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Contents

Special Section

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Cover photo: Jeffers Country. Point Sur (far right), canyons where "Thurso's Landing" and "Cawdor" took place, Soberanes Point ("The Place for No Story"). Looking south from Mal Paso Creek. By Gene Kafka.

George Hart

Editor's Note

This "special issue" of *Jeffers Studies* is special in many respects. First and foremost, it is a festschrift in honor of Robert J. Brophy, timed to coincide with the thirty-fifth anniversary of the publication of his *Robinson Jeffers: Myth, Ritual, and Symbol in His Narrative Poems*. It is a triple issue, containing six scholarly articles, a transcription of an early draft of *Cawdor*, and a critical anatomy of a unique Jeffers manuscript, the Great Sheet. And, it contains a wealth of visual material we usually are unable to include in regular issues: photos and reproductions in honor of Bob Brophy, illustrations from a limited edition of *Cawdor*, images relating to some of the critical essays, pictures of manuscript pages from the Library of Congress, and a full-scale facsimile of the Great Sheet. We hope that our readers and Jeffersians everywhere will find this issue a treasure trove of critical insight, scholarly production, and rare material. Everyone who contributed to this issue did so in honor of Brophy's groundbreaking critical work and his career-long record of scholarly achievement.

In my editor's note in the last issue, I described Brophy's book as a field guide to Jeffers's breakthrough narrative poems, written during his most fertile period in the 1920s. Considering the articles in this volume, *Myth, Ritual, and Symbol* can also be seen as a catalyst for wide-ranging inquiries into Jeffers's narrative practice beyond this period. In the call for papers, we asked for submissions on any aspect of Jeffers's narrative poems, especially those which Brophy so closely analyzed in his book. The submissions that we got, at least those which made it through the peer-review process to be included here, contained many surprises. The only article to reconsider a narrative poem that Brophy discussed in his book is ShaunAnne Tangney's reading of "Tamar" and its use of decadent tropes as social protest. Tangney places "Tamar" in a new context, demonstrating that other literary-historical (and social) approaches can

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stand with a myth-ritual approach and make meaning in what many would consider the poet's most important narrative. The only other article on one of the major 1920s narratives is James Baird's reading of "The Women at Point Sur." Baird both supplements Brophy's account of 1920s narratives—"Point Sur" did not receive sustained attention in Brophy's book because it did not use myth-ritual structure as did the other narratives—and extends it, arguing that the poem in fact entails the collapse of mythic structures.

Tim Hunt and Rob Kafka took the opportunity to dig deeper into the development of Jeffers's narrative art. Hunt looks closely at ritual implications in the drafts of an early lyric, "Salmon Fishing," and connects them with Jeffers's meditations on his craft in "Apology for Bad Dreams." Hunt's argument for seeing Jeffers's ritualizing as a form of witnessing adds to and contends with Brophy's longtime struggle with this important yet elusive text. Kafka's essay possesses both a wide scope and a precise focus. Drawing from a deep familiarity with Jeffers's early narratives and the fragments of his abandoned "Point Alma Venus" project, Kafka directs our attention to a recurring Jeffersian figure, the lighthouse-keeper's daughter, to whom we might otherwise fail to give much notice. Kafka makes a strong case for the psychological significance of this character in Jeffers's work, guiding us through her first appearances in the pre-"Tamar" period through unpublished drafts in the 1930s.

The last two critical articles take up Jeffers's narratives in his middle and later periods. My article emerges from a line of questioning provoked by *Myth, Ritual, and Symbol*, specifically the myth-ritual schema presented in its appendix. I had always wanted to write about the shorter narratives that appear regularly in the 1930s, but never had a sense of how they fit into the larger body of work; Brophy's use of Northrop Frye's *mythoi* in that schema showed me the way to seeing these poems as Jeffers's "comic" narrative mode. Robert Zaller takes up Jeffers's later narratives and traces the theme of resurrection as it develops from an incipient to an explicit concern. The range and diverse interests represented by these articles shows us, I think, how much more we have to learn about Jeffers's narratives, and how Brophy's book can help us in our continuing investigations of them.

Along with these critical essays, there is a "special section" of this special issue that includes two remarkable archival documents. Dirk Aardsma's transcription of the Library of Congress draft of "Cawdor" represents a major editorial feat in Jeffers studies—a complete version of this first draft, including all the relevant revisions. For the first time, readers have the chance to see the compositional process involved in drafting one of the major poems, and they can judge the penultimate version of the narrative that capped Jeffers's artistic successes in the

1920s. Aaron Yoshinobu's transcription of the Great Sheet takes us back to the breakthrough moment of this period. Approaching this document as he would layers of geological strata, Yoshinobu maps the notations and fragments on the page and determines a possible chronological order for them, giving us a glimpse into the birth of Jeffers's poetics as well as his stonemasonry.

It is our great privilege to gather this material together in honor of Bob Brophy, and it is with great pleasure that we bind it in a cover with Gene Kafka's stunning photograph of the Big Sur coast. It is the least we can do to show our appreciation of and admiration for Bob's work.

Articles

Tim Hunt

A Poetics of Witness

Jeffers's "Salmon Fishing" and the Apology in "Apology for Bad Dreams"

Robert Brophy's *Robinson Jeffers: Myth, Ritual, and Symbol* was not the first book on Jeffers. Earlier studies, including those by Lawrence Clark Powell, Radcliffe Squires, and Frederic Ives Carpenter, still have valuable things to teach us. But Brophy's book regrounded the project of reading Jeffers, and the approach he articulated has informed much, if not most, of the important work on Jeffers in the years since. Earlier scholars had focused on such matters as Jeffers's philosophical roots; they had emphasized the nature and significance of the claims that Jeffers might be advancing through the poems; and they had debated how to categorize the long poems generically. What made *Myth, Ritual, and Symbol* so productive a turn in the history of Jeffers scholarship was that Brophy largely sidestepped matters such as these and instead turned his attention—and ours—to the question of how the poems might work structurally and symbolically. He asked us, that is, to focus on how to read the poems and to build our theorizing from that ground. In part he did so in order to counter the then all-but-total rejection of Jeffers by the New Critics and the academy by showing that the poems, especially the long narrative and dramatic poems that were then critically least acceptable, could be read closely, and that their meaning derived from their aesthetic and structural dimensions instead of existing separately from them. Now, some forty years later, the New Critics are themselves in eclipse, a dusty historical episode boxed away in a back corner of the critical attic, but Brophy's project continues to matter. The most obvious reason would be that Brophy's demonstration of the nature and importance of Jeffers's use of ritual and mythic structures and imagery remains a productive, indeed necessary, approach to the long poems. His research clearly established the depth of Jeffers's interest in, extensive command of, and use of ancient myth and ritual and his productive awareness of the work of the Cambridge anthropologists, especially

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Gilbert Murray and Jane Harrison, and their theories about the ritual and mythic substructure of Greek tragedy. But Brophy accomplished something even more fundamental in *Myth, Ritual, and Symbol*. Instead of arguing for ancient myth and ritual as the meaning of the poems, Brophy identified them as elements within the poems that help us to understand how the poems work and, thereby, to participate more fully in them. By demonstrating that any effort to understand Jeffers must start with the process of experiencing the poems through engaged close reading, he made it necessary to read Jeffers's texts as poems first, with matters of doctrine and philosophy having to be understood through the process and experience of the poems.

But in spite of the value and power of Brophy's approach in *Myth, Ritual, and Symbol*, and in spite of the compelling readings of core texts of the Jeffers canon that his book offers, we are still struggling to come to terms with Jeffers's at times seemingly simple work, and the achievement and significance of the long poems remain matters of debate and disagreement. What was Jeffers doing, and why does it matter? The questions still trouble us, and their urgency is not simply a matter of how to justify Jeffers's significance to those in the academy who focus on American poetry yet continue to overlook his work (though this is an important goal); even more it is a matter that those of us who are convinced of Jeffers's achievement and cultural and historical importance continue to sense that the poetry outstrips our individual and collective efforts to account for it.

Brophy's recent essay, "Jeffers's 'Apology for Bad Dreams' Revisited," is a case in point. In it, he reconsiders the powerful and influential reading of this key poem that he developed in the final chapter of *Myth, Ritual, and Symbol*, and his renewed questioning of the poem leads him to conclude, "And thus my search for the deepest meaning of 'Apology' for me remains frustrate. Jeffers's intent remains ambiguous" (13). And he adds, "Closing, I can only remark that my more youthful conclusions have become doubts; I have had second thoughts over the full meaning and dimensions of 'Apology for Bad Dreams'" (13).

Brophy's second thoughts about "Apology" matter deeply. In *Myth, Ritual, and Symbol* he casts the poem as a paradigmatic *ars poetica* in which Jeffers systematizes and justifies his poetic project, especially his narratives. Moreover, his analysis of "Apology" functions as a summative coda to his demonstration that (as he put the matter in the Epilogue to *Myth, Ritual, and Symbol*) understanding Jeffers requires attending carefully and fully to his "mythic intent, ritual structures, and allied imagery patterns" (286). Potentially, then, Brophy's recent "doubts" challenge us, at the least, to continue to question the process and meaning of "Apology," and they might, as well, call into question the use of

"myth-ritual analysis and archetypal criticism" (xi) that Brophy outlined in the Foreword to *Myth, Ritual, and Symbol* and then developed through his readings of "Tamar" and other crucial long poems.

I do not know how far Brophy would extend his recent "doubts" about his earlier reading of "Apology for Bad Dreams," but I want to argue that his premises in *Myth, Ritual, and Symbol* remain productive and sound. These include his claims that "Jeffers had familiarity, competence, and conviction in dealing with myth and ritual"; that sacrificial motifs and patterns are central to his perspective and to his poems; and that his specific awareness of these motifs and patterns reflects not only his reading in classical literature but also "the findings of the newly burgeoning science of cultural anthropology—as reported in such works as Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, Jane Harrison's *Themis*, F. M. Cornford's *The Origin of Attic Comedy*, and Jessie Weston's *From Ritual to Romance*" (7). We should, I believe, continue to take it as a given that Jeffers knew this material and drew heavily on it, especially in the long poems, but Brophy's revisiting of "Apology" suggests we need to continue to explore and extend the paradigm he established in *Myth, Ritual, and Symbol*. That myth and ritual are crucial to Jeffers's poetry should remain a given. Precisely how Jeffers understood myth and ritual and how they function in the poems continue to be crucial questions. While these matters can be addressed most fully through the narratives, especially the narratives of the 1920s, including the "Point Alma Venus" fragments and *The Women at Point Sur*, the shorter poems can offer important clues. In particular, Jeffers's revisions to "Salmon Fishing," revisions that appear to coincide with the development of his mature voice and stance, provide a possible context for considering Part IV of "Apology for Bad Dreams."

Jeffers wrote "Salmon Fishing," the evidence suggests, in December 1920, as he was working out the techniques and assumptions that would typify his mature poetry.[1] Two preliminary typescripts survive: one typed soon after the poem was written, the other apparently from 1923 when he was assembling a preliminary version of *Tamar and Other Poems* (*CP* 5: 317–21). The two typescripts show Jeffers moving toward the poem's final conception, and a reworking of the latter two-thirds of the poem written in pencil across the bottom of the two typescript documents yet another step in the process. Across the drafts, the basic scene remains the same, and the tone seems to shift little. Yet the revisions, though perhaps subtle, fundamentally alter the poem's resonance and implications, and they reflect a fundamental change in Jeffers's relationship to nature and how the poems enact that relationship.

In the 1920 typescript the "anglers" are a flat, intrusive presence; they "torture" the fish against the backdrop of the "Red ash" of a solstice "sundown," which implicitly indicts their actions:

> Autumn and evening rains make the earth young-blooded,
> The southwind shouts to the rivers,
> The rivers open their mouths and the salt salmon
> Nose up into the rapids;
> In Christmas month against the smoulder and menace
> Of a long angry sundown,
> Red ash of the dark solstice, I have seen the anglers
> On the rocks and in red shallows
> Reel out their lines to torture, silent men
> Playing the three-foot steelheads,
> And land their living bullion, the bloody mouths
> And scales full of the sunset
> Twitch on the rocks, no more to wander at will
> The wild Pacific pasture, nor wanton and spawning
> Race up into fresh water.

In this draft nature figures as renewal, pleasure, energy—even speech ("The southwind shouts to the rivers"), while the human figures not only intrude on nature's dialogue with itself but disrupt it with violence and death. The relationship between nature and the human actors in this draft can be read as a simple (even simplistic) dichotomy, and the speaker's pronouncement of "hav[ing] seen" all this seems an example of the overly naïve voice and rhetoric that detractors too often assume characterizes Jeffers's work, in which a misanthropic speaker rejects humankind for its destructive violence and longs to be part of an edenic, pre-human nature. (How such a rejection of human violence and a longing for a redemptive nature might, at this point for Jeffers, relate to his anguish over World War I and the intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic crisis it precipitated for him, would be worth considering. Such a reading might well cast "Metempsychosis," the original version of "The Hills Beyond the River," which would have been written about the same time as the original draft of "Salmon Fishing," as a complementary poem.)

In the 1923 typescript of "Salmon Fishing" Jeffers rephrased a number of lines. The adjustments to the first half leave the poem's underlying logic essentially unchanged, but the revisions to the middle are another matter. The speaker no longer sees the "anglers" as "Reel[ing] out their lines to torture" but instead sees them, in what is now the "Red fire" of the solstice sunset, this way:

I have seen the anglers,
Like dark herons, like priestlings
Of a most patient mystery, at the river-mouth
Perch the rocks and lash the pool there.

This revision naturalizes the "anglers" by equating them with the "dark herons" that also fish the river mouth. The anglers are no longer figures outside nature who violate its wholeness and tranquility, and the poem no longer posits violence as something the human figures impose on an otherwise tranquil nature. The anglers' actions are still acts of violence and death (the "living silver" of the fish still "Twitch on the rocks"), but this violence, the violence that they enact, is now the violence that is both within nature itself and fundamental to it. Anglers and herons both kill the fish they harvest, but this violence does not violate nature; it is more simply an aspect of the destruction, renewal, and continual transformational flux that *is* nature and which contains anglers, salmon, and herons. This revision also presents anglers, herons, and salmon as all enmeshed in a ritualized and sacrificial landscape of fire and blood. In this draft, the "long angry sundown" of the earlier typescript has become a "storm-prophetic sundown," and rather than "Red ash," there is "Red fire of the dark solstice" (an image that better fits a moment of actual ritual sacrifice and also underscores the implicit analogy later in the poem, where the salmon's bloody scales are "full of sunset" as they "Twitch on the rocks").

The 1923 typescript is a stronger, more complex piece than the 1920 version, but it is also confused or muddled or contradictory in at least one way. The anglers seem not only to participate in nature's flux, as herons do, but also to stand above or outside it as "priestlings," which projects their fishing as being of a different sort and order than the herons' fishing. While violence has been shifted in this second draft from something that man enacts on nature to a fundamental feature of nature itself, human violence seems to be both within and of nature, while also being apart from it. In some sense human violence is of a different order, even unnatural. In part, this difficulty is in the image itself. Salmon fishers do not consciously direct their fishing as a sacrificial rite (however many private quirks may be part of their fishing). In part the difficulty is rhetorical and conceptual. It is the speaker of the poem who sees the fishing as if it is a ritual. More logically, this figure who "has seen the anglers" would function as the priestling, but the voice in the poem stops short of assuming that authority for the scene's actions and imagery.

The revision Jeffers developed in pencil across the bottoms of the two typescripts in the next stage of rewriting suggests that he recognized the

promise of the trope of sacrificial ritual in the 1923 typescript and that he might also have sensed that he hadn't quite resolved the implications of casting the anglers as "priestlings." In this penciled revision, the workings for line 6 and following read in part:

I have seen the anglers
On the rocks and in red shallows
Draw landward their live bullion, the bloody mouths
And scales[?] full[?]
The wild Pacific pasture,
Nor wanton and spawning race into fresh water.
The men were stranger to gaze at,
Dark forms against the fading red,
Pitiful, cruel, primeval,
Like the priests of the people that built Stonehenge,
Dark silent forms, performing
Remote solemnities in the red shallows
Of the river's mouth at the year's turn,

This sketch complicates and extends the revisions made to the middle of the poem in the 1923 typescript. The most significant adjustment, I'd suggest, is the way the speaker's act of looking and responding shifts from the largely passive pronouncement "I have seen" to the more openly engaged reaction of "The men were stranger to gaze at," which in turn makes the figure of the anglers as "priests" a characterization that the speaker comes to as he tries to make sense of why they are "stranger to gaze at." In these revisions, that is, the speaker seems both to see the anglers as of nature (as herons and salmon are of nature) and yet as different than herons and salmon ("stranger") in part because they are able, as the speaker is, to observe and reflect. As such, their strangeness is less their consciousness per se than their ability to give themselves up to (and into) the moment as Jeffers imagines the herons would, even though the anglers, like the speaker, also have the capacity to step back and contemplate. In these revisions, then, a dichotomy (or more a dialectic) is emerging between active, unreflective participation on the one hand (what might be termed participation in the never-ending flux of being) and standing apart to contemplate on the other (what might be termed consciousness), and it is the speaker of the poem who both recognizes this dichotomy and enacts it in creating the figure of the anglers as priests, whose ability to function as if priests for the speaker is that they are unaware of their priestliness and even unaware of their ritual actions and the landscape's ritual dimension. At the very least, the speaker in this revision is a more active figure in the poem; he

is dramatically engaged in the scene and its implications in a way quite different from the initial 1920 typescript.

Jeffers recast the poem's middle section yet again in developing the final version as published in *Tamar*, where it reads:

> In Christmas month against the smoulder and menace
> Of a long angry sundown,
> Red ash of the dark solstice, you see the anglers,
> Pitiful, cruel, primeval,
> Like the priests of the people that built Stonehenge,
> Dark silent forms, performing
> Remote solemnities in the red shallows (*CP* 1: 6)

In this reworking the speaker is again at a somewhat greater distance from the scene and its actions. It is now a "you" who is hearing the poem (either as the reader or as an aspect of the poet in a kind of internal dialogue), and it is this "you" who "sees" the anglers as "performing" nature's central mystery of destruction and renewal against the winter solstice sunset. In this iteration of the poem, it is the implied "I" who is speaking, and this "I" offers the equation of anglers as priests not as the scene's truth but instead as a figure that pushes the listening "you" to move beyond either the mystery of ancient priests or contemporary ones, for beyond these mediations we come face to face with the "solemnities in the red shallows," and the violence, beauty, and renewal of "bloody mouths / And scales full of the sunset," which is (and which typifies) the ceaseless change that is the ground of being. In the final form of the poem, the reader is asked to recognize the figure of the anglers as priests and the details that evoke human ritual but then to move through this mediation to acknowledge and affirm instead the deeper sacrificial process of nature, in which we participate unconsciously as victim and victimizer. This deeper process confronts us with our own inexorable vulnerability to the flux of being, but it is also, if our act of contemplation is sufficiently charged and active, not only sublime beauty but authentic beauty.

"Salmon Fishing," then, functions through a kind of gazing as action that can in a casual reading seem merely a simple scene simply presented. Yet the poem involves a complex mix of imagined being in nature and standing apart from nature to contemplate its beauty (including the beauty of "scales full of sunset"), and as it happens Jeffers makes the dialectic of action and reflection that is implicit in "Salmon Fishing" quite explicit in "Continent's End," a lyric from 1922, where the figure of the sun's "tides of fire" evokes the fundamental reality of all being, its recurring destruction and renewal, while the sun as a figure of

"the eye that watched before there was an ocean" evokes both an awareness of destruction and renewal and an awareness from within destruction and renewal (*CP* 1: 16–17). This is the participation *in* nature and consciousness *of* nature that Jeffers attempts to enact and explore within his poems. This project can seem a reversion to the romantic mode in the sense that nature is the ground of value and the poet's role is to intuit that value and evoke it for us through his witness. But the nature that Jeffers intuits is not Wordsworth's. It is not just a matter of the shift from the Lake Country to the California coast. More, it is a matter of how Darwin and modern astronomy intervene and recast nature as something that must be recognized (and experienced) as material process in which the speaker is enmeshed (as are the poet and reader). Moreover, Jeffers's sense that consciousness is both a means to become aware of nature and what sets us apart from it, and thereby can alienate us from it, implies that evocations through acts of witness can never be the truth of the matter. The truth of nature outstrips language, even the language of the poem, which is one reason why Jeffers's poems so often move through reflections on consciousness and nature to reach moments where what is truly important occurs as we imagine moving beyond the poem to a particular moment of engaged awareness that the language can perhaps trigger and partly direct us toward but not fully enact, possess, or contain. The poem, that is, functions as a liminal space in which nature can support moments of visionary awareness and acceptance and which can contain and validate (albeit tragically from the human perspective) moments of acceptance of, and reintegration with, the ceaseless flux of being. In an ironic way, the poem enacts consciousness in order to place consciousness not at the peak of a hierarchal psychology of the sacred (as the moment when the self transcends itself to realize divine vision) but in order to demonstrate its insufficiency, which allows us to value and experience more properly its redemptive force.

The complexity of "Salmon Fishing" is also apparent in the way the figure of the priests functions. For the anglers to be priests within this ritualized and sacrificial scene (and fully one with natural flux), they must, it seems, be unaware of their priestliness and the ritual over which they preside. The speaker's awareness of their symbolic resonance and the resonance of the scene might lead us to figure the poem's speaker as in some way the actual priest, with the reader and perhaps the speaker's less aware or engaged self functioning as congregants. However, the speaker's very awareness of the implications of the scene which enables him both to project the anglers as priests and to imply the irony of their unconsciousness (that is, the way their blindness to their role and the symbolic dimensions of their action give them their priestly identity) compromises to some degree his immersion in being (including its vio-

lence). The implicit tragedy of the scene is not simply (and perhaps not even primarily) its sacrificial pattern or the violence within nature that inevitably drives loss and death. The tragedy of the scene is also that one can imagine—and even stage—the simultaneity of being's "tides of fire" and consciousness as "the eye that watched" but not actually become that simultaneity. The speaker's act of figuring the anglers as priests functions both as a desire for a similarly unmediated, unreflective immersion in the business of nature and as a kind of celebration of the speaker's ability to see what the anglers do not see—the beauty of the whole which is intertwined with its unceasing sacrificial renewal. This casts the speaker of the poem, finally, not as a priest through whom we participate in the ritual he enacts on our behalf but instead as a witness both to the beauty of the scene he presents and to the necessity of his participation in that beauty (a participation which is necessarily his own eventual death and dissolution).

This approach to "Salmon Fishing," in which the poem enacts consciousness and being through the ritualized scene, points to several possibly useful connections. For one, it suggests one reason why Jeffers eventually chose not to publish "Metempsychosis," probably written in 1920 and perhaps related to the same phase of work as the original version of "Salmon Fishing." In "Metempsychosis," the speaker imagines becoming one, physically, with the land, so that its creeks and his veins, for example, become through a kind of metaphorical fusion one and the same. This was a significant step toward the view of nature in Jeffers's mature aesthetic but not finally adequate. In "Metempsychosis," Jeffers acknowledges his (and our) full participation in the materiality of nature and its process (including dissolution and renewal), but in this poem, he creates this participation by imagining that he can simply erase the complication of consciousness. (Conversely, in the late poem "Vulture," he imagines a similar full union with and through nature, which requires moving beyond consciousness and returning to the flux of nature through the physicality of death.) Acknowledging the materiality of being and one's full participation in it is to align one's self with the "tides of fire," but the desire to set aside consciousness is, finally, just that, a desire. The approach to nature in the initial draft of "Salmon Fishing" resembles the approach in "Metempsychosis." In revising "Salmon Fishing," though, Jeffers moved well beyond "Metempsychosis," and these reworkings underscore the importance of the comments he made in his April 24, 1926 letter to Donald Friede, a letter written while he was struggling with the "Point Alma Venus" fragments out of which not only "Prelude" and the "The Women at Point Sur" emerged but also "Apology for Bad Dreams":

> The story [Point Alma Venus], like Tamburlaine and Zarathustra, is the story of human attempts to get beyond humanity. But the superman ideal rather stands on top of humanity—intensifies it—ends in "all too human"—here the attempt is to get clear of it. More like the ceremonial dances of primitive people; the dancer becomes a rain-cloud, or a leopard, or a God. The protagonists are a paralytic old farmer, a preacher who has renounced his faith, a weak imaginative boy who kills his father. The episodes of the poem are a sort of essential ritual from which the real action develops on another plane. (*SL* 68)

In the first two sentences here, Jeffers makes it clear that he sees his project as something other than the heroic (but implicitly misguided) attempt to transcend the "all too human"; instead, he suggests his effort is "to get clear of" the "all too human" altogether. These sentences evoke, without naming, the perspective of "Inhumanism." The next sentences, though, are less clear conceptually and syntactically, but they are highly suggestive and, I believe, crucially significant.

There are several facets to the puzzle: first, who or what is "More like the ceremonial dances of primitive people"? The meditative process out of which the poem emerges? The imaginative action of writing and/or reading the poem? The dynamic unfolding of the poem itself? And if the episodes of the poem are "essential" and a "ritual" form (or ritual action), what is the other "plane" where the "real action" of this ritual unfolds? We could attribute any lack of clarity in this passage to its being in a letter where one might write impressionistically and with minimal reflection and revision. However, Jeffers was often quite precise in his letters and seldom deliberately vague. Moreover, in this letter he is writing about something that he has, it seems, been wrestling with in the poetry (including "Apology for Bad Dreams," which would have been written around this time).

Most literally, the argument here seems to be that this never-completed attempt at "Point Alma Venus" is an "attempt" to "get clear" of "humanity" by having the poem's action function like a "ceremonial dance," which parallels, derives from, and symbolically expresses "the real action," which "develops on another plane" (literally, it seems from comments earlier in this letter, the Coast landscape itself). If so, who is trying to "get clear" of "humanity" is clearly key. Judging from the revisions to "Salmon Fishing" and the way the characters do and do not understand themselves in the narratives of this period, the answer seems to be that the consciousness that generates and narrates the poem is seeking to "get clear" by imagining characters who enact rituals which express the nature of which they are a part. The characters are, like the angler/priests in "Salmon Fishing," absorbed in their participation and not conscious of the ritual they enact or its symbolic resonance. If so,

then, it is the poem's speaker who achieves, through the mediation of the human figures he has evoked, moments of awareness. And these moments come from (and through) the ceremonial actions he has perceived (and imagined), which he evokes through the poem. Through these representations, mediations, and processes, the speaker aligns himself with (and accepts) natural process ("rain-cloud"), unselfconscious being in nature ("leopard"), and the simultaneity of the flux of being and totalizing awareness ("a God").

As in "Salmon Fishing," the presumed speaker of this uncompleted narrative imaginatively fuses with the world he draws from the process of nature and creates in order to reach an interlude of extended consciousness that includes both non-human nature and a sense of the human viewed from a perspective beyond the human. However, what is key is that Jeffers does not project the poet or speaker as becoming "God" or "a God." The poet is figured more as a witness who can perceive the implicit ritual surrounding him and who can, then, by attending to this "real action" on "another plane" become conscious of—and express—the being of "rain-cloud," "leopard," and "a God." The speaker, through the mediations and processes he perceives and enacts, comes closer to accepting and celebrating *the* "God" which would be their totality. Here, as in "Salmon Fishing," the poet is less the transcending agent of the aesthetic world than a participant in it, a witness, and this rhetorical position, and its logic, might well extend to "Apology for Bad Dreams." If so, "Apology" might be less an *apologia* for the poet's dreams (in which Jeffers attempts to justify his aesthetic and practice to the reader) than an *apologia* for God's dreams, which are our reality (in which Jeffers, or if one prefers, Jeffers's persona, attempts to understand and accept God's ways in order to bear witness to them and celebrate them properly).

In the Foreword to the 1938 *Selected Poetry* Jeffers offers this explanation of "Apology for Bad Dreams": "Cruelty is a part of nature, at least of human nature, but it is the one thing that seems unnatural to us; the tension of the mind trying to recognize cruelty and evil as part of the sum of things is what made the poem" (*CP* 4: 394). Jeffers's comments of this sort could at times be the truth of the matter but not the whole truth (as, for instance, his comment in the Introduction to the 1935 Modern Library edition of *Roan Stallion, Tamar and Other Poems* about having imitated "Milton and Shelley" in his apprentice years, when the manuscript for this piece shows he had instead originally noted that he had been imitating "Wordsworth"—a more revealing and critically resonant admission that he chose to elide), but in this instance Jeffers might well be pointing openly to the core of the matter, and if so, the "tension" that "made" "Apology for Bad Dreams" parallels the tension

that he was progressively engaging as he transformed "Salmon Fishing" through the series of revisions. Recognizing this can help us address one of the interpretive cruxes in "Apology"—how the pronouns function in Part IV, which reads:

> He brays humanity in a mortar to bring the savor
> From the bruised root: a man having bad dreams, who invents victims, is only the ape of that God.
> He washes it out with tears and many waters, calcines it with fire in the red crucible,
> Deforms it, makes it horrible to itself: the spirit flies out and stands naked, he sees the spirit,
> He takes it in the naked ecstasy; it breaks in his hand, the atom is broken, the power that massed it
> Cries to the power that moves the stars, "I have come home to myself, behold me.
> I bruised myself in the flint mortar and burnt me
> In the red shell, I tortured myself, I flew forth,
> Stood naked of myself and broke me in fragments,
> And here am I moving the stars that are me."
> I have seen these ways of God: I know of no reason
> For fire and change and torture and the old returnings.
> He being sufficient might be still. I think they admit no reason; they are the ways of my love.
> Unmeasured power, incredible passion, enormous craft: no thought apparent but burns darkly
> Smothered with its own smoke in the human brain-vault: no thought outside: a certain measure in phenomena:
> The fountains of the boiling stars, the flowers on the foreland, the ever-returning roses of dawn. (*CP* 1: 210–11)

If the impetus to "Apology" was at least in part to acknowledge—and accept—"cruelty and evil" as natural rather than "unnatural" (and thereby part of the God and the divine presence in the order of things rather than apart from and in opposition to them), then the "He" that opens this section should, it seems, be read as "God," as should the repetitions of "He" that initiate the third, fifth, and thirteenth lines. This context also suggests that the "man having bad dreams, who invents victims," is not only lesser than God (i.e., "only the ape of that God") but also mistaken. The poet's task, as witness, is not to imitate God but to perceive, accept, and celebrate God. The poet's task is not to invent victims but to perceive victims, even more to perceive the ritual and sacred resonance of victimhood, including God's own self-elected victimhood within nature and natural process which is in some sense also the condition of his being (here, again, the dialectic from "Continent's

End" of "tides of fire" and "eye that watched" is implicit). And at root this means to perceive one's self as participating in this victimhood.

