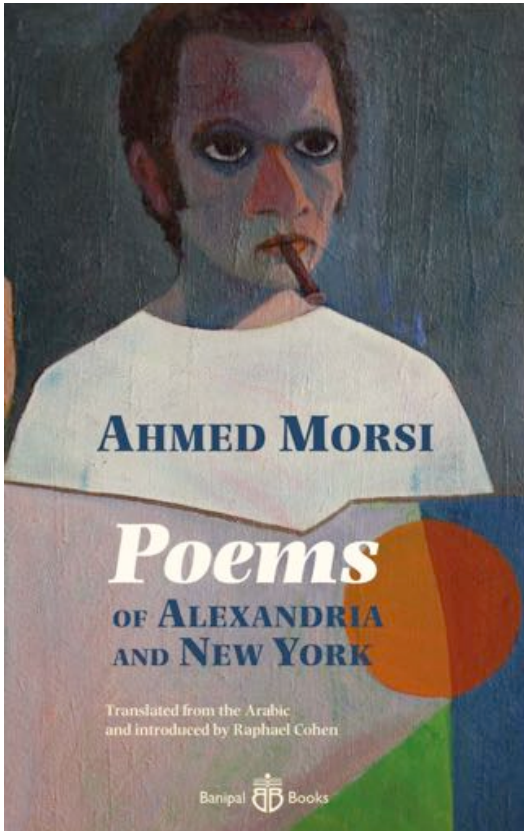


# Poems of Alexandria and New York

by **Ahmed Morsi**



Ahmed Morsi is a renowned painter as well as a prolific art critic, journalist, translator, and, as this book reveals to a new audience, a consummate poet. *Poems of Alexandria and New York*, Ahmed Morsi's first volume in English translation, captures the modernity and empathy at the heart of all his works, his surrealist humour, and his visions of the dramas of ordinary life.

It comprises two of his best known collections, *Pictures from the New York Album* and *Elegies to the Mediterranean*, both written when he resumed writing poetry following a break of nearly 30 years after the calamitous Arab defeat in the 1967 Six-Day War. The former opens up the city of New York, his home since the mid-1970s and where he still lives and works, while the latter takes readers deep into abiding memories of the Mediterranean city of his birth, Alexandria, Egypt, in 1930.

*"When I read the poems of Ahmed Morsi I begin to travel."*  
Alfonso Armada, journalist, playwright and poet

*"These two collections weave multiple relations – threaded with the themes of exile and alienation – between New York and Alexandria."* Hala Halim, New York University

*"The unique sensibility of the 'pure artist' who is Ahmed Morsi."* Raphael Cohen, translator and introducer of *Poems of Alexandria and New York*.

*"An impressive translation revealing the intense gaze of a magnificent narrator, wandering between sea and ocean, between art and poetry, in search of amazement."* May Telmissany, author, film critic and academic

After graduating in English Literature from the University of Alexandria, and publishing his first poetry collection, Ahmed Morsi studied art in the Alexandria studio of Silvio Becchi and became a part of the city's literary and artistic society. Later, in Cairo, after a few years living and working in Baghdad's literary and artistic hub, he co-founded and was editor-in-chief of the famous avant-garde literary magazine *Galerie '68* and designed stage sets for the Cairo Opera House. In 1974, he moved to New York City, painting, printmaking, and later returning, thankfully, to writing more poetry.

The collection is introduced and translated by Cairo-based Raphael Cohen, whose translations of works by contemporary Arab poets include Ahmed Rashid Thani, Hala Mohammad, Samer Abu Hawwash, Ahmed Al-Mulla and Marwan Makhoul.

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