

My grandfather, although best known and loved by many readers all over the world for creating the Larkin family in his bestselling novel *The Darling Buds of May*, was also one of the most prolific English short story writers of the twentieth century, often compared to Chekhov. He wrote over 300 short stories and novellas in a career spanning six decades from the 1920s through to the 1970s.

My grandfather's short fiction took many different forms, from descriptive country sketches to longer, sometimes tragic, narrative stories, and I am thrilled that Bloomsbury Reader will be reissuing all of his stories and novellas, making them available to new audiences, and giving them—especially those that have been out of print for many years or only ever published in obscure magazines, newspapers and pamphlets—a new lease of life.

There are hundreds of stories to discover and re-discover, from H. E. Bates's most famous tales featuring Uncle Silas, or the critically acclaimed novellas such as *The Mill* and *Dulcima*, to little, unknown gems such as 'The Waddler', which has not been reprinted since it first appeared in the *Guardian* in 1926, when my grandfather was just twenty, or 'Castle in the Air', a wonderful, humorous story that was lost and unknown to our family until 2013.

If you would like to know more about my grandfather's work I encourage you to visit the [H. E. Bates Companion](#)—a brilliant comprehensive online resource where detailed bibliographic information, as well as articles and reviews, on almost all of H. E. Bates's publications, can be found.

I hope you enjoy reading all these evocative and vivid short stories by H. E. Bates, one of the masters of the art.