The challenge to the poet, that is, is to focus on God's act of "bray[ing] humanity" to release "spirit." It is not the poet's place to break the "atom." The poet's task is to bear witness to God's breaking of the "atom," and this requires the poet, the speaker, the consciousness that is generating the poem, to bear this witness both in the sense of bearing the vision of the released spirit and of bearing manifestation as an "atom" that is being "bray[ed]" and broken. For the poet to face up to God's injunction to "behold me" as God breaks itself "in fragments" and "mov[es] the stars that are me," the poet must embrace his own psychic fragmentation. The challenge, here, to the speaker, the poet, is not to function as a lesser to God (as, that is, "a God") through imitation and invention but instead to accept one's participation in God's ceaseless becoming (which is ironically to accept one's dissolution) and by being willing to be "broken" for the glory and beauty of "God's" process of releasing spirit attain a visionary glimpse of that glory. To attain this holistic appreciation (to get "clear" of humanity rather than "beyond" it), the speaker must set aside concern for self and identity, and the poet must recognize that the attempt to "ape" God would be to evade, in part, these challenges. It would be to pretend to "know" the "reason / For fire and change" and why God, in spite of "being sufficient" is not "still." These matters are beyond "reason"; they are simply the ways of God who is, for the speaker/poet "my love." Accepting that there is "a certain measure in phenomena," while "thought" is "Smothered with its own smoke in the human brain-vault" (and, thus, finally inside and obscured by subjectivity rather than "outside" and "certain" in its measure) is to recognize that one can only partly understand God and being. This means that one must accept that one can neither grasp a final meaning nor invent one. And in turn, recognizing and accepting this condition prepares one to experience the beauty of both "The fountains of the boiling stars" and "the flowers on the foreland" and also to intuit that such beauty is both ever-disappearing and "ever-returning" (in this context it is useful to note that the phrase "roses of dawn" not only alludes to a recurring figure in Homer but that the image implicitly joins "boiling stars" and foreland "flowers" into a single, comprehensive beauty).

Read in the context of "Salmon Fishing" and Jeffers's comments in his April 24, 1926 letter to Friede, "Apology for Bad Dreams," especially Part IV, shows Jeffers diminishing the poet's role, not elevating it. It shows him offering the figure of the poet less as the prophet or priest presiding over his characters, more as the participant in and through their being. As such, "Apology" is less a celebration of the poet's aesthetic powers than it is a self-chastisement not to aspire to be God's

"ape" and to accept instead one's condition as "atom" to be broken. In this way, "Apology" resembles the original strategy for "Sign-Post." The original opening verse paragraph (later discarded) shows that the "you" being exhorted in this seemingly didactic poem was originally, explicitly the speaker himself, not the reader (*CP* 5: 558). Similarly, in Part IV of "Apology" the speaker, the poet, exhorts himself to accept the challenge of being a witness to "God" and not to give in to the temptation to be as if "a God" through attempting to "ape" "God."

We have wanted, I think, to read "Apology for Bad Dreams" as a poem in which Jeffers explains—and justifies—his narrative practice to his readers, an *ars poetica*. However, the development of "Salmon Fishing" reflected in Jeffers's revisions to it, the letter to Friede, and the Foreword to the 1938 *Selected Poetry* all suggest that we should attend seriously to the word "Apology" in the title of "Apology for Bad Dreams" and the possibility that Jeffers did actually mean the poem as an *apologia* for the existence of "cruelty and evil" as strands within the totality of being which is God. Implicitly (in turn) Jeffers is then apologizing not for there being violence in his own poems but instead for the difficulty he has had in accepting these realities. If so, "Apology" does not celebrate the poet's bad dreaming as a sign of his special strength or vision or authenticity but rather calls his relationship to this bad dreaming into question. The poet's goal, the human goal, is not to seek redemption through creation but to seek it through participatory contemplation in natural (and divine) process that enables moments of redemptive awareness.

Perhaps ironically reading "Apology" as an *apologia* and not an *ars poetica* may provide important insights into Jeffers's aesthetic. On April 30, 1926, six days after Jeffers wrote Friede about how the "essential ritual" of "Point Alma Venus" "develops on another plane," he wrote Friede again to tell him that it had become "dreadfully clear" that the poem "would not do" and that he would have to "pick this thing to pieces" and start over. As explanation, Jeffers offers that the poem had become "too long, too complicated, and, from the attempt at compression, neither clear nor true" (*SL* 70). The transcription of "Point Alma Venus" suggests that the last quality, "true," may well have been the key to Jeffers discarding the poem. As Jeffers's final attempt at "Point Alma Venus" progresses, the narrator becomes increasingly a spectator to his characters and their issues, and as the narrator becomes more alienated from the characters and the world of the poem, it becomes increasingly difficult to imagine how the projected arc of the plot would yield the compelling catharsis that marks the endings of both "Tamar" and "Roan Stallion." The core of the problem is the figure of Old Morehead, even though he is in some ways the most interesting creation in the poem.

Jeffers constructs this "paralytic old farmer" (as he puts it in the first of the two letters to Friede) as having a comprehensive awareness of all the physical life of the region; of present and future; and of conscious and unconscious energies of all the other characters. His awareness makes him as if a God, and he is suffering the agonies of all the poem's agonists. He is not literally the God who "brays" the characters, but he experiences the pain of the "bray[ing]" and, it seems, anticipates or experiences something of the "savor" and the "naked ecstasy." The figure of the "old farmer," though, does not "invent" the characters through which he experiences nor their suffering. Within the logic of the poem, they are "invented" by God, but in reality, of course, they are the invention of the poet, the narrator, who is, in this way God's "ape." The problem—aesthetically and conceptually—for Jeffers (what makes the poem, it seems, not be "true") is that it is Old Morehead who functions as the "witness" in this aesthetic economy—not the speaker or Jeffers, who has deferred himself into a position of projecting and imagining Old Morehead's witnessing. Put another way, the problem is that the poet and speaker has positioned himself as the God, not as the atom.

What Jeffers perceived as the failure of "Point Alma Venus" has to do, I would suggest, with failing to fulfill the terms of Part IV of "Apology for Bad Dreams." The challenge, Part IV suggests, is not to invent characters who are victims (to "ape" God) but instead to use the imagined characters to enmesh one's self in the flux of being and to bear the risk of becoming one's self the sacrificial victim. In "Point Alma Venus," the characters—Barclay, Edward, Old Morehead—bear the risk, not the narrator. In "Tamar" and "Roan Stallion," though, the speaker, the narrator, bears the risk both through and with his characters. Tamar's transgressions are, at a different level, the speaker's, and this is also the case in "Roan Stallion." This is partly evident in the various passages in the two narratives where the speaker interrupts the narrative to react to it. It is also, I think, evident in one of the cruxes of "Roan Stallion"—what actually happens physically between California and the stallion on the hill top. Some have read the passage as implying an intensely transgressive union; others have read the passage as evoking a symbolic union. I would suggest the passage leaves the actuality of what happens between California and the stallion unclear, and that the actual transgressive act is that of the speaker imagining the simultaneous possibility of physical and symbolic union. It is the speaker's risk and vision that give the passage its energy, which the imagery expresses. What makes "Tamar" and "Roan Stallion" different from "Point Alma Venus" is that Jeffers in the first two risks an intense psychic participation in the transgressive violations projected and enacted in the poems. In these poems, the speaker is also sacrificial victim (atom not ape). In "Point Alma Venus," Jeffers

had written himself out of the poem, leaving his characters to bear existence and as a result cutting himself—and us as readers—off from any possibility of catharsis and visionary awareness. He had, that is, sacrificed the possibility of witness.

The probable time frame for the composing of "Apology for Bad Dreams" suggests that it was written around the time Jeffers came to recognize that "Point Alma Venus" had failed and would have to be abandoned. And if this was the context for "Apology," it underscores the possibility that the poem was less an occasion for Jeffers to codify his aesthetic and explain it to the reader than it was an occasion where he was trying to understand why "Point Alma Venus" was different from "Tamar" and "Roan Stallion," where he had gotten off track, and what he needed to do to get back on track. As such, the poem is not an argument in verse about how his poems function and why this is justified—an *ars poetica* in the usual sense—but a poem in which Jeffers attempts to reorient himself, to turn away from the temptation to "ape," and to re-accept that awareness can only emerge from recognizing and experiencing that one is an "atom" being "bray[ed]." The probable time frame for composing "Apology" points to one other possible connection—"Prelude." If "Apology" is, in part, an attempt to reconnect the perspective of witness in "Salmon Fishing" to the process of his narratives, it is worth noting that the narrative that Jeffers tackled after "Apology" was "Prelude," where the speaker's participation in the figures of the narrative (from the rocks to the oil-tanks to Onorio's desire for a symbolic and literal crucifixion) is even more evident than it is in "Tamar" and "Roan Stallion."

My sense is that Jeffers wrote "Apology for Bad Dreams" less as an explanation or justification of the material and methods of his long poems than as a reminder to himself of the limitations of poetry and the poet's perspective. Approaching the poem this way has several possible benefits. For one, it underscores how "Apology" may anticipate such later self-critiques as "Love the Wild Swan." But perhaps most basically, approaching the poem less as an *ars poetica* and more as a poem of witness (akin in spirit and rhetoric to "Salmon Fishing") brings "Apology for Bad Dreams" clearly into the center of Jeffers's career-long meditation on the divinity of nature and the need to celebrate it—and the intense difficulty of doing so. Recognizing this, we are better positioned to continue the examination of how Jeffers understood myth and ritual and how these matters, especially ritual, function in his work, and as we continue this examination we will, at each stage and step, be renewing our indebtedness to the interpretive project Brophy framed and initiated more than forty years ago in *Robinson Jeffers: Myth, Ritual, and Symbol in His Narrative Poems*.

Endnote

1. For a discussion of the dating of "Salmon Fishing," see *The Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers* (*CP* 5: 56). The remarks on "Salmon Fishing" that follow are adapted from a talk, "Lyric Ritual: Jeffers and the Poetics of Post-Romantic Witness," presented to the Association of Literary Scholars and Critics in October 2002.

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Robert Kafka

The Lighthouse-Keeper's Daughter

As Robert Brophy has pointed out, Robinson Jeffers's concern with myth and ritual, with its concomitant de-emphasis on characterization, became central to his narrative plan with his reading of Jung, perhaps Frazer, and others apparently sometime after the First World War—that is, during the few years when he underwent a creative transformation from journeyman versifier to iconoclastic poet (*Myth* 6–7). Once Jeffers had found his voice and his themes during the period 1919–1922, he returned to his earlier work to mine it for plot elements and characters, to work them out again in the hard rhythms of his authentic voice and in light of his newly attained knowledge—especially, as William Everson has repeatedly pointed out, in the culture-shattering notion of liberation through violation. Whereas Jeffers's immersion in the literature of myth, which Brophy terms a particularization of ritual (*Myth* 8), prepared him for mythopoeic creation in the decades that followed, mythic attributes and analogues are not uncommon in the earlier period. The difference is that these elements in the earlier verse function as literary conventions, while in the later verse they embody a profoundly realized religious truth.

This distinction is apparent in the development of a character type that recurs in four narrative poems written between 1915 and 1927. The lighthouse-keeper's daughter first appears as the title character in what is probably Jeffers's earliest narrative, the unpublished "Clare Avon" (1915). After a significant hiatus during and shortly after the First World War, when Jeffers was occupied with other themes and projects, she surfaces again, centrally though briefly, in "Sea-Passions" (*CP* 4: 330–36), which Tim Hunt dates spring-summer 1919 (*CP* 5: 49–50). In the preliminary drafts of *The Women at Point Sur* (1923–26), which are variously and tentatively titled but are here referred to collectively as the "Point Alma Venus" fragments, she is more fully formed as April

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Nelson, who plays a major role in most of the numerous versions of that story. Finally, in the only published appearance Jeffers gave her, she appears fleetingly as Faith Heriot in the "Prelude" to "The Women at Point Sur" (1927). Faith, of course, figures prominently in the narrative itself, but not in her role as the lighthouse-keeper's daughter. As we look at the poems that these characters appear in, we will note that the first three contain elements of autobiographical reference, in the first incidentally but centrally in the second and third, suggesting that the character type is one that might be key to an understanding of Jeffers's psychology, and possibly of one of his most difficult poems, "Apology for Bad Dreams." This suggests that the lighthouse-keeper's daughter is a figure of Jeffers's imagination that accompanied or grew out of his early creative experiments in autobiographical revelation—an experiment that he abandoned with her only published appearance.

It has become commonplace to speak of the remarkable creative transformation that Jeffers underwent after the First World War, under the triune influence of Wife, War, and Stone—though Everson would have us substitute Eros for Wife and Thanatos for War, in light of the revelations of "Mal Paso Bridge" and other poems (*Brides* xvii *ff*). Some elements were inevitably abandoned—Ruth Alison for instance, of the eponymous poem in *Californians*, does something that no heroine from Jeffers's mature period could ever do: she dies of a broken heart. Yet Everson has adumbrated the salvaging effort that Jeffers engaged in when he returned to his early work to mine themes and characters. He noted, for example, the direct lines from "The Vardens" to "Cawdor," from "The Three Avilas" to "Tamar," and from "A Woman Down the Coast" to "Prelude," which cut through the sudden creative and intellectual eruption of that period (*Californians* 21; *Alpine* xxiv–xxv).[1] But because "Clare Avon" and the *Point Alma Venus* material remain unpublished, and "Sea-Passions" only appeared in the *Collected Poetry* in 2000, the significance of the lighthouse-keeper's daughter has not been apparent. This obscure character whom Jeffers repeatedly revisited throughout his transitional years, whose father is identical in each iteration, who is inextricably involved with a central tenet—violational liberation—of Jeffers's religious vision, and who bears striking resemblance to a figure in his own adult sexual fantasies, is central to the poet's psychobiography and artistic development.

"Clare Avon"[2]

Since this poem was unpublished by Jeffers and not included in *The Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*, a brief summary is given here.

Clare's father, latterly a Christian fundamentalist, had a career as a debauched sea captain and now keeps the light at the (fictional) Cape Contra. Clare falls in love with an unnamed "fisher-boy"[3] who arranges nocturnal trysts in her room in the lighthouse tower, just below the light. When she gives him a signal by a lamplight in her window, he leaves his boat on a nearby island, swims to the lighthouse, scales the tower by means of a rope, and enters her window. They enjoy their passion and sleep until the coming dawn hurries him from her window. Her father however has decided to wed her to Roger, a young man of the town, but has also discovered his daughter's affair with the fisher-boy and her method of signaling him. He invites Roger, Roger's sister, and some townspeople to the lighthouse for a betrothal-party. During the party, Clare's father goes upstairs to Clare's room and lights the lamp in Clare's window. The fisher-boy on the ocean sees it and heads for his island, where he leaves his boat and clothing, and swims to the lighthouse. He climbs the rope and at the top discovers that Clare's father awaits him with a knife. The old man cuts the rope; the fisher-boy lets out a cry and falls to the rocks below. Clare hears the cry and goes out, followed by Roger and his sister. She tends to the boy with the help of the other two, takes him down to her father's boat, and sets out over the sea. The boy is badly injured, but alive. The old man comes out of the lighthouse and discovers Roger and his sister, who tell him that Clare has escaped with her lover. In fury, he drives the visitors from the lighthouse. Alone in the tower, old Avon howls with rage, and with his senses leaving him ascends to the light and extinguishes it. A ship misses its channel for want of the light and breaks on a rocky island, where the castaways find the fisher-boy's boat and clothes. The final stanzas describe a God, too remote for praise or worship, smoothing the waters for Clare's boat to glide to safety.

The story is "unalloyed melodrama," as Everson said of "The Vardens" (*Californians* xx). Clare, like other heroines of the *Californians* period, is a one-dimensional paragon, virtuous even when failing in virtue. A child of nature, her gathering of flowers is described at length and finally in sacramental terms: "as worshippers the eucharist / Take with most reverent touch of fear and faith / So hushedly did Clare her blossom-wreath." And while most of the action takes place at the lighthouse, it seems to have impressed itself upon Jeffers's mind not as a symbol but solely as an image suggesting loneliness and isolation. But if its major faults, which are all too obvious, can be overlooked, it is difficult not to admire the effort and achievement that it represents in narrative structure and poetic form. And it conveys more clearly than any other narrative poem from Jeffers's apprenticeship his poetic allegiances at the time.

The poem is a pastiche incorporating narrative and figurative elements from Keats, Shakespeare, and Marlowe. The narrative line is very loosely adapted from both Keats's "The Eve of Saint Agnes" and the myth (primarily through Marlowe) of Hero and Leander.[4] In the latter, Hero, like Jeffers's heroine, lives in a tower by the sea and is the devotee of Venus, as Clare is of Nature. Each is the chaste object of a lover's fervid passion, though Hero is jealous of her chastity, while Clare, Nature's child, is unconcerned with hers. Each lights a lamp in her window: Hero as a mark for Leander to swim to, Clare as an all-clear signal to her fisher-boy. Each lover swims naked—across the Hellespont in the earlier story, from a nearby island in Jeffers's—to the tower where his desired dwells, and enjoys a night of love-making. With the coming of dawn, Leander steals away and swims back across the strait, as the fisher-boy does until his last visit.

The plot similarities to Keats's poem are confined to two elements: a maiden who receives a clandestine nocturnal visit from a lover who has swum to her abode, and the two lovers' escape into the night at the end of the poem. Keats's poem, unlike Jeffers's, is predicated upon a tradition that a maiden who performs certain rituals on the Eve of St. Agnes will see her future husband revealed in a dream. Unlike Keats's Madeleine, Jeffers's heroine is an active and willing partner in her lover's covert visits to her. There are numerous other divergences, and of course Jeffers's poem lacks the sensuousness and lushness of Keats's—as it obviously does the wit and brilliance of Marlowe's. Yet it is primarily Keats, and not Marlowe, whom Jeffers is at pains to imitate throughout the poem, in diction ("eremite" and "darkling" among other usages), reference (for example, a belabored and unconvincing revision, later cancelled, of the tag of the "Ode on a Grecian Urn," involving Beauty and Wisdom), and form: "The Eve of St. Agnes" and "Clare Avon" are both written in Spenserian stanzas.[5]

The conflation of the myth of Hero and Leander and the legend of the Eve of St. Agnes aligns Jeffers with two traditions and creates a narrative framework upon which to build his own conventional story. Yet there are elements of the mature work that are evident even in this early narrative. For instance, Jeffers includes a striking passage on what Brophy terms "the monomyth of eternal recurrence" (*Myth* 9). When Clare first sets her lamp in her window as a signal, Jeffers draws a direct comparison to Hero. Then he expands the reference, obviously with Keats's Grecian Urn in mind, and imagines a similar object turning slowly, revealing different scenes, revivified endlessly as the cycle is repeated in "the infinite unrollment of no change."[6] The maiden represented reappears "in every land / And every age," and thus reflects the stasis that was Keats's theme. The passage begins with Clare's exhorta-

tion to her lover to come not by land, where he would easily be discovered by her father, but by sea:

"The sea's way come," she had said. Not first nor last
Of willing maidens, but unwillingly
Maiden, since Hero's joy was overcast
With rage of waters and the wasteful sea,
Clare Avon was, nor first nor last was she
Of those that set with cunning and close vows
A lamp against the lattice-hinge, to be
A light for one man only, and not rouse
The eyes of crafty old age within the house.

Not first nor last: but who is last or first
Of the infinite unrollment of no change?
Lo, all that is or has been is rehearsed
From time eternal; nor of things found strange
Is anything found new: an equal range
Of circles never mutable at all
Brings back the beautiful gestures; nor revenge
Of god nor death can ravage nor appal
The lovely forms, the flesh marmoreal.

By what unknown supreme artificer
Sculptured, there is no man can understand;
We but behold the marble cylinder
Turn, and the figured frieze, an endless band,
Unroll itself and draw through every land
And every age the pageant of the prime.
This maiden body quivering like a wand
Above the lamp, has moved how many a time
Across the world in eager pantomime.

O we have seen her often; she is one
Of the ageless and unweary images.
She will return until the stars are done,
And withered like dead leaves the wrinkled seas.
She will not die; but as the well-zoned frieze
Is rolled, she'll pass the edge and seem to fade.
Then some predestined sorrow's fool will tease
His lids to drought of tears, and shrilly upbraid
The fates that spared not so desired a head.

Twenty-six years later, while on the 1941 lecture tour, Jeffers identified culture-cycles as one of the recurrent themes in his poems. He said he had found the notion of these cycles in Vico of Naples, Flinders

Petrie, and Oswald Spengler, but that the idea had come to him earlier and independently. Culture-cycles, after all, are a special case of eternal recurrence. "Clare Avon" helps to substantiate Jeffers's assertion that he came to an understanding of cyclical history on his own, and that as early as his late twenties "the infinite unrollment of no change" informed his view of history and archetypes ("This maiden body . . . has moved how many a time / Across the world in eager pantomime.").

Another passage merits mention in light of the later poems to be discussed. After Clare is at sea with her lover and ably handling the little boat in the storm, the narrator asks:

> But how should all her craft and courage save
> That rowboat when the storm broke up a ship?
> —Yet not the storm. An old man needs must rave
> When his daughter runs wild, and who's to whip
> But she, if the old man's mind and duty slip?

To old Avon, his daughter's affair is the cause of his temporary insanity and the loss of the ship. He intends to flog her for it should he get the chance—but Clare is safe with her fisher-boy and will not return. Here the anticipated flogging is a minor detail, but it will take on horrific proportion in the next narrative in which the lighthouse-keeper's daughter appears, four years later.

But what, we may wonder, was Jeffers's purpose in writing the poem? Years later Jeffers denied that a story-teller had any obligation to provide moral instruction. Writing to a correspondent in 1938, he said "poetry does not necessarily have a 'message' except 'How beautiful things are'—or 'How sad, or terrible'—or even 'How exciting.' These are the only messages that Homer or Shakespeare—for instance—have for us." (*Letters* 233). But at this early date, Jeffers had not yet arrived at that position. The lines at the beginning of "Clare Avon" involving Beauty and Wisdom indicate that Jeffers wanted to do more than simply tell an exciting tale. In the first stanza, he writes:

> [S]he had wisdom as a maid may have:
> And wisdom's but a mist, a mocking name,
> Except it melt in beauty as flame in flame.

This is followed by a stanza that was cancelled for obvious reasons:

> Right wisdom, then, is beauty. Whether truth,
> As my much greater said, be beauty indeed
> I am too unsure of eyes and too uncouth
> Of tongue, to attest; but this I pray you heed:

Since beauty and wisdom are one, let truth exceed
Our wisdom or fall short, as God devise;
It matters not, so wisdom's be our creed;
If beauty is truth, let wisdom be called wise:
If beauty is lies, may wisdom cleave to lies.

By declaring the equivalence of beauty and wisdom, and then extending that equivalence to truth, Jeffers had worked himself into a logical cul-de-sac, resulting in an absurdity in the final two lines which had to be expunged—though it is surprising that the stanza made it into the typescript and was only discarded in a final editing. But before we dismiss his conception out of hand, we should remember his treatment of "wisdom" in another poem written about the same time and published in *Californians and Other Poems*: "The Homely Labors" (*CP* 4: 66). In a long periodic sentence Jeffers dismisses the outward glories of his life in early Carmel—the couple's falcon-like love, their dreams of their future together, the consecration of their lives in the daily setting and rising of the sun, the "spiritual agony" brought on by the sight of the infinite stars in a gape of cloud—"[n]ot these alone," he says, can make his and Una's seclusion splendid. What also is needful is the homely labors—preparing the fire, cutting firewood—and these tasks make him mindful of "how much beauty and how sweet desire / And *wisdom* these include" [emphasis added]. Thus the simple tasks of daily living are consecrated and exalted, much as Clare's participation in natural phenomena is, in the term "wisdom." It is a profoundly conservative point of view, and one that Jeffers maintained throughout his life—though he would later find different expression for it.

Finally, the closing section of eight stanzas of "Clare Avon" presents an inchoate moral order. Jeffers first deals with Love, finding it careless and unmerciful—much as he does in the juvenile lyrics that precede this poem. It might strike us as surprising that this 28-year-old, recently married after a protracted and volcanic encounter with Eros, can write:

Who builds his hope on Love is nowise bolder
To build his house upon Vesuvian fire.

Love being potentially consuming and destructive, Jeffers finds a higher moral value in Beauty:

Unalterable words, eternal forms,
Are what [Beauty] has desire of . . .

This is familiar; Beauty is concerned with the eternal, the permanent. But the subsequent lines in the stanza do not accord with the mature Jeffers's attitude toward Beauty:

> . . . Though up to her
> All our poor wisdom labors, none the less
> We know high Beauty keeps no pensioner;
> She accepts the sacrificial loveliness:
> The bleeding remnant tempts her not to bless.

For the mature Jeffers, Beauty is an attribute of the divine. But as with Jeffers's thoughts on the "message" of poetry mentioned above, in 1915 he had not come to this realization either. Here the performance of routine necessities ("our poor wisdom") is done in service to Beauty, but is insufficient (leaving a "bleeding remnant"). To answer this want, Jeffers posits a third, supreme good:

> There is one higher than [Beauty]—but not for us.
> One greater than she is—we worship not.
> He is one with all, and works through all, and thus
> Stands beyond all, intolerably remote.
> He is the thinker of the infinite thought,
> The weaver of the incognizable dream.
> He cares for all, we say; or cares for naught,
> We know not. He is the streaming of the stream.
> He the eternal, the impartial, the supreme.

Clare's story is an exemplum of Jeffers's moral order as he conceived it in 1915. Loving, while Love is quicksand, and embodying Beauty through her Wisdom (that is, her intimate daily participation in her environment), Clare is assured salvation by neither of these necessary but insufficient virtues, but by the—not *grace*, but *whim*—of an "intolerably remote" God. Jeffers at this time is uncertain whether this God cares at all.[7]

There remains one specific detail to be noted in "Clare Avon." Before the main action of the story begins, Clare is apostrophized:

> Ah Clare, Clare Avon, simple and sweet maid,
> Who know not much but soon may come to the knowing!
> O small brown head enwound in comely braid,
> Bent low to blossoms of wild Love's own sowing!

The "small brown head enwound in comely braid" is a description of Una Jeffers's signature hairstyle, apparent in the Genthe and Hagemeyer

photographic portraits, as well as Robinson's own sketch of his wife in 1915.[8] Una continued to wear her hair in this fashion throughout her life. Clare's hairstyle might seem trifling, but it furthers the incorporation of autobiography that Everson noted in the early verse. The extended address to Una at the beginning of "The Vardens," written shortly after "Clare Avon," occupies 22 of the 55 stanzas, and after the narrative has begun Jeffers continues to address his wife. Here he tells Una of the similarity between her own hair and Marina's:

> . . . I think that either side
> Her clear gray eyes, thick-lidded, somnolent,
> The dark brown hair fell downward in such wide
> And equal curves as yours has; and was bound
> With double braids the little head around. (*CP* 4: 156)

Here the braids are not simply a descriptive touch: after her brother-lover is shot by her other brother, Marina stanches the bleeding from his lifeless body with her uncoiled hair.[9]

Unlike the narratives of Jeffers's maturity, some of his early narratives carry varying weights of autobiographical reference. In fact we might extend the identification of Clare with Una by noting that Jeffers considered Una a savior from his youthful dissolution and squandered energies, as Clare is the savior of the fisher-boy.[10] We will return to the autobiographical thread in the next section.

"Sea-Passions"

When in 1974 Everson published much of Jeffers's apprentice work in *Brides of the South Wind*, he presented four pages of what he believed to be "Peacock Ranch." He did not have the benefit of the discovery twelve years later of the full text of that poem and others at Occidental College. In fact, the first three pages that Everson published were indeed from that narrative, but the last, which was the basis of his conjecture on the poem, was from another narrative written about the same time, "Sea-Passions," which was discovered in its entirety in the same trove as the complete "Peacock Ranch." "Sea-Passions" was also written in rhyming couplets, but in a verse line longer even than the Locksley Hall meter of "Peacock Ranch"—the one clue that might have tipped Everson off that that one page was from a different poem. Hunt posits that it was written sometime after April 1919, when "Peacock Ranch" was completed (*CP* 5: 47). What is remarkable is that Everson's intuition about "Sea-Passions"—though he could not know that this is

what it was, and he had only one page of typescript to base his conclusion on—turned out to be pitch-perfect:

> [I]t is a pity we have no complete text of "Peacock Ranch" [i.e., "Sea-Passions"] for what we do have makes it quite clear that this poem signals the long-deferred transition from the conventional romantic poet of *Californians* to the savage iconoclast of *Tamar*. His first narrative of irrepressible violence, it was conceived by him after the impact of the war changed him from ideality to ruthlessness. (*Brides* xxiii–xxiv)

"Sea-Passions" is indeed Jeffers's "first narrative of irrepressible violence." Its stark brutality is amplified by its spareness and brevity, and it remains appalling with repeated readings, whether approached from the earlier verse or backwards from the mature narratives. The theme of the story is the absence of divine justice in the world. In "Clare Avon" divine justice is capricious and unreliable. In the pastoral narratives of *Californians*, it is mostly not at issue—though in stanza 46 of "The Vardens," it is denied in a few tangential lines. But in "Sea-Passions" the matter is central, and Jeffers, just as he had in the earlier and unpublished "Storm as Deliverer" (1917; *CP* 4: 257–77) renounces it again with finality.

