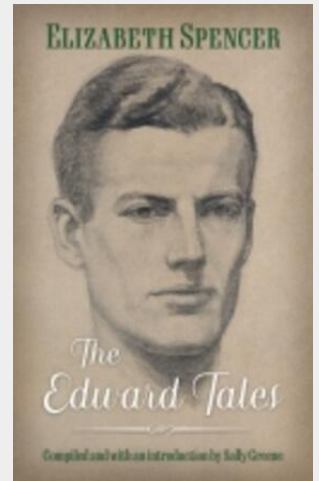


Spencer

Edward Tales

In conferring upon Mississippi native Elizabeth Spencer (1921–2019) the 2013 Rea Award for the Short Story, the jury said that at the then age of ninety-two, she "has thrived at the height of her powers to a degree that is unparalleled in modern letters." Over a celebrated six-decade career, Spencer published every type of literary fiction: novels and short stories, a memoir, and a play. Like her best-known work, *The Light in the Piazza*, most of her narratives explore the inner lives of restless, searching southern women. Yet one mercurial male character, Edward Glenn, deserves attention for the way he insists on returning to her pages. Speaking of Edward in unusually personal terms, Spencer admitted a strong attraction to his type: the elusive, intelligent southern man, "maybe an unresolved part of my psyche." In *The Edward Tales*, Sally Greene brings together the four narratives in which Edward figures: the play *For Lease or Sale* (1989) and three short stories, "The Runaways" (1994), "Master of Shongalo" (1996), and "Return Trip" (2009). The collection allows readers to observe Spencer's evolving style while offering glimpses of the moral reasoning that lies at the heart of all her work. Greene's critical introduction helpfully places these narratives within the context of Spencer's entire body of writing. *The Edward Tales* confirms Spencer's place as one of our most beloved and accomplished writers.



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