



LETTERS TO GALA

By Paul Eluard

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A collection of the French poet's letters immortalizing his great love for the musewife he shared with Salvador Dali. Eluard (1895-1952) and Gala met in 1912, when both were 17. They married five years later. From 1919 on, he was associated with surrealism, and the letters--dating from 1924 and his assumption of the editorship of that epochal surrealist magazine, *Minotaure*, to 1948, four years before his death--chronicle his friendships with a galaxy of artistic acquaintances including Aragon, Breton, Bunuel, Char, Giacometti, and Picasso, thus forming a veritable journal of the movement. The letters of this Resistance hero--the poet of love in time of war--to a woman whose "presence [was] sovereign" in him, and for whom woman was not only the other half but the be-all and end-all of man, memorialize the vestiges of the passion of two lovers, "two shadows in a single night." Through silences, separations, reunions, the "partaken nights" of these two became, as they divorced and both remarried (Eluard to "Nusch" and Gala to Dali), the stuff of memory and poetry. Eluard's letters bequeath to posterity, if not individual stylistic masterpieces, then--in addition to an invaluable, firsthand account of a seminal artistic movement--a poetic testament to an enduring love.