# Statue of Russian Poet Alexander Pushkin Snatched by Thieves in Moscow

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The monument to Alexander Pushkin that was stolen by a group of unknown vandals in north-western Moscow.

In a country where poet Alexander Pushkin is worshiped as a literary god, stealing a monument in his honor is to be considered nothing short of blasphemy.

Yet that's exactly what happened over the weekend, when a group of unknown hoodlums seized a bronze statue of Pushkin from a square in north-western Moscow.

District authorities said Saturday in an online statement that the vandals had most likely removed the monument to sell for scrap metal.

"The statue was not light, and [the vandals] would have had to use machinery in order to take it away," the statement said, indicating that the theft had been planned in advance.

According to the authorities, the Pushkin monument was unveiled in 1999 and has been stolen once before.

But the latest theft is being viewed as "particularly offensive" given that 2015 has been declared the Year of Literature in Russia by President Vladimir Putin. The next 12 months will see Russians exposed to a host of festivals and activities in a bid to increase interest in reading.

Local law enforcement agencies are still searching for the Pushkin bust, the authorities said in their statement.

Pushkin, who lived from 1799 to 1837, is perhaps one of Russia's most revered poets. His most famous works include "Eugene Onegin," "Queen of Spades" and "Ruslan and Lyudmila."