None of the major characters is named. The story unfolds briskly in a mere forty couplets, with a few lyric verses interspersed. In the first two couplets, a young man who is in training to be a priest drives on a winter night to the stone house of his dying father, situated on a rugged coast where waves crash on the rocks below. He is told that his father might live for two more hours. The rest of the poem except the final couplet is monologue, the father's confession to his son. The father disapproves of his son's choice of profession, but hopes that his story might help him to escape "foolish . . . father-love" (i.e., the son's God-love). He had come to the coast with his young wife, the young man's mother, and shortly afterward his wife died. He tells the son that he used to swim in stormy weather, when there would be only one other swimmer. One day he saw her from off-shore, a young girl standing naked on the rocks, shielded from land-view by the sea-cliffs. And here, the father creates a nested narrative:

The girl later found a lover and enjoyed "amphibious loves" with him, until he lied to her. She took revenge by stabbing and wounding him during one of their trysts in the ocean. The man partially recovered and started out near sundown in stormy weather to (fictional) Point Fuertes lighthouse, where the girl lived with her old bible-reading father, whom the man intended to confront. A steamer approached, but the lighthouse lamp was out because of the keeper's inattendance—just as it was in "Clare Avon," for the same reason and with the same

result. Seeing the imminent danger, the man swam in the storm to the tower, and, standing on a buttress, he saw through a window the old keeper flogging his bound daughter's naked shoulders, the blood streaming down her back. At the climax, the steamer was wrecked on the rocks, and the drowning people and the bound and flagellated girl cried up to God, as the old keeper continually cried the name of God. "Red in the flesh to be white in spirit," the keeper chants.

At this point, the father declares the inoperability of divine justice and the insufficiency of Christian dogma, and reveals himself to be the man who was the lover of the lighthouse-keeper's daughter in his own nested narrative:

> Curious moralist stitch your cloths of crime to consequence and ruin to sin,
> Folly, adultery, madness, shipwreck, death, a Nessus shirt to fold him in.
>
> But that bad man lived unpunished and will die at peace, God's paths are more
> Deeply strange than your divinity plumbed yet. I am the man, I have dived
> lower. (*CP* 4: 335)

Though the narrative is brief, it unfolds in three layers. There is the nested narrative, the kernel which contains most of the action of the poem. Enfolding this is the son's visit, and the father's interpretation of what had happened, which he accomplishes by first concealing his involvement and then exposing it. Finally, there is the author's arrangement of the narrative, which is the more complex because the lyrical fragments that he intersperses are apparently those of the father, but are actually his own as well, as we will see below.

Brophy has commented on several other ritually bound, suspended and/or tortured figures in Jeffers's narratives (*Myth* 51 *ff*). Tamar dreams of herself suspended naked between the sea and sky (*CP* 1: 60); David Carrow at Christmas-tide is shot and then hanged at the end of "The Coast-Range Christ" (*CP* 4: 362–64); Helen is ritually hanged and tortured at the end of "At the Fall of an Age" (*CP* 2: 303). Brophy contends that these victims are "hanged to propitiate winter forces and to bring a return to fruitfulness" (52). We recall that the son in "Sea-Passions" returns home to be present at his father's death on a *winter* night. The horrific flogging has purchased the walled-off domestic security of the lyrical interpolations, examined below. This looks forward to more familiar passages in Jeffers, e.g., Onorio Vasquez's insistence, after the death of the crucified hawk in the "Prelude" to *The Women at Point Sur*, that "[i]t is necessary for someone to be fastened with nails" (*CP* 1: 248). Redemption requires sacrifice.

The father closes by saying that in his life he was favored by having a "steady and senseless heart," which he terms "Old sea-boulder." But this

will not suffice for the son, who "[r]oamed the shore and beat the boulders with his bare fists while his father died." It is not hard to detect at the end of "Sea-Passions" a correspondence between the father and Jeffers himself, who wrote repeatedly of his cold nature and declared kinship with the sea-boulders. Furthermore, just before the first ten lines of the passage below beginning "A barren foreland" are inserted, the father (who is assigned as author to the lyrical verse sections of the poem) says, "Yonder were the seven great boulders pushing from the soil." He says this upon his deathbed within his own house. Una and Robinson referred to the stones on Carmel Point where they built Tor House as the "Standing Stones" (Donnan Jeffers 7), borrowing a phrase from the Irish. Evidently, the "seven great boulders" are the Standing Stones by another name.[11]

Interrupting this savage tale are pieces of a lyric that clearly was written earlier by Robinson to Una. Some of these lines, interspersed at three points in the narrative, were inscribed by Jeffers on the walls of the attic of Tor House, where by life-long habit he composed his poetry. They are familiar to readers of Jeffers as a single poem which was first published in Melba Bennett's *Robinson Jeffers and the Sea* (1936), where they are said to be "from Una's scrap book."

> A barren foreland without a fountain, without a tree,
> Bulks of monument granite push up from the brow of the hill,
> Monstrous blocks break through for a broad-beaked prow in the sea,
> Winds blow over, the waters below never are still. . . .
> There are only simple things here,
> Three huge people my dear,
> The earth's old hard strength,
> The keen air's messenger powers,
> The coiled sea's moving length,
> Immense neighbors of ours.
> I will build a stone house for young life and rock walls for the seedlings of love,
> Ribs of rock round a hot soft heart, crannies in granite for the roots of flowers;
> Waves wrestling below, winds ranging above,
> Braggarts, go by, the old earth is our friend, touch nothing of ours.
> (Bennett [ix])[12]

The first four lines, with their alliterative plosives and concentration of stressed syllables, convey the violence of the locale. This is balanced by the acceptance of the greater world and its elements in the following six shorter lines. The closing promises protection to his family from the elements. What is remarkable is that this idyllic autobiographical lyric is cut up and distributed in "Sea-Passions" among lines of sadistic horror. It is worth noting, in light of what will follow, that the threats

to the family's domestic tranquility are here merely external natural forces—the wind and ocean—and not threats arising from within the poet himself.

And so in this tale Jeffers associates himself—by sharing his authorship of the lyrical portions—with a character whose sexual transgression has led him to a vision of "irrepressible violence" and a realization that God does not interfere in the human drama. But it is a long stretch from this to the conviction that violation can liberate—Tamar's discovery. Upon completion of her story, which Hunt believes to have occurred in late 1922 or early 1923 (*CP* 5: 59), Jeffers embarked upon the project that was to consume much of his compositional energy for the next five years, laying it aside for only relatively short periods, and culminating in the June 1927 publication of *The Women at Point Sur*.[13] In it Jeffers not only affirmed the principle of Tamar's discovery, but qualified it by placing it in a larger social context. The birthing of that poem was the most difficult of Jeffers's career, and it is clear now that it was a rapidly conceived and realized story—begun and finished in about six months, extending to 175 published pages—that broke decisively with the drafts that had preceded it. It is in those drafts that Jeffers dealt with the immediate aftermath of Tamar's knowledge and the next incarnation of the character we are examining.

The "Point Alma Venus" Fragments[14]

In January 1926 Jeffers wrote to George West, a San Francisco newspaperman, of his use of incest as a theme in "Tamar" and mentioned in closing: "My next theme I think is parricide. There's something to be said for this, too, as a theme" (*Letters* 59). Jeffers was alluding to a project that had likely been on his desk since at least 1923, which finally evolved into *The Women at Point Sur*. Three months later he wrote to his publisher a brief description of the poem, which he said was titled "Point Alma Venus," though that title does not occur on any of the existing versions and fragments.[15]

The act of parricide is not represented in the fragments, but several of the late versions make it apparent that this was the direction Jeffers was working toward. The lines "My son, do you mean to kill me? / I shall know God first" occur as marginal notations in two of the versions. And in the later versions Barclay's wife Audis encourages her son Edward to kill his father. Among the many plot elements that Jeffers was working with are the following, all taken from one of the last versions:

- Rev. Arthur Barclay's renunciation of his faith from the pulpit in Los Angeles, and his desire to discover the real God;

- His escape to coastal Monterey County—in earlier versions to Carmel, in later ones to the Big Sur country—with his wife Audis and son Edward;
- Barclay's terrors and torment at the prospect of death;
- Edward's resentment of his tutelage under his strict father, and his dreams of world domination;
- Barclay's interest in parapsychology, and his arrangement for his family's participation in séances;
- Audis's attempted suicide;
- Edward's sexually charged swimming scene with Natalia Halloran (variously called Jane Halloran and Natalia Morhead in other versions); his failure and shame;
- Telepathy, connecting the son in the ocean with his father in his study;
- Barclay's desire to visit the Point Aumentos lighthouse (drawn from earlier versions of the historic Point Pinos lighthouse in Pacific Grove);
- Barclay's rape of the Indian servant-girl Maruca;
- Audis's discovery of the outrage; her enlistment of Edward in torturing Maruca as vengeance;
- Barclay's visit to the lighthouse; on the way he passes an Indian burial ground, which fills him with revulsion;
- Another séance, arranged with Rose Nelson and others at Barclay's home, with a cast of spiritual characters, leaving Barclay feeling uncertain and suspicious;
- Audis's urging of Edward to kill his father;
- Another séance arranged privately by Barclay with Rose Nelson and daughter April on a "breast-shaped mound of ancient burials";
- The recently drowned Natalia Halloran's appearance at a subsequent séance;
- Barclay's hold on reality becomes increasingly tenuous, while he accumulates power.

Such a bare listing of course omits nearly all of the action and the actors' motivations, interactions, and conflicts, as well as the narrator's commentary on them. The final two versions that survive are both almost 100 manuscript pages long. For our present purpose we will focus only on a few of these elements.

When Barclay discovers that the Point Pinos lighthouse-keeper's wife, Rose Nelson, is a spiritualist who conducts séances for the locals around Point Pinos and down the coast, he interprets this as a confirmation and progression of his spiritual quest. Rose's husband is, like the lighthouse-keepers in "Clare Avon" and "Sea-Passions," a bible-obsessed

old sea-captain, who says the voices his wife hears are "lies." While skeptical, Barclay wishes to test Rose and her communications with the other world. His visit to the lighthouse, often delayed but finally answering a siren-call that he had long heard, is for him an exploration of a mysterious symbol. Here, he recognizes a correspondence among the layout of the lighthouse grounds, some doodles that he made absent-mindedly on a piece of paper, and the prehistoric rock-carvings in Brittany (in Carnac) and Britain:

> He took a pencil in his hand to make notes in a tablet.
> His thought wandered away; he was drawing concentric circles on the paper,
> Ring within ring, a ray slashed from the center
> Through the widest circumference. He looked with wonder at what he had drawn: what working
> Of the deep mind, deep under consciousness,
> Does that symbolize? Ring within ring, wall within wall, the prison of existence?
> The labyrinth of our awful ignorance? Escape, the ray cut through the circles?
> This sort of thing they sculptured before history begins on the stones at Carnac
> And north in the islands: cup-and-ring markings, the old masons
> Drew in a dream . . . "why," he thought, "the actual diagram of Aumentos lighthouse,
> Ring within ring, the round tower built around the light, and the house embraces
> The tower, the low stone wall circles the house, the driveway circles the wall,
> The old cypress hedge circles the driveway. Then, from outside, the road leads down to it
> Cuts in through the hedge, the path runs through the wall to the door of the house: the channel
> That I was drawing from center through circumference. The same," he thought, "the old same
> Instinct that made the cup-and-ring markings in Carnac, it planned the lighthouse
> And drew my drawing. We are one humanity.—Humanity?" he thought,
> "It was not humanity made the circle within circle of the eight planets."

Such overt reference to racial symbols, though not characteristic of all of the "Point Alma Venus" versions, recalls a key passage from "Roan Stallion," written perhaps a year before the lines given above: "The fire threw up figures / And symbols meanwhile, racial myths formed and dissolved in it, the phantom rulers of humanity / That without being are yet more real than what they are born of . . ." (*CP* 1: 194). And in a letter to Powell (*Letters* 183) Jeffers himself acknowledged the presence of "racial memories" in Tamar's dream (*CP* 1: 34 *ff)* and Onorio Vasquez's visions.[16] The symbolism is evident in other passages of the "Point Alma

Venus" material as well. In the final extant version, for example, Barclay visits the two Morros, breast-shaped hills, one of which is crowned by the lighthouse. The other is a native American burial ground with a stone menhir at the peak; erosion has revealed human remains, from which, as reminders of his own mortality, Barclay recoils in horror. The lighthouse and the menhir become nipples, one spewing light and life in rhythmic, sexual pulses across the landscape; the other oozes death. "The two poles" of the universe, thinks Barclay.

Barclay's son Edward died in the First World War before the action of *The Women at Point Sur* opens. But in the "Point Alma Venus" material, he is a prominent character. His conflict with his father, fed by his mother's venom against her husband for his abandonment of his faith, of his position, and of her security, increasingly takes shape as the narrative progresses. Edward becomes Barclay's antagonist and presumptive murderer—presumptive only because the versions are left incomplete, though the notes for the poem make Edward's role clear. Edward is also modeled closely on Robinson Jeffers himself. No other character that Jeffers ever delineated draws so directly from his own life story. Edward's father is a clergyman, twenty-two years older than his wife, as Jeffers's father was. Edward endures long sessions studying Greek and Latin with his father, just as Robinson did. Like Robinson, Edward is schooled in Europe; he is lonely and friendless; he dreams the dream of the powerless:[17]

> . . . He walked across the sand-hills
> Dreaming his dream; the father was not the only dreamer; his was far off
> though.
> Huge Asia beyond the sun-glint plain of sea there.
> The horses of Mongolia, the old ferocity; it was Edward Barclay
> Gathered them, the nomads heard him, he spoke of Attila,
> The glory of Genghiz, the spoils of Timour, the earth desert of grass forever
> Where the hooves of the host trampled it. "Remember the fury of your fathers,
> The spears driven through China, the rape of India, the waves of the horses
> roaring westward,"
> He cried, he blew up the coals of the old daring courage, he welded the tribes
> into one weapon;
> Air-planes for ponies, bought with the loot of the East, shadowed the world
> with terror; it was Edward Barclay
> Rode the storm, the double wings of the hawk of Asia darkened America and
> Europe;
> He ruled, he scourged the world, avenging his youth upon it.
> This was nineteen-fourteen, the early summer, when courage,
> Not come to the act, dreamed in boys' minds.

Later, after Barclay has visited the lighthouse at Point Aumentos, met the keeper and his daughter April Nelson, and attended séances with April and her mother Rose, Edward again on the shore yields to his day-dreams, this time centering on a public flogging of naked treacherous women in the presence of another who resembles April. In the dream April witnesses and passively assents to the violation and humiliation of Natalia Halloran, with whom Edward (in reality, not in dream) had experienced sexual humililation:

> . . . He lay in the shadow
> Of rocks beside the sand-bar of the stagnant stream, at the beach for bathing,
> His mind and his flesh making a dream.
> Dominion of Asia: to wake Mongolia
> From the ancient sleep, he Tamburlaine and Genghiz, gather the tribes, the wild riders,
> Buy them with the first loot air-planes for ponies, shadow America and Europe
> With menace, with empire: so wide a dream had avenged on the world his subdued childhood
> For years, hundreds of repetitions, hosts of brave men slain in huge battles,
> And now there were women in the folds of the dream, one faithful, the others traitresses,
> Beautiful spies; the faithful one resembled April Nelson, that woman's
> Daughter; she often wept for the others, they had fitting punishments, stripped naked, whipped senseless
> In the midst of the camp; but that black moon of treachery Natalia Halloran, himself
> Punished when she defied him; in April's presence, with April's terrified approval
> He tore the clothes from her white skin, she screaming, he humbled her
> On the rough bed in the tent. Afterward she'd be given to the soldiers.

A similar passage occurs in the earlier "MacTorald" version, with far more detail. Here Edward's dreams of world domination are more fully expressed, and then shift to a fantasy of literary conquest—fanciful, but more attainable. The daydream is a reaction to his humiliation in a sexually charged swimming scene with Jane (in other versions, Natalia) Morhead, and ends again in sexual frustration, insecurity and shame.

> . . . Edward
> Had lived inward and fed on dreams, his father
> Ruling him, dreams for refuge: the father had grown feeble
> These last two years, but the old ghost lived: what dreams?
> Of domination, Macedonian Alexander
> Shaking the tower of the world . . . Tamburlaine . . . himself,
> Edward Barclay . . . he had written a bloody history

All over the blank pages of his future,
He against the people: he had gone west into Asia,
Wakened Mongolia out of the ancient slumber,
The wild riders gathered, he had made them a wedge
To split Asia, flung the east over Europe, the west
Intolerable over America, and ruled
One terror, the twin destructions of the world.
The dream lived with him out of childhood, the great war
Fed, not eclipsed it; but now two years new elements
Mixed in this dream of vengeance on a world
In which he was too little and separate; reality
Breathed on the edge of the dream: and if Mongolia
Were deaf to him . . . he'd no sword to whip the world with . . .
A poet stands separate, against the world, wielding some power,
He might put magic into words and make
Something to be remembered against the world,
Having ranged Asia, and the east wisdom: now sometimes
Edward Barclay walked about his dream
Poet instead of conqueror: the other element
That entered with adolescence: desire came in,
Wondering desire, visions of naked breasts
And the white thighs of women: the woman here,
When they were swimming, a week ago, had touched him
On the arm and on the flank: he never doubting
Himself contemptible still, although the future
Would bow before him, had shrunk like bats from sun
Thinking she mocked him: she caught his hand in hers
Now, and he thought, "Mockery again? Not mockery?"
Not-mockery was more terrible: he left her his hand,
But shook with fear . . . a mountain chasm of failure . . .
How could he be equal to any turbulence
Or sweet crisis in the world?

These passages are remarkably self-revelatory. In June of 1940, Jeffers wrote with arresting candor to a correspondent who had inquired about imaginary companions in his childhood:

> I had little or no companionship with other children and spent much time in day-dreams, but I do not remember imaginary companions (meaning playmates). I was usually alone against the (imaginary) world, astonishing a curious or hostile people by my exploits—a flying man, or an animal-companioned man like Kipling's Mowgli. This up to 14 years or so, then I found satisfactory companionship of my own age. Occasionally after that when circumstances isolated me again. (*Letters* 281; formatting slightly amended)

That in this poem of unexampled self-revelation Jeffers includes as one of the major figures April Nelson, the daughter of the keeper of the light at Point Aumentos, now comes as no surprise. We have seen that a young girl in a tower was early and loosely associated with Una, and that she then evolved into a suspended and tortured girl. Below we will see that this figure is present also as the terrified object of Jeffers's own sexual fantasy in some of his most intimate autobiographical verse, which he declined to publish.

In this version of the "Point Alma Venus" fragments, Jeffers moves further in the direction that Brophy first demonstrated: relating the narrative to the action of the year-God cycle. Here, after a séance on a hilltop Indian graveyard, Rose Nelson enters a trance and invites the dead to enter her and speak through her. "The hill shakes, the old rock / Swarms upward like an ant-heap." Tribal voices are heard, but Barclay, in his desire for April, has convinced himself that it is fraud. April has half-fainted and sees her mother's face like a mask with alien figures appearing in the eye sockets; Rose is now the voice of God, and April imagines Barclay as God, not to be resisted. Barclay, having embraced violation as a means to discovery and freedom, has gathered her in his arms:

> It is out of a story lost and forgotten
> In the youth of the world, before the first Demeter: the bereft mother in the sun,
> The God, the maid in his arms, striding down hill into the darkness.
> Minds dreamed
> In the dawn of the mind: and you toward noon, and the attitudes, the gestures,
> Return, dreaming the evening of the world: you dreamed of wings in the wan morning,
> You have forged them about noon, fly with steel falcons . . . I will tell you more clearly.
> There is a column carven with images, the triumphs of the race, the attitudes, the gestures;
> The ages wonder about it and consider its faces: after many returnings
> Memory is prophecy: you pilgrims of the circle would have grown weary but the attitudes
> Are beautiful, the gestures beautiful, evening's worth dreaming.
> . . . The stone-eyed mother
> Rose from her rock; the ghosts babbled in her throat, she moved like stone walking;
> Her masters had forgotten how to guide the live limbs. . . .

Fierier possession
Rode the man with long spurs, desire his youth had denied avenging its prisons.
His other burden, the girl April,
In his arms, her eyes upward, hardly distinguished him from the intolerable sunlight,
She felt the long strides of his strength, she saw the branches of the pinewood
Cover the sky: some obscure
Brutality to be suffered, a crucifixion: what violence? the sweetness of it
Was the necessity: an irresistible power: submission was all.

Barclay-as-Hades carries downward into darkness his Persephone from her bereft mother, recreating Persephone's ritual death at the end of the year and promising her return. The Demeter-Persephone-Hades myth is one of the oldest of the Greek myths, and Jeffers tells us here that his story, like the one that inspired the Eleusinian Mysteries, reaches back even earlier than that to a prehistoric prototype now lost. We have returned to the "infinite unrollment of no change," with the "column carven with images" in "Point Alma Venus" standing in for the marble cylinder of "Clare Avon." Memory is prophecy.

The passage above points up an anomaly in the "Point Alma Venus" material. Unlike Jeffers's other narratives, early and late, this one makes explicit reference to classical myth and mythological concepts, such as the year-God cycle. Some of these references are not very notable in themselves, but taken together illustrate Jeffers's conscious intention to incorporate into his narrative elements of myth by reference. The following lines are from an early version of "Point Alma Venus," in which Barclay addresses the congregants at an Easter sunrise sermon:

I cannot tell you what is true. But I can tell what's false: the books, the Bible, the stories,
The church and the faith founded on them: all false, all false, lies of the liar. The story that Jesus
Was God and a son of God and died to save us: a myth related to the myth of Adonis.
The story that he rose from death on the third day, the tomb in the rock was broken open:
The yarns of idle fishermen, the washings of Syria.

The final line appears in the first chapter of "The Women at Point Sur," but not the reference to Adonis, which Jeffers perhaps felt was too direct or didactic.

There are other instances of direct reference. The following lines are found on the opening page of the version of the poem that we have mainly been referencing. As is typical with the notes that Jeffers made

for his narratives, they float and shift between prose statements of intentions, notes on narrative development, and poetic snippets of dialog or narrative. Here Jeffers notes his intention in prose (not carried through) to connect Barclay with Earth Mother worship (Kali is not only the Hindu Earth Mother, but the goddess of Change) and then switches to Barclay's voice in narrative verse, apparently again at the Easter sunrise service which occurs in several versions, and supplies the most explicit statement of the year-God myth to be found in his work. (The interrupting parenthesis is the poet's note to himself):

> The father [i.e., Barclay] worships mother Earth (Kali); he has come to this worship through confusion with his dead former wife, not Edward's mother; though communicates with her through Rose Nelson[.]
>
> I know the story of Jesus Christ dying to save us is a vain story, ~~I know it's falsehood~~.
> God is a woman to men, a man to women; to me God is a woman.
> She is Venus, she is Kali, she is the mother, she is the nourisher, the fountain.
> (That God is not sexual)
> I came out of her, I return to her in a woman's arms, I return to her
> Dead, when I go underground; she takes me home, remoulds me, green I grow out of her.

There are other direct references, such as Barclay's characterization of his wife Audis, after his outrage upon Maruca, as "scapegoat of the Venus," and the marginal notation "Mahadeo" (Shiva), given without any context.

"Prelude" and "The Women at Point Sur"

On April 30, 1926, Jeffers famously wrote to his publisher:

> . . . when I gave a whole morning to reading the manuscript [of "Point Alma Venus"] considerately it became dreadfully clear that it would not do. . . . Every story that ever occurred to me had got wound up into this one poem, and it was too long, too complicated, and, from the attempt at compression, neither clear nor true. . . .
>
> Now I must pick this thing to pieces; and I promise a book for spring publication . . . (*Letters* 70)

Spring 1927, that is. Jeffers was giving himself a year to "pick this thing to pieces" after having spent over three years—at the very least—on it. And it took him almost that long: he finished "The Women at Point Sur" in mid-February 1927; it was published in June.

It must have been a heavy task, one that called for a re-evaluation of so much of the work that he had done since his breakthrough with "Tamar," and which had totally absorbed him, except for relatively brief interludes when he wrote "Roan Stallion," "The Tower Beyond Tragedy," and various lyrics. This material drew on his own life-story, and encompassed various narrative lines that he had already worked out in service to his narrative goal. Now he had to perform wholesale amputations upon it. The effort has not been fully documented, but we sketch here the broad excisions that were necessary for him to impose focus and control on his story, "to burn" the narrative "down to significance," in Arthur Barclay's phrase.

Gone are the visits to the lighthouse and its occupants, the old lightkeeper and his medium-wife. Their daughter April has been re-sired as Barclay's daughter, whose violation by her father in chapter XIII initiates what Hunt has termed the nightmare portion of the narrative (Hunt 207). All of the séances at which the lighthouse-keeper's daughter assisted—gone, and with them all of Barclay's interest in the paranormal. Edward has been killed off in the war in France before the action begins, though he and his impulse toward parricide are alive in April's subconscious. Therefore, the sexually charged swimming scenes with Natalia Morhead (or Jane Halloran) are absent, as are Edward's daydreams of conquest. Maruca the Indian-girl remains, but she is no longer deceived by Barclay; rather bought by him. Audis, who in her derangement had flogged Maruca and goaded her son to kill his father, recedes into passivity. As Everson commented, "[Jeffers] had to begin all over again . . . center all in Barclay."[18] And Jeffers did not immediately begin work on "Point Sur" after his letter to Friede; he finished several shorter poems and the short narrative "Home" by mid-June (Hunt, *CP* 5: 74). That so much narrative material could be cast off and the story re-imagined so quickly is a testament to the heat of Jeffers's creativity at this time. It also contextualizes the bitterness that Jeffers felt at the failure of his *magnum opus*, as expressed poignantly in "The Bird with the Dark Plumes."

It is in the "Prelude" to "The Women at Point Sur" that Jeffers finally introduces the lighthouse-keeper's daughter to his public, but in a tightly compressed role. The lighthouse is once again the light on the north horn of the Monterey Peninsula: Point Pinos (which Barclay in his dreams in the earlier versions had thought of as Point Alma Venus). It is swaddled in dunes and pasture, close to habitations—even within view of Barclay's residence, in some versions, inviting the communal involvement essential for the séances. It is immediately contrasted to the light station at Point Sur, which is remote, forbidding, inhospitable. And

what is about to occur down the coast is far from the orbit of ordinary human affairs.

> The lighthouse-keeper's daughter little Faith Heriot
> Says "Father the cow's got loose, I must go out
> With the storm coming and bring her into the stable.
> What would mother do without milk in the morning?"
> (Clearly Point Pinos Light: stands back from the sea
> Among the rolling dunes cupped with old pasture.
> Nobody'd keep a cow on the rock at Point Sur.)

Faith's lineage in Jeffers's cast of characters is apparent in her sexual yearning and her father's religious belief:

> This girl never goes near the cowshed but wanders
> Into the dunes, the long beam of the light
> Swims over and over her head in the high darkness,
> The spray of the storm strains through the beam but Faith
> Crouches out of the wind in a hollow of the sand
> And hears the sea, she rolls on her back in the clear sand
> Shuddering, and feels the light lie thwart her hot body
> And the sand trickle into the burning places.
> Comes pale to the house: "Ah Bossy led me a chase,
> Led me a chase." The lighthouse-keeper believes in hell,
> His daughter's wild for a lover, his wife sickening toward cancer,
> The long yellow beam wheels over the wild sea and the strain
> Gathers in the air. (*CP* 1: 243–44)

The structure and compositional history of "Prelude" are of interest here.[19] The first twenty-one lines, a first-person soliloquy by Jeffers, were published separately in *The American Mercury* for December 1926 under the title "Preface." Allowing for several months' time for submittal, acceptance, and publication, these lines were likely completed in the late summer of 1926 at the latest. In late 1926, as his readers pondered his brief soliloquy, they realized that they had never heard anything quite like this from the poet before. He was contemptuous (insulating himself against "the animals Christ is rumored to have died for"), defiant ("the hateful-eyed / And human-bodied are all about me: you that love multitude may have them"), revolted (ashamed to speak of "the active little bodies, the coupling bodies, the misty brainfuls / Of perplexed passion"). His bald statement that "Humanity is needless" amplified the premise of "Roan Stallion" ("Humanity is the start of the race"), and the rest of "Preface" suggested the implication of this for his narrative art. But "Preface" accounts for only a tenth of the verse lines in "Prelude." What was added was another section of twenty-three lines,

an invocation of storm and an incantation praising natural violence as liberating, and a final section comprising a lengthy phantasmagoria of 149 lines, with narrative elements revisited cyclonically in swirling tension.

The action of this section takes place during a roughly 24-hour period, from late afternoon or early evening of one day "in the slide of the year" (*CP* 1: 243) until about the same time the next. The incantatory invocation of storm has already been spoken by the narrator ("Come storm, kind storm. . . . / I was calling one of the great dancers / Who wander down from the Aleutian rocks and the open Pacific . . ." (*CP* 1: 241). While Jeffers incorporates a number of vignettes as the storm progresses over the 24 hours, the main story is Myrtle Cartwright's, adapted from the first part of a narrative written in 1917.[20] The passage begins with the Vasquez brothers on Palo Corona, the crucifixion of a hawk, and Onorio's vision of the colossal figure of Our Lady of the Sorrows walking naked on the Pacific. As evening draws on the wind drops, and old Vasquez sends his seven sons to set fires, the autumn ritual to clear the pastures for new growth.[21] In order, the rest of the vignettes are given or revisited as follows:

- Myrtle Cartwright, sick with feverish desire, tries to sleep as the thunder begins over the ocean and the rain is imminent.
- Now Faith Heriot, in the passage quoted above, slips out during the night under pretext for storm-induced autoeroticism on the shore.
- The hawk is apostrophized, its strain mirroring God's strain in the gathering storm and apparent everywhere, in the ocean, the electric charge in the clouds, in the countervailing atomic forces in the oil in the oil-tanks in Monterey.
- The rain finally comes, and lightning terrifies Myrtle.
- The Vasquez sons have gone home. After midnight the wind rises again, nearly blowing the roof off the Vasquez farmhouse. Onorio sees another vision: the eucalyptuses bent north under the wind, everything streaming north to a strange lover, a prefigurement of Barclay's role in the narrative to follow.
- In the morning, Myrtle yields to her desire and leaves the house for her lover amid the wind and lightning.
- The first oil-tank in Monterey is hit with lightning and explodes in flame.[22]
- Myrtle scrambles up the hillside on all fours in the rain and mud, imagining the lightning coming to cover her like an animal.
- The nine other oil-tanks wait in anticipation.

- Myrtle arrives at Rod Stewart's and offers herself; Rod takes her to the barn where he satisfies her desire.
- Other oil-tanks take fire from the first.
- Onorio is apostrophized. "It is necessary for someone to be fastened with nails," he says.

