

Hawk Tower Revisited

Edwin A. Cranston

Houses

House built of stone;
small panes, great heart and flame
listening all night to the moan
of sea, your lichened rock
seems nothing like the same
as hill-dry wood and blazing glass,
but winds will pass
and never mock
passions that sank like ghosts,
hungry and angry, legions of the lost,
into the joists, the beams, the stones
guarding the shore garden and the grass-dry hill of bones.

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A pilgrimage last year to California to attend a sea-cliff wedding and find again the graves of a friend and his wife in Sonoma brought my own wife and me also to Carmel on another journey into the deep past. Carmel is Jeffers country. We went to be in the same place where the poet lived from 1914 to his death in 1962, to visit his home—and to find what making such a pilgrimage might mean. Carmel retains a special character despite the vast changes that have overtaken it since its days as an artist colony in the 1890s,¹ or since Robinson and Una Jeffers arrived there just as the First World War was beginning, or even since my own first trip up the coast in 1954. As many—too many—have discovered, Carmel is a good place to be. Jeffers, who did not love the crowd, and who was a prophet if any poet ever was, lived to see what was happening and suffered accordingly. The forest of pine and eucalypts he planted is mostly gone, most of his property sold off and built up. But Tor House and Hawk Tower have been saved from the wrecker's ball and are preserved under the protection of the U.S. government (what an irony, considering Jeffers's political views) and the Tor House Foundation. The house, tower, and garden are now an enclave of a special past—haunted by the ghosts of a great love and a remorseless power. My wife and I were welcomed to that enclave by Alex and Fran Vardamis of Tor House Foundation, an experience that coincided with the publication of the

fourth volume of the *Collected Poetry* by Stanford University Press to bring Jeffers with all his troubling and passionate demands back from the underlayers of my mind. Whatever others may think, for me the man, this poet, will not rest easy in neglected earth. His voice must be heard.

Although I am an old English major, I long ago abandoned the field and switched to Japanese literature. Therefore my presence in this periodical has a certain implausibility. My only qualification, such as it is, must be my involvement with poetry. I teach poetry, translate poetry, and have written poems since my senior year in high school. Poetry has turned out to be the center of my existence. A life in poetry implies a vision of the world. My own world is, like everyone's, the product of everything read, written, and experienced. Early exposure to Robinson Jeffers, whom I began to read about fifty years ago, has helped create that world. At that time I had never seen the California coast north of San Diego, but fortunately I was living in the Sonoran desert of southern Arizona. I was studying Astronomy in college. Arcturus, Aldebaran, Antares came to me at once from the night sky and from *Tamar* and other poems by Jeffers. I too could step out any winter night and see Orion and the Pleiades in silent, pale parade. The intensities of my own youth resonated with what I discovered in Jeffers, especially that aspect of him which is devoted to the cosmic frame. The passages in his narratives that suddenly break away and invoke the universe came to me as a revelation of what poetry could do. The mountaintop scene in *Roan Stallion* is one example:

Enormous films of moonlight

Trailed down from the height. Space, anxious whiteness, vastness. Distant beyond conception the shining ocean

Lay light like a haze along the ledge and doubtful world's end. Little vapors gleaming, and little Darknesses on the far chart underfoot symbolized wood and valley; but the air was the element, the moon-

Saturate arcs and spires of the air.

Here is solitude, here on the calvary, nothing conscious

But the possible God and the cropped grass, no witness, no eye but that misformed one, the moon's past fullness.

Two figures on the shining hill, woman and stallion, she kneeling to him, brokenly adoring. (*CP* 1:193)

Another passage, earlier in the poem, steps aside from narrative altogether to make a statement of belief, of "philosophy," probably the first enunciation of Jeffers's credo that I found:

Humanity is the start of the race; I say

Humanity is the mould to break away from, the crust to break through, the coal to break into fire,

The atom to be split.

