

# Jim Tully

## American Writer, Irish Rover, Hollywood Brawler

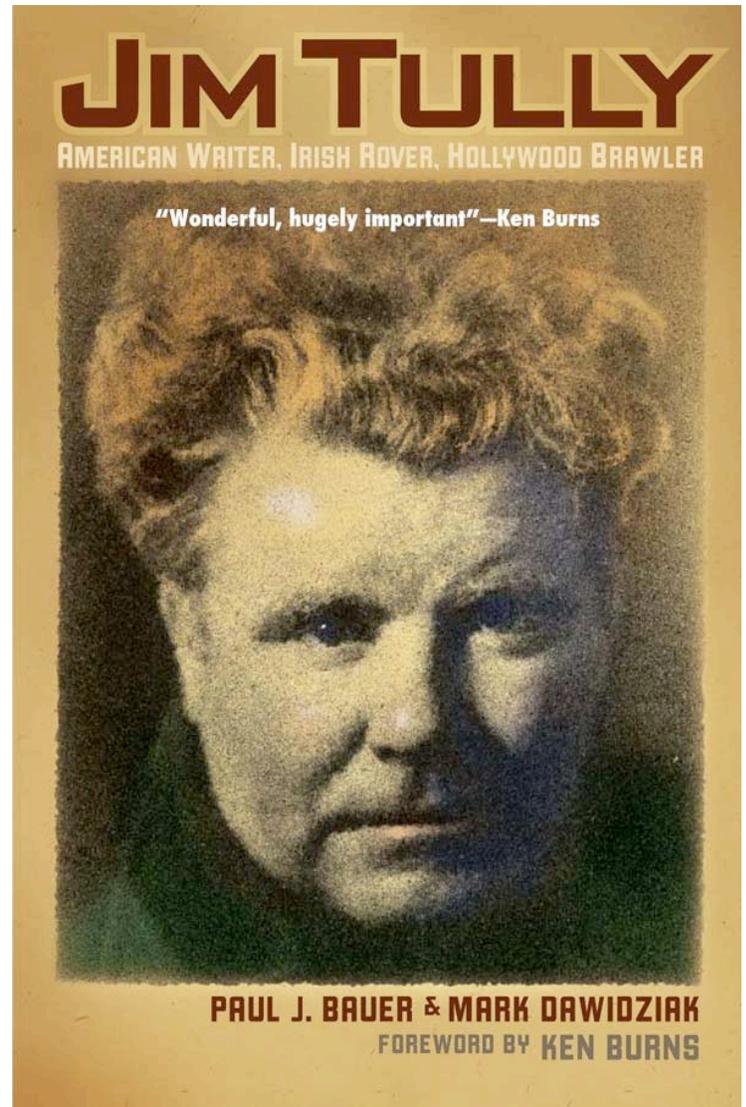
By Paul J. Bauer and Mark Dawidziak

**The first full-length biography of Jim Tully, the “hobo author” who became a literary star as a hard-boiled chronicler of both America’s underclass and the Hollywood elite**

### Jim Tully (1886-1947)

Let Paul J. Bauer and Mark Dawidziak introduce you to *Jim Tully: American Writer, Irish Rover, Hollywood Brawler*. Overcoming years of poverty and struggle, Tully achieved a critical and commercial success during the 1920s and '30s that may qualify him as the greatest long shot in American literature. Although largely forgotten today, Tully was a literary superstar, writing about the American underclass: hobos, carnival workers, con artists, prostitutes, drifters, grifters, and boxers. Along the way, this “hobo author” worked for Charlie Chaplin, interviewed James Joyce and picked up such close pals as W.C. Fields, H.L. Mencken, Frank Capra, Wallace Beery, Jimmy Cagney, Jack Dempsey, Lon Chaney, and Damon Runyon.

Born near St. Marys, Ohio, to an Irish immigrant ditch-digger and his wife, Tully spent six years in a Cincinnati orphanage and another six years as a youthful vagabond. He left the road in Kent, Ohio, working as a chainmaker, professional boxer and tree surgeon. He moved to Hollywood in 1912, when he began writing in earnest. His literary career took two distinct paths. Writing about movie stars, directors and producers, he became known as the most-hated man in Hollywood—a title he relished. Less lucrative but closer to his heart were the books he wrote about his life on the road, the American underclass, and his Irish-American family.



“If Tully were a Russian, read in translation, all the Professors would be hymning him. He has all of Gorky’s capacity for making vivid the miseries of poor and helpless men, and in addition he has a humor that no Russian could conceivably have.”

