

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Critically acclaimed Palestinian poet Ghassan Zaqtan and award-winning fellow poet and translator Fady Joudah to visit 15 venues in the U.S. in October

Tour Dates

Oct. 1 • Amherst Books
Oct. 2 • Harvard University
Oct. 3 • Boston University
Oct. 4 • Brandeis University
Oct. 8 • Scripps College
Oct. 10 • University of Texas at
Austin
Oct. 15 • Yale University
Oct. 16 • New York State Writers
Institute / SUNY Albany
Oct. 17 • Asian American
Writers Workshop (NY)
Oct. 18 • New York University
Oct. 18 • Columbia University
Oct. 19 • Georgetown University
Oct. 24 • Westmont College
Oct. 25 • University of California
Los Angeles
Oct. 29 • Rice University /
University of Houston

For further details and individual event
contact info, please see schedule attached
at end of press release.

On October 1, 2012, **Ghassan Zaqtan**, a leading poet of the Arab world, and award-winning poet and translator **Fady Joudah** will embark together on a month-long U.S. book tour that will take them to 15 venues in support of Joudah's inspired and critically acclaimed translation of Zaqtan's work, *Like a Straw Bird It Follows Me, and Other Poems..*

The volume, published by Yale University Press earlier this year, includes Joudah's translation of Zaqtan's tenth and most recent poetry collection *Like a Straw Bird It Follows Me* as well as selected earlier poems, thus bringing to English-language readers the best work by one of the most important and original Palestinian poets of our time.

Zaqtan is the author of ten collections of poetry. He is also a novelist, editor, and filmmaker. Born in Beit Jala,

near Bethlehem, he has lived in Jordan, Beirut, Damascus, and Tunis. He returned to Palestine in 1994 and now lives in Ramallah.

His translator **Fady Joudah** is a Palestinian-American medical doctor and an award-winning poet and translator. Among his translations are two poetry collections by Mahmoud Darwish, *If I Were Another* and *The Butterfly's Burden*. His own collection of poems, *The Earth in the Attic* (2008), was selected by Louise Glück for publication in the prestigious Yale Series of Younger Poets. Dr. Joudah lives in Houston, Texas.

Together, the two poets will appear at lectures, readings, discussions, and book signings hosted by an array of distinguished institutions throughout October 2012 (see attached schedule for details). Beginning at Amherst Books in Massachusetts, their U.S. tour will bring them to audiences at Harvard, Boston University, Brandeis University, Scripps College, UT Austin, Yale, the New York State Writers Institute / SUNY Albany, the Asian American Writers Workshop in New York City, New York University, Columbia, Georgetown, Westmont College, and UCLA, before concluding with a Rice University/University of Houston event.

At month's end, the two authors will immediately proceed to London, to appear at both the Qattan Foundation and the Aldeburgh International Poetry Festival in Suffolk, UK, at the start of November.

Like a Straw Bird It Follows Me, and Other Poems is a volume in the *Margellos World Republic of Letters* series from Yale University Press. The series is dedicated to making literary works from around the globe available in English through translation. It brings to the English-speaking world the work of leading poets, novelists, essayists, philosophers, and playwrights from Europe, Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, to stimulate discourse and creative exchange.

With the poems in this volume, Zaqtan illuminates what Arabic poetry in general and Palestinian poetry in particular are capable of. Departing from the lush aesthetics of such celebrated predecessors as Mahmoud Darwish and Adonis, Zaqtan's daily, delicate narrative, whirling catalogues, and at times austere aesthetics represent a new trajectory, a significant leap for young Arabic poets today.

In his preface, Fady Joudah analyzes and explores the poet's body of work: "Ghassan Zaqtan's poems, in their constant unfolding," he writes, "invite us to enter them, exit them, map and unmap them, code and decode them, fill them up and empty them, with the living and nonliving, the animate and inanimate, toward a true freedom."



“A beautiful and substantive collection.”

—James Tolan, *Ploughshares* blog

**“[Zaqtan] examines states of being in quotidian life
with the patience and care of a jeweler.”**

—Kevin Hong, *Arts Fuse*

“*Like a Straw Bird It Follows Me*’s generous selection of Ghassan Zaqtan’s poems, masterfully and compellingly translated by Fady Joudah, is a gift. Zaqtan is not only the most important Palestinian poet alive, but one of the most important poets of our time, embodying in various sophisticated and cosmopolitan forms of expression depths of feeling, complexity, compassion, and witness beyond compare.”

—Lawrence Joseph,
author of *Into It*

“The poet’s trade is exile, & a Palestinian poet’s trade thus a double exile: Ghassan Zaqtan’s work is exemplary in that its lyrical intensity simultaneously hides & foregrounds this quest’s epic dimensions.”

—Pierre Joris,
author of *A Nomad Poetics*

“Zaqtan’s poems are uncompromising in their direct engagement with daily life, detailing the way in which the quotidian is, after all, the grand narrative of history. Joudah’s brilliant translations capture not only sense, sound, and rhythm, but also pulse, infusing the English language with a new sensibility.”

