

—News from MID-LIST PRESS—

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CALIFORNIA M.B.A. FOLLOWS HER HEART TO AN AWARD-WINNING NOVEL

In November, Mid-List Press of Minneapolis will publish *The Echo of Sand* by San Diego author Gail Chehab, winner of the First Series Award for the Novel.

Ms. Chehab was born in Briarcliff, New York, a small river town in the Hudson Valley. Her early life was spent at Girl Scouts or tennis lessons, or playing a game of kickball. But from the age of thirteen the wider world had been in her sights. Ms. Chehab explains: “I interviewed a nun for a social studies project. She had been placed into a labor camp in the Philippines during World War II. Through broken teeth she told me a story of terrible struggle by people in an exotic land. On that day, I became determined to live a more meaningful life. I packed away my Girl Scout uniform, tennis racket, and kickball—and I have never missed them.”

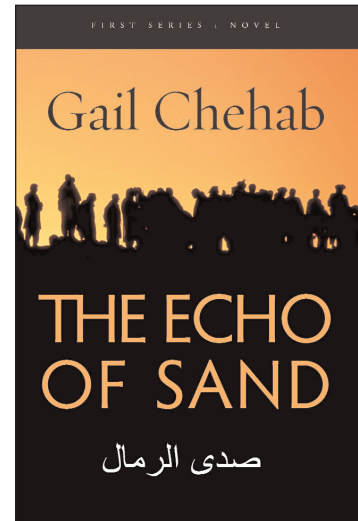
Fifteen years later, Ms. Chehab was completing her M.B.A. in Paris. “I thought I would meet some Frenchman and settle in Paris. Instead, I fell in love with a man from Lebanon. I knew that our marriage would change my life. But I didn’t know his past would become my future.”

Although Mr. Chehab had left Beirut in 1978 when he was nine years old, he retained vividly painful memories of the Lebanese civil war. “When my husband and I traveled together to Lebanon in 1998, we saw a country half in ruin, half in resurrection. But it was clear to both of us that the country he had been yearning for was long gone.”

After the Chehabs returned to the United States, Ms. Chehab admits their plans to one day live in Lebanon seemed impractical. “We wondered if it was his destiny never to feel at home. As an Arab American he feels more Lebanese in America and more American in Lebanon.”

Two children later, and after a move from New York to California, having a job any other M.B.A. would dream about was no longer right for Ms. Chehab. She took a creative writing course and “found the courage to show my insides to anyone who would read my prose.” The assignment was to write a first chapter. “I needed a story,” Ms. Chehab says. “I searched my heart, knowing I would find my husband and his two countries inside.”

From that chapter grew *The Echo of Sand*, the story of twin brothers separated during the Lebanese civil war, and their journeys home. As the novel begins, the U.S. Marine barracks at Beirut International Airport has been destroyed by a truck bomb. Nine-year-old Saleh is in a helicopter, staring through the window at his twin, Samir, who still stands on a rooftop in the burning city. Spanning two decades and unfolding simultaneously in Beirut and Brooklyn, *The Echo of Sand*



is a brave and honest novel about resilience and reconciliation.

Ms. Chehab received a B.S.B.A from The American University and an M.B.A. in International Business from Pepperdine University. She has held prestigious positions with such institutions as Altos Hornos de Mexico, Deutsche Bank N.A., and The Conference Board. She has received many literary awards and honors in addition to the Mid-List Press First Series Award for the Novel. Her current works-in-progress include the young adult novel *Light from the Disappearing Sun*—recognized by Joyce Carol Oates as Honorable Mention for the *Zeotrope: All-Story Fiction Contest* and chosen as runner-up for the San Diego Book Award for the Unpublished Young Adult Novel—and “Milk and Cookies with the President,” a picture book manuscript that was a finalist in the Pacific Northwest Writers Association’s awards.

Mid-List Press publishes books of high literary merit and fresh artistic vision by new and emerging writers, and by writers ignored, marginalized, or excluded from publication by commercial and mainstream publishers. Mid-List seeks to increase access to publication for new writers, to nurture the growth of emerging writers, and to increase the diversity of books, authors, and readers. Mid-List Press is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit literary organization. For more information, visit www.midlist-press.org.