Tragedy that breaks a man's face and a white fire flies out of it; vision that fools
him
Out of his limits, desire that fools him out of his limits, unnatural crime, inhuman science,
Slit eyes in the mask; wild loves that leap over the walls of nature, the wild fence-vaulter science,
Useless intelligence of far stars, dim knowledge of the spinning demons that make an atom,
These break, these pierce, these deify, praising their God shrilly with fierce voices: not in a man's shape
He approves the praise, he that walks lightning-naked on the Pacific, that laces the suns with planets,
The heart of the atom with electrons: what is humanity in this cosmos? For him, the last
Least taint of a trace in the dregs of the solution; for itself, the mould to break away from, the coal
To break into fire, the atom to be split. (*CP* 1:189–90)

This passage excited and challenged me. It took seriously the implications of science in words that said what I felt all the would-be accommodators of science and religion were avoiding—not to mention those who would reject science itself. But at the same time, I was in the full tide of intoxication with the humanism Jeffers rejects. The worlds of art, literature, and thought were just then opening to me. The conflict has remained unresolved to this day. The violence for which Jeffers's narratives are notorious, the stark dramas played out against the splendors of the cosmos and the majesty of the California coast, resonate with other matter in the great tradition—the unbelievable violence of the *Iliad*, the cruelties and torment of Greek and Elizabethan drama, the remorselessness of old ballads. They in fact become part of that tradition. But that tradition also includes the softer, sweeter, more merely “entertaining” elements Jeffers liked to scorn—the antics of dancers, the music and writing and art that warm the heart to (foolish, he would say) love of one's fellowman. Volume Four of the *Collected Poetry* allows one to see Jeffers leaching out of himself the erotic sweetness of a poem like “Fauna,” developing fluency in traditional verse as he began to focus on his themes, and finally abandoning rhymes, sonnets, regular meters for a new style. The California coast from Carmel south through the Big Sur was a world apart in the era before the coast highway, a world that seemed coeval with the elements of nature itself, and Jeffers at first felt it would not change soon. He learned otherwise as the decades passed, and some of his peculiar bitterness stems from anger at spoliation.² This fed into his developing creed of humanity as “dregs of the solution.” The other formative—or distorting—factor in his mature development was the First World War. There is evidence that Jeffers was torn by patriotic emotions in conflict with his nascent isolationism and “Inhumanism.”³ But by the war's end, Jeffers was already disillusioned, if indeed he had any illusions to lose. And he was embittered by America's involvement in quarrels he consistently maintained were not its own. Jeffers's repetitive insistence on the cold eye and

the stone-like stance can be understood as a quarrel with himself, a not entirely unvexed position. Jeffers had political passions, and they mattered to his poetry. World War One excited and appalled him. He clearly felt it signaled the end of Western civilization—and a good thing too, he seems to say. But previously unpublished poems like “The Dance of the Banner” (*CP* 4:282) and “The Daughter of God in Russia” (*CP* 4:464) show him fascinated with the Bolshevik revolution.⁴ Violence always fascinated him, as is only too notorious in his later poems about Hitler, whom he seemed to think of as another of his self-destructive heroes. Wilson was a man with a tragic flaw, but Roosevelt was only a cheap politician, a deceiver. If the war of 1914 contributed to the doom-laden quality of Jeffers’s thought, the war of 1939 (as he referred to it) made him shrill, sometimes too angry and frustrated to write well. His reputation has suffered accordingly.⁵

But to me in the early fifties, both the earliest and the late Jeffers were unknown. I wrote poems reaching out to the cosmos, poems about the desert mountains, poems that attempted the Jeffers-style incorporation of science, especially astronomy, into a passionate vision of the world. They came out of me because of the sheer power and impact of Jeffers’s own vision. He was sympathetic to me in part because of my own misanthropic tendencies, the pleasure I shared in notions of man’s disappearance from the world. But I never managed to follow Jeffers into “Inhumanism” (surely the most unfortunate name for what could better be labeled “transhuman”). I left college still a would-be “humanist.” Clearly one with an unresolved contradiction at the heart of his humanism, to be sure.

