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73 Kenway Road  
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# First Boredom, Then Fear

## *The Life of Philip Larkin*

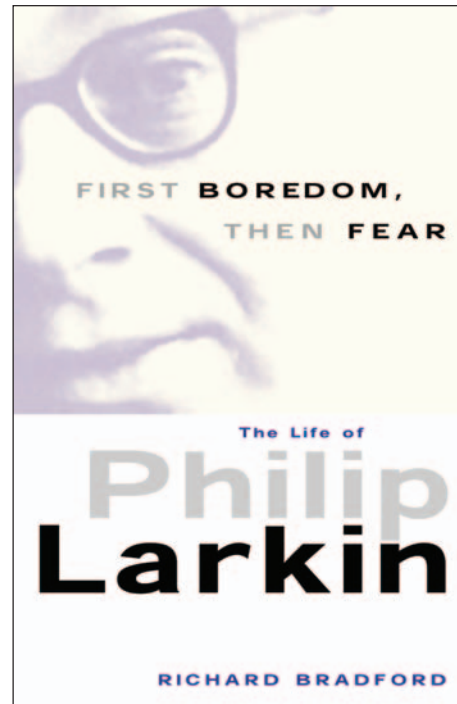
Richard Bradford

Illustrated

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**When Anthony Thwaite's edition of Philip Larkin's *Letters* was published in 1992 followed by Andrew Motion's biography a year later, Larkin's enemies seized on the new disclosures with a frenzy hardly witnessed since the McCarthy era.**

What had hitherto been regarded only as potential inclinations hinted at in his poems – misogyny and xenophobia in particular – were now indisputable facts, and since then Larkin's reputation as a poet has been tarnished by his image as a human being. Richard Bradford's new biography reveals that Larkin treated his prejudices and peculiarities with detached circumspection. Sometimes he shared them, self-mockingly, self-destructively, with his closest friends; he divided up his life so that some people knew him well but none completely. It was only in the poems that the parts began to resemble the whole.

The trajectory of his poetic writing was influenced principally by his friendship with Kingsley Amis. Without Larkin Amis's immensely successful first novel, *Lucky Jim*, would not have been written. Its success caused Larkin to finally abandon his own ambitions as a novelist, to concentrate exclusively on his poetry, and his poetry would thereafter become his autobiography. Larkin's poetry is in its own right magnificent, and readers of Bradford's biography will be able to extend their appreciation of his art to an acquaintance with the artist at work.

- **Eagerly anticipated follow-up to Bradford's acclaimed study of Kingsley Amis**
- **First Larkin biography since 1992**
- **Engages directly with the controversy over Larkin's supposed racism and misogyny**
- **Draws on never-before-seen material overlooked by other studies**
- **Incorporates a study of Monica Jones's recently uncovered private letters**
- **Interest in Larkin at an all-time high after the play *Pretending to be Me***
- **BBC drama *Love Again* broadcast to major acclaim**
- **Follows the release of a new edition of Larkin's *Collected Poems***

**Richard Bradford** is Professor of English at the University of Ulster. Previously he has taught in the universities of Oxford, Wales and in Trinity College, Dublin. He has written twelve books on a variety of subjects, from studies of eighteenth-century literary criticism to *Lucky Jim: The Life of Kingsley Amis* ('An intelligent and interesting account of Amis's life . . . Bradford is particularly perceptive on the relationship with Philip Larkin, whose superior genius awed and inspired Amis.' – *Spectator*)

*For further information contact Simon Smith at Peter Owen*