—Cole Swensen,
Iowa Writers’ Workshop

“Reading Fady Joudah’s remarkable translations of Zaqtan, I was thinking of the great poet and mythmaker of Yugoslavia, Vasko Popa, who also saw violence and wrote the dream-time of his nation. Like Popa, Zaqtan is unafraid to claim his roots, but also to see the “secret builders Cavafy had awakened / passing through the hills,” digging by his pillow. For this bravery and lyric skill, I am grateful.”

—Ilya Kaminsky

The *Margellos World Republic of Letters* series

Like a Straw Bird It Follows Me, And Other Poems

by Ghassan Zaqtan; translated by Fady Joudah

Price: \$26.00 * ISBN: 978-0-300-17316-1 Cloth * eBook ISBN: 978-0-300-18363-4 * 144 pages

Original publication date: April 24, 2012

Ghassan Zaqtan & Fady Joudah
Tour Schedule
Fall 2012

Monday, October 1, 2012

Amherst Books

8 Main Street, Amherst, MA

8:00 PM Poetry Reading & Book Signing

Hosted by the Creative Writing Center at Amherst College

Contact: Catherine Newman - crnewman@amherst.edu

Tuesday, October 2, 2012

Harvard University

Rethinking Translation Seminar

Mahindra Humanities Center at Harvard, Barker 133

6:00 PM Reading and Discussion

Contact: Stephanie Sandler - ssandler@fas.harvard.edu

Wednesday, October 3, 2012

Boston University

The BU Castle, 225 Bay State Road, Boston MA

12-2 PM Conversation & Poetry Reading

Lunch will be served before and during the talk

Contact: Margaret Litvin - mlitvin@bu.edu

Thursday, October 4, 2012

Brandeis University

Mandel Center for Humanities, Room 303 (The Reading Room)

Waltham, MA

5:00 PM Poetry Reading & Book Signing

Contact: Olga Broumas - broumas@brandeis.edu

or Heather Lefebvre - hlef@brandeis.edu

Monday, October 8, 2012

Scripps College

Hampton Room, Malott Commons,

Scripps College, Claremont, CA

7:15 PM Poetry Reading & Book Signing

Contact: Sheila Walker - swalker@ScrippsCollege.edu

Wednesday, October 10, 2012

University of Texas at Austin

12 -1 PM Class visit to Introduction to Creative Writing, CBA 4.124

7 PM Poetry reading (with Fady Joudah), UTC 3.124

8:30 PM Reception

Contact: Lisa Moore - llmoore@austin.utexas.edu

or Rebecca Macmillan - rmacmillan@utexas.edu

Monday, October 15, 2012

Yale University

Whitney Humanities Center, Room 208

New Haven, CT

5:00 PM Poetry Reading

Contact: Elina Bloch - elina.bloch@yale.edu

Tuesday, October 16, 2012

New York State Writers Institute • SUNY Albany

4:15 PM Informal Q&A with students

8:00 PM Poetry Reading

Contact: Don Faulkner - dwf8@juno.com

Wednesday, October 17, 2012

Asian American Writers Workshop NY

110-112 West 27th St, NYC

7:00 PM Translation Night at the Asian American Writers' Workshop

Headliners: Fady Joudah and Ghassan Zaqtan; other participants: Jeffrey Yang, Sinan

Antoon, and Susan Bernofsky

Contact: Maryam Gunja - mgunja@aaww.org

Thursday, October 18, 2012

New York University

The Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies

(The Richard Ettinghausen Library at the Hagop Kevorkian Center)

50 Washington Square South at 255 Sullivan St

12:30 PM - 1:45 PM

Contact: Greta Scharnweber - gs113@nyu.edu

or kevorkian.center@nyu.edu

Thursday, October 18, 2012

Columbia University

Room 509, Knox Hall

606 West 122 St, New York

~ 7:00 PM Bilingual Poetry Reading & Discussion

Contact: Maryam Zohny - maryam.zohny@gmail.com

Friday, October 19, 2012

Georgetown University

Lannan Center Conference Room / New North 408

Noon to 2:00 PM

Contact: Meriem Tikue - mmt43@georgetown.edu

Wednesday, October 24, 2012

Westmont College

Winter Hall 210, Campus of Westmont College, Santa Barbara

4:00 PM Poetry Reading & Book Signing

Contact: Gregory Orfalea - gorfalea@yahoo.com

Thursday, October 25, 2012

University of California Los Angeles

Exact Location TBD, Campus of UCLA, Los Angeles

~3:00 PM Poetry Reading

Contact: Johanna Romero - romero@international.ucla.edu

Monday, October 29, 2012

Rice University/University of Houston

UH / Rice University Visiting Writers Series

Honors Commons

5:30 PM Poetry Reading

Contact: Kevin Prufer - kdp8106@yahoo.com

**For details and/or final confirmation of specific events,
please contact the individual venues**

**For general press/media requests regarding the book
and author interview inquiries, please contact
Robert Pranzatelli / robert.pranzatelli@yale.edu**