The years that followed took me to Japan, and in the fullness of time I became a student and translator of Japanese poetry. As one learns about something foreign, one naturally is drawn to difference, to otherness. It would be interesting and useful to examine Jeffers’s own notions of East Asian art and civilization, on which we have some fragments of evidence.⁶ But I choose not to do that. One reason is that to do so would inevitably involve me in a series of generalizations of the East vs. West variety. Although Robert Frost humorously defended his poems as generalizations,⁷ they are the generalizations of a wise, or at least savvy, Yankee on human life. Generalizations of the academic sort I leave to the authors of textbooks. The other reason is that the foreign is not all foreign. Part of the pleasure of studying it is to discover the familiar, to discover ourselves. That means more to me. After all, I am still a humanist. I still believe we all ultimately speak the same language. We just have different dialects.

What did I find in Japanese poetry that is relevant to Robinson Jeffers? Late in his career Jeffers published an essay titled “Poetry, Gongorism, and a Thousand Years.” I will not defend its opinionated attack on the modern in poetry and art, though I cannot say I completely disagree with it either. What strikes me is Jeffers’s insistence that the poet write for the distant future—be thinking

ahead “a thousand years.” Thus he should concern himself with the permanent, disdaining the fashions and devices of the moment. I think he believed his own verse qualified to be read long after more popular poets were forgotten. Time will tell—perhaps. But I feel a strange sense of confirmation of this notion when I realize that the Japanese poetry that moves me most was composed over a thousand years ago. In the ancient songs and in the first anthology, the 8th-century *Man'yôshû*, I found a world that Jeffers would recognize and that I recognized as evocative of the world he himself created in his work. Not that it incorporates a scientific vision or a Nietzschean thrust beyond good and evil, but the simpler and I think more fundamental elements of man in nature are there. Japan has its own “Big Sur” seacoast in the province of Iwami, and its wild, remote beauty is rendered in lines by the greatest of Japan’s early poets, Kakinomoto no Hitomaro, whose poems come from the end of the 7th century. Like Jeffers at Point Lobos, Hitomaro deems the coast precious for its rugged, untamed quality, and as being the home of a longed-for woman. Waves, seaweed, and sinuous beauty combine to define this world apart. Jeffers first reached me through the stars, the galaxies, and I found the seacoast only when I went to him. Once found, it became something I could find again in Hitomaro and undoubtedly contributed to my fondness for that poet. Let me quote some lines in translation.

Man'yôshû II:131

.....
 All along this reach
 Of the wild, whale-hunting sea,
 Bearing down on the rocks
 That bristle there on Nikitazu’s strand,
 Glistening green gems
 Of seaweed, seaweed from the offing,
 Come driven by the wind
 That leaps like wings of morning,
 Come carried by the waves
 That leap like wings of evening;
 And like the jeweled weed
 That slips and floats in the waves,
 Riding in their embrace,
 Was she in soft and yielding sleep
 Whom I have left behind,
 Helpless as a trace of dew or frost,
 And come upon this road.
 (WA 1:205)⁸

Man'yôshû II:135

In the Sea of Iwami,
Where swarming vines crawl on the rocks,
Under the Cape of Kara,
A name for far lands strange of speech,
On the sunken reefs
Grows the sea pine in the deep waters,
On the stony strand
Grows the lovely, gemlike seaweed:
Yielding as gemweed
Was my young girl when she lay with me,
She for whom my love
Is deep as the deeply growing sea pine;
But those nights were few
When we lay thus in our drifting sleep.
Now we have parted
As the crawling ivy vines do branch and part,
And I have come away,
Grieving this heart seated amidst
The vitals in my breast,
Turning in longing to look back again.
..... (WA 206)

