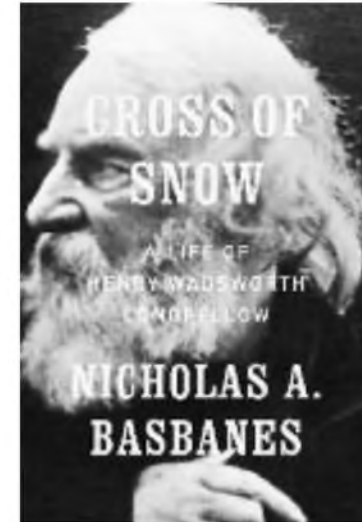
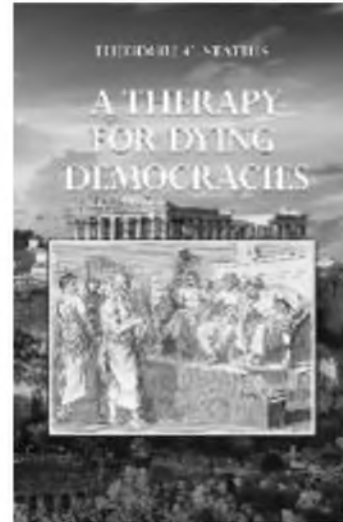
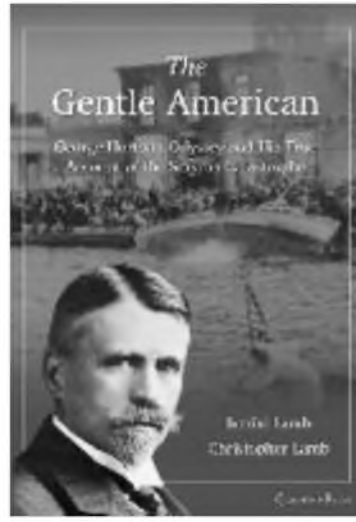


TNH's Year in Books, Favorite Fiction and Non-Fiction

As 2022 draws to a close, The National Herald looks back at some of the most fascinating books of the year. Among the year's top selections, books inspired by the Greek myths captured the imagination while non-fiction works offered thought-provoking insights.

This year, our favorites in fiction inspired by Greek myths included *Ariadne* by Jennifer Saint and *Daughters of Sparta* by Claire Heywood, which also happen to be debut novels that focus on the female characters, and sisters specifically, offering readers a chance to hear from the unheard voices of the young women in these timeless tales. Both books are entertaining novels, but Saint's *Ariadne* is the more emotionally-charged of the two and the most at ease incorporating the fantastical aspects of the myths with the realistic portrayal of the characters' emotions.

Elektra by Jennifer Saint is another impressive retelling of Greek myth, a strong followup to her debut novel, *Ariadne*, which became an international bestseller, *A Book of the Month* pick, and garnered comparisons to Madeline Miller's *Circe* and *Song of Achilles*. Published by Flatiron Books, the book weaves together the stories of three women bound to the House of Atreus, desperate to escape an ancient curse and to step out of the shadow of the heroes of the Trojan War. The characters are well-known to those familiar with Greek myths – Clytemnestra, Cassandra, and the title character, Elektra, but Saint's retelling of



their stories allows us to experience the dramatic events through their own eyes and with a deeper sense of their emotional truth and the profound lessons that ancient Greek myths can still teach us today about human nature and its constancy.

In non-fiction, *Cross of Snow: A Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow* by Nicholas A. Basbanes is an impressive reassessment of the poet for the 21st century. Well-written and meticulously researched, the book is a pleasure to read, just like all of Basbanes' works.

A major literary biography of America's best-loved 19th century poet, the first in more than 50 years, highlights the life of the writer whose stature and celebrity were unparalleled in his time, whose work helped to explain America's new world not only to Americans but to Europe and beyond. The book is a must read for anyone interested in Longfellow, literature, and cultural history.

The Gentle American: George Horton's Odyssey and His True Account of the Smyrna Catastrophe by Ismini Lamb and Christopher Lamb

is a well-researched and well-written volume that highlights this remarkable historical figure and brings the events of that time period to life through Horton's own words. Published in time for the 100th somber anniversary of the Smyrna Catastrophe, the book is a compelling biography of Horton that offers insights not only into his life's journey but also into U.S. foreign policy and the humanitarian efforts in response to the tragic event that changed the course of world history. *The Gentle American*, published by Gorgias Press, is available online: <https://bit.ly/3SVXydr>.

As threats to democracy everywhere seem to be increasing, the discussions surrounding the threats rarely offer practical solutions to the problems plaguing the system. *A Therapy for Dying Democracies* by Theodore C. Stathis is an impressive book offering insights as well as a plan of action for saving democracy which is especially timely at this particular moment in history.

The book's description notes that "the world economic crisis and the provocatively unjust distribution of wealth have exposed the real crisis,

which is a political one. All the malfunctioning democracies that are gradually growing into oligarchic governments have become the main focus of many political experts."

That Time I Got Cancer: A Love Story by Jim Zervanos draws the reader in from the very first page of this well-written memoir that reads like a novel as Zervanos recounts his dramatic and inspiring story. His family, friends, and team of doctors join him on his harrowing journey through countless tests and then undergoing surgery, to his eventual diagnosis with lymphoma and the treatment that followed. This is a moving account of how cancer affects not only Zervanos himself but also those closest to him and how those relationships evolve under the tension and stress of the diagnosis and treatment, as well as the recovery. Lighthearted and tender moments relieve some of the tension in the story which offers hope for all those struggling in life whether they're facing a personal health crisis or not.

The books mentioned above are all available online and in bookstores.