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J.G. Farrell: The Making of a Writer

Lavinia Greacen

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J.G. Farrell: The Making of a Writer Lavinia Greacen
This new, expanded edition of the widely praised biography of the Booker Prize-winning author J.G. Farrell is timely. His literary achievement is still in the ascendent, as proved by the posthumous award in 2010 of the ‘Lost’ Booker for *Troubles*, decided by international e-vote. That made him a double Booker winner, and the publicity given to his renowned Empire Trilogy novels has left the general reading public wanting to know more.

Lavinia Greacen has uncovered fresh material and additional photographs since the publication of the first edition, shedding further light on Farrell’s short life and tragic death, as well as the development of his writing career. The result is a fascinating and compelling story about the man described by the latest *Estudios Irlandeses* as "one of the English language’s most accomplished and enigmatic figures".

The life of the novelist J.G. Farrell (1935 – 1979) is almost stranger than fiction. He was a schoolboy sporting hero struck down by polio, a dedicated writer living on a shoestring who was awarded the Booker Prize in 1973, and, with his literary reputation secure and a newly-converted house on the scenic west Cork coastline, he was drowned at the age of 44 while fishing from rocks nearby.

This expanded biography, interweaving letters and interviews from sources previously unknown, tells the moving story of his peripatetic life. It ranges from his childhood in Ireland to public school and university in England; from his base in London, where most of his novels took shape, to extended stays in France and the United States, and to periods spent in Mexico, India, Vietnam and Singapore. Readers will discover that Farrell’s celebrated Empire Trilogy, which includes *Troubles*, *The Siege of Krishnapur* and *The Singapore Grip*, reflects his own travels and personal experiences, as well as his unique wit and imagination.

This biography reveals the very private man behind the celebrated literary novelist. "After reading it", wrote Gerald Dawe, Senior Lecturer in English at Trinity College, Dublin, "I felt not only that I knew J.G. Farrell, but that I, too, mourned his loss as if he were a friend."

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