

England Review, and *Southern Review* have seen their budgets and staffs slashed or are threatened with elimination altogether if they don't break even.

In their heyday half a century ago, Genoways notes, university-based literary journals were vital forums for serious fiction and public debate. "Consider this: When Wilbur Cross was elected governor of Connecticut in 1930, an unlikely Democratic victor in an overwhelmingly Republican state, his principal qualification was his nearly 20 years as editor of *Yale Review*."

The fact is that no one reads such journals now, Genoways says. The average literary journal prints fewer than 1,500 copies. Yet the volume of submissions to these publications has exploded. In a blog posting on *Virginia Quarterly Review's* own Web site after Genoways published his essay, the magazine's editors noted that every year 10 times as many people submit to the magazine as subscribe to it. "And there's very, very little overlap. We know—we've checked."

Writers know there's no audience for what they do—many of them aren't reading the stuff themselves—so, writes Genoways, they "have become less and less interested in reaching out to readers—and less and less encouraged by their teachers to try." The echo chamber has had an effect. Major magazines that once regularly published fiction have ceased to do so—*The New Yorker* and *Harper's* being the exceptions. "One would think that

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the rapid eviction of literature from the pages of commercial magazines would have come as a tremendous boon to lit mags. . . . But the less commercially viable fiction became, the less it seemed to concern itself with its audience, which in turn made it less commercial, until, like a dying star, it seems on the verge of implosion." As evidence that fiction has ceased to concern itself with things that matter, he notes the dearth of fiction written about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; journalists and war vet memoirists have taken up the publishing slack.

Genoways proposes a new era of invigorated literary journals. "With so many newspapers and magazines closing, with so many commercial publishers looking to nonprofit models, a few bold university presidents could save American literature, reshape journalism, and maybe even rescue public discourse from the cable shout shows and the blogosphere." But that can only work if young writers "swear off navel gazing" and "write something we might want to read."

ARTS AND LETTERS

Grandeur in Stone

THE SOURCE: "Sculptors of the American Renaissance: Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Daniel Chester French" by James F. Cooper, in *American Arts Quarterly*, Fall 2009.

THE CIVIL WAR LEFT BOTH THE North and the South bruised and battered, but the Industrial Revolution ensured that prosperity returned fairly quickly. Soon enough, the search was on for a culture appropriate to a rejuvenated America's growing role on the world stage. Thus dawned the American Renaissance, a period when "art was at the heart of American civic life," writes James F. Cooper, editor and publisher of *American Arts Quarterly*.

Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Daniel Chester French, arguably two of America's greatest sculptors, exemplified the period's mix of mastery, ambition, and gravitas. French is best known for *Lincoln*, the 19-foot-tall statue of the 16th president that sits inside the grand memorial on the National Mall, while Saint-Gaudens won praise for accomplished memorials to contemporary luminaries such as Robert Gould Shaw, the Civil War colonel who commanded one of the U.S. military's first black regiments, and Navy admiral David Glasgow Farragut. Both sculptors were inspired by the moral authority and aesthetic excellence of Greco-Roman sculpture. But they also had unique strengths and influences.

Of the two men's work, French's was more traditionally neoclassical. He was particularly concerned with shape and form; like Michelangelo's,



As a boy, Augustus Saint-Gaudens was one of thousands to pay his respects to Abraham Lincoln when the fallen president's funeral train stopped in New York City. In this bust made years later, Saint-Gaudens captures the president's thoughtful nature.

French's sculptures change "as one moves from one side to the other, each angle carefully composed for the benefit of the eye," Cooper writes. Take *Memory*, on view at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. The sculpture is of a young, melancholy woman gazing into an indirectly angled hand mirror; "the seated figure is twisted gracefully in contrapposto . . . presenting perfectly composed compositions viewed from any angle." French's "Romantic passion and robust talent" made his work particularly powerful, Cooper writes.

Saint-Gaudens trained at the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris, where he was influenced by Modernism, which was then coming into vogue. In contrast to French's classical style, which aimed to portray an idealized image of a subject, Saint-Gaudens' approach is "realistic and naturalistic, intended to

reveal the character of the sitter." Indeed, Saint-Gaudens' work, such as the bust of Abraham Lincoln with his bow tie charmingly askew, aim more for psychological realism than geometric harmony. "Mere physical beauty would detract from the spiritual essence he was seeking," Cooper writes of a memorial Saint-Gaudens crafted to historian Henry Adams's wife, Marian Hooper Adams, who committed suicide. Instead, Saint-Gaudens' work "has a soul."

Neoclassicism fell out of favor ahead of World War I, as artists grew enamored of the possibilities of abstraction. Many remarkable American Renaissance monuments were even destroyed. The reputations of French and Saint-Gaudens were spared such a drastic fate, but as men who "created great works that spoke to the nation," Cooper believes, they are still woefully underappreciated.

ARTS & LETTERS

The Invisible Hand

THE SOURCE: "Translators Struggle to Prove Their Academic Bona Fides" by Jennifer Howard, in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Jan. 17, 2010.

PITY THE LITERARY TRANSLATOR, whose mission it is to be invisible, to "fade into the background, like a discreet waiter who keeps the glasses filled while remaining practically unnoticed." Translating fiction and poetry is a thankless task, one that earns little respect in the academy and little pay outside of it, writes Jennifer Howard, a senior reporter at *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

In academia, translation is often

seen as a digression from serious scholarly work. As Mark Anderson, a Franz Kafka specialist at Columbia University, describes the prevailing sentiment, "Translation can take people away from criticism and theoretical thinking of an original sort." Before Anderson was tenured, the chair of his department advised him not to work as a translator because doing so would be viewed unfavorably by the tenure committee. Anderson opted to work under a pseudonym. "I think my chair gave me excellent advice," he says. Stars such as Robert Fagles notwithstanding, marketing specialists have downplayed the role of translators, often excluding their names from the covers of books they have brought into English, in the belief that translated work is a tough sell.

But the tides may be changing, Howard writes. More universities are offering certificates or degrees in translation. Some schools, such as the University of Texas, Dallas, now house on-campus translation centers. And small imprints emphasizing translated literature are springing up at university-affiliated publishing houses. At a few academic institutions, faculty personnel codes have been recrafted to consider the work of translation in hiring and promotion decisions.

Howard reports that a group of translators are trying to move the weight of the Modern Language Association—the nation's most prominent organization of literary scholars—behind the fight for greater recognition in the academy. But respect doesn't put food on the table, and job pickings remain slim in the humanities, for translators and scholars alike.