Sacrifice and redemption, violence and liberation, the themes of the narrative to follow, become cyclonic winds that join with the actual storm that has slammed into the coast in an awesome depiction of the violence that Jeffers intuited at the heart of existence. There is nothing in American poetry like it.

The structure of the phantasmagoria reveals Myrtle's central role. Her story is advanced in five segments separated by segments of other vignettes as the narration mirrors the circularity of the massive storm; the Vasquez family is the subject of four segments; the crucified hawk and oil-tanks three each; and Faith only one. Myrtle, the heroine of the ten-year-old "A Woman Down the Coast" (published in *CP* as "Storm as Deliverer"), whom Jeffers constellated with three other earlier heroines as "Brides of the South Wind" (*CP* 4: 368), is central in "Prelude" but recedes in "Point Sur," appearing primarily as a minor character who joins the throng on the mountain at the end. Faith, on the other hand, is a minor figure in "Prelude" but is one of the main characters in the story that follows, though as the pathetic high-strung lover of Natalia who has moved into the Morhead household to take care of old Morhead, not the desirable daughter of the old bible-obsessed man who keeps the light. While their trajectories cross between "Prelude" and "Point Sur," neither survives in any of the work that follows "Point Sur." In this circumscribed sense, "Point Sur" marks in Jeffers's creative development, as he later said in a broader context of "The Waste Land," an end and not a new beginning (*CP* 4: 423).

Though Jeffers only accorded the lighthouse-keeper's daughter one appearance in his published verse, it was in his most sustained, intense, and violent lyrical-narrative composition—for "Prelude" contains elements of both genres. His gesture to her there was a valedictory one. She had haunted his creative imagination from the time he took up narrative in 1914 until twelve years later when, standing at the break-over moment of his career, he was ready to present his *magnum opus*.

Bad Dreams: The "Apology" and Two Others

We have seen that the figures of the lighthouse-keeper's daughter and her bible-obsessed father are threaded through Jeffers's early narratives, and that the thread runs into the early years of the mature work. We

have also seen that these manifestations are accompanied by passages of autobiographical revelation, as well as the poet's emerging sense of archetypal action and the necessity—even "holiness" as Everson insists (*Earth* 227)—of violence. But the simple juxtaposition of these autobiographical and metaphysical matters with the figures in the lighthouse suggests that something else ties them all together.

The unity of conception of the old lighthouse-keeper in the four narratives—all four keepers are interchangeable, differentiated only by greater or lesser detail—suggests that Jeffers viewed them as representatives of the religious codification that he had escaped. Yet while he admitted that his education under the tutelage of his father was harsh—his scholarly father "beat" Greek and Latin into him—the lighthouse-keeper of these narratives is far removed from the Rev. Dr. Jeffers, who was tolerant and increasingly liberal throughout his career (Karman). The characterizations of the lighthouse-keeper thus suggest a more general antipathy to religious doctrine, which Jeffers had renounced years before these poems were written.

The figure of the keeper's daughter—except for her third appearance—can then be seen as a representation of Jeffers's emergent and expansive religious sensibility, which he himself once reluctantly identified as pantheism, but which in his later verse seems closer to panentheism. All four instances of the type are presented sympathetically. Clare Avon is identified as "the child of Nature," and the unnamed girl in "Sea-Passions" acts the part. In the earlier narrative, Clare is romantically consecrated in nature, while in the latter the keeper's daughter is consecrated through horrific violence. April Nelson, embodying some of the natural characteristics of her previous incarnations, is an assistant to her mother's mediumship, an extra-orthodox connection to the beyond. While she is more completely characterized than any of her sisters, she functions in the narrative as a false hope to Barclay's quest, and like so much in that narrative and "Point Sur" is a foil to Jeffers's own religious point of view. It is Faith Heriot—and once again we here speak of her role as the keeper's daughter in the "Prelude," and not her role in the later narrative, where Jeffers took her character in another direction—who among the others in this group, in her reckless freedom and sexual abandon amid the violence of the elements, most closely encompasses Jeffers's epiphanic vision. Because the characters of both the lighthouse-keeper and his daughter cut close to the quick of Jeffers's emergent religious outlook, it is not surprising that elements of autobiography attend these revelations.

This outlook was first fully announced in "Apology for Bad Dreams," which Jeffers wrote during the composition of "Point Alma Venus." A compelling discussion of the "Apology" forms the conclusion of Brophy's

1973 book. Yet in a recent article, Brophy returned to the poem with a new set of questions. How can it be, he asks, that the quintessential scientific rationalist of American poetry in the Twentieth Century attempts to "[b]urn sacrifices once a year [i.e., his annual publication of violence-drenched narrative poems] to magic / Horror away from the house" (*CP* 1: 209)?[23] He offers three readings at different levels of the poem (though he never feels that he has gotten to the heart of the matter); ours supports his second, the therapeutic reading. In this reading, Jeffers is

> somehow confronting and sublimating into verse narratives the "insanities of desire," that is, one's subterranean, "from the core" instincts, desires, aggressions, and cruelties, "lest you martyr some creature." [This reading involves] a strategy of fantasy-release and avoidance therapy. Through it, metaphorically, [Jeffers] will not beat horses. It is perhaps most commonly recognized in Freudian terms and strategies." ("Apology" 7)

Thus the creative act becomes for Jeffers a salvific act, through which his tensions are released vicariously. By writing out his torments and desires, he is able to immure himself against them. If he were to stop writing, by implication his desires would overwhelm him and destroy the carefully—and consciously—constructed domesticity created by Una, primarily, but also through his own complicity. He comprehends the precariousness of his position and so is wary of weakness, another dimension to his oft-stated "desire to the rock."

There is evidence—admittedly scant but nonetheless arresting—that the brutality that erupts in "Sea-Passions" and the "Point Alma Venus" fragments, stories freighted with autobiographical detail, parallels a sadistic sexual fantasy that the War apparently triggered in Jeffers himself, and which he addressed privately in poetic composition. There are two lyrical pieces that testify to this. In the first, Jeffers addresses a tall girl imprisoned within his tower and describes in clear terms his sexual intent. The lines appear on the "Great Sheet" at Yale's Beinecke Library, among other notes and verses written in early 1922. Everson concluded his Introduction to *Brides of the South Wind* with a dramatic description of this most famous of Jeffers's manuscripts, which contains not only seminal notes on the emergent "Tamar," but an early draft of "Continent's End" and an architectural drawing of Hawk Tower, then under construction (*Brides* xx). But Everson omitted this crucial piece of verse,[24] an incomplete lyric, if the Roman numeral that introduces it is definitive—though it is possible that in the process of writing the poem Jeffers abandoned that plan and finished the poem without going back to strike out the Roman numeral. The repetition in the second and third sections documents its evolution:

I

The trees of my planting are russet and yellow, they have perished in the wind.
A great wave came at the winter solstice and has taken my garden
From the brow of the cliff in the rains of Orion and left bare rock.
Only my stone cliff, only the stone of the house and the stone of the sea-walls
Remain after storm, delight is escaped, only strength is strong.

The pit of my tower is sunken under ground, it is walled and cornered with thick granite,
If I had you a prisoner there you might scream for help but none could help you.
You would become quiet and sweet and submit to be handled.

---

1 A room at my tower's root is buried in the bed-rock,
2 You can hear there the rumble of the waves but no murmur of the rushing of the wind.
3 Tall [ ] white girl, if I had you down there like a candle in a cavern
4 You might scream but no hearing nor help, I would look at the secret of your treasure,
5 I would use [ ] in violence, I would stab you with love, I would [mouth] with you tenderly.
6 And you, would [turn] [sweet] after [anger], you would sigh and submit to be handled.

Therefore how timidly I approach delight,
And trembling at it,
As a robbed man a coin the road's dust.
Because her hair now
Is red and gold, because she is tall and high-headed,
Are these a reason
I should be given a leave to finger the harp-strings
And plant in the orchard?

So if I had you a prisoner while you [rage? range?] though
I am not enough humble
Nor enough arrogant to uncentre my life
For the uncontrolled's sake.
Go by and smile and never dream I will follow.
I have not gone mad yet.
I have no jealousy, I have only desire,
And a wolf's caution.

Though Hawk Tower is not a lighthouse and this captive girl not a lighthouse-keeper's daughter, she is clearly a representative of the character type we are examining. Jeffers's enfolding of this tortured figure from the lighthouse directly into his autobiography is unprecedented.

The "insanities of desire" that he was shortly to write of in "Apology" are here nakedly displayed as his own.

The setting in the first five lines is ominous in Jeffersian terms. Not the leaves of the trees Jeffers has planted, not even the garden, nothing but stone is left on the cliff-brow in the wake of the winds of winter. We know these winds are from the south, the violent winter storms of the central California coast that are the eastern edge of the huge counter-clockwise rotating weather systems that descend from the Gulf of Alaska. And in Jeffers the south wind is always a harbinger of violence, in both the non-human and human spheres.

The next two duplicative sections describe the threat of a violational act in the tower in gothic, sinister terms. This is the age-old dream of the powerless, as Jeffers felt himself to be throughout his youth, under the iron domination of his father. We have seen another example of such a vicarious domination dream above, in the "Point Alma Venus" material. In the fourth section Jeffers describes himself, the imagined tormentor, sympathetically. He approaches his captive "timidly," as a man who had been robbed of the sexual gratification he seeks. Contrasted here are his imaginary captive and his wife, for he next wonders whether the physical attributes of the captive—her hair-color and her stature, both the opposite of Una's—are enough to justify such a betrayal.

Finally, he admits that for all the sexual storm within him, he is not willing to sacrifice his domestic life to his desire. He is "not enough humble" to submit to his passions and "not enough arrogant" to renounce his vowed responsibilities and throw over all he has worked for. Yet the fragment ends with the creepiness of a stalker's taunt: "Go by and smile and never dream I will follow." He suggests chillingly that he might change his mind ("I have not gone mad *yet*" [emphasis added]), and that his "wolf's caution" might turn at last to a different advantage.

The psychological tension and sadism of this passage—physical violation is threatened, not released, finally repressed, and then threatened again—are accounted for in these oft-quoted lines from the second section of "Apology for Bad Dreams":

> This coast crying out for tragedy like all beautiful places: and like the passionate spirit of humanity
> Pain for its bread: God's, many victims', the painful deaths, the horrible transfigurements: I said in my heart,
> "Better invent than suffer: imagine victims
> Lest your own flesh be chosen the agonist, or you
> Martyr some creature to the beauty of the place." And I said,
> "Burn sacrifices once a year to magic
> Horror away from the house, this little house here

You have built over the ocean with your own hands
Beside the standing boulders: for what are we,
The beast that walks upright, with speaking lips
And little hair, to think we should always be fed,
Sheltered, intact, and self-controlled? We sooner more liable
Than the other animals. Pain and terror, the insanities of desire; not accidents but essential,
And crowd up from the core": I imagined victims for those wolves, I made them phantoms to follow,
They have hunted the phantoms and missed the house. (*CP* 1: 209–10)

"The insanities of desire," the poet tells us, "crowd up from the core"—his as well as our own. And horrifically, these experiences are *essential*, including pain and terror.

A poem written almost twenty years later mirrors the dynamic of "The trees of my planting," though it is more ambiguous and puzzling.[25]

Adolescent's Love

Bird in the storm,
I had some better thoughts, but remembering you
Has driven me wild.

Marble, archaic, boy-slender, sole flower of dawn
In this foul world.

Has no one told you my dear that innocence,
Long invalid, died
One hundred years ago in her cold bed?

Mourn her to-night,
While sunset makes a red eye like a cigar-end
In the murk of cloud.

You are like an archaic marble, hard, clean and terrible . . .
Opposite sunset.

The world is dying, the ocean like the gray scum
On molten lead,
But cold, and the sky a cloud-crust: love, your pure face,

Your virgin body.
I have loved a woman but never a girl before. I will violate you
Like a sacked city,
Mourning dead innocence.

Hunt posits that this unpublished poem is "a distant cousin" to the published "I Shall Laugh Purely," which seems likely: the verse-form is similar, and the description of the young girl as "boy-slender" appears in both. Is the adolescent of the title Jeffers himself, who sees himself as adolescent because of this attraction? Other questions proliferate. But these questions aside, the poem suggests a number of things that are relevant to our present inquiry. The opening line "Bird in the storm" was originally "Bird out of storm"—indicating that the young girl was somehow sheltered from storm. No tower is mentioned, though a haven of some sort is suggested. But the change erases that, and instead focuses on the storm of sexual desire.[26] Here the "storm of the sick nations" ("Natural Music," *CP* 1: 6) in the early years of the Second World War has released a pent-up illicit sexual desire, as the First did in the earlier "Sea-Passions." As with the earlier fragment "The trees of my planting," the violence is psychological—threatened, not actual—and the sexual gratification arises from the imagined unwilling subjugation of the victim. The world decays, innocence is long dead, the face of nature is apocalyptic—and Jeffers, as despoiler, aligns himself with the forces of degeneration. There is no suggestion of a coming resurrection. Most of Jeffers's published poems, even at their darkest, point a way to salvation, however far off or difficult to achieve, even if only by implication. His own private musings were sometimes of a different tenor.

This poem was written during or in the aftermath of the period of creative desiccation that Jeffers underwent in 1938–1940, a period that coincided with the outbreak of hostilities on the continent, reminding us of Everson's identification of the Eros-Thanatos dynamic as being particularly powerful in Jeffers. At this time he conducted the short-lived affair with Hildegarde Donaldson, whom he had met in Taos, which resulted in Una's near-successful suicide attempt by gunshot. The prophecy he had written earlier in "Apology for Bad Dreams"—that he must continue to write violent stories lest he and his family become victims—must have come home to him at the time.

Though this private apparition from the late 1930s is closely related, the figure of the lighthouse-keeper's daughter in Jeffers's oeuvre is confined to the long years of apprenticeship and the very early mature period—the same period when Jeffers's most inward-looking explorations of his own autobiography were written. It was during this period that his religious awakening occurred, memorably described by Jeffers himself in a letter written by Una to Lawrence Clark Powell as similar to what "adolescents and religious converts are said to experience."[27] While this suggests a sudden conversion, Jeffers was feeling his way toward his own religious vision long before this occurred, as testified by much of the verse written before 1920. The critical realization of the

role of violence in this vision—the violence of natural process, that is, which inheres in the cyclic returnings that Jeffers saw all about him, and which forms the superstructure of the mythic narratives that Brophy first revealed—was fully internalized by the time "Point Sur" was written, allowing Jeffers finally to move beyond this iconic character.

Endnotes

1. Other vectors are the character of the bed-ridden old man upstairs (in "Peacock Ranch," the unpublished "Point Alma Venus" fragments, "The Women at Point Sur," "Thurso's Landing"), a young girl dancing naked on the shore (chastely in "Emilia," wantonly in "Tamar"), heroines dreaming of horses rising from the sea (in "Dorothy Atwell" and "Tamar"), shipwreck (in the early and unpublished "Clare Avon," "Peacock Ranch," the "Point Alma Venus" fragments, "Loving Shepherdess"), a sex-in-the-ocean scene (in "Sea-Passions," the "Point Alma Venus" fragments, and sublimated in "Give Your Heart to the Hawks"), and the binding and flogging of a naked young woman (in "Sea-Passions" and the "Point Alma Venus" fragments). Even the hollowed-out redwood tree that serves as a trysting place for Ruth Alison and her lover, described in sacramental terms in *Californians*, reappears transmogrified in Jeffers's mature period as "The Summit Redwood," the towering concealment of old Escobar's cattle-thefts.

2. The typescript, with heavy autograph revisions and the penciled year of composition in Jeffers's hand on the first page, is at Occidental College. It was in the trove of material discovered in 1986, the year before the centennial of Jeffers's birth, which had been sealed by Melba Bennett. Written in 146 Spenserian stanzas, four of which have been cancelled, it represents a remarkable prosodic feat that might explain its survival. The stanzas are arranged in fourteen numbered sections, each stanza renumbered within its group. Hunt surmises that "Clare Avon" and "The Valley" were too late in composition for inclusion in *Californians* (*CP* 5: 31). But the weight of imitation in "Clare Avon" suggests to this writer an earlier date, late 1914 and/or early 1915, and that it is this that Jeffers was at work on during his and Una's earliest months in the log cabin at 5th and Monteverde after their removal to Carmel. Perhaps the death of Jeffers's father, a biblical scholar, in December 1914 freed him to portray Christianity in an unflattering light in the character of Clare's father.

3. In one of the cancelled stanzas, he is amusingly named "Hector Dare."

4. It is likely that Jeffers approached the latter story through Marlowe's treatment, as Marlowe is one of the poets Jeffers sometimes cited among his favorites. A curiosity of diction also suggests a debt to Marlowe: Jeffers's use of the archaicism "whist" ("[The sea] that spoke but low, its diapason whist / In lack of wind the passionate organist . . .") seems a deliberate echo of Marlowe's use in "Hero and Leander" ("where all is whist and still"). Yet one crucial detail in "Clare Avon" is missing from Marlowe's poem, though it is central to the myth as told by Musaeus Grammaticus and Ovid: the lamp which Hero lights to guide Leander as he swims the strait to her.

5. In addition to the derivations from Keats and Marlowe, Jeffers has overlaid extravagant Shakespearean comparisons and reference to the nightingale and lark debate in *Romeo and Juliet*. Clearly the poem was too derivative and artificial for inclusion in *Californians*.

6. In the description of the "figured frieze" Jeffers doubtless recalls an object from his childhood, mentioned in the opening of "Hellenistics": "I look at the Greek-derived design that nourished my infancy—this Wedgwood copy of the Portland vase: / Someone had given it to my father—my eyes at five years old used to devour it by the hour" (*CP* 2: 526).

7. Later he will have no doubt: "[T]his is the God who does not care and will never cease" ("Explosion," *CP* 3: 414).

8. Reproduced in *Jeffers Studies* 7.2.

9. Ruth Alison is also described as having two braids (*CP* 4: 91).

10. Among others, Everson has noted Una's savior role (*Brides* xxx).

11. A photograph of some of the stones before Tor House construction began faces page 4 of Garth Jeffers's monograph, *Memories of Tor House*. Brophy points out that Jeffers wrote in "Apology for Bad Dreams" of his home by the "standing boulders," and at the end of his life in "The Beginning and the End," of his home "[b]eside the standing sea-boulders" ("Apology" 9).

12. Bennett's text is given here, because in *CP* it exists only in fragments within "Sea-Passions." But the Bennett text apparently predates the fragments incorporated in "Sea-Passions." In line 11 she has "seedlings" (a clear reference to the Jefferses' twin sons), while the "Sea-Passions" typescript has "seedling." The discrepancy is accounted for in another snatch of lyric verse in "Sea-Passions," not included in Bennett's text, where the father speaks of making toys "to gladden our boy"—that is, the young man who hears the father's confession.

13. Hunt surmises that the earliest of the "Point Alma Venus" material might have actually preceded the composition of "Tamar." If not, it was certainly begun soon after "Tamar" was completed.

14. Quoted verse material in this section is from the preliminary drafts of "The Women at Point Sur," listed in the Works Cited.

15. The genesis of the title is given in the text of the final two versions. Barclay tutors his son Edward in Greek and Latin, as Dr. Jeffers had tutored Robinson. After studying Lucretius's "De Rerum Natura" with Edward, Barclay dreams of the lighthouse at Point Aumentos, but in his dream it is called Point Alma Venus. "Alma Venus"—nurturing Venus—is the address used in the invocation in the first lines of Lucretius's poem. There is no topographical feature named "Point Aumentos" in Jeffers country, but Aumentos Rock and Aumentos Reef are located a few hundred meters off Point Pinos, where the lighthouse of the "Alma Venus" fragments is situated. See below for the symbol of the lighthouse as life-giving nipple.

16. See Brophy's explication of this dream (*Myth*, 33 *ff*).

17. Edward's dreams of domination and sexual conquest in the "Point Alma Venus" material—and much more—are the subject of the first part of Chapter V of Robert Zaller's Freudian reading of Jeffers in *The Cliffs of Solitude*. Interested readers are referred to that source for passages and analyses that extend beyond what can be given here. The daydream passages presented here are from different versions than the one from which Zaller selected.

18. Letter to the author, January 20, 1977.

19. Hunt has described and analyzed the three sections of "Prelude" (196–204).

20. Hunt retains Jeffers's later penciled title, "Storm as Deliverer," instead of his typed title, "A Woman Down the Coast," which Everson preferred. See *CP* 4: 257 and *Alpine*, xxiv.

21. Jeffers first referred to this activity in "The Coast-Range Christ," *CP* 4: 346.

22. Jeffers here describes an historical event, and follows the chronological unfolding of it fairly closely in his account in "Prelude." The oil-tank fires in Monterey had occurred on September 14, 1924. The first tank was hit by lightning in the morning, and by 6 p.m. another had exploded, creating a chain reaction that continued until 3 a.m. of September 15. For an account and photographs, see <http://telemetrix.com/pipeline/fire.htm>.

23. Deborah Fleming, on the other hand, finds Jeffers, like Yeats, to be an antirationalist, though she does not deal with "Apology for Bad Dreams."

24. For the text presented here, I rely on Hunt's transcription in *CP* 5: 331–32, digital scans of the Great Sheet supplied by Aaron Yoshinobu, and my own transcription made from the manuscript. This accounts for the variances from the text as given by Hunt. In some instances, I have adopted his readings over my own after reviewing the digital scans; in others I have preferred my own to Hunt's.

25. Hunt's version is given in *CP* 5: 652. As with the previous poem, I have modified Hunt's transcription of the MS in light of my own transcription. I have also deleted excised words and phrases for readability. Line 18—a crucial one—is heavily amended and could easily yield other readings. The poem appears on the verso of a form letter from *Time* magazine, soliciting a subscription for a special publication. It is signed by P. I. Prentice as Vice President of *Time*, a position he held from 1939 to 1941.

26. Another point of ambiguity in the poem is the cancelled word "Homosexual" before the title "Adolescent's Love." The fantasy is overtly heterosexual, if my transcription of the 18th line is correct. Possibly the boy-slenderness of the girl suggests a homosexual attraction—or the speaker is a persona.

27. *Letters*, p. 213. Una is usually identified as the author of this passage. But as is frequently the case when answering inquiries about her husband, she wrote from a draft response by Jeffers himself written in the third person. The holograph of his draft is at the University of Texas.

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ShaunAnne Tangney

"Did you think you would go laughing through France?"

Decadence and Social Protest in Robinson Jeffers's "Tamar"

When we think of decadent literature, we are quick to recall Baudelaire and Wilde, perhaps Max Beerbohm or William Butler Yeats. Our focus is on the Absinthe-besotted atmosphere that surrounds the sexual and cultural deviance we associate with decadent literature; that hot-house humidity and those fetid orchids of poetry and prose that are somehow more associated with Europe than America. Indeed, in his book *Glorious Perversity: The Decline and Fall of Literary Decadence*, Brian Stableford says that "there was, of course, no American Decadent movement. America was the last place on earth to provide fertile soil for literary Decadence, because it was the nation most thoroughly infected with the mythology of progress" (130). It is arguable that there was no decadent movement in America, but certainly there were writers of decadent literature—and there were precisely because of the so-called myth of progress, which implies that civilization must and will relentlessly persist. Decadent writing itself can be seen as a critique of the myth of progress, and it is misguided of Stableford to assume that there was only blind acquiescence to that myth in America. There were countless writers who criticized and debunked it, and some of them did so using the aesthetic tropes of and historical concepts behind decadence.[1] In my paper I will read Robinson Jeffers's poem "Tamar" as decadent literature. I order my argument along the contention that decadence is a kind of artistic expression affected by conditions of historical decline (or at least the conception of historical decline) and will posit that Jeffers uses the conventions of decadence to lodge social protest—ultimately, in "Tamar," against war. Jeffers is not himself decadent, but some of his writing is, and it is important that we acknowledge this dimension of his work in a critical manner.[2]

While it is evident that Jeffers was well aware of the aesthetic tropes and historical concepts of decadence, little if any scholarship has sug-

Jeffers Studies 10.2–11.2 (Fall 2006–Fall 2007), 55–69.

gested that they were crucial to his work. Readings of "Tamar" tend to be formalist, archetypal, or psychological, and certainly the poem warrants these kinds of interpretations. Perhaps the most notable formalist reading of the poem appears in Frederic I. Carpenter's *Robinson Jeffers*. In his chapter on "the long poems," Carpenter struggles with the primitivism of ancient myth and modern morality and psychology. "The mythical characters of the modern poet [. . .] find themselves in conflict with modern civilization," he writes, "[a]nd their author must somehow mediate this conflict, remembering not only the demand of his primitive characters that their inner nature be given full expression, but also that of his modern readers that moral law must prevail" (57). As for "Tamar," he does not completely resolve this conflict but rather concludes that the poem "may be described as a modern myth about myth" (60). The bulk of criticism of Jeffers's long poems, and of "Tamar" specifically, is of the archetypal variety, the most poignant by William Everson (Brother Antoninus) and Robert Brophy.

In *Fragments of an Older Fury*, Everson reads "Tamar" as evidence of ongoing hostility toward women, which is "archaic, but it is also archetypal—an ineradicable factor in the masculine heart" (53). Everson tries hard to show this hostility in a good light: "Faithful to the primacy of man's immortal anguish, [Jeffers] has the supreme dignity to register our hostilities and our fears at their very root" (55), but the sexism inherent in archetypal criticism is evident here. However honest Jeffers might be, according to Everson, one of the key aspects of "Tamar" is that it shows us the primeval and perennial hostility toward women. In *Robinson Jeffers: Myth, Ritual, and Symbol in His Narrative Poems*, Robert Brophy gives the most comprehensive archetypal reading of "Tamar" to date. Brophy states that "[a]s in all of Jeffers' narratives there are several levels on which the dramatic figures operate; first, as human individuals who are victims of inner weakness or fateful event; second, as agents of the life-force cooperating in cyclic change; and third, as mythic figures interpreting the fatality of events by their human drama" (15). It is intriguing, however, that Brophy adds what might be called a fourth dimension to that triad, that of the natural landscape of the central California coast. He still interprets the physical landscape archetypally (calling the "'twisted coast'" correspondent to original sin, for example [26]), but his understanding that this element of Jeffers's poetry be neither ignored nor underestimated is a significant addition to the scope and impact of archetypal readings.

Finally, Robert Zaller has added psychological readings to the criticism of "Tamar." In general, Zaller claims that Jeffers "constructs the family, as does Freud, as a dehistoricized locus of ego combat" ("Freudian Family Romance" 239). As for "Tamar" specifically, he argues that Tamar

breaks free from patriarchal authority, signifying Jeffers's own break from the dour Presbyterianism of his own father. "Tamar's confrontation scene is Jeffers' own unresolved Oedipal dilemma," Zaller writes, from which he concludes: "The Freudian view is, it seems to me, more fruitfully explanatory that any other that has yet been advanced to account for Jeffers' poetic development in general and the pivotal importance—acknowledged by all critics—of 'Tamar' in particular" ("Tamar's Oedipal Transcendence" 18). While the psychological readings of Jeffers in general and of "Tamar" specifically are an interesting element of Jeffers criticism, I would not argue them as finitely as does Zaller. Indeed, I think there is a great deal of room for further interpretation of the poems, and recognizing Jeffers's use of decadence is a worthwhile addition to the critical oeuvre.

It would seem both helpful and wise to set up my argument with some discussion of decadence per se, including a definition of the term and its relationship to literature. This is easier asked for than delivered, however. As David Weir says in the preface to *Decadent Culture in the United States*,

> decadence is hard to define because the concept is so nuanced and polyvalent that the very procedure of definition misses the point. . . . Is it a general cultural condition or an individual mode of behavior? Does *decadence* refer to the state of a particular society at a specific historical moment or to a segment of society at any point in time? Does the appreciation of decadence require a special type of moral, emotional, or psychological sensitivity? . . . In aesthetic terms, is decadence mannered and imitative or, as some think, innovative and original? (xiii)

Even while admitting its complexities, Weir does point to what we might call the two main concerns of decadence: the corrupt civilization or society, and the artistic produce of those who are interested in that corruption. Weir later correctly notes that the root of the word decadence is the word *decay*, and that it is from a sense of decay that all other nuances of decadence result. From there, he suggests, "some basic discriminations are fairly easy to make" (xiii).

First of all, Weir says, "decadence is often used to describe conditions of national or imperial decline" (xiii), and the fall of Rome is most often used as the prime example. The argument is that Rome fell because of internal weaknesses caused by social and political corruption coupled with "overindulgence in rarified pleasures" (Weir xiii). Likewise, in decadent literature, social decay is portrayed as a result of excessive, aberrant pleasures, and the greatest emphasis is put upon sexual pleasures. Decadent literature often focuses on sexualities or sexual acts that, according to Weir, have replaced "the normal healthy desire to propagate and preserve the species" (xiv); he also argues that "deca-

dence . . . involves a deliberate violation of moral codes of conduct and the inculcation of a sense of sin (xv). The dichotomy we see Weir building is that of civilization and nature (also conceived as barbarian or primitive). As he suggests, "overcivilization or overrefinement results in a sense of apathy and a feeling of unworthiness that involves the wish for renewal from without—the desire for a fresh infusion of barbarian blood" (xiii). Decadence, then, explores both the overcivilization and the barbarian, or the primitive, and perhaps even considers the latter an antidote for the former.

Because the multiple incidents of incest in "Tamar" have always stood out for readers of the poem, let me begin my reading of it with that topic. In decadent literature, sexuality is often what we might consider nonconformist, consisting of homosexual or incestuous relationships. Decadent writers very often turned away from "an ideal love rooted in the natural relations of the sexes" (Beckson xxx) and towards "new sensations in forbidden love, for sexual depravity revealed a desire to transcend the normal and the natural" (Beckson xxx). The normal and the natural here should be read in terms of overcivilization; what a decadent society thinks of as normal or natural is in fact only a construction of its own (increasingly corrupt) ideal. Indeed, there is a clear connection between overcivilization and social construction: when we live in a state of overcivilization, it is difficult to recognize that what we consider normal or natural, right or righteous, is often no more than a human invention. In decadent literature, then, sexual nonconformism is a literary device used to critique social and spiritual decay, which is evident in all the sexual acts in "Tamar."