These lines meet Jeffers's test of needing no footnotes and dealing with permanent aspects of the human condition—man and woman in nature, parting, sadness, longing. The two lovers could have lived on the coast Jeffers knew and loved in that time he perhaps imagined would last forever. Other poems and other poets exalt the mountains, as Jeffers did Pico Blanco. Man is ever seen wandering through an unspoiled land or seascape in this early poetry. The uncrowdedness of it surely would have appealed to Jeffers. And even in a society in which half-siblings could marry, Jeffers's central theme of incest is not unknown. The early chronicles tell the tale of Prince and Princess Karu, full brother and sister, taken in incest. In one version of this 5th-century legend, the prince is sent into exile. The princess follows him, and they die together. The chroniclers employ various songs in the fashion of a poem-tale, and such utterances of the prince as

That beauty so fine,
If I can bed her, just bed her,
Like sickled rushes
Let the tangle tangle then,
If I can bed her, just bed her.

are a far cry from the intensities of the scene between Orestes and Electra concluding *The Tower Beyond Tragedy*, or what happens to Tamar and Lee Cauldwell. The prince and princess do indeed die in their own tangle, however, having violated Orestes's (and Jeffers's) advice to "fall in love outward."⁹

The savagery of the ballad informs many of the narratives of Jeffers. At the end of his early poem "Storm as Deliverer," a tale of illicit love and murder that later was worked into *The Women at Point Sur*, the guilty wife gets away scot-free with her lover, who has arranged the murder of her husband and then killed the killer. Afterward the pair live as happily, Jeffers would have us believe, as most:

In filth of peace and brutish fury of war
Lives beauty which you fail to recognize
Because you are foolish people and have sick eyes.¹⁰ (CP 4:277)

This comment on the tale is typical of Jeffers. Earlier in the story, the wife opens her cabin door to find her husband—whom she loathes—lying dead on the doorstep. After being raped by the murderer and wounding him with her husband's shotgun, she realizes that she should drag the body inside, or the brood sows and young boars will be at it in the morning. This passage speaks with the authentic, unflinching voice of the un-genteel singer of tales. I was reminded of a song from ancient Japan about a similar feud between men over a woman. Shibi, the winner, loses his life to the vengeful loser.

Nihonshoki 98

Then Kagehime, when she had gathered him up and buried him, and it was finished, and she was about to start home, choking with grief, said, "Woe is me! Today I have lost my beloved husband." And again, pouring out tears of sorrow, with heavy heart, she sang:

Aoni yoshi	In blue-earth
Nara no hasama ni	Nara in a narrow cleft
Shishijimono	Like a wild beast
Mizuku hegomori	In a dripping trench he hides,
Minasosoku	Water-streaming
Shibi no wakugo o	Shibi the young lord—
Asarizu na inoko	Do not root him up, young swine. ¹¹

The telling detail is there, though the wife in this version is not wicked.

The men and women who people Jeffers's California poems typically live on isolated farms and homesteads, pursuing their irremediably independent and ornery existences. In their dramas of love and death they may be ennobled by the nature amidst which they live, or made more vile in contrast to it. In ancient,

sparsely populated Japan, there were also country hamlets about whose denizens legends accumulated. Takahashi no Mushimaro, who lived in the early 8th century, was one of a number of poets drawn to their stories. The young woman too well wooed is one stock figure. Unable to choose between two lovers, she drowns herself:

Man'yôshû IX:1813–15

In Ashinoya
Lived the Maiden of Unai:
From a child of eight,
A half-grown girl, until
She tied her hair
To hang short on either side,
She was never seen
In the houses on the street,
But stayed secluded
As in a hollow of bleached cloth:
They fought for air,
The men who would see her;
They formed a fence,
The men who came to call.
Then the Youth of Chinu
And the Youth of Unai
Came at each other,
Black as the soot from torched hovels,
Fierce in their wooing,
Rivals for one woman's love.
Twisting the hilts
Of their swords of tempered steel,
Strapping on their backs
Their quivers and their whitewood bows,
They faced each other,
Ready to plunge into water,
Ready to plunge into flame.
In the midst of their contending,
My young darling went
And to her mother she said this:
"A homespun bracelet,
I am lowly, yet for me
The stalwart men
Fall into strife; when I see it,
I know I could never wed,

