

USAID: THE URGE TO MERGE ■ WHAT'S COOKIN' OVERSEAS ■ FS BLOGS, 2009

FOREIGN SERVICE

JOURNAL

THE MAGAZINE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS

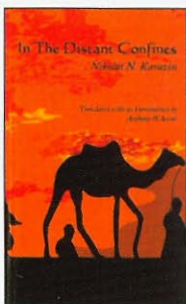
\$3.50 / NOVEMBER 2009



1521-8500

IN THEIR OWN WRITE
Books by Foreign Service Authors

his wife in Somerset, Md., Wachob continues to write verse for his parish newsletter and volunteers in a Washington, D.C., high school. He is also the author of *Basics of Clause and Sentence Structure: A Handbook for New and Experienced Writers* (Vantage Press, 2007).



In the Distant Confines

Nikolai N. Karazin, translated with an introduction by Anthony W. Sariti, Authorhouse, 2008, \$20.49, paperback, 456 pages.

A tale of the Wild, Wild East, Karazin's first novel (published in the Russian literary journal *Delo* between 1872 and 1873) introduced Russians to their newly conquered and still restless frontiers in Central Asia. With this work, translator par excellence Anthony Sariti becomes the "Karazin of America," not only introducing the relatively unknown Russian artist to the U.S., but bringing Central Asia to popular attention here, as well.

Although the world Karazin depicts has changed in many ways, his novel remains instructive. It offers an enduring ethnographic portrait of the peoples and cultures of the region and — though told with a sympathetic slant that views Russian and native alike with equal sympathy, humanity and satire — a faithful depiction of the depravity and racism of the czarist imperialists.

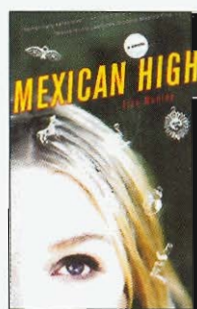
Karazin's tale chronicles a Russian officer in Tashkent, Batogev, who returns from the frontier wars with a loyal Uzbek comrade. With a loyal Uzbek comrade, drunk and licentious opportunist and megalomaniac, Batogev is kidnapped by Kirghiz natives.

Anthony W. Sariti holds a Ph.D. in Russian literature from the University of California, Berkeley. He left the Foreign Service in 1978 and has lived in Yaounde, Kuala Lumpur, West Berlin, Shanghai and elsewhere. In many languages, he has translated from Chinese and transliterated from Russian.

Mexican High

Liza Monroy, Spiegel & Grau, 2009, \$14, paperback, 352 pages.

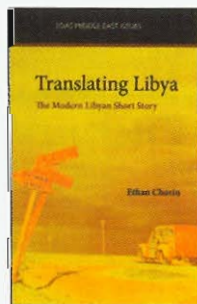
This novel not only captures the classic drama of the cusp of adulthood, but magnifies and revels in it.



Monroy presents the longing of the displaced and distraught teenager with all the raw urgency of youth.

After a lifetime of nomadism with her single, ex-hippie diplomat mother, Milagro (Mila) Marquez has settled in 1993 in Washington, D.C., for high school. She is a well-adjusted and successful youth — until a sudden reassignment pitches Mila and her mother into the heart of Mexico City for Mila's senior year. There she is swept up into the exclusive cliques of the rich and famous at the International School of Mexico, quickly descending into a life of clubs and drugs. All the while, Mila pursues her search for identity — partially through a quest to find her mysterious, unknown father.

Liza Monroy, the daughter of a Foreign Service officer, attended high school at an international school in Mexico City. She has been previously published in the *New York Times*, *The L.A. Times Magazine*, *Newsweek* and *The Village Voice*. She is currently an MFA candidate at Columbia University, where she teaches essay writing.



Translating Libya:

The Modern Libyan Short Story

Ethan Chorin, Saqi Books, 2008, \$19.95, paperback, 238 pages.

In *Translating Libya: The Modern Libyan Short Story*, author Ethan Chorin presents 16 short stories translated from Arabic to English. Not merely entertaining diversions, the stories — with titles that mention important cities and cultural landmarks — are the medium through which Chorin allows his readers to delve deep into the culture of this North African country.

The book is divided into sections of stories from the east, south and west, reflecting the country's cultural and geographical diversity, and includes short biographies of the various writers. The tales trace the influence of the ancient Romans, the Italian occupation and the current influx of foreign workers from Africa and farther afield.

In addition to social satires, love stories and fables, Chorin also includes some of his own memoirs of living in Tripoli. These aim to give readers a feel for the contemporary reality of this rapidly urbanizing country that has been "off the beaten path" for a very long time.

Ethan Chorin, a former PSO, served as commercial