

# J. R. R. Tolkien: An Imaginative Life

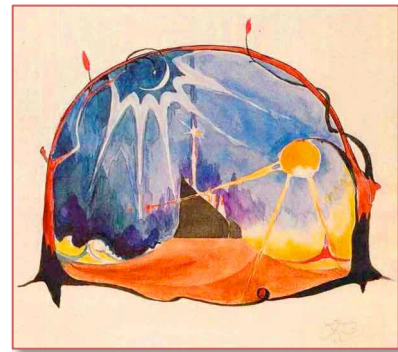
A Series of Three Illustrated Lectures  
Presented by Lance S. Owens, MD

*“The Land of Fairy Story is wide and deep and high.... In that land a man may (perhaps) count himself fortunate to have wandered, but its very mystery and wealth make dumb the traveler who would report.... The fairy gold (too often) turns to withered leaves when it is brought away. All that I can ask is that you, knowing all these things, will receive my withered leaves, as a token at least that my hand once held a little of the gold.”*

– J.R.R. Tolkien (draft manuscript of “On Fairy Stories”)

J.R.R. Tolkien has emerged as one of the most important and enduring literary figures of the twentieth century. His masterwork, *The Lord of the Rings*, possesses an intriguing quality of "depth" and veracity that has evoked a sense of wonder in generations of readers. Those qualities have made it one of the most-printed and most-read books in history.

Most of his fans know that Tolkien was a philologist and professor of English language at Oxford. However, very few readers appreciate the intensity with which Tolkien explored the beauty and perils of his imaginative world before ever starting down the road that led from the Shire to Mount Doom – the decade long labor of writing *LOTR*, begun by Tolkien in 1937. These three lectures examine the broad span of Tolkien's life and work, with focus on Tolkien's experience of imagination.



Tolkien understood his imaginative gifts and inclinations were unusual. Though rare, they are however not entirely unique. In the final lecture, we consider Tolkien's place in the Western imaginative tradition, with special attention to the work and experiences of C. G. Jung and his "Red Book" – a work kept hidden for decades, and just finally released for publication in 2009. Tolkien also had a "Red Book" – *The Red Book of Westmarch* – and the similarity of the experiences behind these two imaginative "Red Books" is quite extraordinary.

These three illustrated audio lectures were offered as a prologue to Dr. Owens' in-depth lectures on [C. G. Jung and the Red Book](#); they were presented at Westminster College, Salt Lake City, during February and March of 2009.

**[Click here for the catalog and to listen to the lectures](#)**