Even if I were to live.”
Gameflesh on a spit,
In the dark land I’ll wait, she whispered,
Keeping this intent
As deep as water in a hidden marsh.
She sighed,
The darling girl, and went her way.
The Youth of Chinu
Saw her that night in a dream,
Clung to her,
Followed her where she went;
And, now left behind,
He, the Youth of Unai,
Gazed up to heaven,
Shouted, shrieked at the sky,
Stamped on the ground,
Gnashed his teeth in defiance,
And swore he’d not
Be bested by no more a man than he.
He slung on his sword,
Belting it tight at his hip,
And went to find them,
Following like a creeper of wild yam.
And so the kinfolk
Came together to decide:
That for long ages
They might stand as monuments,
That in distant years
The tale might still be told,
They raised a tomb
For the maiden in the middle,
And tombs for the youths
One on either side of her.
When I heard of it,
All the story of these graves,
Though I knew nothing
Of those times, I wept aloud,
As in mourning for the newly dead.

When on my travels
I pass by the barrow site
At Ashinoya,

The grave of the Maiden Unai,
I can only weep aloud.

Over one grave
Trailed the branches of a tree:
Just as I had heard,
It was to the Youth of Chinu
That she inclined in her heart. (WA 1:319–21)

The villages in these poems also harbor girls for whom too much attention is never enough. Tamana was one such:

Man'yôshû IX:1742–43
By the long-breath-bird
Land of Awa lies the last
Of the villages,
Sue the tip of the catalpa bow:
There dwelt Tamana,
My sweet girl with swelling breasts,
Slender at the waist,
The wasp-maiden of Sue.
Shapely she was and smooth,
All her person soft with sheen,
And when like a flower
She stood smiling at her door,
Men who were bound away,
Traveling down the jewel-spear road,
Gave up their journeys
And went no more along the way,
But reached her gate
And stopped, though she had not called.
Neighbors in houses
Standing lined along the lane,
Heads of households,
Separated from their wives
And without her asking
Offered up their very keys.
Everyone was mad
For her, wandering thus lost,
And so she yielded,
That fair one, and went with them
In the wild ways of desire.

Someone had come,
Was standing by the metal gate:
In the dead of night
With no thought of what she did,
She went and kept her tryst. (*WA* 1:321–22)

Jeffers was drawn to just such simple types, such basic passions, in his most characteristic work. But upon them he exerts an unbearable pressure—the “white fire flies out” when “they are fooled out of their limits.” He is out to see what happens when passions work themselves out to conclusions beyond human control, thereby recouping humanity as reenacting cosmic violence. In this drama he finds a beauty like the burning of a billion suns. And yet, he makes the counter-argument as constantly: the viciousness of humans comes from their incestuous obsessions. Orestes in his final speech in *Tower Beyond Tragedy* enunciates the doctrine of casting aside humanity to “enter the earlier fountain” of primal godhead, which is the cosmos itself.¹² It is plain to me that the poet Jeffers was a tormented spirit claiming for himself a stone-like stolidity, but utterly aware of the electron whirl in every atom within. His use of early myth, legend, and history, and his search for primal types in contemporary life, were ways of coping with what clearly were agonizing angers and a prophetic drive to shake the world about him to its foundations. He built a stone tower with his own hands, but he was not above the battle that is our life.

Hawk Tower

Rough stone tower,
you tear my shoulder,
shred my skin to blood
I would give your hawk,
heart-less though it left me
for aught else
save cold-stone
immolation of desire.

Stone-rough tower
inner keep of unicorn
corbelled window chamber
sweetly fancied love
to whom the secret stair
wound in your hawk-wounded
heart . . .

