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carvers, long regarded as mere artisans, were encouraged to refine their work and to emulate the "high art" styles of Europe. Painter Charles Wilson Peale (1741–1827) and sculptor William Rush (1756–1833), both connected with the founding of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in 1805, worked with American craftsmen and their Old World tutors to bring American sculpture up to the level of American painting. Their aims were advanced by the Philadelphia architect William Strickland, who routinely incorporated sculpture into the many new public buildings he designed for the city. By the time of Houdon's death in 1828, Philadelphia displayed a sculptural landscape unmatched elsewhere in the new nation.

Philadelphia's William Rush, who was once a carver of ship's figureheads, executed this statue of George Washington in 1814.



Independence National Historical Park.

Robert Frost: Fire and Ice

"Vanity, Fame, Love and Robert Frost"
by Donald Hall, in *Commentary* (Dec.
1977), 165 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y.
10022.

During his lifetime, poet Robert Frost (1874–1963) enjoyed a popular image as the benign sage of New England. But after his death, a second Frost, revealed by biographers, rose up and destroyed the first—the conniving, self-absorbed abuser of his suffering wife and children. Hall, a noted poet who knew Frost for 20 years, contends that neither image is correct.

Young Frost suffered greatly for his art; so did his wife and children,

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who, living in rural poverty while he wrote, variously experienced "madness, suicide, and early death." Both in his eyes and in theirs, he bore the blame for his family's misery. But Frost's guilt and fanatical perseverance in his work are two sides of a granite-like ego, driven by a need to convince the world of his superiority. From this compulsion, says Hall, Frost constructed his public persona (the simple rustic) and his professional image (the fierce competitor bent on sitting alone atop the "steeple of literary acclaim").

Frost himself believed that he was an evil man who had to be tricked into acts of kindness—he joined in efforts to free poet Ezra Pound from a mental hospital, but only because he thought Pound's release would bring personal publicity. In fact, says Hall, it was neither selfishness nor misanthropy but a more complex drive toward love and "fame" that motivated Frost. "Fame is the word for the love everyone wants," Hall writes, "impersonal love, love from strangers for what we are, what we do and have done." A deeper desire than vanity, a more demanding goal than mere celebrity, fame so honed Frost's ambition that he became in its pursuit both a heartless father and the creator of enduring works of art.

The Adventures of Daniel Defoe

"Defoe, Edinburgh Spy" by Paul Henderson Scott, in *Blackwood's Magazine* (Oct. 1977), 32 Thistle St., Edinburgh EH2 1HA, Scotland.

Modern readers know Daniel Defoe (1660–1731) as the author of great adventure stories. Few realize, however, that his own life was at times as topsy-turvy as that of his characters, or that *Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders*, which immortalized his name, represent only a small fraction of his literary output. Indeed, argues Scott, an Edinburgh writer, literature was simply an economic expedient for Defoe. His real loves were politics and commerce.

Defoe combined politics with writing during a career as an English spy in Edinburgh immediately before and after the formal Union of England and Scotland in 1707. A failed London merchant (he sold hosiery, wine, and bricks), he took up journalism to feed his wife and seven children. But his penchant for politics, along with his gratitude to the Queen's chief minister, Robert Harley, for arranging his release from prison on charges of illegal pamphleteering, led Defoe in 1706 to become Harley's paid eyes and ears in Scotland.

With his genius for inventing believable characters, Defoe adopted a variety of "covers," ranging from fishmonger to salt merchant and linen-draper. His secret mission included "black propaganda" work. Under pseudonyms implying either English or Scottish authorship, he wrote numerous polemics in favor of Union. One of the "Scottish" pamphlets recently fooled a modern historian.

Defoe's writing probably had little effect on the decision for Union. But he was intensely proud of one accomplishment: His proposal for a tax on beer got into the Treaty of Union in his own words.