The first incidence of incest we witness in "Tamar" (other acts of incest precede the poem's time-frame) takes place between Tamar and her brother, Lee. Their sexual congress happens outside, in nature—in a river, actually, while they are bathing. The poem's omniscient narrator describes the scene: "Ah Tamar, stricken with strange fever and feeling / Her own desirableness, half-innocent Tamar" and later "Ah Tamar, / It was not good, not wise, not safe, not provident, / Not even, for custom creates nature, natural, / Though all other license were" (*CP* 1: 25). The claim that custom creates nature is decadent indeed. In an overcivilized society, nature, to use Jeffers's word (but we might think of it as wilderness, or the non-human), is less and less available to us. And because nature is less available we don't really have a relationship with it, but rather with our idea of it; hence, custom creates nature. In "Tamar," nature is almost unnatural, and it is fitting, then, that the nonconformist sex acts in the poem, most especially the incestuous ones, take place in that setting.

Tamar's sexual relationship with her brother Lee results in her pregnancy. She cannot bear the thought of a child born of incest, and so seduces Will Andrews, an old friend of the family. First she convinces herself: "'O I can do it, I can do it,'" and then she allows herself to be brazen: "'Why should I be careful,' / She thought, 'if I frighten him off what does it matter, / I have got a little beyond caring.' 'Let's go down / Into the willow'" (*CP* 1: 36–37), she says to Will, where they do in fact have sex, and once again, the sexual encounter takes place in a natural setting. Afterward, both suffer an agony of second thoughts and broken dreams. Will professes undying love, says he'll go away, or kill himself, and Tamar replies, "'There is nothing to do, nothing. / It is horribly finished. Keep it secret, keep it secret, Will. I too was to blame a little'" (*CP* 1: 40), but then she goes on a rampage, saying, "'You have loved me and broken me, the house is broken / And any thief can enter it.' . . . 'You have broken our crystal innocence, we can never / Look at each other freely again'" (*CP* 1: 40). Regardless of the fact that Tamar's rage is somewhat false (she lost her virginity to her brother, not Will), the figure of the broken house is intriguing and again brings up the civilization/wilderness dichotomy. The "broken house" is a symbol of Tamar's lost virtue, and yet a house is more akin to civilization than the natural settings of Tamar's sexual relations. In decadent literature, even though nature is the site of sexual nonconformism, civilization can't be the site of sexual—or moral—virtuosity, for civilization is corrupt and unhealthy. Jeffers, like other decadent writers, uses the trope of nonconformist sexual relationships not to promote sexual nonconformism, but rather to put a focus on social and spiritual decay. The "broken house," then, is not a symbol of Tamar's so-called sexual depravity, but of society's fallen state.

Jeffers continues to work with the decadent dichotomy civilization/wilderness as he brings the Cauldwell family house—the physical structure—into play in the poem. As an example of civilization, we might suspect the house to be a site of good, but because of the decadent paradox it is not quite that simple. Intriguingly, it is Tamar who recognizes that the house is not a place of virtue: "'It is God'" she says, "'Who is tired of the house that thousand-leggers crawl about in'" (*CP* 1: 47), referring to the infestation of millipedes the house suffers in the waning days of August. If we assume that God is synonymous with virtue, then the house, as artifice, is certainly not the site of virtue. She continues:

> "I say He has gathered
> Fire all about the walls and no one sees it
> But I, the old roof is ripe and the rafters

> Rotten for burning, and all the woods are nests of horrible things, nothing
> would even clean them
> But fire, but I will go to a clean home by the good river." (*CP* 1: 48)

Not only is the house infested with hideous bugs, but also, in Tamar's mind, it is unclean, "ripe and . . . rotten for burning." These are clearly decadent images, and they are foist upon the house, not upon Tamar, the alleged sinner, nor upon the "good river" where the incest and sexual promiscuity actually happened. The house here can be read as a symbol of civilization; as such it is a corrupt place, while nature remains clean and good, even though it is nature that has been the site of all allegedly deviant sexual activity. Tamar tries to burn down the house at this point in the poem but is not successful—for the house has a purpose yet to fulfill.

Tamar miscarries her child—at almost nine months—and after the miscarriage she is installed in her bedroom in the house. Angry that Tamar never told him about the child (he says he would have taken her away, someplace they could have lived together as a family), Lee decides to enlist and is bound for World War I and Europe. But before he leaves, he visits Tamar in her bedroom, where she makes another sexual advance on him, to which he replies "'You whore, you whore, you whore,'" and then "'Well, you shall have it, / You've earned it'" (*CP* 1: 78), and he begins to whip her with a quirt. He cries out throughout the ordeal, but Tamar

> Took it silently, and lay still afterward,
> Her head so striken backward that the neck
> Seemed strained to breaking, the coppery pad of her hair
> Crushed on the shoulder-blades, while that red snake-trail
> Swelled visibly from the waist and flank down the left thigh.
> "O God, God, God," he groaned; and she, her whole body
> Twitching on the white bed whispered between her teeth
> "It was in the bargain," and from her bitten lip
> A trickle of blood ran down to the pillow. (*CP* 1: 79)

The scene is chilling, but it makes Jeffers's point: conventional morality serves violence. No one is "saved" by this beating; no "sin" is erased because of it. While Lee calls out to God, Tamar realizes that guilt "was in the bargain"; that is to say, is but a function of conventional morality. She knows that in conventional terms she has sinned, but she knows as well that she did so to serve her own ends ("'If I have done wrong it has turned good to me,'" she says later (*CP* 1: 74). This is evidence of the subversive nature of decadent writing, as Charles Bernheimer discusses in "Unknowing Decadence." Bernheimer writes:

> the notion of decadence is inhabited by a doubleness that puts fundamental moral and social values in question. There is an implicit appeal to a norm that sustains society's assumptions about what is natural, good, right, life-sustaining, progressive, and so forth. But there is also the suggestion that this appeal constricts human potential, denies opportunities for pleasure, and discredits the attraction of the perverse and destructive. (51)

Decadent literature calls into question assumed or conventional moral norms and won't let the reader ignore the pull of nonconformitive behavior, which can serve as social critique. By flagrantly displaying sexual nonconformism, writers of decadent literature force the reader to question social and moral norms and values. "Tamar" calls a particularly vexing social norm into question: that of war. No matter that killing another human being is strictly forbidden by the Judeo-Christian moral code, history is replete with the killing of war. As such, it is reasonable to call war a social norm. And the connection between nonconformitive sexuality and war is not tenuous in "Tamar." It can be argued that Jeffers uses sexual nonconformism to foreground that which he finds truly perverse: humankind's willingness to wage war. The house as symbol of civilization isn't a site of virtue; rather it's a site of necessary conflagration that will keep Lee and Will out of World War I.

"Tamar" is published some six years after World War I, but convincing arguments can be made that the poem was indeed a protest against that war, against all wars. In the second section of the poem, Lee's father reminds him that there is a dance that night, but Lee says he's not going, he's staying home evenings from then on. Recalling Lee's recent accident on a horse, his father warns him, "'Don't do it; better dance your pony down the cliffs again than close / Young life into a little box; . . . Come summer we'll be mixed into the bloody squabble out there, and you'll be going headforemost'" (*CP* 1: 23). The father wants his son to have some fun, some levity, before he's compelled into war. Lee replies "'A soldier's what I won't be, father'" (*CP* 1: 23) but dreams that night of being killed in battle, indicating that the war is indeed much on his mind. But why does Jeffers include the war at all in the poem? Brophy, Everson, Carpenter, and others are certainly correct in their arguments that "Tamar" is a modern attempt to deal with ancient questions about the origins of the universe and our role in it; "Tamar" could have been a successful poem in that vein never mentioning World War I or any war. But it does. Indeed, the war, or Lee's entrance into it, serves as the poem's denouement: it is only after his decision to enlist that Tamar reveals the generations of sexual nonconformism in the Cauldwell family and poses them as an evil less than war: "But I was thinking / Last night, that people all over the world / Are doing much worse and suffering much more than we / This wartime" (*CP* 1: 72). It seems plausible

indeed that sexual nonconformism in "Tamar" is used to foreground what Jeffers considers a "true" perversion: war.

The connection between the war and sexual nonconformism is brought to full view by the end of the poem. Both Lee and Tamar have engaged in sexual acts that were considered less than virtuous in the early twentieth century. Lee is no stranger to the whorehouses of Monterey, and while Tamar's sexual encounters have been few, they have been non-traditional. Tamar even (falsely) augments her few-but-strange sexual acts and taunts Lee with her marks in the cypress tree and her lamp left in the window, actions that make Lee believe she has had multiple sexual partners, and also that Tamar has defiled their own love. But all of this love and jealousy, need and passion, only comes to light after Lee announces his decision to enlist, and that he will not even wait for morning but will leave that very night. Over and over again, Tamar phrases their sexual connection, and its ramifications, in terms of the war: "'O, / You beast'" she shouts at him once; "'I wish you joy of your dirty Frenchwomen / You want instead of me'" (*CP* 1: 59). And a second time, when Lee calls for her to open her bedroom door, she replies, "'I opened it for you, / You are going to France to knock at other doors'" (*CP* 1: 69). But in the final scene of the poem, when Lee has beaten Tamar and has slashed Will's face with a knife, when the house has already caught fire, and Tamar has in her grasp both her Lee and Will, she says, "'What, shall the men that made your war suck up their millions, / Not I my three?'" (*CP* 1: 84). And finally, in nearly the very last lines of the poem, Tamar, with Lee in her arms, the fire raging about them, says, "'Did you think you would go / Laughing through France?'" (*CP* 1: 89). Some might be tempted to read this as Tamar's last perverse act of possessiveness, but I believe the wiser choice is to read the lines as a condemnation of war. It is perhaps clumsy poetics, but it is Jeffers's voice as much as Tamar's that asks a generation of Americans if they thought their participation in World War I would be simple, easy, guiltless, or horror-free. Jeffers is clear in this scene that war is the greatest human transgression, and Tamar here is heroic, preventing Lee and Will from participating in what Jeffers recognized as the scourge of civilization: warfare. Such a strong anti-war stance makes "Tamar" clearly a protest poem, a political poem, although it has not often been read as such.

That the poem takes a stance on war is not surprising if we recall that all the aesthetic conditions of decadence are predicated on its historical notions of national or imperial decline (Weir xiv). Neville Morley notes the long tradition of the decadent historical narrative:

> This is the kind of account offered in the universal histories of Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee, and the tradition can be traced back via Giambattista

> Vico to Augustine and Polybius. Historical change in this narrative is seen to be cyclical: civilizations and cultures rise and fall. This repetitiveness—Vico's cycle of barbarism-heroicism-barbarism, Spengler's view that "eras, epochs, situations, persons are ever repeating themselves true to type"—is not to be dismissed as merely the product of the historian's romantic inclinations, but lays bare the logic of historical development. Societies and cultures are seen as natural objects following the diurnal and seasonal rhythms of nature, or as higher-order biological entities subject to the same life courses as individual animals; inevitably, therefore, they pass through twilight as well as dawn, autumn as well as spring, and periods of decline and decadence as well as periods of growth and decay. (273)

Despite the cyclical patterns of nature, decadence keeps its focus on the decline and decay, and remains uneasy about the future civilization that might arise after the decline. As such, decadence is, for the most part, pessimistic in nature, and it is important to note that the pessimism that follows from the historical concept of decadence functions as social protest. With their focus on periods of decline and decay, decadent writers are set to descry society's worst tendencies, and therein decadent literature becomes political literature.

It is also important to note that Jeffers was well aware of the historical conception of decadence. In a speech titled "Thoughts Contingent to a Poem," he says that

> civilization historically is not a steady stream but a succession of separate waves, each of which differs in character from all the others, and passes normally through stages of growth, maturity, and decline. This idea is clearly put forward, though incompletely, by the archaeologist Flinders Petrie, in a little volume called "The Revolutions of Civilization," first published in 1911, "Civilization" he says, "is an intermittent phenomenon," and "a recurrent phenomenon." Oswald Spengler's big books, "Decline of the West" develop the theme much more thoroughly; but with still German formalism, remorselessly defying nature to fit theory. (*CP* 4: 396)

His aside on Spengler's style notwithstanding, it is obvious that Jeffers was very familiar with the historical concepts of decadence. We know as well that he read Vico, and that he interpreted (or, arguably, misinterpreted) Darwin with an eye towards perpetual rise and fall. It is my argument that Jeffers took his reading of social and cultural history, his understanding of decadence, and used it in his poetry as social protest.

On decadent literature as social protest, the editors of *Perennial Decay: On the Aesthetics and Politics of Decadence* assert that "decadent writing is no more 'decadent' than realist writing is 'real.' Only when critics begin to recognize the consequences of this insight and examine the *uses* of decadence, rather than its *meaning*, can critical discussions of the

topic move beyond assumptions (often unwittingly) inherited from Nordau" (12). The allusion to Nordau implies that critics of decadent literature all too often limit their criticism to a kind of taxonomy of "morbidity, . . . artificiality, exoticism, or sexual nonconformism" (2), and ignore that decadent literature "poses serious literary, political, and historical questions" (1). Far from being apolitical, decadent literature "aims to undermine conventional boundaries and borders" (25) and often "serve[s] the interests of progressive, and even radical, political aims" (26). For example, the editors suggest that the recent work of Jonathan Dollimore "finds in Wilde's strategy of sexual and aesthetic inversion a valuable contribution to contemporary theoretical debates on dissent, nonessentializing, and antihomophobic forms of cultural resistance" (26). The essential political nature of decadent literature, then, is subversive; it challenges assumed norms and poses alternate means and possibilities.

Tim Hunt makes a strong argument as to the political nature of "Tamar." Examining the surviving copies of tables of contents of rough drafts of *Tamar and Other Poems*, Hunt notes:

> Instead of simply adding the most recent work (and paring some of the least recent) . . . Jeffers deleted recent work (including pieces eventually in *Tamar*) while adding several explicitly political and historical poems he had long discarded and would never actually publish. Moreover, he used these specific poems (written during and about the First World War) to frame "Tamar," not his more recent nature lyrics. In other words, Jeffers at first contextualized "Tamar" as a political poem, even though Tamar's incest and destruction of herself and those around her is in no way explicitly political. (99)

The conclusions Hunt draws from his bibliographic study are convincing, and he unnecessarily undoes them with his last statement about Tamar's actions. Tamar's actions are—and Jeffers's poem is—overtly political, and Hunt himself goes on to reassert that fact when he suggests that the inclusion of "Shine, Perishing Republic" in the later publication, *Roan Stallion, Tamar and Other Poems*, is strongly indicative of Jeffers's historico-political concerns. "Shine, Perishing Republic," one of Jeffers's best-known poems, is clearly political, and clearly decadent as well:

> While this America settles in the mould of its vulgarity, heavily thickening to empire,
> And protest, only a bubble in the molten mass, pops and sighs out, and the mass hardens,
>
> I sadly smiling remember that the flower fades to make fruit, the fruit rots to make earth.

> Out of the mother; and through the spring exultances, ripeness and decadence;
> and home to the mother.

Here we have the pervasive decadent image of the overripe fruit, the trope of decay and fecundity. And this sense of decay is clearly linked to the decline and fall of a civilization, indeed, a nation, America; here clearly is the condition of national or imperial decline. The poem foregrounds the pessimism of decadence as well, for Jeffers warns later in the poem,

> But for my children, I would have them keep their distance from the
> thickening center; corruption
> Never has been compulsory, when the cities lie at the monster's feet there are
> left the mountains. (*CP* 1: 15)

Evident in the poem is Jeffers's use of the decadent civilization/wilderness dichotomy, with the primitive, non-human wilderness as a kind of antidote to corrupt civilization. Jeffers's disdain of civilization, his recognition of its corruption and of its death-throes, is further evident in a letter to Mark Van Dorn and James Rorty that references "Tamar" specifically. In the letter, Jeffers says that "Tamar" can be read as a

> judgment of the tendencies of our civilization, which has very evidently turned the corner down hill. "Powers increase and power perishes." Our literature, as I said in answer to the New Masses questionnaire, is not especially decadent (because in general it is not especially anything); but our civilization has begun to be. (*SL* 117)

Powers increase and power perishes—and all too often through the mechanism of war. The mechanism of war is, for Jeffers, the ultimate corruption of civilization. If a historical conception of decadence centers on the cycle of birth, growth, and decay, it lodges its version of social protest by showing us that if we keep planting the same seeds then we will only continue to grow the same produce. In "Tamar," Jeffers tells us that if we only plant the seeds of war, we will only grow endless war. Tamar's pregnancy can be read as a radical disruption of the cycle—an attempt to return to something more primitive and to shun the horrors of civilization. Incest notwithstanding, Tamar suffers great sadness at the loss of her child. "To live here / Seventy-five years or eighty, and have children, / . . . would not / Be a bad life" (*CP* 1: 73) she says wistfully, knowing she will not live through the night. Her attempt to disrupt the cycle fails, but Jeffers's social critique is clear.[3]

Jeffers often posed radical solutions in his poetry, and while he was not politically radical, he did sympathize with radical ideas and moves.

The aforementioned passage from the letter to Van Dorn and Rorty concludes:

> Some of you think that you can save society; I think it is impossible, and that you only hasten the process of decadence. Of course as a matter of right and justice I sympathize with radicalism; any way I don't oppose it; from an abstract viewpoint there is no reason that I know of for propping and prolonging the period of decadence. Perhaps the more rapid it is, the sooner comes a new start. (*SL* 117)

Here again is the new start that decadent writing as social protest calls for. Perhaps more than many writers of decadent literature, Jeffers is especially keen on the idea of a new start. Jeffers's new start calls for a radical reassessment of civilization and a return to a more primitive kind of life, as evidenced in the non-human environment. This call for reassessment and return is evident in both prose and poetry. In the foreword to the 1938 *Selected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*, Jeffers says that he sought out "contemporary life that was also permanent life; and not shut from the modern world but conscious of it and related to it; capable of expressing its spirit, but unencumbered by the mass of poetically irrelevant details and complexities that make a civilization" (*CP* 4: 392). In "November Surf," he longs for a time when he might see "The cities gone down, the people fewer and the hawks more numerous, / The rivers mouth to source pure; when the two-footed / Mammal, being someways one of the nobler animals, regains / The dignity of room, the value of rareness" (*CP* 2: 159). In "Boats in a Fog," Jeffers begins by saying that "Sports and gallantries, the stage, the arts, the antics of dancers, / The exuberant voices of music, / Have charm for children but lack nobility" and concludes with "all arts lose virtue / Against the essential reality / Of creatures going about their business among the equally / Earnest elements of nature" (*CP* 1: 110). What we consider the hallmarks of civilization, Jeffers condemns as ignoble and only fit for children. Children don't examine the virtue or necessity of what they want, they just holler for it until they get it. Thus, according to Jeffers, civilization spawns the worst kind of immaturity, an immaturity that has brought humanity not to the heights of intellect and joy, but instead to a constant state of intolerance and quarrel, a state of bloated prosperity that leaves society ripe for despots and Caesars.

Jeffers's response to the immaturity and bloat he sees all around him is a return to the primitive, and in "Sign-Post" he points the way: "Civilized, crying how to be human again: this will tell you how. / Turn outward, love things, not men, turn right away from humanity, / Let that doll lie." (*CP* 2: 418). As in "November Surf" and "Boats in a Fog,"

Jeffers does not call for the eradication of all humanity; rather, he calls for a reassessment of the egotistical positioning of human beings at the center of the universe, suggesting that in that reassessment, humans might regain their nobility, something that they have lost in the mad rush to civilization. In a more primitive world, dignity and value are not only possible but also prevalent. "Sign-Post" continues: "You will . . . see that even / The poor doll humanity has a place under heaven. / Its qualities repair their mosaic around you, the chips of strength / And sickness; but now you are free, even to become human, / But born of the rock and the air, not of a woman" (*CP* 2: 418). Again Jeffers argues we must throw off the corrupt conventions of civilization that might promise arts and entertainments and other cultural niceties but most often lead to irrelevant customs, bad habits and bad politics, warfare and planetary destruction. Civilized, he argues, is not how to be human. Human is something much more primitive, and perhaps pure. Jeffers is perhaps most eloquent and strong on the notion of the primitive in his assertion that

> [p]oetry is more primitive than prose. It existed before prose and will exist afterward, it is not domesticated, it is wilder and more natural. It belongs out-doors, it has tides as nature has; while prose is a cultured interior thing, prose is of the house, where lamplight abolishes even the tides of day and night, and human caprice rules. The brain can make prose; the whole man, brain and nerves, muscles and entrails, organs of sense and of generation, makes poetry and responds to poetry. (Preface [*Continent's End*?], *CP* 4: 375)

The assertion of the primitive was, if nothing else, his life's work, and is clearly evident in the final lines of "Tamar": "Grass grows where the flame flowered; / A hollowed lawn strewn with a few black stones / And the brick of broken chimneys; all about there / The old trees, some of them scarred with fire, endure the sea-wind" (*CP* 1: 89). Here is the decadent writer's dream: that more primitive, less human environment that might serve as an antidote to overcivilized corrupt, rotting society. And yet, it is marked, permanently scarred, by human folly and foible. Here, civilization—both the ruins of the Cauldwell ranch house and the poem "Tamar" itself—remains as a marker, but it is nature that endures.

Endnotes

1. Cf. David Weir's *Decadent Culture in the United States: Art and Literature Against the American Grain, 1890–1926*, in which he traces the careers of dozens of American authors who wrote in the decadent style or tradition, each to protest

America's imperial decline and/or the plight of overcivilization and its effects on its citizens.

2. It must be noted here that there is a distinction between decadent writing and decadent lifestyle. I think whenever we hear the word "decadent" our minds leap directly to Wilde or Baudelaire, two writers of decadent literature who also led a decadent lifestyle, one directed by drug and alcohol use, sexual experimentation, a profound focus on aesthetics, and a desire to shock the general public with dress, behavior, and politics. However, as Dennis Denisoff says, "even during the heyday of the Decadent Movement, the term Decadent was used to refer to both lifestyle and literature" (para. 13); and furthermore, "most of the authors associated with the Decadent Movement are known for their writing rather than their lifestyles" (para. 16). So it behooves me to repeat: Jeffers was not himself a decadent person, one who lived a decadent lifestyle, but he was a writer who, in several of his poems, used the tropes and historical concepts of decadence. He was, in certain instances, such as "Tamar," a writer of decadent literature.

3. Jeffers's anti-war stance grew only stronger as he continued to live through the twentieth century. In a letter to the League of American Writers about the Spanish Civil War, Jeffers wrote, "You ask what I am for and what against in Spain. I would give my right hand, of course, to prevent the agony; I would not give a flick of my little finger to help either side win" (*SL* 266). As for the United States' participation in World War I, Una notes in a letter to Lawrence Clark Powell that Jeffers believed that "our entrance into the war on one side or the other was unavoidable" but that he "disliked the cant of our neutrality followed by the cant of our belligerancy [*belligerency*]" (*SL* 213). When the Second World War breaks out, Jeffers expresses utter dismay in the face of the hubris and caprice of humankind and writes the poems of *The Double Axe*, the volume that most clearly exhibits his hatred of war. As William Everson says in his foreword to the Liveright edition of *The Double Axe*, "[n]o other contemporary verse comes to mind that is quite so brusque, savage, and intransigent. What anti-war poetry of the sixties, for instance, equals 'Eagle Valor, Chicken Mind' for incisiveness?" (x). Everson's assessment of the poem is correct in that it needs no analysis, merely presentation: "Unhappy, eagle wings and beak, chicken brain. / Weep (it is frequent in human affairs) weep for the terrible magnificence of the means, / The ridiculous incompetence of the reasons, the bloody and shabby / Pathos of the result" (CP 3:134).

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Jim Baird

Shards of Myth in *The Women at Point Sur*

> I say that if the mind centers on humanity
> And is not dulled, but remains powerful enough to feel its own and the others, the mind will go mad.
>
> Robinson Jeffers, *The Women at Point Sur* (*CP* 1: 308)

> Whoever battles with monsters had better see that it does not turn him into a monster. And if you gaze long into an abyss, the abyss will gaze back at you.
>
> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (85)

> Scraps and metaphors will serve.
>
> Robinson Jeffers, "Prelude" (*CP* 1: 241)

The first readers of Robinson Jeffers's narratives "Tamar," "Roan Stallion," and "The Tower Beyond Tragedy" interpreted those works as dramatic presentations of Freudian psychological and social forces. They were confounded by Jeffers's next narrative poem, *The Women at Point Sur*, which seemed, according to that viewpoint, to boil sexuality and violence in a cauldron, producing a dense mixture which, for many readers, was overwhelming. Critics thought that the point that repression can produce violent, irrational reactions had been made well enough in Jeffers's earlier works, and they did not understand why the poet belabored in such an unpleasant fashion a point he had already established. For example, Howard Mumford Jones thought the poem an "excess of sex, insanity, and perversity" (qtd. in Vardamis 21).[1] Not until Robert Brophy, in his study *Robinson Jeffers: Myth, Ritual, and Symbol in His Narrative Poems*, presented a further layer of analysis did later readers understand that those first narratives were not only psychodramas but presentations of Jeffers's cosmic worldview, in which the entire universe is an energy exchange which constantly changes and renews itself through destruction, rebirth, growth, decay, and destruc-

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tion again, which continues the cycle. God is all of this, constantly in flux and violent change, and humanity only a part of this flow, and a small part at that. This viewpoint he came to call Inhumanism to underscore humanity's limited role in the cosmic process. Jeffers used the characters in his narratives to show their varying degrees of awareness of this view and the consequences of that awareness, or lack of it, in human life. In order to recognize this greater reality, one must see the human dimension of reality as "the mould to break away from" ("Roan Stallion," *CP* 1: 190), often through a violent act which shatters ordinary morality and the human-centered view that comes with it.

But some of the objections of the readers of the 1920s still hang over *The Women at Point Sur*. In the earlier narratives, incest, sex obtained under false pretenses, animal worship, and matricide had been part of the mix, presented as examples of the process by which the universe renews itself. Although the reader, and even Jeffers himself, might shrink from and condemn these anti-social actions, as Jeffers says in "The Bloody Sire," "Violence has been the sire of all the world's values" (*CP* 3: 25). The shock and pain of violence are needed to rebuild the universe no less than gentleness and quiet growth. But *The Women at Point Sur* ramps up the characters' acceptance of violence to a crescendo. In addition to suggestions of the brother-sister incest which appeared in "Tamar," in *The Women at Point Sur* there is father-daughter incest, shocking enough in itself, but in the later poem forcible rather than consensual. Random murder and cannibalism are also suggested. Must we, as puny humans whose motives, passions, and actions are ultimately laughable in terms of the vast universe, accept even these excesses in order to know and experience the full reality of existence? Jeffers answers this question by showing that the protagonist of *The Women at Point Sur,* Arthur Barclay, is a self-absorbed failed hero who does not understand the full implications of his search for ultimate reality, and whose attempts to break through to truth only ruin his life and those of others. The quest must be undertaken with openness rather than egotism.

Barclay's failure does not mean that the poem is a failure. Jeffers wrote in a letter to Frederic I. Carpenter, "[W]e endow a person in a story with certain excesses of thought or passion and see what their logic leads to, and are thus perhaps warned ourselves, so he suffers instead of us" (*SL* 196). Jeffers accomplishes what he set out to do in the poem, to show how Barclay's failure is a wrong turn on the path of enlightenment, in spite of the remark made by the narrative voice halfway in the poem, "These here have gone mad: but stammer the tragedy you crackled vessels" (*CP* 1: 289). This statement is not an admission but a benchmark; it does not mean that Jeffers has lost interest in the poem but will

complete it anyway, but that insanity has overtaken its characters, and therefore the poem is difficult to read and understand, a conclusion that most readers also reach. Jeffers uses mythic elements which do not play out as they should as a reminder of what madness truly is—an insistence on personal vision or power that turns in on itself, and which might be seen in a less intense form in the family, the workplace, the life of the nation.

As Robert Brophy shows, Jeffers used the monomyth of the eternal return, the closest analogy to his own view, to signal the reader to an underlying cosmic structure which informed and helped explain the reality beyond the naturalistic action in "Tamar," "Roan Stallion," and "The Tower Beyond Tragedy":[2]

> By myth . . . is meant the monomyth of eternal return. Myth is seen as an extension of ritual, that is, as the dramatic particularizing, in time and space . . . of the more elemental monopattern of death and rebirth by which the cosmic god unfolds himself eternally. (8)

This essay proposes to show that Jeffers uses myth differently in *The Women at Point Sur* than in the other narratives because he presents his main character, Arthur Barclay, as a seeker after truth who takes a wrong turn and becomes a "lunatic" (*SL* 116), although his conclusions about the nature of reality are similar to those of Jeffers himself. In addition to Barclay's thoughts and actions, Jeffers signals the reader that Barclay's search is fruitless by scattering hints of a mythic structure that Barclay should have been aware of but failed to recognize. Instead of an overarching myth which might help to unify and explain the wild events of the narrative, as in earlier works, there are only bits and pieces—shards of myth, but not a mythic whole. The monomyth of the eternal return, the myth of the renewal of human life and vegetation through the cycle of the birth, death through dispersal, and return of the year god (a subcategory of the monomyth), and the Faust myth appear in *The Women at Point Sur* in a scrambled fashion which reflects the confusion of Barclay and the community he gathers to him. In "Sign-Post" Jeffers says that with proper perception "The poor doll humanity has a place under heaven. / Its qualities repair their mosaic around you, the chips of strength / And sickness . . ." (*CP* 2: 418). The chips of myth are never assembled in *The Women at Point Sur* but remain what a mosaic is before a wise hand begins its construction—bits and pieces meaning nothing. As Jeffers says, "Scraps and metaphors will serve" (*CP* 1: 241). Although this poem is often regarded as a failure, the confusion and unresolved nature of its narrative are part of the experience of madness that Jeffers intended to convey. The reader goes on the same wild philosophic and

emotional ride that Barclay—and Jeffers himself—endured. But before an analysis of the character of Barclay, the poem, and its action begin, here is an examination of the myths that Jeffers used in other works in order to better understand their partial appearance in *The Women at Point Sur*.