Over the sea-cold
stone turret Orion
striding the same sky
of my desperate
desert youth . . .
Aldebaran, Arcturus, Antares . . .
A mon seul désir
stone syllables,
galaxies of fire.

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ENDNOTES

¹ Carmel's history since its days as the haunt of the Bohemian Club of California writers, artists, and general free spirits is recounted entertainingly by Clint Eastwood (erstwhile mayor of Carmel) in a videotape titled *Don't Pave Main Street* (Carmel Heritage—a Julian Ludwig Production).

² Among Jeffers's last poems is one, "Salvage," that begins

It is true that half the glory is gone.
Motors and modernist houses usurp the scene.
There is no eagle soaring, nor a puma
On the Carmel hill highroad . . . (CP 3: 421)

"Carmel Point" (CP 3:399) speaks for patience, but the anger elsewhere is undeniable: "Oh heavy change. / The world deteriorates like a rotting apple, worms and a skin. / They have built streets around us, new houses . . ." ("The Last Conservative," CP 3:418). Even in the 1920s the poet cried out for "[t]he beautiful places killed like rabbits to make a city," predicting "my own coast's obscene future" ("The Broken Balance," CP 1:375).

³ James Karman, *Robinson Jeffers, Poet of California* (Story Line Press, 1996), 39–41. Karman, drawing on the letters of Una Jeffers published in Robert Brophy, ed., *Robinson Jeffers Newsletter*, nos. 47 and 56, recounts the poet's attempts to enlist after the U.S. declaration of war in 1917.

⁴ Both poems are from 1918. The political and religious allegory intended by the naked "daughter of God" and her red banner dancing across the vastness of Russia calls for exegesis. "The Murmansk Landing" (CP 4:278) makes clear Jeffers's hostility to the Western intervention. The unfinished "Daughter of God in Russia," at least, is explicit in equating its central revolutionary figure with Liberty—and, it would seem, sisterhood with Christ.

⁵ On Hitler, see “The Day Is a Poem” (*CP* 3:16) and “The Bowl of Blood” (*CP* 3:81–100); on Wilson, “Woodrow Wilson” (*CP* 1:106–07) and “Wilson in Hell” (*CP* 3:117). The latter has some of Jeffers’s most hostile lines on Roosevelt. “What Odd Expedients” (*CP* 43:137) dismisses Roosevelt (“cripple’s vanity”) along with Jeanne d’Arc (“crackpot dreams”), Hitler (ditto), Mussolini (“bombast”), and Napoleon (“tinsel star”), the point being that the decks must be cleared for the contest between the “two strong bulls”—the U.S. and U.S.S.R. The prophet here clearly does not anticipate the coming “Cold War” being cold. The Liveright edition of *The Double Axe* (1977) includes a version of this “suppressed poem” (*DA* 163) in which the comment on Roosevelt reads “cripple’s-power-need.” On Roosevelt, see also “Fantasy” (written in June 1941), another of the suppressed poems in *The Double Axe* (1948), where Roosevelt and Hitler are imagined hanged in effigy from the same tree (*CP* 3:109). The invective of the wartime poems is hard for me to bear, especially as it rips in two a reading of the world into a cosmological frame with which I feel at one and a sense of history too determined by race and manifest destiny for me to accept. The dark intensities of the poems in *The Double Axe* are not lacking in the old power, but their obsession with current events, whether or not one is offended by their views, removes them from the grander ranges of the poet’s thought. William Everson writes on these matters in his introduction to the Liveright edition of *The Double Axe and Other Poems* (1977), and on Jeffers’s alleged “fascism,” in *Fragments of an Older Fury* (1968). I am still pondering his arguments.

