



from

CHRISTMAS LANDSCAPE

Tonight there is no moon,
But a new star opens
Like a silver trumpet over the dead.
Tonight in a nest of ruins
The blessed babe is laid.
And the fir tree warms to a bloom of candles,
And the child lights his lantern,
Stares at his tinselled toy;
And our hearts and hearths
Smoulder with live ashes.

Laurie Lee

Laurie Lee

(1914- 1997)



Laurie Lee above the cottage in Slad where he grew up

Laurie Lee is most famous for his autobiographical books. *Cider With Rosie* is a highly evocative and nostalgic account of his country childhood in the Gloucestershire village of Slad. It describes a vanished rural world of home-made wine, village school, church outings, 'a world of silence... of hard work and necessary patience... of white roads rutted by hooves and cartwheels, innocent of oil and petrol.' The Rosie of the title is a village girl who 'baptized me with her cidrous kisses' behind a haycock.

As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning tells how he left for Spain, and eked out a living as he walked to Andalusia by playing his violin. *A Moment of War* describes how he returned to Spain in the 1930s as an International Brigade volunteer in the Spanish Civil War, fighting in the Republican army against Franco's fascists.

His first love was poetry, and he published several volumes, which show the same rich and sensuous apprehension of the natural world that is found in *Cider with Rosie*.