Mythic Background

Robert Brophy, building primarily on the discoveries and theories of anthropologists and literary critics such as Sir James George Frazer, Jane Harrison, F. M. Cornford, Gilbert Murray, Jessie L. Weston, Northrop Frye, Joseph Campbell, and Mircea Eliade, shows that "primitive" and ancient societies such as the Greeks recognized a cyclical view of reality and commemorated it in their myths, legends, art, and ritual which presented symbolically the monomyth of the eternal return. The human element of the cycle is the hero who aids his or her people through a quest which results in greater understanding for all. Joseph Campbell describes briefly the monomythic hero's journey:

> The hero . . . is the man or woman who has been able to battle past his personal and local historical limitations to the generally valid, normally human forms. Such a one's visions, ideas, and inspirations come pristine from the primary springs of human life and thought. Hence they are eloquent, not of the present, disintegrating society and psyche, but of the unquenched source through which society is reborn. The hero has died as a modern man; but as eternal man—perfected, unspecific, universal man—he has been reborn. His second solemn task and deed therefore . . . is to return then to us, transfigured, and teach the lesson he has learned of life renewed. (*Hero* 19–20)

The most important feature of the monomythic hero's quest is that he or she returns with the gift of knowledge which the hero shares with his or her people. Campbell says, "The great deed of the supreme hero is to come to the knowledge of this unity in multiplicity and then to make it known" (40). That is what makes him or her a hero in the ordinary sense—a person with exceptional skills who endures great trials, survives, and helps others.

The hero's quest is treated ironically in Jeffers's work, because he was suspicious of any endeavor which is human-centered. Too much emphasis on humanity blurs the basic point that the universe is an energy exchange of which the human race is only a part. Proper acceptance of this view leads to humility and stoicism, not pride or romantic judgments of human achievement. Although the hero's task is to enlighten the people, there are traps and snares in that path. The deliverer of the divine message—Jesus, Mohammed, Buddha—becomes merged with

the message itself and becomes, improperly, an object of worship. Such an outcome feeds the normal human desire to be praised and loved. Jeffers warns against the danger of messianic urges in such works as "Shine, Perishing Republic," "Woodrow Wilson," "Dear Judas," and a poem which was originally planned as a prelude to *The Women at Point Sur*, "Meditation on Saviors":

> How should one caught in the stone of his own person dare tell the people
> anything but relative to that?
> But if a man could hold in his mind all the conditions at once, of man and
> woman, of civilized
>
> And barbarous, of sick and well, of happy and under torture, of living and
> dead, of human and not
> Human, and dimly all the human future:—what should persuade him to speak?
> And what could his words change? (*CP* 1: 399)

The only character in Jeffers's narratives who reaches full awareness of the nature of reality and understands its meaning is Orestes in "The Tower Beyond Tragedy." His sister Electra urges him to act as a conventionally guilty person after he has killed his mother, but he understands that the audacity of that act has caused him to break through human morality to a grander perspective through which he is one with everything:

> I entered the life
> of the brown forest
> And the great life of the ancient peaks, the patience of stone, I felt the changes
> in the veins
> In the throat of the mountain, a grain in many centuries, we have our own
> time, not yours; and I was the stream
> Draining the mountain wood; and I the stag drinking; and I was the stars
> Boiling with light, wandering alone, each one the lord of his own summit; and
> I was the darkness
> Outside the stars, I included them, they were a part of me. I was mankind also,
> a moving lichen
> On the cheek of the round stone . . . they have not made words for it, to go
> behind things, beyond hours and ages,
> And be all things in all time, in their returns and passages, in the motionless
> and timeless centre,
> In the white of the fire . . . how can I express the excellence I have found
> . . . . . .
> I have fallen in love outward. (*CP* 1: 177–78)

The key statement in Orestes's declaration is "they have not made words for it." The realization he attempts to describe lies beyond language. It

must be experienced. The monomythic hero can point the way, but each of us must complete his or her own journey to enlightenment.

Having made witness, Orestes leaves human society, choosing not to become a leader or messiah. Joseph Campbell identifies the condition Orestes has reached:

> But for those who have found the still point of eternity, around which all—including themselves—revolves, everything is glorious and wonderful just as it is. The first duty of man, consequently, is to play his given role—as do the sun, the moon, the various animal and plant species, the waters, the rocks, and the stars—without fault, and then, if possible, so to order his mind as to identify it with the inhabiting essence of the whole. ("Historical" 25)

Jeffers presents this one instance of a fully realized monomythic hero, perhaps in order that his readers know that it is possible to achieve a kind of salvation, but one which each person must struggle to reach in his or her own way: "But while he lives let each man make his health in his mind, to love the coast opposite humanity / And so be freed of love, laying it like bread on the waters; it is worst turned inward, it is best shot farthest" ("Meditation on Saviors," *CP* 1: 401). "Turned inward" defines the root of Barclay's madness. He thinks of what he learns only in terms of himself and his human-centered goals.

A subcategory of the monomythic pattern is the myth of the vegetation god who dies, is scattered into pieces, then is revived by contact with his consort, often a sister, and who brings plants to life again. In mythic terms, a story is told such as that of Osiris and his sister/wife Isis, who assembles his scattered parts after a personal disaster so that he can be resurrected. The stages in the myth correspond to the cycle of vegetation—a crop is harvested, its seeds planted, and through a remarriage of the elements from which it came (earth, water, and sun), it grows again and returns to feed the people for another year. The myth is affirmed by a society through its rituals: some societies choose a person who is pampered throughout the year—the year-god—then sacrificed at the appropriate moment to ensure good crops in the new year; others translate the ritual into symbolic art, which Gilbert Murray posits as the origin of Greek tragedy (341–63). Another variation of this myth is that of the fisher king in the myth of the search for the holy grail, explained by Jesse L. Weston in *From Ritual to Romance* (113–36). The fisher king is ineffective at releasing his realm from a drought and requests the aid of a hero. Jeffers invokes parts of all three of these variations on the monomyth to illustrate Barclay's failure.

Although Barclay does adopt most of Jeffers's own philosophy, Jeffers describes him as a failure in a letter to James Rorty, in which he wrote

that *The Women at Point Sur* is designed to show "in action the danger of that 'Roan Stallion' idea of 'breaking out of humanity,' misinterpreted in the mind of a fool or a lunatic" (*SL* 116).[3] But Tamar Cauldwell, like Barclay of *The Women at Point Sur*, also committed incest and attempted the destruction of her house and family. She is often seen as an agent of the powerful, cleansing force which remakes the world. Barclay, acting with the same forces and with more awareness of the impact of his actions through religious education than Tamar, is a lunatic. Jeffers faces a difficulty which is common to all monistic viewpoints. If all kinds of actions are necessary for the minute by minute recreation of existence, why should any action be credited or condemned? How can Jeffers argue both that pain, destruction, and violence are essential (as in "The Bloody Sire") and also that humans are reprehensible or mad when they engage in such acts?[4]

Jeffers gave another clue to his view of madness when he wrote to his publisher, Donald Friede, that he intended *The Women at Point Sur* to be "the Faust of this generation" (*SL* 105). This statement could be taken a number of ways. Like Goethe's Faust, Barclay is a seeker after knowledge. The questions he asks, is there a God, is there a life after death, and what should a person do in the face of the answers (or lack thereof) to these questions (*CP* 1: 253), were the same kinds of questions that plagued the German scholar and which might concern the monomythic hero. An earlier essay discussed the connections between Goethe's drama and Jeffers's poem.[5] This essay invokes the Marlovian view of Faust (without Goethe's redeeming humanism, which Jeffers would have found wrong-headed because of its reliance on the power of mankind's striving) to show how in Barclay's story Jeffers invokes elements from the Faust legend to serve as a reminder that no progress is made either by the protagonist of the narrative or by the community he proposes to enlighten.[6]

Jeffers's use of the Faust myth makes it a failed monomyth within a failed monomyth. Faust is an ironic hero because the boon he seeks is for his personal use—in Marlowe's account, he has no desire to help others, and the result of his effort is eternal damnation. Faust begins his quest by signing over his freedom to another (whether his helper is evil or not is irrelevant—he makes the wrong decision), thus losing at the outset his ability to act on his own discoveries. He also specifically wants knowledge and power for his own purposes. At points in the narrative Jeffers specifically invokes that myth, independent of Goethe's drama to which he apparently refers in his letter to Donald Friede. The story of Faust first appeared in folklore as a cautionary tale warning of the dangers of possessing too much knowledge, or knowledge of the wrong kind. Viewed from this perspective, the Faust story becomes a collapsed

version of the monomyth—the hero is only a hero to himself.[7] The Faust story gives us a judgment of a person who need not have taken the disastrous course he did and winds up insane—in Jeffers's poem, Barclay. Furthermore, Jeffers also says that he gives us the story of a fool—that person is, I propose, Randal Morhead, one who wakes to the reality of his existence too late to save himself from disaster.[8]

Barclay as a Character

As it does in *Tamar*, the shadow of the First World War falls over *The Women at Point Sur*. Arthur Barclay[9] has lost not only his son, Edward, in that conflict, but consequently his faith in conventional religion.[10] When Barclay remembers his son, though, it is not the death of Edward that he recalls but his leave-taking. Edward went to his sister April's room to say goodbye and locked the door. Barclay felt rejected by both of his children and thought that there might have been a sexual encounter between brother and sister. This conjecture is never proven, but it plants the seed of Barclay's later rape of his daughter. His desire for his daughter had always been present, but later Barclay justifies this act in his own mind as part of his "breaking out of humanity" to reach a new worldview. This is certainly what Jeffers meant in his explanatory letter to James Rorty as one of the purposes of *The Women at Point Sur*: "sketching the growth of a whole system of emotional delusion from a 'private impurity' that was quite hidden from consciousness until insanity brought it to the surface" (*SL* 117). Barclay himself considers the possibility that his loss of faith is linked to his resentment of the closeness his children share and his own feeling of rejection, but dismisses this explanation:

> Was it possible
> His outburst against religion, against his ministry,
> Dated from there, the public passionate resentment?
> No; that was reasoned; having taught falsehoods, countenanced
> Lies, must denounce them publicly. And the death of his son
> Involved in the same texture; his own starved impotent
> Desert of years. (*CP* 1: 257)

But the dismissal of this reasoning ends with Barclay's recognition that his life has been "impotent." The reference to the "desert of years" is the first of many allusions to the aridity not only of Barclay's personality but to the environment of the poem—a dry summer which suggests the need for renewal through the appearance of the monomythic vegetation god—an environment to which Barclay is unable to bring new life.

What Barclay tells himself is a search for a new spiritual awareness is really no more than a circuitous path to his indulgence in his own secret desires. He is not breaking away from humanity, he is, in the name of new freedom, falling prey to his own basest instincts. Unlike Orestes in "The Tower Beyond Tragedy" he has not "fallen in love outward" (*CP* 1: 178), but rather has fallen in love with his own heart and body.

Reverend Barclay begins a quest which becomes a descent by announcing to his congregation that he has lost his faith and his morality:

> "The creed died in my mind. . . I thought the spirit,
> The revolutionary spirit of Christ would survive, flame the more freely. There are many others
> Leaders of churches have sunk the myths and swim by the ethic. Love: and not resist violence: which one of us
> Holds to that now? Dared name it this time last year?" (*CP* 1: 249)

In this declaration Barclay both explains the reason for his loss of faith and ethics and foreshadows the course and conclusion that his new quest will take. When he uses the metaphor of flame to describe the impact of Christ, he means a flame that supplies positive energy and enlightenment. But as Barclay's journey heads south and inward, fire becomes, as it so often is in the monomyth stories and in Jeffers's poems, a literal and destructive fire, but with no promise of future renewal. Barclay notes that the violence of the First World War has caused this change. How can one face violence with naive love in the wake of the slaughter of "last year" (when the war was still going on and took his son)?[11] Barclay wants to become one of those leaders of churches who sink the myths. He will attempt to find a new explanation. There is an ambiguity in the phrase "swim by" which might mean "act according to" or "ignore." The latter meaning is what finally animates Barclay. In this scene he also gives a clue to the true force behind his quest for new meaning. When he tells the congregation that Christianity is false and their faith is pointless, they begin to flee, and he tries to hold their attention by reminding them that they "love authority" and "*I* have authority / Here" (*CP* 1: 249–50). But he has just denounced the religion which gave him what authority he has. He wishes to hold the congregation for the exercise of personal power alone—and at every juncture of the ensuing narrative, he falls back on that viewpoint. He must be obeyed because he wants to be obeyed, not because he is genuinely animated by a new vision of reality which might make life better for his followers.

The key scene in the poem is the one Barclay remembers—standing outside the locked door of his daughter's room while she bids farewell to her brother. Sexual desire aside, Barclay's position is the same as that reached by many parents; he has lost control of his children. If the child has been raised well, this change is good, however disturbing it might be to the parent. Edward's death in the war gives Barclay a larger cause on which to blame his distress, but he never lets go of the desire to be totally in control, extending that power beyond his family to everyone he meets, so he never grows in personal or emotional terms, even though his philosophic discoveries about the violent cycle of the universe are the same as those of the poet who created him. Graphically, the monomythic pattern is a spiral. In the story of the vegetation god, the same pattern is repeated as the changes in the seasons move through time. In the Jeffersian view, the spiraling change occurs without an observable pattern and through time which cannot be measured—the universe remakes itself from nano-second to nano-second. In Barclay's story, no real progress is made, so the spiral flattens to a circle, with the same actions (Barclay's multiple ascents of the hill—Moses only had to climb Mount Sinai once) and the same statements ("God thinks through action") repeated fruitlessly. In monomythic stories, the circle is a symbol of wholeness and completion. In *The Women at Point Sur*, it is a path which leads back to the "private impurity" which Barclay does not escape.

Barclay's desire for disciples also appears in veiled fashion in this passage. In his final message to the congregation, delivered over the public address system to increase the power of his voice, he urges them, like a Nietzschean hero, to "take despair by the throat" but also tells them "[t]o hear me again you'll have to follow me" (*CP* 1: 250–51). "Follow" means to continue with him on his journey, but it could mean to adopt his viewpoint. Jeffers reminds repeatedly that one must approach true enlightenment as a solitary quest. All disciples are dupes. Later Barclay makes his desire for disciples explicit when he thinks, "'The mind's powerless in vacuo, no one can dispense with disciples / And burn to the essence. / Those are the birds that are not caught but with confidence'" (*CP* 1: 254). This passage is a warning sign for any reader of Jeffers's other early narratives. Enlightenment comes not from group action (always a bad idea in Jeffers; see, for example, "The Purse Seine") or from any other kind of strictly human behavior, but from individual apprehension of the natural world. Barclay's describing these future disciples as captured birds suggests their lesser importance to him, and his idea that they can only be caught with confidence sounds like a noble motive, but it might also mean that one must secure their confidence in order to engage them, so that the confidence he refers to is the trickery

of the confidence man. This interpretation is further suggested by his next comment, "'What's honesty, the end is honest'" (*CP* 1: 254). If he uses or deceives people, he is justified because the result will be the knowledge and power that he seeks.

And what did he expect to receive from the disciples? He does not speak of learning from them or even drawing energy from their respect. Even this early in the poem, it is clear that Barclay's philosophy is a rude blend of Jeffersian Inhumanism and Nietszchean[12] arrogance. Later, after he has begun to live at the Morhead farm, he thinks of a way to use disciples: "'gather disciples / To fling like bullets against God and discover him'" (*CP* 1: 259). Do this, or commit an act "'so monstrous, so irreparable / It will stand like a mountain of rock, serve you for fulcrum / To rest the lever'" (*CP* 1: 259). Then he imagines an act of human sacrifice. The disciples are to serve as mere tools in his search for God. Of Natalia Morhead he thinks, "Disciples, this one the first, lances to ambush / The power behind powers, bring down the mastodon" (*CP* 1: 274),[13] as if that power were something one could tame. The disciples are phallic lances who will necessarily blunt against this massive target.

Barclay's thoughts about the imaginary disciples that he thinks surround and surrender to him contain frequent references to his daughter: "Going down the hill a company followed him, / His daughter April among them" (*CP* 1: 260); "He awoke thinking of April / His daughter, her purity and grace, named from the springtime" (*CP* 1: 266); "one current / Opaque yet, he understood it vortexed on April" (*CP* 1: 274); "'O little ones, passionate maiden bodies and April faces'" (*CP* 1: 288). In his last sermon to his followers, Barclay boasts, "'I am God and the laws are mine and the times mine: comes up on the hill, the incarnate / And perfect April of the world, the shining / Foil for the love'" (*CP* 1: 360). "Foil" may be interpreted three ways. Barclay probably means a reflective layer to help display better an image, in this case his presumed new revelation. But "foil" may also mean a contrast or a weapon, as his daughter becomes in this climactic scene. April is the disciple Barclay is most eager to "catch."

Barclay's Search for God

After Barclay leaves his congregation and heads south past Monterey to his vacation home, he says to himself for the first time the statement with which he begins most of his excesses: "'God thinks through action'" (*CP* 1: 253). He repeats this motto several times, using it as a release from thought and an excuse for anything he does wrong. Then he asks the three questions which he claims to investigate throughout the rest of the poem:

> First, whether there's any . . . what the vulgar call God . . . spirit of the universe.
> But spirit's a more contaminated word than the other. Life then, one life
> Informing . . . no, being: whether it's one being . . . why, this is evident.
> Second, is anything left after we die but worm's meat? Third, how should men live? (*CP* 1: 253)

This is the passage in which Jeffers assigns "his philosophy" to Barclay, because the former minister states that "God" is first "life," then "one being" (although "this is evident" no more than the "self evident truths" of the Declaration of Independence), leaving the reverend with the questions of afterlife and morality to decide himself.

His first decision indicates the path that he will take—impulsive and selfish with an overlay of excuses. A young man comes to give him a letter, and Barclay thinks that he might kill him—an "action" of the God Barclay seeks to understand:

> To mould one's thoughts through action. Give up sanity again, be mad enough to act.
> This fellow that climbs up the hill to prick my solitude:
> Kill him and hide the body, that would be action, not an inch more monstrous
> Than any other. (*CP* 1: 253)

Barclay's cold-blooded contemplation of the murder of a stranger is the beginning of the evidence that his mind is becoming unhinged.[14] Most of the other murderers in Jeffers's works do so because of emotion or personal grudge. Barclay's view of murder without personality is similar to the random violence of World War I that took his son's life, a violence which he has internalized rather than transcended. After the man has left, Barclay concludes "I should have taken him. / He serves the hotel, he is not proper to this earth / I shall crop the pure fruit of. If I must" (*CP* 1: 254). The monomythic vegetation figure renews the world; Barclay desires to take the "crop" for himself. The most important part of this statement is "I should have." Despite Barclay's constant affirmations of the purifying consequences of violence, he does not here act on his impulse to kill and never does. In fact, his acts of violence primarily involve women, particularly his own wife and daughter. In his view, women are of little importance. He had told the congregation, "I know you are fools and soft, woman-brained" (*CP* 1: 251).

For this reason, Barclay's sexual unions are not joyous but designed to reinforce his view of himself, precisely the love "turned inward" that Jeffers warns against. The monomyth features the joining of male and female as a prerequisite for renewal, but in the truncated world of *The Women at Point Sur*, Barclay chooses Maruca, the Indian servant, pre-

cisely because she is undesirable, although her possible later role in the renewal of the monomyth is hinted at in the description of her: "The heavy protuberances of breast and belly / And the idol thighs" (*CP* 1: 266).[15] When their coupling is over, Barclay makes it clear that he only used her for personal reasons. In his earlier life, he would have feared appearing ridiculous, but after his sex with Maruca, that fear is buried. Their tryst occurs in a dry stream bed, again a suggestion of the limited possibility of fertility and renewal. (Tamar and Lee's incest took place in a pool.)[16] Barclay recognizes that this has all been *pro forma*: "the symbolic flesh / Had served him: the value of the symbol secured" (*CP* 1: 273). Later Natalia and Faith meet for a sexual encounter (they "wrestle") in the same spot, and the same imagery is used to describe it, suggesting that their exercise of sexuality brings no joy but only a release of energy into an atmosphere too wasted ("starved sod") to absorb it (*CP* 1: 286).

The "monstrous act" toward which Barclay lashes himself, his rape of his daughter, April, takes place at night with little description of the landscape except for the sky, which features the moon's quarter as an incomplete piece, a "chip of bent moon" (*CP* 1: 292) and the stars which are described as chaotic: "anthill Pleiades" (*CP* 1: 295). April doesn't understand why her father is taking her into the darkness, thinking that she still has nothing to fear from him even if he has gone mad. But Barclay confirms her judgment of his insanity when, just before he attacks her, he announces that he is God:

> "God has come home to you,"
> He said furiously, "to you that refused him
> Faith, now you feel his power and believe. You laughed in your pride
> But God is stronger." (*CP* 1: 295)

Although Barclay charges that April has no faith (in himself? in him as an embodiment of God?) he actually betrays her faith in her belief that her father would not harm her.

April loses her mind as a result of this violation—another version of insanity, this caused by severe emotional trauma. April's view of the world has been destroyed by her father's attack, but it is replaced not by enlightenment but revenge. After this injury, April increasingly absorbs her brother's personality in order to bury her own "stained" one (*CP* 1: 296). She is also usually described in masculine, phallic terms as she attempts to alter her personality so that she will have the will to shoot her father: "She heard her own voice / Formed and steady as the slender shaft of a pillar" (*CP* 1: 297). She dreams the dreams of "an adolescent / Boy": "Erect sword-slender figure riding the plunge of the great prow

toward Asia" (*CP* 1: 305). "April held hidden under the coat something / That men have [Randal's pistol] / . . . / . . . April had passed / With a boy's gesture" (*CP* 1: 342), "April / Averted her eyes [from her mother, who is getting dressed], feeling not thinking herself / Boy-sexed in the woman's room" (*CP* 1: 349).

Her defense is to retreat into the personality of the only other person she could trust, her dead brother Edward. In that role April hurls the worst charge that a child can make to a parent: "'I didn't ask to be born'" (*CP* 1: 295), but she imagines this comment and does not say it to her father. Earlier in the encounter, Barclay had said, "'You wouldn't ask me / To love backward, back toward the dead, dead souls'" (*CP* 1: 292), yet that is the reaction that his desecration has produced. In the form of Edward, April wishes for time to run backward, to end a sorry life by negating it before birth.[17] Unlike the male-female incest in many monomythic stories (for example, Osiris and Isis) which suggests the integration of genders into a new, more powerful whole, Barclay's attack leads to April's disintegration. The episode is another example of the ruined mythic pattern in *The Women at Point Sur*; instead of a sexual union producing a new life or at least a movement toward a new configuration of energy, Barclay's rape leads to a desire to reverse the course of spiritual history.

Barclay also fails to recognize the importance of pain not as an end but a pathway. It is true that pain is necessary for revelation, but one need not inflict pain on others, as Barclay does when he rapes his daughter. In the "Prelude" which presents many of the themes of the narrative in symbolic form, Onorio Vasquez says of the crucified hawk, "'It is necessary for someone to be fastened with nails'" (*CP* 1: 248), and he offers to take the place of the hawk, but there is pain enough in the world already; one need not add to it in order to learn from it. Vasquez was able to have his vision because he participated in the pain of the hawk, but he did not torture it as did his brothers. Now that the hawk's passion is finished, Vasquez can no longer live through him and see visions: "'No, for the topazes / Have dulled out of his head'" (*CP* 1: 248).

The people at Morhead's farm who gather to Barclay do so because they are impressed by his past position and apparent learning, much like those who were impressed by the historic Faust. Their own ignorance prevents them from seeing and judging Barclay clearly. Natalia says that she cannot understand him—therefore he must be learned (*CP* 1: 260). She is also impressed by his visions of a future apocalyptic change, a change which seems to be signaled by an earthquake which some think that Barclay has either predicted or caused. He tells Natalia and Faith Heriot that the war began a change which will reshape the world: "'When the world changes and the tired soul / Of the earth drinks a new

spring: someone is sent to tell men, I am sent to tell you'" (*CP* 1: 263). He identifies himself as a divine messenger, perhaps a messiah, a role he invokes when he says later "'To master the people, set myself free / To master the people'" (*CP* 1: 268). He envisions his new congregation assembled "[u]nder the snake-limbed oaks" (*CP* 1: 271). In mythic terms, the snake is seen as a bringer of both knowledge and danger, the oak as a symbol of wisdom, but when Barclay finally declares his vision of a new world, it is the old stuff of saviorism and personal excess: "When I send out my thought there are nerves to take it, / . . . and they will come down" (*CP* 1: 272).[18] Barclay uses images of dryness and atrophy even when he speaks to April about her growth and physical development: "'God that grows up in trees and mountains, the same power / In the wrinkled limbs formed them and smoothed them, drew them long, polished them white and shining, mounded the low breasts'" (*CP* 1: 271). Rather than describing a newborn baby in terms of joy, freshness, and innocence, Barclay uses words such as "wrinkled" and "low," which suggest that as living things age they approach and return to the same state of helplessness and weakness with which they began. Decay is inherent, even in flourishing life. The canyon and the hills he sees as "bronze" (tinted with dark brown), rather than gold, and all this appears under the "little bone sky" (*CP* 1: 272). Even the heavens are touched by sterility and death in the drought-plagued landscape which throughout the poem does not receive the relief of rain. All nature is in a state of collapse or appears to threaten in the poem. For example, "the sharp-tipped crescent [moon] / Reddened and fell in the sea beyond the Sur rock" (*CP* 1: 273). When Barclay assembles his disciples, "in the creases [of the mountain] the winter stream-beds / Haired with low oak, but higher between deep ridges spiring to redwood, netted the edge of the continent / With many-branching black threads" (*CP* 1: 275–76), as if forming a net. The completion of the monomyth cycle would bring a new season of fertility and renewal, but the poem ends in the same dry environment in which it began.

Barclay delivers a message to the cattle on the hillside which seems to convey the same idea that Jeffers presented often: only surrender to the great flux that is reality can calm and bring peace: "'*I* am not your savior, I have sharper gifts than salvation'" (*CP* 1: 278). Barclay thinks that the cattle, always identified as "horned," suggesting both evil and danger, should hear his message because they are "one flesh" with the rest of existence, and the only human who hears it is Maruca, who visits Barclay because she doesn't think it good that he should "talk to [himself]" (*CP* 1: 278). While Barclay preaches a message of acceptance to those who cannot understand it, Maruca, whom he has cruelly used and

scorned, acts on a human impulse of compassion from a world that Barclay has left behind.

This passage also mentions the "strokes of the sun" (*CP* 1: 275), "the blinding sun" and that "the sun blazed" (*CP* 1: 279), all comments made by the narrative voice. The sun, along with the season, is the cause of the drought which has fallen on the land. The many references to the merciless heat of the sun are more symbolic markers showing that this poem, unlike the other verse narratives, is stuck in a dead end. There is no progress because although Barclay talks of surrender to the elements, he is still bound tightly in a cocoon of personal desire and emotion. In mythic terms, he is a fisher king who does not even look for a helper to aid him on his quest.

Barclay contradicts his own reason for drawing disciples to him when he dismisses the first group that follows him: "'I am gathering seed in a great solitude, I shall tell you everything / When I return, but not now'" (*CP* 1: 255). Once again, this remark both invokes a savior (Christ—"When I return") or could be a cover for having nothing to tell them. After a kind of passion during which Barclay echoes Christ, saying "'It is finished'" (*CP* 1: 299), he returns to harangue his flock, who, like Natalia Morhead, are impressed with his power but do not grasp his message: "They understood nothing but listened" (*CP* 1: 302). Finally Barclay tells them something they can understand:

> "I know that I stand near God
> and speak for him.
> . . . . . .
> I am his token
> And symbol to you that he will give you these gifts,
> Inexhaustible life, incomparable power, inhuman knowledge:
> That he will make you Gods walking on the earth
> And striking the sky." (*CP* 1: 302–03)[19]

So he tells his followers that they will have great power in this life on earth, obviously a perversion of Jeffers's view of divine power. Then follows a parade of Barclay-twisted beatitudes. His followers like to drink, so God will give them wine; they are poor and God will make them rich, and so on. With this declaration Barclay returns to the same kind of soothing rather than challenging message he preached when he was a minister, debasing the truths he learned about humanity as only a part of existence. Perhaps this message is worse than the conventional one, because through it Barclay promises salvation not through an afterlife but in this world. Barclay is even aware of this reversal and his own insanity: "'How did the waters turn backward . . . ?'" (*CP* 1: 301); "'Madness, madness, / And lies: it is put in my mouth'" (*CP* 1: 303). An old woman

taunts him: "'I am old. / Have you changed that?'" He responds, "'I will change it. When I set you / Back of the bleeding womb and *before* conception'" (*CP* 1: 337). Barclay claims to be able to reverse the flow of time, but there is only one direction possible. Barclay himself had yearned for annihilation, but that is probably not what the old woman had in mind.

During another visit to his favorite spot, the top of the hill, Barclay undergoes another revelation but does not change his attitude about himself: the narrator observes, "Here his faith died" and "Nothing [was] discovered in all the vicious circumference." Barclay thinks, "'All the religions are dead, / When it stank you denounced it. You are chosen to found the new one, / To draw from your own fountain the soul of the world'" (*CP* 1: 310). Actually, Barclay has reached an important point in a Jeffersian analysis of his and the world's existence. Conventional religion is ill-thought-out and unsatisfying, human knowledge as it is traditionally constituted has limits. In terms of his own vision, he has committed the "monstrous acts" which should allow him to break "the blind mask" of social convention and individual personality and "walk in" with "discovery" (*CP* 1: 240).[20] But rather than being armed by this new vision, "the mind [remains] center[ed] on [his own] humanity" (*CP* 1: 308), and he thinks himself an agent of the divine force, when, in the Jeffersian view, there should be no personality left and nothing to make a choice. He has reached, instead of enlightenment, another degree of madness.

After this further descent Barclay sleeps and dreams of a unification of the shade of his dead son with that of Christ ("'My crucifixion a digging between the war-lines'" [*CP* 1: 313]), who says that he wants "'to slay God who violated my mother / And streaked the earth with its pangs'" (*CP* 1: 313). Because Barclay has assumed the identity of God, he thinks that Edward/Christ wishes to kill him to avenge his violation of April/Mary. He had previously suspected that Edward and April had committed incest, but he tries to justify himself in terms of the Christian myth by claiming, "'I embraced the future, I came to a virgin . . .'" (*CP* 1: 314), but since the dream is a projection of his own guilt, there is no way to get free. The figure in the dream says what April imagined him saying, "'I did not ask for existence'" (*CP* 1: 314). This dream leaves Barclay with "All his body trembling" (*CP* 1: 314).