⁶ Most notably in “On an Anthology of Chinese Poems” (*CP* 3:449), which finds Chinese landscape painters “far better than ours” in their placement of man in the universe, but leaves the reader to ponder an alleged “moral difference” in a perceived lack of “weight” in Chinese mountains as compared to Wordsworth’s. The earlier “Credo” (*CP* 1:239) again prefers the ocean’s ocean to the “bone vault’s,” in a debate between Eastern and Western mysticism. *Jeffers Studies* 2:1 (Winter 1998) summarizes an article on *mushin* (“mindlessness”) in Jeffers by his Japanese translator, Miura Tokuhiko. Miura claims to find the Zen concept of mindlessness, which he defines as “mind without illusions,” in Jeffers’s evocation of a peace that “does not seek joy.” A comment from the poet on this notion would have been of interest. A poet who identified himself deeply with stone might have found a resonance in *Shizukesa ya / Iwa ni shimiuru / Semi no koe* (Bashô): Stillness: hear! / Sink into the rocks / Cicada cries.

⁷ In a tape of him reading from his work published by Harvard University Press in the album *The Poet’s Voice* (1978). He includes the dictum “You mustn’t generalize” in prefatory remarks on things he hates, along with being asked if he’s writing poetry any more. “Hate,” he opines, is needed to “sort of even things up” with love. He goes on to inform his audience that all his poems are generalizations—“every one.”

⁸ Quotations from early Japanese poetry in the present essay are from Edwin A. Cranston, *A Waka Anthology, Volume One: The Gem-Glistening Cup*, indicated throughout by the letters WA. The lines from *Man'yôshû* II:131 are from the translation (WA 1:205).

⁹ For the Japanese song, which is no. 80 in the ancient chronicle *Kojiki*, see WA 1: 48; for the quotation from *Tower Beyond Tragedy*, CP 1:178. “I have fallen in love outward” is what Orestes says, to his sister and co-matricide Electra, who would draw him back with the offer of her body to the pit of incestuous desire. Prince Karu’s song is likely an ancient love lyric arbitrarily assigned by the chronicler or earlier legend-makers to the amorous and tragic prince, whose fall was not “outward.”

¹⁰ Jeffers retells the story of Myrtle and Andrew Cartwright in the “Prelude” to *Point Sur* (CP 1:240). Her lover’s name, Will Stayne in the earlier poem (“Storm as Deliverer,” CP 4:256), is changed to Rod Stewart here. Myrtle’s wild hegira through storm to forbidden desire is reenacted in Jeffers’s powerful new style in “Prelude” interspersed with scenes of Faith Heriot, Onorio Vasquez and his visions, exploding oil tanks at Monterey, the screaming of redwoods in the wind, and the death of a crucified hawk. We see Myrtle in flashes, as if caught in the lightning she invokes. The sexual climax, however, is not followed by the murder tale as in “Storm as Deliverer,” and the illicit lovers do not go south to a new, “happy” life. Instead, Myrtle reappears in the Point Sur narrative to become one of the Rev. Dr. Barclay’s disciples, indeed one of his last followers (CP 4:256-77, 1:243, 245–48, 281, 346, 351, 362, 365). The “brutish fury of war” Jeffers has (and always had) in mind is that of the Great War, World War I; another early evocation of “inhuman” acceptance of human vileness is in “Natural Music” (CP 1:6), where “eyes” are changed to ears “strong enough to listen without / Divisions of desire and terror / To the storm of the sick nations . . . / Those voices also would be found / Clean as a child’s . . .”

¹¹ See *A Waka Anthology* (WA 1:100–05) for the *Nihonshoki* version of the tale of Kagehime, Shibi no Omi, and Prince Woke. *Nihonshoki* (*The Chronicles of Japan*) is an early official history, submitted to court in 720. *Kojiki* (*Record of Ancient Matters*), the earliest history, submitted in 712, has a different version of the story (WA 1: 64–66).

¹² The last line of *The Tower Beyond Tragedy* uses two images for Orestes’s refusal of the incestuous enticements of humanity: the other is the climbing of “the tower beyond time” (CP 1:178). A visitor to Hawk Tower becomes aware that towers can be complex symbols, tied to the earth while pointing to the stars. At the heart of Hawk Tower, Una’s hideaway reminds us of humanity and love.

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