

**The Stonehenge Letters**, by Harry Karlinsky, Coach House Books, 264 pages, \$17.95

A retired psychiatrist trawls the Nobel Archive searching for why Freud never received one of those famed medals – only to discover another, secret award available only to Nobel Laureates. A clandestine codicil to Alfred Nobel's will established the Stonehenge Prize, awarded to the person who can solve the who, what, when, (from) where, or why of the English monument. That premise sets up a fascinating, highly original novel. According to our narrator the psychiatrist, "It was Freud who stated that there was no better document than the will to reveal the character of its writer." In this telling, Nobel's will develops into a surprisingly expansive book, considering its page count: It's part psychiatric assessment of Nobel, part intellectual biography of the prize, part parlour game. How would you solve Stonehenge if you were Pavlov, Kipling, Roosevelt, or Curie? The Stonehenge Prize is, sadly, fictional, though as the novel's bibliography and notes show, the story is rooted in fact.

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