After this further descent into "the furnace heart" (*CP* 1: 320), Barclay addresses his congregation and changes his message once again, telling them, like Jesus addressing his disciples after giving a parable to the multitude, that he will now explain a secret: "'God has gone mad. / . . . / . . . he has turned away from [the mountains], he has gone mad, he has turned to love men. You greasy foreheads, / It is not for power nor

beauty, what have you got under you that I should love you?'" (*CP* 1: 322–23). Although he now identifies himself with God, the earthquake which his audience thinks a result of his power has cemented his hold over them. In another bizarre echo of the gospels, a woman falls at his feet, saying "'Lord, I am here'" (*CP* 1: 323).

Jeffers's view of reality, although non-religious, shares the basic idea of all the world's religions that one must lose one's sense of self-importance: "The mind / Passes, the eye closes, the spirit is a passage; / The beauty of things was born before eyes and sufficient to itself; the heart-breaking beauty / Will remain when there is no heart to break for it" ("Credo," *CP* 1: 239). Barclay's failure to understand the true nature of divinity, in spite of his lip service to Jeffers's belief in the divinity of the energy system, comes in the scene in which Barclay confronts someone when the "buried sun" pokes a ray through the fog, and Barclay finds that he is looking at his own image. He says, "'I see the devil is short of faces'" (*CP* 1: 284). Barclay might treat the encounter as a joke, but he nonetheless sees that his alleged search for knowledge is actually self-indulgence. The other self is not an evil twin but that part of Barclay's mind that is still clear-eyed and sane. It tells him,

> "You could not fool yourself
> utterly. Your very body
> Cries for companions; you stood like a moose bellowing for love. I listened all
> the while with secret laughter
> The time we persuaded ourself we wanted disciples to bait the God-trap: their
> sweet persons you wanted;
> Their eyes on our eyes. A filthy breed to refer to." (*CP* 1: 284)

The scene also ironically references the Faust myth; Faust had to call upon the devil in order to obtain the knowledge he sought which lay beyond his personal grasp. The Mephistopheles figure here is not an agent of evil but a would-be guardian, although his mocking message seems delivered with a sneer. Ultimately, the Faust legend grows out of the Judeo-Christian tradition. To seek for knowledge which lies beyond human ken is to tempt the wrath of God. In the "Faust of this generation," evil lies within oneself. One doesn't need to call forth evil. It lurks within the heart of the person who can see no further than his own desires.

Randal Morhead as Fool

Randal Morhead, unlike Barclay, has experienced the horrors of the war at first hand, yet returns with his romantic view of the world intact. When he comes back three-fourths of the way through the poem, the

last major character to appear, Jeffers pairs him with Barclay, one ignorant, the other insane: "The day brought home Randal to the house and Barclay to the hill, / The one believing himself happy and the other / Believing himself God" (*CP* 1: 321–22).

Randal has not even doffed his uniform before he attempts to seduce April:

> "It's like a story: to have gone over into hell
> And fought with all the horrible faces of death
> And lain among his loathsome pickings
> Years, then come home and find my dream in my house.
> High-bred, shining with mind, my ideal queen." (*CP* 1: 328)

Before he left for the war he had deceived Natalia and impregnated Faith Heriot. He is also unconcerned about his sick child. Therefore all this high-flown imagery might just be a device to enable another sexual conquest. Nonetheless, the terms he uses, "story," "dream," and "queen," suggest that he sees himself as a hero, like a knight in a medieval romance. In any case, the horrors of the war have not pricked him to consider a new perspective. Like an adolescent who has yet to enter the adult world, he still thinks, or perhaps imagines, because he shows little evidence of thought, that happiness and contentment follow from finding an ideal lover. He continues:

> "What have I got out of the war?
> This uniform and a pistol taken from a prisoner.
> I kept the light of ideal love burning in my heart,
> I knew there was a girl made for me to worship,
> I'd never seen her, tant pis pour moi. But now, now,
> I have climbed out of hell and found her." (*CP* 1: 329).

April is unimpressed. Her reaction involves a rare bit of Jeffersian humor: "April perceived / Rather a bodily odor than the spoken words" (*CP* 1: 328), which makes Randal and his rhetoric laughable. Later the narrator remarks that Randal has been "appointed to outrage the abstraction of her mind / With comic attitudes" (*CP* 1: 331). If Randal is "appointed" to perform this task, he is like a jester in a court, a fool for her "queen." One fears a madman but laughs at a fool. Jeffers underscores this point by indicating that deluded young men like Randal are common: "[h]is handsome trivial face" (*CP* 1: 329). April, now thoroughly possessed by the spirit of her dead brother, is more interested in the pistol (taken from a helpless prisoner rather than seized in battle).

Jeffers wrote that *The Women at Point Sur* was designed to show the dangers of "my philosophy in the hands of a madman or a fool" (*SL*

116). Although Barclay obviously tries to come to grips with Jeffers's worldview, it could be argued that Randal is too slight a character to represent that cosmic perspective. But Randal does say, "'Even before I went over / The sea and learned something, I knew all the while / There was much better in the world than anything I knew'" (*CP* 1: 328). Recognizing that there is something larger beyond oneself is the first step in the journey that Jeffers himself took. Randal, however, insists that there is "much better" out there. But Randal has moved only from an individual perspective to the favorite fantasies of the larger society: "'I kept my ideals / Bright and clean through it all, I believe in goodness, / In *ro*mance'" (*CP* 1: 331). This from an adulterer. In order to understand Jeffers's philosophy, one must abandon preconceptions, particularly the idea that the human world or the universe is benevolent, and perceive the actual evidence coldly, like a scientist. Like most people, Randal shrinks from this idea and collapses into romantic fantasies. Barclay has indeed seen the face of God, and the experience has driven him mad, but he does have a vision of the truth (perhaps the difference between madness and simple insanity), even if his relationship to that vision is flawed. A fool, however, only daydreams. His attempt to seduce April a failure, he must finally come home to reality:

> "I used to think of this place
> Tenderly, all for Natalia's sake,
> . . . . . .
> remember thinking most tenderly
> Of the pure woman to return to, I impure but her soldier,
> And now there's nothing in the house but a sick child." (*CP* 1: 333)

His response to these conditions is to couple roughly with his wife while imagining April during the encounter. "[T]he strain-shocked mind / Returning on adolescence" (*CP* 1: 335). Finding no joy in this union, he abandons even his fantasies and falls back upon a crude imposition of male power, choking his wife and demanding, "'I'm the master in the house. / Say it, that I'm the master'" (*CP* 1: 338). Natalia agrees but leavens this concession with the remark, "'What happened to you to make you a fool and a coward . . . ?'" (*CP* 1: 339).

In the vegetation cycle version of the monomyth, the figure who represents the dying year and is sacrificed in order for the new, fertile year to begin is often represented as a fool because he is allowed to indulge himself in any way he chooses before his ultimate death. He thinks himself favored, when in fact he is tricked. In keeping with the ironic nature of the references to the monomyth in *The Women at Point Sur*, Randal Morhead returns to what he expects will be a celebration of his

survival to find that not only his father but his child is afflicted. In a bizarre parody of the revival of nature at the close of monomythic stories, old Morhead, who had been confined to his bed throughout the narrative, rises and goes up the hill to become one of Barclay's congregation. Rather than an older figure who ceremonially dies, instead it is Randal and Natalia's child Rachel who dies. Seeing the dead child, Barclay, in a gruesome parody of the Christian communion (itself a living example of the monomyth), shouts, "'Why should you riot over the child, hack her in pieces, / For each a mouthful'" (*CP* 1: 364). There is no evidence that Barclay's followers act on this command, but to do so would be to shake the monomythic parallels further: instead of a mature sacrificial victim, the figure who should represent the worn-out old year is instead a child who should embody the possibilities of the future. While she dies, taking hope with her, the old year, in the form of old Morhead, refuses to loosen its hold and stalks about, a reminder of decay rather than renewal. Faith Heriot tells him, "'Come on old scarecrow, / Born at the wrong end of the horn, old baby, / You know what you were brought out for'" (*CP* 1: 358).

Everything turns upside down at the close of the poem, which is also the end of the *walpurgisnacht* of drinking, sex, and general abandonment which Barclay styled "freedom" (*CP* 1: 326) and urged upon his followers. Their campfires have set fire to the dry countryside. The drought which has gripped the landscape during the entire poem has brought an apocalypse. Ranchers and farmers set fire to brush at the end of the summer to clear the ground for new growth in the spring, but such blazes are "controlled burns." This fire is a wildfire without purpose, nature run riot. Natalia sees the fire from the house: "the red sky streaming / Over the hill like dawn in the wrong quarter" (*CP* 1: 355). Rachel Morhead, sick throughout the poem, dies not from disease but from suffocation by her mother, who thinks that she is sparing the child by saving her from a further woeful life: "'I'd done her a crime / In the conception, made it as right as I could. / For two minutes of hurt bought her eternal heaven'" (*CP* 1: 345).

April, the fulcrum

When contemplating the violent, breakthrough act which would allow him to experience a new dimension of reality, Barclay had described it as the "'fulcrum / To rest the lever'" (*CP* 1: 259) which would vault him into the realm of ultimate truth. So Barclay's rape of April becomes the fulcrum of violence of which Barclay spoke. But at the end of the poem, April, coupled with the spirit of her dead brother, also serves a fulcrum which turns *against* violence. April has been building toward the murder

of her father and is totally absorbed by her brother's personality, as she tells her mother:

> "[T]his terrible happiness has flowered
> Out of my sister's misery: I Edward your son,
> I died in France . . .
> . . . . . .
> Would I dare to go up and face him
> If I were that victim, mother, that stricken April?
> I go coldly, having gone under death" (*CP* 1: 352)

When April finally confronts her father, she speaks with the spirit of her brother. "'I am Edward, father, I have come.' 'My dream on the mountain,' he answered, 'you act nothing but echoes me.' She knew then / That the young man would desire to kill his father / And never could do it" (*CP* 1: 362). True, Barclay grieved the loss of his son to violence, and though violent himself, was never murderous. April then kills herself (as Edward? as April?) thus becoming the sacrifice for which Barclay wished. In another twist on the monomyth, the hero performs a heroic deed which benefits his or her people, but must suffer injury during the struggle to reach this goal. One of the possible heroic deeds in *The Women at Point Sur* is April's plan to kill her father, freeing his disciples from his mad grip. This action is doubly, triply, ironic, because April must adopt the personality of her brother in order to gather the strength to prepare and carry it out. The next twist is that the plan fails—when the time comes to kill her father, April/Edward is unable to do it. Finally, the cruelest injury to April comes from her father, but she continues to injure herself, another example of the introversion which Jeffers thinks keeps humanity from enlightenment: "She caught herself back: since no fortitude sufficed / Flayed with the nails of her right hand the wrist of the left under the table" (*CP* 1: 298). Barclay also adds to the theme of self-mutilation when he "[strikes] his fists against his eyes" (*CP* 1: 299), and when he plunges his hands into coals just before his death.

Barclay's Collapse and Death

Maruca reveals that she is pregnant (presumably from her union with Barclay),[21] and she plans to raise her child not as a healer or prophet, but a predator, a rough beast:

> "God came secretly and gave me a child in my womb,
> The Christ of the lions, for whom I shall kill fawns
> And feed him on the young of the mountains."

. . . . . .

"He has turned to love lions,
We are wise to the catnipped baits and strychnine, we shall hunt men
After the kitten is grown." (*CP* 1: 365)

Similarly, the conclusion of the poem negates the conclusion of the monomyth. Barclay turns away from the west, both in tradition and in Jeffers's poetry the direction of renewal (e.g., "Continent's End" and "The Torch Bearer's Race"), and goes east, in traditional symbolism the direction of spiritual quest but in Jeffers's poetry often a dead end of exhaustion. Barclay ventures into a pit—suggestive of Plato's cave where the dwellers are trapped in their own self-delusion—and, after three days, dies without resurrection, enlightenment, or redemption. The pit is not a natural formation, but an abandoned mine, another reminder of humanity's attempt to impose itself upon and dominate nature, as in "Thurso's Landing." The effort to subdue the earth has failed, but the damage remains.

Sanity

The focus on insanity in this long, difficult poem casts a shadow over a question which the poem did not attempt to answer and which is a subject for another study, but the draining emotional experience of *The Women at Point Sur* compels some concluding comments in that direction. No one in the poem seems normal, as Jeffers himself notes: "These here have gone mad" (*CP* 1: 289). As Brophy points out,

> Sanity, soundness of mind, is marked by a concordance of the mind's truth with the nature of things; to Jeffers this is found in the detachment which accurately expresses man's insignificance, impotence, and mutability. Madness . . . is marked by delusion, rashness, and want of reason; to Jeffers this is manifested in man's biases for power, continuance, invulnerability, and control of his fate. (135–36)

That explanation presents the difference between the two states of mind on the grand scale. But what about one of Barclay's questions: how should men live—every day, not when on such a quest as his? Mercedes Cunningham Monjian makes a point often forgotten:

> It is difficult to agree . . . that family ties count for little, because it is significant that in many narratives, in the attic-room beneath the eaves of the house lies a sick old parent who is cared for with filial love. These people are solicitous of their old invalids, as we see in *The Women at Point Sur*. Old Morhead, paralyzed from the chest down, is given not only respect but patient attention. (56)

Finally, the alternative to the madness of Barclay is evident in the behavior of many characters not only in *The Women at Point Sur* but in Jeffers's other works. The average reader has no difficulty understanding that Barclay is mad, and why. The critic, searching for the pain and violence that Jeffers so often insists upon, races with Barclay to the top of his hill and fails to note that there is a level of human decency in Jeffers's poems that he rarely comments upon, but that is as important in daily life as a vision of divinity. Evil lives in the human heart, but so does compassion and a sense of what it means to be properly human. In the other narratives, not only the old and infirm (for another example, Martial in "Cawdor"), but the insane (Jinny in "Tamar") must be tolerated and protected, and an attempt made to preserve family in spite of its fracture. In addition, "some obscure human fidelity" (*CP* 1: 198) told California that an animal which kills a human, even if the human is contemptible and the animal an emblem of God, must be destroyed. A human deserves its dignity. Another form of "fidelity" causes Onorio Vasquez to pity the tortured hawk and Maruca to help the man who abused her when he babbles to himself. Jeffers himself killed an injured hawk rather than see it endure crippled and powerless ("Hurt Hawks"). Although April plans to kill her father, motivated by revenge, she cannot respond in kind to the person who attacked her, perhaps because of another "obscure human fidelity" to kindness toward fellow humans. Renunciation of revenge becomes the central feature of Jeffers's later narrative "At the Birth of an Age," in which Gudrun drops her plan to kill her brothers as vengeance for the death of her first husband, Sigurd. In his prose comment on this work ("Thoughts Contingent to a Poem"), Jeffers describes this act as an example of the conflict between the ancient code of retribution and the newer Christian model of forgiveness. That might be so, but it also suggests something the flinty poet tried to ignore but could not: there is a place under heaven for humanity, and that place might be to tend to others and the earth itself.

Endnotes

1. This judgment from so many critics is odd, because there are fewer such acts in *The Women at Point Sur* than in the preceding verse narratives. Perhaps it is the main character's insistence on such behavior that alienated readers.

2. "Closest analogy" is the term used because Jeffers balks at the notion that one could pin a label on not just his version of reality, but of any such explanation. Even the clear-eyed view of science ultimately supplies metaphors, not truth: "Science and mathematics / Run parallel to reality, they symbolize it, they squint at it, / They never touch it" ("What's the best life for a man?" [*CP* 3: 425]).

3. Given the number of times that Jeffers specifically identifies Barclay as insane, it is hard to understand why so many readers think that Barclay speaks for the poet.

For example, Mark Van Doren writes that "Mr. Jeffers shows us [Barclay's excesses] with a satisfaction that Mr. [Floyd] Dell would certainly call unsocial" (Karman 62). Jeffers says his characters "have gone mad" (*CP* 1: 289); of Barclay, "The God in his insane mind / Answered" (*CP* 1: 311–12), "The insane starts and dispersions of his mind" (*CP* 1: 325), "He lay deprived in the awful return of sane thought, / . . . / He knew in a flitting instantly forgotten moment / That sanity was too frightful to endure" (*CP* 1: 336). "Barclay, the stars forming and dying / In the measurelessness of his lost mind . . . " (*CP* 1: 346–47).

4. Aware that there is no easy answer to this dilemma, even in his own mind, Jeffers injects himself into the narrative of *The Women at Point Sur* more than he did in the earlier works, struggling along with Barclay to understand what moral choices still trouble the person who recognizes the inhuman reality of the universe. Tim Hunt has pointed out in his textual note to the Liveright reprint of *The Women at Point Sur* how Jeffers wrestles with his own relationship to the story and its characters, finally deciding in "Meditation on Saviors" (originally titled "Note on 'The Women at Point Sur'" [Hunt 217]) that no message of salvation from the pain and stress of life is needed, because it comes naturally: "[Humans] are not to be pitied but very fortunate; they need no savior, salvation comes and takes them by force, / It gathers them into the great kingdoms of dust and stone, the blown storms, the stream's-end ocean" (*CP* 1: 401). Jeffers has traveled with Barclay down a road on which Barclay confused his vision of cosmic reality with his own personal power and thought to "save" humanity. That way is not for the poet. Further, moral questions remain for the individual no matter what belief system he or she chooses, so that battle continues for all of us: "while he lives let each man make his health in his mind" (*CP* 1: 401).

Jeffers apparently undercuts a mythic interpretation of his works by his insistence that enlightenment and salvation are matters for each person to settle. Myths are an entire society's statement of its beliefs, which suggests that knowledge through a group's sense of wisdom is possible. But Jeffers presents his view through symbols, not ideology, so most of his characters remain unaware of the larger meaning behind their struggles. Further, the monomyth to which Robert Brophy and others refer is "mono" only as a broad structure. The journey the hero takes, the difficulties he or she encounters, the gifts and knowledge which he or she returns to the people, all remain specific to the person who makes the quest.

5. Baird, "*Faust* and *The Women at Point Sur*," *Jeffers Studies* 1.4 (1997): 28–39.

6. In his study of the practical and social limits of human knowledge, *Forbidden Knowledge*, Roger Shattuck links Goethe's *Faust* with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* as early nineteenth-century warnings against the excesses of the romantic revolution, just as Jeffers says he intended *The Women at Point Sur* as a tale of wrongly transcended limits. Shattuck determined that there have been only two new myths generated since ancient times, the legend of King Arthur and the story of Faust (78–80). Arthur's court was destroyed because its members attempted a search for the Holy Grail which they were not prepared to complete, so both new myths show that if we are not able to assimilate what we learn from the destruction of our old world view, we violate the limits of our knowledge and abilities to our ruin.

The myth of Faust is based on a real person, the fortunately named Johann Faust (Ger. faust = fist), a scholar and doctor who lived *circa* 1500. He possessed great

knowledge and could perform tasks that other scholars could not (perhaps—Shattuck calls him a "charlatan" [80]), so he acquired not only followers but enemies who assumed that such transcendent knowledge and powers could only come from an otherworldly source. There is no evidence that the historical Faust came to a bad end, however. The notion that Johann Faust made a bargain with Satan to exchange his soul for knowledge and power comes from the chapbook *The History of the Damnable Life and Deserved Death of Doctor John Faustus* published by Johann Spiess in 1592. With that publication the historical Faust began to become a local legend which grew to the larger mythic category through its treatment in the hands of Christopher Marlowe and Johann Goethe, who were interested in the philosophical implications of the story of Faust rather than its use as a tale to frighten peasants.

7. Arthur B. Coffin's comment, "There are strikingly moving passages in the poem, but they ornament an ideological structure rather than embody it" (95) suggests just the interpretation offered here. The ideological structure that Barclay presents is fluid and unworkable, so the poetic passages that describe it cannot embody it, as it is a shell without meaning. Obviously, as Jeffers himself noted in his letters to Rorty and Friede, it is difficult for the reader to expend the effort of attempting to absorb so much failure. But both William Everson and Robert Zaller think that Barclay was finally successful in his quest but unable to assimilate what he had experienced or explain it to others—even to himself. Everson (Brother Antoninus), in his essay on *The Women at Point Sur* in *Robinson Jeffers: Fragments of an Older Fury*, states that Barclay is successful in breaking through to a new truth in spite of his madness and inability to convey that truth:

> [T]he true answers of a poet are beyond him, visitational solutions emerging from the fabric of an inspired utterance, a synthesis of intuition from a world, a cognitive realm, which philosophy and science are unable to reach. . . . We are offered a redeemer who, on the conscious level, revolts us to the basis of our being. . . .
>
> . . . [W]hat Jeffers has done is put a typical prophet—a religious seeker bearing all the psychic liabilities an accusative clinical psychology could attribute to him—through a test run in order to determine if any affirmation possibly survives the extremes of such negation, of such nihilism. It is my belief that Barclay's quintessential truth does just that. (140–41)

Robert Zaller, in his analysis of *The Women at Point Sur* in *The Cliffs of Solitude*, expands the analyses of both Hunt and Everson. Like Hunt, he finds that Jeffers identifies with Barclay as a person seeking for a new truth and works out for himself the pitfalls that lie in the poet's path through Barclay's excesses. He also finds, like Everson, that Barclay's search for truth is fulfilled within himself; his madness and crimes are necessary to reach that truth. Zaller adds that Barclay's downfall is his inability to communicate that truth. All that he is able to convey to his followers is the force of his own personality that led him to attempt such a quest. Thus his vision became personalized and therefore trivial:

> The incidents of "Point Sur" are thus inseparable from the occasions of Barclay's will. In this way too he is an analogue of his creator; indeed, in no other poem does Jeffers seem so intimately connected with his hero, albeit in a relation of antagonism. . . . Jeffers rid himself of Barclay by creating him; in living out the corruption of his vision he purged and strengthened it. (131)

8. I am indebted to Prof. Terry Beers of Santa Clara University, who first suggested to me this interpretation of Randal Morhead's character.

9. Jeffers coyly names his central character after two figures who quested. Barclay's surname, Arthur, is a reference to the great king whose powers nonetheless did not allow him to find the Holy Grail. His last name is pronounced the same as another religious figure who sought knowledge, Bishop George Berkeley.

10. Lawrence Clark Powell points out that religious figures had supported the horrors of the First World War:

> . . . Jeffers looks back on his fellows in the "ruinous churches" still worshipping a bearded God in their own image, and finds ridiculous "men's inability to see God clothed in anything but the contemptible body of the ape." After the carnage of the war of 1914–1918, in which 10,000,000 men, blessed by their priests, went to the shambles, Jeffers puts the Rev. Dr. Barclay into the pulpit, from where he publicly denounces the hollow shell of orthodox religion. (153)

11. Barclay also refers to another disaster of the period, the influenza pandemic of 1918 that killed more than the war: "the plague in the air that killed its millions" (*CP* 1: 281).

12. The Nietzschean connection is made explicit when Barclay uses the title of one of the German philosopher's works: "'I have come to establish you / Over the last deception, to make men like God / *Beyond Good and Evil*'" (*CP* 1: 282 [my italics and capitalization]). Barclay also alludes to *Also Sprach Zarathustra* in the passage in which he confronts himself in fantasy: "'Here you are, madness. / The Magus Zoroaster thy dead'" (*CP* 1: 284).

13. The metaphor of the "mastodon kill" as an example of excessive human power reappears in "Original Sin" (*CP* 3: 203–04).

14. Robert Zaller points out that "Barclay does not commit murder, an act that, in the aftermath of World War I . . . , could scarcely retain its power to shock" (118).

15. The narrative voice cruelly refers to Maruca's room as "her kennel" (*CP* 1: 345), suggesting that Jeffers himself is infected by Barclay's low opinion of women.

16. The image of stagnant water or water which is trapped and flows nowhere appears again with a reference to Audis Barclay "[trembling] over her private cistern of bitterness" (*CP* 1: 298).

17. Faith Heriot's abortion is another example of this theme. Faith also wishes not to have been born, perhaps as a way of dealing with guilt over the potential life she ended: "The thing would be to find out a way of getting *un*born. / *I* have found out a way" (*CP* 1: 340).

18. The oak also plays a part in some myths as a catalyst for the onset of madness, as Robert Brophy points out in his analysis of "Roan Stallion": "The pursued

[Johnny, the stallion's owner] first takes refuge by an oak (the tree sacred, among other deities, to Cybele, the mother-lover-destroyer of Attis who drove him mad, to his death) . . ." (98). Discussing "Tamar," Brophy notes "The tree branches doubling back on themselves . . . induce . . . narcissism which in myth-ritual terms marks the autumnal down-swing, the death-wish, scapegoat phase of the cycle, anticipating a purging, loosing of violence" (26).

19. Jeffers scores himself in this passage with Barclay's use of the word "inhuman," and perhaps warns himself not to become wedded to his personal philosophy. (See endnote 2.)

20. In these words from the "Prelude" which precedes the action of the poem, Jeffers, in his narrative voice, reminds the reader that he had given this advice in "Roan Stallion" (*CP* 1: 189–90) and thereby suggested that *The Women at Point Sur* would be a detailed investigation of the examination of that viewpoint in the life of an educated person, Barclay, a clergyman. California of "Roan Stallion" was an actor, not a thinker. Neither was Tamar nor Orestes. The enlightenment that the latter finds at the end of "The Tower Beyond Tragedy" comes after violent action. Jeffers shows finally that Barclay's education has no more prepared him for enlightenment than if he were Maruca or Onorio Vasquez—perhaps less so, because Barclay's training has pushed him further away from the natural world, the source of wisdom.

21. Like so much else in the whirligig of actions and statements that end the poem, Barclay's paternity of Maruca's child is uncertain. Joe Medina, one of the cowboys who tortured the hawk at the beginning of the poem, at least attempts to rape Maruca (*CP* 1: 285). Also, Maruca "loved him" (*CP* 1: 296), so was there sex between them, and was it consensual? Obviously Jeffers, a careful writer, could resolve these questions if he chose. He is quite precise at the beginning of the poem, stopping the narration to clarify the identity of the lighthouse Faith Heriot's father tends when Faith covers her absence by telling her father she is stabling a cow: "(Clearly Point Pinos Light: stands back from the sea / Among the rolling dunes cupped with old pasture. / Nobody'd keep a cow on the rock at Point Sur.)" (*CP* 1: 243–44]). The extreme length of the poem, its repetitiveness (Barclay's many ascents of the hill and his discoveries and sermons), the conflicting interpretations of many events of the conclusion suggest that Jeffers wanted the reader to experience the same sense of confusion and exhaustion as does Barclay.

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George Hart

Idylls of the Coast

Jeffers's Comic Mode and the Shorter Narratives of the 1930s

There is an interesting contradiction in the way Robinson Jeffers's poetry is read by sympathetic critics. Jeffers's work is generally considered to have two modes, narrative and lyric, and critics most often deal with one or the other in isolation. The arrangement of the *Collected Poetry* reinforces this basic distinction: in the running titles, the left-hand footer designates the period by the title poem of the collection published in those years; in the footer on the right-hand page, poems longer than twenty pages are indicated by their title, or the shorter poems are gathered in groups under the rubric "lyrics."[1] Such labeling is a matter of convenience, of course, but it underscores the critical tendency either to read Jeffers as a narrative-dramatic poet, with attention to his longer narratives based in classical drama and myth, or to read him as a lyric poet, with attention to his ecological witness to the divinity of the material universe. What this binary division of subgenre in his work allows us to overlook is the variety of narrative modes that Jeffers deploys. In the 1930s, Jeffers developed a short narrative form that departed from the tragic structures of his major long poems and incorporated the ecological and bioregional sense of place found in his lyric poems. These shorter narratives provide a middle ground on which Jeffers can explore the implications of human survival within the community of nature that can rightly be considered a comic counterpart to his more famous tragic narrative poems.

As Robert Brophy demonstrates in *Robinson Jeffers: Myth, Ritual, and Symbol in his Narrative Poems*, Jeffers's long poems are dominantly tragic in structure and purpose, and the choice of this mode is intended to expose human self-involvement and reveal a way out of it. Discussing the famous passage on tragedy in "Roan Stallion," Brophy writes, "Tragedy 'breaks man's face'; tragedy slits eye-holes in the previously blind mask man wears in his role of tragic actor" (88). The tragic mode

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of the major narratives is, as Brophy asserts, Jeffers's main statement against a human-centered vision of God and the universe:

> Since the time of Copernicus, astronomy has attempted to correct the Ptolemaic bias that put earth and man in the center. On the contrary, man is a speck on Earth which is but a minor satellite to a sun which is millions of light-years off center in a galaxy which is light-centuries off center in the universe—if there actually is a center to be contemplated. Once reoriented within such a realm, man cannot be comfortable in his solipsistic, presumptuous complacency. (89)

Brophy convincingly argues that to understand Jeffers's pantheistic vision of a divine cosmos, the tragic element in his narrative poems must be experienced and the basis of their plots in myth-ritual structure must be understood.

It is here that the contradiction in critical reading is most apparent. Even though his tragedies are intended to slit eyes in the mask of homocentrism and show us the beauty of the divine universe, ecocritical interest in Jeffers focuses mainly on the lyrics, which present that beauty directly through description and offer moral statements on humanity's obligations toward it. In one sense, Jeffers's great contribution to the post-Darwinian attack on homocentrism might also be his great flaw to a readership that has already accepted the necessity of leaving behind "the arrogance of humanism," in David Ehrenfeld's phrase. In fact, a year after Brophy's book was published, Joseph Meeker advanced a theory of "literary ecology" that proposed that comic modes such as the picaresque and dramatic comedy are better suited to an ecological view of humans as members of an ecosystem rather than lords of creation. In *The Comedy of Survival*, Meeker writes, "Tragedy is ultimately metaphysical, and it is always evident that biological problems of survival and welfare are of small concern" (51). Tragedy's basis in myth-ritual orients Jeffers's narrative structures toward action that emphasizes humanity's disconnection and away from the biological process that integrates it into nature; with a singular attention to the tragic in Jeffers's narratives, we lose the opportunity to see how his narrative reinventions of place can reveal characters' biological connection to the community of nature in which they exist. If we look past the simple binary that distributes the longer and mid-length poems under the narrative rubric, and anything that runs ten pages or less under the lyric rubric, we can find shorter narrative poems, especially in the work of the 1930s, which operate in a comic mode that supplements the tragic mode of Jeffers's major work as well as the ecological witness of the strictly lyric poems.