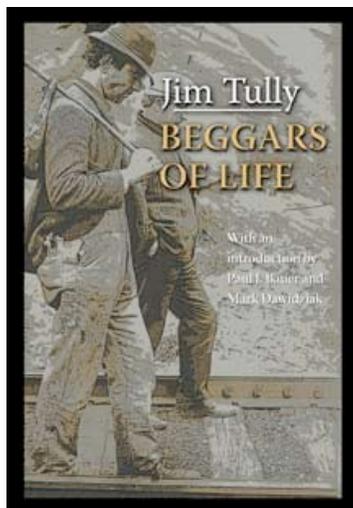
— H. L. Mencken

“That Jim Tully wrote at all was a miracle; that he wrote so well is a gift to the world.”

— John Sayles

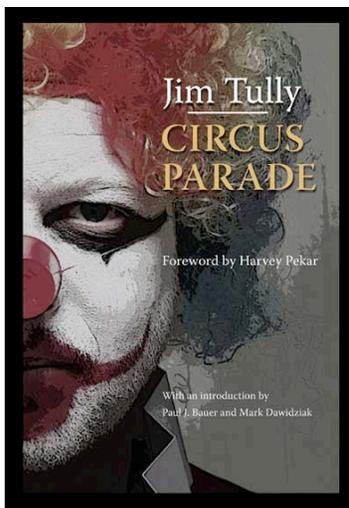
# Books by Jim Tully

Kent State University Press has reprinted four of Jim Tully's most acclaimed books  
Edited with introductions by Tully biographers Paul J. Bauer and Mark Dawidziak



## Beggars of Life

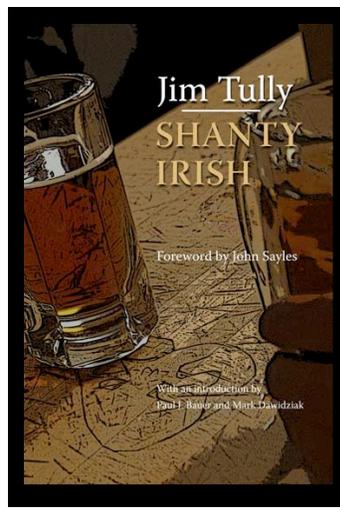
First published in 1924, this novelistic memoir impressed readers and reviewers with its remarkable vitality and honesty. Tully's devotion to Mark Twain and Jack London taught him the importance of giving the reader a strong sense of place, and this he does brilliantly, again and again. This is the book that defined Tully's hard-boiled style and set the pattern for the twelve books that followed over the next two decades. Startling in its originality and intensity, *Beggars of Life* is a breakneck journey made while clinging to the lowest rungs of the social ladder.



## Circus Parade

Based on Tully's time working with small-time carnivals in the South, *Circus Parade* presents the sordid side of circus life. Tully's use of fast-paced vignettes and unforgettable characters made this book one of his most successful, both commercially and critically. Published in 1927, it's also one of his grittiest works. Among the cast is Cameron, the shifty and sardonic circus owner; Lila, the lonely four-hundred-pound strong woman; and Blackie, an amoral drug addict.

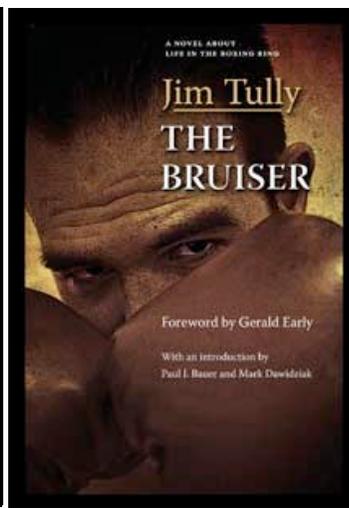
*Foreword by Harvey Pekar*



## Shanty Irish

Tully's most deeply personal book, *Shanty Irish* was published in 1928. "*Shanty Irish* is a chunk of real life," wrote Upton Sinclair. "It made me feel human and humble, which is a good thing for anybody." H.L. Mencken said, "In *Shanty Irish*, it seems to me, he has gone beyond any of his work of the past. The book is not only brilliantly realistic; it also has fine poetic quality." The story of the Tullys and the Lawlers, it is considered the first book to address the Irish-American immigrant experience from a serious perspective.

*Foreword by John Sayles*



## The Bruiser

*The Bruiser* is the story of Shane Rory, a drifter who turns to boxing and works his way up the heavyweight ranks. Like Tully, Shane starts out as a road kid who takes up prizefighting. While *The Bruiser* is not an autobiographical work, it does draw heavily on Tully's experiences of the road and ring. More than just a riveting picture of life in the ring, *The Bruiser* is a portrait of an America that Jim Tully knew from the bottom up. Published in 1936, the novel was dedicated to Tully's friend, "fellow road-kid" Jack Dempsey.

*Foreword by Gerald Early*



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