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## By Lawrence Levi

One Saturday afternoon in New York City, at the age of 13, I took the subway down to the Mid-Manhattan Library to unearth buried treasure: the uncollected stories of J.D. Salinger. Having gobbled up *The Catcher in the Rye* and his three other books, I was giddy with the discovery that he had 22 stories floating around in back issues of magazines like *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Cosmopolitan*—giddy in a way I hadn't been since I was 8 and heard they were making a sequel to *Star Wars*. I decided to start with the last piece Salinger ever published—"Hapworth 16, 1924," in the June 19, 1965, *New Yorker*—and work my way back. When I got to the stacks, I found, to my utter shock and disillusionment, that the appropriate pages had been torn out—from all the appropriate issues. A sympathetic librarian directed me to the microfilm readers, but when I finally got it on the screen, "Hapworth" was way too long to ingest in the half-hour time limit or to photograph with my eighth-grade allowance.

This summer, the small Orchises Press in Alexandria,

Va., will quietly bring "Hapworth" (without an author photo or cover art, as Salinger always insists) to bookstore shelves; it's the first new Salinger book in 34 years. Considering the 78-year-old writer's notorious mania for privacy—he's granted just two brief interviews since 1953, and in 1986 blocked publication of a biography that quoted from his letters—and his seeming resolve never to publish again, it's perplexing (and, to fans, titillating) that he would authorize this new volume.

Salinger's works have always had a sort of mystical aura, one that his silence has helped to perpetuate. The aura comes less from his later writings' somewhat fatuous promotion of Zen Buddhism than from his characters. They provoke a powerful sense of identification, and their pronouncements seem intimate and profound. In Salinger, teenage readers find their first adult sympathizer. As Alfred Kazin wrote in *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1961, they "respond to him with a consciousness that he speaks for them and virtually to them, in a language that is peculiarly

*Continued on page 47*