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## Review of the Sixty-Five Years of Washington by Juan Jose Saer

Kevin Clouther

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**The Sixty-Five Years of Washington.**  
**By Juan José Saer. Tr. by Steve Dolph.**

Nov. 2010. 203p. Open Letter, paper, \$14.95  
(9781934824207).

In Dolph's confident translation of Saer's *The Sixty-Five Years of Washington*, the reader will find a world distinct from the worlds commonly offered by contemporary American literary fiction. It is not the South American setting that is distinct, however, so much as the style. The characters—some with simple names like Leto, others with grand titles such as the Mathematician—could be talking and walking anywhere, and talking and walking are mostly what they do. What feels foreign is the late Argentine author's leisurely syntax and villanel-la-like repetition. This is an abstract novel, and often the abstraction feels more elliptical than profound, though Saer sometimes offers an idea so compelling and immediately recognizable, one cannot help but feel—or perhaps wish—one has had the very same thought: “In the half-empty cabin his sudden and at the same time slow gesture contrasted with the illusory stillness of the airplane, which floated in a bank of the gray clouds like a fragile object wrapped in cotton packaging.” —*Kevin Clouter*

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