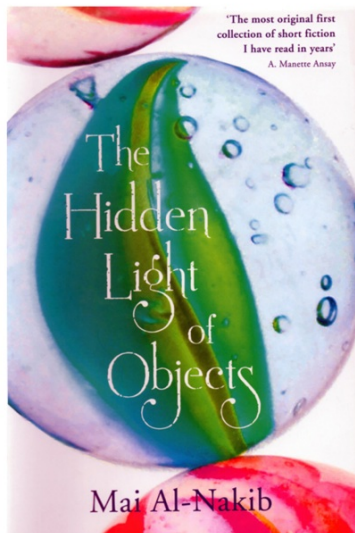
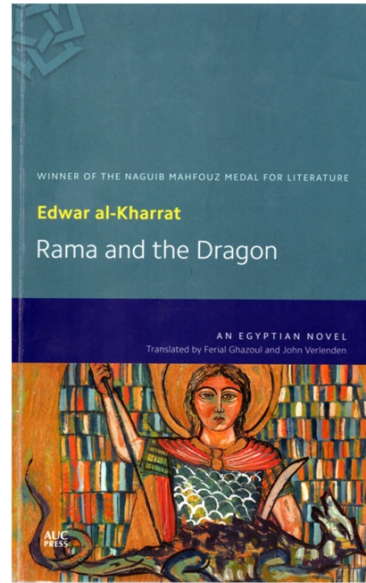


2007), and explores the relationship between the protagonist, photographer Nasir, and Fatin, an older woman with whom he becomes obsessed.

The Arabic edition of **Rama and the Dragon** by Edwar al-Kharrat was awarded the 1999 Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature and described by the judges as “a breakthrough in the literary history of modern Arabic fiction” (See *Banipal* 6, Autumn 1999, for an interview with the author). The love story between a Copt and a Muslim from opposite ends of Egypt allowed al-Kharrat to explore narrative discourse, juxtaposing and entwining poetry, legend, philosophy and history.

Despite the author having described his first novel (published in Arabic in 1979) as “untranslatable”, Ferial Ghazoul and John Verlenden produced an excellent English translation of this masterpiece of intertextuality and human emotion, first published in 2003.

- *Black Magic* by Hamdy el-Gazzar translated by Humphrey Davies. AUC Press. ISBN 978 977 416 626 6. Pbk, Sep 2013, 192pp. \$17.95.
- *Poor* by Idris Ali, translated by Elliott Colla. AUC Press, 2013. 220pp, Pbk \$18.90. ISBN 978 977 416 627 3.
- *Rama and the Dragon* by Edwar al-Kharrat, translated by Ferial Ghazoul and John Verlenden. AUC Press, 2013, 340 pp. Pbk, \$19.95. ISBN 978 977 416 625 9. CR



The Hidden Light of Objects by Mai al-Nakib is the author’s first short story collection. Born in Kuwait in 1970, and now teaching post-colonial and comparative literature at Kuwait University, Mai al-Nakib’s stories are unusual in being a collection within a collection, with ten vignettes of often childhood or school memories alternating with ten short stories, all set in a contemporary world of checkpoints, intifada, suicide-bombing, universities, cancer, airplanes, family and East-West travel.

The title story is the last in the book, and like a number of the other stories concerns a mother and her children, but is very unexpected in that it is about a mother returning home to Kuwait after being imprisoned in Iraq for 10 years, having been abducted when she answered her front door by mistake during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Published by Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation Publishing, 2014. Hbk, 242pp, ISBN: 9789992195413.