



The Life and Loves of Laurie Lee

Valerie Grove

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Millions of readers know and love him for his lyrical portraits of his life, from the moving and nostalgic tales of childhood and innocence found in the pages of *Cider with Rosie*, to the nomadic wanderings through Spain retold in *As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning*, to his dramatic experiences fighting Franco's forces in *A Moment of War*. As a poet, playwright, broadcaster and writer, Laurie Lee created a legend around himself that would see him safely secured in the literary canon even within his own lifetime. Yet, though he wrote exclusively about his own life, Lee never told the whole story. His readers know him as a man devoted to two women: his wife and his daughter, 'the firstborn'. Among the pages of his published works there is little trace of the girls he left behind. He never identified in print the girl who inspired him to go to Spain, or the woman who supported him there. He never named the beautiful mistress he came home to, who was the great love of his young life and who led him into literary London, bore his child and broke his heart. In *The Life and Loves of Laurie Lee*, acclaimed biographer Valerie Grove delves into the letters and diaries he kept hidden from the world, building on her magisterial study of the charismatic poet to capture the essence of this romantic, elusive enigma and bring him to life once more.

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