In ecological terms, one might suppose that if we strip away myth or narrative, and focus intently on objective description of place, we get

closer to the actual environmental particulars, but such scientific objectivity would deny Jeffers the power of his ability with narrative. Environmental philosopher Jim Cheney proposes another way to think about myth and story: "A Western scientific description of the specifics of the ecosystem within which one lives is not adequate. It provides the wrong kind of myth. It can and ought to *inform* our construction of appropriate mythical images, but it cannot function as the centerpiece of a viable environmental ethic, much less a mythos for our times" (132). What Cheney proposes instead is what I think becomes apparent in many of Jeffers's shorter narrative works, poems in which he drops the myth-ritual structure and the tragic imperatives and deploys a comic mode. Cheney writes, "The task then is to tell the best stories we can. The tales we tell of our . . . 'storied residence' in place are tales not of universal truth, but of local truth, bioregional truth" (133). If Brophy's version of myth connects Jeffers's narratives with their deep sources in ritual, Greek and Nordic myth, and tragic drama, Cheney's environmental mythos connects story with ecosystem, or bioregion, and reading Jeffers's "non-archetypal," shorter narratives in light of this concept adds another layer to our understanding of his narrative practice.

One clue for discovering Jeffers's comic mode is in fact exposed by the thoroughness with which Brophy explores tragedy in the longer narratives. The appendix of *Myth, Ritual, and Symbol* presents a "Schema for Jeffers' Myth-Ritual Patterns," derived in part from Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism*. Brophy boldly adapts Frye's "theory of myths," which is meant to encompass the narrative patterns of Western literature, to the work of a single author. The schema puts into graphic form the myth-ritual patterns that Brophy discusses in detail throughout his study, thereby offering a concise summation of his argument about the meaning and structure of Jeffers's major narrative poems of the 1920s. By schematizing the seasonal pattern to which Frye's *mythoi* correspond, Brophy confirms the importance of myth and ritual in Jeffers's work, and he establishes the context in which the narratives offer their richest meanings. Frye's theory of myths posits that there are "four narrative pregeneric elements of literature . . . *mythoi* or generic plots" (162), and he connects each of the four *mythoi* with one of the four seasons, emphasizing the cyclical patterns of action in natural process that correspond to "divine activity" (158). Brophy's schema puts Frye's model into action, imaging the seasonal cycle as the driver of the circle of *mythoi*, and the circular graph shows "*the seasonal context of tragedy*," indicating that "Jeffers' poetry accents the tragic autumn phase of the cycle" (298).

Whereas placing Jeffers's narratives in this context reveals the tragic nature of his story-telling, it also raises the question of these other *mythoi*

in his work as a whole. If Jeffers's poetry is dominantly autumnal and tragic, is it exclusively (some might say relentlessly) so? Where might we look in his work for examples of the solstice modes of romance and satire, or the other equinoctial mode of comedy? Brophy does not deny other *mythoi* in Jeffers's work, and he points us to the most likely of the other modes, comedy, as the essential counterpart of tragedy. He writes, "Though his poetry touches all four seasonal phases (see, for instance, 'The Maid's Thought' for the motif of spring resurgence), his vision characteristically is tragic" (298). "[S]pring resurgence" does indeed find expression in Jeffers's poetry, and Brophy's example is apt, as would be the two poems that follow it in the *Collected Poetry* ("Divinely Superfluous Beauty" and "The Excesses of God"). However, as lyrics, these examples fall outside of Brophy's concern in his study, and in Frye's system they would have to wait until the "theory of genres" to be accounted for because the *mythoi* are "pregeneric." The power of Brophy's application of Frye's theory lies in its focus on narrative, Jeffers's major poetic strategy for expressing his cosmic vision.[2] Identifying and assessing Jeffers's comic mode supplements Brophy's account by adding an "ecological" dimension, in Meeker's sense, to his narrative practice. Rather than demonstrating humanity's disconnection from the divine cosmos through tragic, incestuous self-involvement, the comic mode indicates humanity's biological integration into the natural cycles of particular ecosystems, and the possibility of its continued survival and satisfaction (if not happiness) there.

The comic mode, as it emerges in the shorter narratives, also seems related to a larger shift in orientation in Jeffers's major poems, a shift away from the determinism of the archetypal patterns that are Brophy's concern to more temporal and human concerns. Terry Beers sees this change in part as a shift toward an "epic," or historical, mode as Jeffers left behind the tragic and mythical themes of twenties-era work such as "Cawdor." According to Beers, "Thurso's Landing," published in 1932, "marked a new creative direction in Jeffers's verse, one noticed at the time by many reviewers. Granville Hicks, writing for *Nation*, found it 'Perhaps the most human poem he has written'" (48). Moreover, as Robert Zaller points out, characters in the middle and later narratives such as Reave Thurso embody human value in a way that archetypical characters such as Tamar Cauldwell do not. They are, Zaller writes, "deliberately antiheroic, men of tough fiber but of limited ambition and imaginative capacity. Their moral gravity derives from their capacity to endure an unsought (though not necessarily an unmerited) suffering; they are not men who have rashly dared fate but whose very humanity has enmeshed them in it" ("Narrative" 243). Whereas this antiheroic or epic mode allowed for a more historical (i.e., temporal) account of

human action, the longer narratives' plots are still essentially tragic, so it is in the shorter narratives that the comic mode expresses this overall shift. The earliest of these poems, grouped together in the *Collected Poetry*, first appeared in *Cawdor and Other Poems* in 1928: "The Humanist's Tragedy" (*CP* 1: 379–83), based on the Bacchae; "The Dead Men's Child" (*CP* 1: 384–86), a "folk" legend invented from a combination of sources;[3] and "An Artist" (*CP* 1: 390–92), a self-referential parable that most likely responds to Jeffers's fame after "Tamar" reached its wider audience. Beginning with a brief narrative in a myth-ritual mode, with the word "tragedy" in its title, this cluster of poems ranges across dramatic story, anecdote, and parable, exhibiting the diversity of narrative techniques that will develop in the 1930s.

After "The Humanist's Tragedy," these shorter narratives also are a sign of Jeffers's exhaustion of, and with, tragic themes. As Tim Hunt explains, by the mid-1930s, Jeffers started thinking in terms of groupings of brief narratives rather than a single, longer, tragic poem. Most significantly, he considered the shorter works "idyls." Hunt observes that in spring 1936, "Una Jeffers wrote Albert Bender that 'Robin is working on a new book, a group of idyls,'" and he proposes that

> The timing of her comment suggests this was about the time Jeffers recognized that he might have to focus for a time on narratives that were briefer (and less tragically intense and violent) and that this move—allowing nature's tragic violence to be more an implicit frame for the narrative than its dramatic center—was successful enough that he was able to imagine organizing a collection around such pieces rather than around one or two long narratives. (*CP* 5: 99)

The irregular and unrestricted formal qualities of the idyll are perhaps a better descriptor for these poems of the mid-1930s than "comedy," but "idyllic mode" carries a much too quaint association for the characters and action of the various stories. An idyll "describes a picturesque rural scene of gentle beauty and innocent tranquillity and narrates a story of some simple sort of happiness" (Preminger 362). Obviously, the setting itself, and the types of local characters that Jeffers encountered, call for adjustments to this formula.

The comic aspects of the shorter narratives in this period also in part derive from the local and personal context of their composition. The stories came to the poet as part of his own "idyllic" life on the coast rooted in his marriage; they were often collected by Una or by the couple together on their excursions through the canyons and coastal mountains near their home. Melba Bennett points out that Una's "part in the making of" Jeffers's mature work "was important, for it was she who brought home incidents about the coast people which stirred Jeffers

to weave his stories around them" (109), and Brophy also emphasizes the link between the grander tragic narratives and local anecdote and legend: "the tragedies are discovery, self-education, and daily insight. At the core of Jeffers' 'imagined' tales were actual incidents which were part of the lore in the Carmel-Sur area" (275). When integrated into his major work, such lore grounds the excess of the plots and the wildness of the characters in reality; on their own, they provide instances of the local culture and bioregion detached from the mythic structures and can then generate a different meaning than that produced by tragedy. This comic mode is most evident in the brief, anecdotal narratives that Jeffers categorized as idylls: "The Stone Axe" (*CP* 2: 306–08), "The Wind-Struck Music" (*CP* 2: 520–21), "All the Little Hoof-Prints" (*CP* 2: 538–40), "Going to Horse Flats" (*CP* 2: 541–43), and "Steelhead, Wild Pig, The Fungus" (*CP* 2: 549–57).[4] In such poems, Jeffers blends his skill in narrative technique with the ecological witness of his lyric mode and produces what might be considered a bioregional narrative poetry. Without denying his primarily tragic view of human existence, the comic mode allows him to consider the possibilities of human survival and integration.

"The Stone Axe" might be the most identifiably comic narrative that Jeffers wrote: it ends with a happy couple and an impending birth, and it presents an ironic yet sympathetic view of humanity's ignorance of the larger natural cycles that both decenter its importance and give it its meaning. The poem tells the story of a stone hand-axe that finds its way to America from the coast of Scotland. Through a series of misidentifications and mishaps, the axe arrives in California and finds itself behind glass at a local museum. Civilization goes through "strange growths and changes and ghastly fallings" while the axe waits (*CP* 2: 307). Then, in some Edenic future, the axe is found by a pregnant young woman dressed in deerskin, and she brings it to her mate, believing it is the tool he lost the day before. The poem concludes with this exchange:

> He took it and said,
> "That's a good thing.
> I was greatly afraid I'd lost it, but here it is." She said, "How lovely the world beginning again.
> Look, dear, there comes the sun. My baby be born as quietly as that." (*CP* 2: 308)

Most likely, Jeffers saw such a stone-age relic in Scotland, noticed its similarities to one in California, and invented the story in order to demonstrate a basic human nature and intelligence that runs through history while also meditating on his theme of culture cycles (and also on another favorite theme, the endurance of stone). Whatever its genesis,

the anecdotal presentation achieves the comic effect with efficiency and grace.[5]

"All the Little Hoof-Prints" narrates an encounter from a daylong hike taken by the poet and his wife, blending together bioregional detail and anecdotal incident. The hikers pass an old man, who has nodded off while sharpening a cross-cut saw, on their way up the canyon. Richard Kohlman Hughey and Boon Hughey have identified the location as Palo Colorado Road. They write,

> One of the best places to get a good look at the Ventana backcountry is at Bottchers Gap. . . . [The] road leads through a magnificent stand of coastal redwoods in the gorge of the canyon and then begins an ascent that takes one to Bottchers Gap. . . . [Jeffers] also called it "Pigeon Gap" in the poem "All the Little Hoof-Prints," which is more solidly based on the fact that the area was a Mecca at one time for pigeon hunters. (23–24)

After taking in this view, the speaker says that on their return down the canyon the couple

> . . . had the picture in our minds of magnificent regions of space and mountain
> not seen before. (This was
> The first time that we visited Pigeon Gap, whence you look down behind the
> great shouldering pyramid-
> Edges of Pico Blanco through eagle-gulfs of air to a forest basin
> Where two-hundred-foot redwoods look like the pile on a Turkish carpet.)
> With such extensions of the idol-
> Worshipping mind we came down the streamside. (*CP* 2: 538)

As in other poems of this idyllic period, most notably "Oh Lovely Rock," the narrative provides a frame for the environmentally oriented vision. Rather than the lone witnessing eye of the poet-speaker, there is a complementary human presence (here, his wife, in "Oh Lovely Rock" the boys whom he accompanies on their camping trip) that links him to both human and nonhuman. In this case, the inhumanist point of view develops out of the couple's shared experience of the place in the ludic context of their recreation, and, in turn, their receptive states of mind provide a foil for the old man's passionate attachment to his canyon home.

When he sees them on their way down, the old man confronts them because he fears they have camped out and might have left a fire. "'I'll kill anybody that starts a fire here,'" he tells them (*CP* 2: 538). His concern about wildfire combines with the story he tells them of falling off his horse and cracking his skull. His fever of "'a hundred and two every

afternoon'" echoes the imagined heat of fire, and both are contrasted with the darkness and coolness of the canyon. The poet says,

> "Darkness comes early here." He answered with
> pride and joy, "Two hundred and eighty-
> Five days in the year the sun never gets in here.
> Like living under the sea, green all summer, beautiful." (*CP* 2: 539)

Despite Una's concern that he is at risk alone with such a wound, the old man refuses to leave for treatment until the fire season has passed:

> "The doctor. He said the bone
> Presses my brain, he's got to cut out a piece. I said All right you've got to wait
> till it rains,
> I've got to guard my place through the fire-season. By God," he said joyously,
> "The quail on my roof wake me up every morning, then I look out the window
> and a dozen deer
> Drift up the canyon with the mist on their shoulders. Look in the dust at your
> feet, all the little-hoof prints." (*CP* 2: 539–40)

The old man's sensitivity for and intimacy with the canyon allows him to point out the small beauties that the daytrippers might have overlooked in their "extensions of the idol- / Worshipping mind." The poet lets his insight stand without comment or addition.

In "Hoof-Prints" the encounter with the old man reaffirms that the harshness of life on the coast is compensated by the daily presence of beauty. In "Going to Horse Flats," the poet, hiking alone this time, encounters another old local, but this one is distracted by concerns with the outside world rather than guarding and defending his home. As they pass a campsite left by hunters, the old man finds a recent newspaper among the litter. Far-sighted from old age, he asks the speaker to read him the news. In response to the rising antagonisms in the news—the Spanish Civil War, Stalinist aggression—the old man pessimistically says "'there is no way out'" of such "'crimes and cruelties,'" and he argues with the speaker, who replies "'There are ways out'" (*CP* 2: 541). The poet eggs the old man on, just "to try him," making the outrageous suggestion that the winning side should just exterminate the losers and "'the feud will then be / Finished forever,'" to which he responds: "'*You*'re the fool'" and stomps off (*CP* 2: 542). Alone in the now-quiet canyon, the speaker observes the natural beauty and turns to his reflections on the story he has just related.

This episode allows Jeffers both to indulge in a little self-parody, revealing to readers that his more extreme statements are perhaps meant to be more provocative than literal, and to represent himself as much

more sympathetic to human suffering than his reputation would indicate. He wonders why the old man would seek news of the world when he has the advantage of living in a wilderness, when he should know that "He could do nothing / To help nor hinder. Nor you nor I can . . . for the world" (*CP* 2: 542). The speaker continues,

> Man's world is a tragic music and is not played for man's happiness,
> Its discords are not resolved but by other discords.
>
> But for each man
> There is real solution, let him turn from himself and man to love God. He is out of the trap then. He will remain
> Part of the music, but will hear it as the player hears it.
> He will be superior to death and fortune, unmoved by success or failure. Pity can make him weep still,
> Or pain convulse him, but not to the center, and he can conquer them. . . .
> But how could I impart this knowledge
> To that old man? (*CP* 2: 543)

Rather than merely restating the inhumanist perspective as it is expressed in "Shine, Perishing Republic" ("the trap" and how to avoid it [*CP* 1: 15]) or in "The Answer" (love the whole, "not man / Apart from that" [*CP* 2: 536]), the narrative frame here allows Jeffers to present his solution in a comic mode, with restrained humor and compassion. The musical metaphor is one of Jeffers's more appealing figures for inhumanist detachment. The music might be tragic, but it is possible to participate in it and stand outside of it at the same time. What is more, rather than making the inhumanist perspective the product of a tragic rending in the blind human mask, it emerges out of a localized narrative, as part of Jeffers's "storied sense of place."

The most important benefit of realizing Jeffers's comic mode, implicit in "The Stone Axe," is that it provides a balanced view of sexuality and survival in Jeffers's narrative voice. His inclination to deploy sex as an element of his tragic vision through the trope of incest, especially in his narratives of the 1920s, creates a negative view of sex and sexuality by necessity. As Brophy explains, "'Tragedy,' etymologically the 'goat-song' from the rites of Dionysus (god of fertility and father of Priapus), necessarily involves overtones of dark sexuality" (277). Zaller also remarks on this dominant characterization of sex in the poet's work: "Jeffers was preoccupied with the destructive and apocalyptic side of human sexuality. For Jeffers, as for Lawrence, sexuality was a fundamentally anarchic force, capable of overturning all convention and law" ("American" 33). And, Calvin Bedient also compares Jeffers's and

Lawrence's "ultra-modernist" leap "over the ethical (as too humanistic) into the sacred" by "straining and contorting and hurting the beautiful in something inhumanely sublime" (160). Overall, sex in Jeffers's narratives is a negative force, but a comic mode, in Meeker's sense of it, provides opportunities for humanity's biological participation in natural process through sexuality.

Bedient provides an extended analysis of the negative power of sex in Jeffers and Lawrence as it is manifest in "the erotic sublime." His reading of the major narrative poems connects Jeffers's tragic view of sexuality with Julia Kristeva's notion of the abject. He writes, "On the relation between art and incest, Julia Kristeva is . . . absolute: simply, poetic language 'utters incest.' It traffics in abjection, the field of attraction and repulsion regarding fleshly things. . . . Not even T. S. Eliot's lines are so loaded as Jeffers's are with expressions of revulsion at female flesh, appetite, and filth" (174). In terms of Jeffers's tragic heroes and heroines, in their stories in which a break into the apocalyptic occurs, tragedy and the abject combine to create a revulsion at the reintegration into natural process: "An abject apocalypse occurs, in other words, where the 'I' collapses back toward the matrix from which it once extricated itself reluctantly, angrily, perhaps inevitably" (176). For Bedient, the only character who escapes the abjection of the erotic sublime is Clare Walker of "The Loving Shepherdess." He writes,

> Simply by inventing a heroine as reluctant as he himself is to face the meaninglessness of an existence not already and invariably a fusional bliss, Jeffers here bypasses abjection, the vortex of summons and repulsion, that gives "The Roan Stallion" [*sic*] and "Cawdor" and "The Women at Point Sur" their rending fury and frightening exaltations. For all the cruelty of Clare's story, the sacred and hence the sublime do not break into it, because in it the maternal is not a forgotten bliss but tenderly preserved in a memory that seems to belong to the very cells of Clare's body. As a protagonist of peace and love, not of power, Clare is the exception in Jeffers's work. (177–78)

Most interestingly, Bedient finds a tension in "The Loving Shepherdess" that expresses Jeffers's contradictory views of the tragic pain of sexuality and the comic acceptance of biology's imperatives. He notes the moment at the poem's conclusion in which Clare unknowingly recognizes her fate reflected in the salmon swimming up the Carmel River to spawn and die. "So it is," Bedient observes, "in one poem . . . Jeffers tenderly promotes (if not promulgates) a suicidal regret of birth and praises the life-adventure of 'dear flesh' and a dedication to the continuation of the species (albeit not the human species)" (178).[6] If Clare Walker is the exception in Jeffers's longer tragedies, then her appearance signals other exceptions in Jeffers's 1930s narrative works.

As Brophy implies in the comment on "The Maid's Thought," Jeffers's celebrations of a rejuvenating sexuality characteristic of spring are more likely found in his lyrics. In the 1930s, Jeffers used the shorter narrative form to present characters whose sexuality, like Clare's, even in violent and sometimes cruel contexts, is grounded in the seasonal cycles through biology rather than myth-ritual. In a group of three related short narratives from *Such Counsels You Gave to Me*, he also uses the violence and fecundity of nature to mirror human sexuality and passion without a break into the sacred or the sublime.

"Steelhead, Wild Pig, The Fungus" presents three stories of infidelity, passion, and sexuality as correlatives to natural process. The characters, rancher Hugh Flodden, his father and brothers, his young wife June, her friend Florrie, and Vina, his mistress, act out scenes of desire and passion that, rather than alienating them from natural process, reveal them as human correlatives of its fecundity. The narrative is divided into three sections, each one represented by the natural object in the title. These stories, as with other shorter narratives of this period, are likely material intended to be included in the major narratives, but for whatever reason Jeffers left it out. Tim Hunt supposes that "'Wild Pig' . . . either evolved from a partially drafted, discarded scene for *Such Counsels You Gave to Me* or it and *Such Counsels* both evolved from something else, in which the Floddens (*Steelhead*, *Wild Pig*, *The Fungus*, and 'Memoir'), the Howrens (*Such Counsels*), and Tom Birnam ('The Wind-Struck Music') would all have been characters" (*CP* 5: 597).[7]

By grouping these three narratives together, Jeffers emphasizes the seasonal cycles that organize Brophy's myth-ritual account, but rather than functioning by archetypal patterns of tragedy that rise dialectically into the apocalyptic, these stories achieve integration as bioregional narratives. As in Meeker's comedy of survival, sexuality functions to locate the characters within their environment—not by synecdoche, as parts that metaphorically stand for the whole, but by metonymy, as signifiers that take on meaning by their contiguity with other signifiers in the system. The structure and arrangement of the poems indicate this allegorical rather than symbolic patterning. The natural objects that contribute their names as titles do not function as totems as much as metonyms, names that transfer their meaning onto the sexuality and conflict that the human actors participate in. Each one—the steelhead salmon, the invasive wild boar, and the mushroom—are signifiers of phallic power. Nonetheless, each one is placed in the context of its environment, an integrated part of the seasonal round that all the characters are enacting.

The three poems span the central coast's fertile period, winter through spring, and the poet's attentiveness to environmental particulars dis-

closes one liability of following Frye's seasonal *mythoi* too rigidly. As the dramatic action of "Tamar" shows, summer's stasis, intense heat and light, inverts Frye's winter stasis. In winter, on the coast, verdure reappears out of late summer's and autumn's desiccated landscape. The first poem is set in December, when, with the rivers running full, the steelhead return to spawn. Hugh Flodden catches Vina poaching salmon from the creek on his ranch, and he makes her "pay" the fine with sexual favors. Vina's poaching is completely part of the natural process—it comes from instinctive impulses in response to the overwhelming fecundity of the fish, and the description of her as she spears the salmon is sexually charged and naturalizing: her actions are like a heron's, she "pant[s] hard" as she "lean[s] on the shaft, looking down passionately"; as she lifts her prey, "her slender body / Rock[s] with its writhing." When Hugh "catches" her, she tells him, "'Take half o' them, honey. I loved the fun'" (*CP* 2: 549). As an analog to a predatory bird, Vina exercises her natural power over the fish. In order to get what he wants, Hugh invokes patriarchal law—she has to pay the "fine" levied on her instinctive passion. Her only scruple is her sense of self-preservation: "'your wife would kill me.'" Nevertheless, she allows herself to be carried off "To [an] island in the willows" (*CP* 2: 550).

Jeffers wryly implies the excess of her sexual appetite—she pays two "fines" for poaching and exceeding the legal limit, "and would willingly / Have paid a third for trespassing," but Hugh declines, lamely masking his sexual exhaustion with an excuse about being discovered. The concluding scenes emphasize the parallels between the state of natural struggle for survival and reproduction and the reflexive consciousness of humanity. Leaving their trysting spot, they see gulls gorging on the steelhead running up the creeks. Vina sees her own behavior reflected in the gulls, and she is repulsed by it: "'That's a horrible thing. . . . They're worse than I am'" (*CP* 2: 551). Her moral assessment of the gulls indicates that she, momentarily, is self-reflexively outside the flow of natural process, while at the same time it connects her to the birds as predator and scavenger, and it recalls Jeffers's characterization of herring gulls from the lyric "Birds": "ungainly / Gray hungers fledged with desire of transgression" (*CP* 1: 108). Although Vina's observation is projected outward onto the gulls, it is an external manifestation of her recognition that she has poached more than salmon. On the other hand, Hugh Flodden identifies with the salmon, not as a victim but as an inverted, mirror-image of his momentary good fortune. Returning along the beach alone, seeing that they have caught one of the fish in shallow water, he scatters the gulls:

Young Flodden rode into them and drove them up; he found
the torn steelhead
Still slowly and ceremoniously striking the sand with his tail and a bloody eye-
socket, under the
Pavilion of wings. They cast a cold shadow on the air, a fleeting sense of
fortune's iniquities: why should
Hugh Flodden be young and happy, mounted on a good horse,
And have had another girl besides his dear wife, while others have to endure
blindess and death,
Pain and disease, misery, old age, God knows what worse? (*CP* 2: 551)

The second poem begins with an explanation of the presence of exotic, Eurasian boars in the coastal mountains: "a wealthy amateur up the Carmel Valley brought in wild pigs / From the Urals to stock his hunting-park: they overswarmed it and broke his borders and roam the coast-range, beautiful / Monsters, full of fecundity" (*CP* 2: 552). In this story, Hugh's father traps a boar in a thicket and prepares to enter it and kill the boar, which has killed one of his dogs, with a knife. Hugh and the old man quarrel over this, but the old man tells his son that he's bothered by the young couple's nightly love-making, which constantly reminds him of his lack of sexual satisfaction—such pointless and risky hunting is now his only pleasure. However, old Flodden only finds "the two living dogs, meek and subdued, and the dead one / Trampled in a jelly of its own entrails, . . . the tall boar had vanished, like a piece of sea-fog / That blows up-canyon into warmer air and instantly vanishes" (*CP* 2: 554). A rockslide, marking this poem's place in the seasonal cycle at the end of winter, abruptly brings this section to a close:

It was now
broad daylight, and old Flodden
Returned out of the thicket, jeering at the cowardly dogs: that moment a heavy
Noise like distant cannon-fire roared at the mountain-top, the horses pasturing
in the valley below
Raced up the opposite slope; then some great stones and a storm of fragments
came bounding
Down the rock-face, felled an oak-tree or two, and cut several straight paths
through the brush and chaparral.
The winter had been very rainy, a high blade of rock
Had settled and split away and rolled down; but it seemed as if the mountain
had said something, some big word
That meant something, but no one could understand what it meant. Or the
other mountains did. (*CP* 2: 554)

Such a conclusion is enigmatic, just as the poem's narrative episode is unresolved, the vanishing boar leaving the old man with no outlet for

his sexual frustration. The rockslide gives the impression of significance, that nature has purpose and intent, but its meaning is unknowable except perhaps to nature itself. Without a tragic plot at the center, this shorter narrative can leave its characters to continue their daily lives; the only meaning necessary, or possible, is the "local truth" of what has happened in place.

The final story involves June Flodden and her friend Florrie Crawford. It takes place in March, at the early beginning of spring, and it focuses on female sexuality exclusively. The two women are gathering mushrooms:

> . . . Florrie found a thick-stemmed toad-stool with a close purplish cap,
> She plucked it and giggled at it, showing it to June, who couldn't think what she meant; then Florrie formed
> An oval doorway between the finger and thumb of her left hand, she forced the odd-looking fungus
> Into the slot and made it play back and forth. When its head broke off
> She screamed with pleasure, threw it on the ground and trampled it, her little white teeth grinning maliciously, "I'd love to
> Do that to all of them." (*CP* 2: 554–55)

Florrie's display of sexual explicitness and anger causes June to break into tears, and she confesses her knowledge of Hugh's dalliance. Florrie forces June to reveal all the details, and June describes spying on Hugh and Vina from a distance and then fleeing to the beach where she saw a dying pelican, its wings coated in oil. She identifies with the pelican: "'I guess that bird and I were the very wretchedest / Lives in the world'" (*CP* 2: 557). Florrie advises a "tit-for-tat" solution to June's marital problems: when Florrie's husband cheats on her, she cheats on him. They are happy, she says, and "'You'll find revenge / Is sweeter than love or honey.'" June won't accept her friend's advice, saying she would rather die like the pelican than take a lover. The poem concludes with Florrie comforting her:

> "Ah, Ah, never say die,"
> Florrie answered quickly, "it's wicked for a married woman to talk like that, we must not be abject. Look, darling:
> There's the first yellow violet, yellow outside and brown underneath, just like your hair." (*CP* 2: 557)

The end of "The Fungus," like that of "Wild Pig," is inconclusive in that no resolution is apparent in June Flodden's situation. However, in

giving Florrie Crawford the last word, Jeffers allows a comic, natural attitude toward sexuality to prevail. Florrie's observation aligns June's beauty with nature's resurgence, and her willed optimism, her marital advice notwithstanding, corresponds to her ability to see the beautiful in nature, which is also confirmed in her name.

Multiple elements of these poems from the 1930s indicate a comic mode in Jeffers's narrative work: the fanciful lightness of "The Stone-Axe" and its positive view of human survival; the humor and humanity of "All the Little Hoof-Prints" and "Going to Horse Flats"; the ambiguity and suspension of tragic sexuality in "Steelhead, Wild Pig, The Fungus." Such narrative techniques supplement both the overwhelmingly tragic character of Jeffers's major poems and the dominantly lyric qualities of his ecologically oriented short poems. With some adjustments, Brophy's schema for his myth-ritual readings of the 1920s work indicates where we might look to find elements of the other *mythoi* in Jeffers's poems in the 1930s and beyond. Shorter narratives based in anecdotal plots and incidents continue to appear in his later work: "Come Little Birds" (*CP* 3: 5–9), written in the late 1930s, and "The Inquisitors" (*CP* 3: 209–10), written in the mid-1940s, are two tales of the uncanny that add another style to Jeffers's narrative practice, the latter being an environmental fantasy of the earth's judgment of humanity.

In fact, the shorter narratives of the 1930s might be the groundwork for Jeffers's most important environmental long poem, "The Inhumanist." It makes a pair with "The Love and the Hate," the two narratives that constitute his major poem of the World War II period, "The Double Axe" (*CP* 3: 214–312). William Everson, sensing the presence of the comic element in "The Inhumanist," describes the two parts of the title poem: "If 'The Love and the Hate' is the darkest narrative Jeffers ever penned, then 'The Inhumanist' is, by far, the lightest" (xvi). The lightness of the poem derives from the title character, the nameless old caretaker of the abandoned ranch. The old man is an imaginative projection for Jeffers, and as such he can go further than the poet himself in practicing an inhumanist detachment. In this character the poem finds its comic aspect. Not only does the old man possess the aloofness required to make wry comments on the other characters' and his own actions throughout the poem, but he himself survives the process of breaking through to the inhumanist vision, a process which no other Jeffers character has survived. "The Inhumanist" is a narrative hybrid, mixing together tragedy, comedy, fantasy; history, myth, current events; and, a rarity in Jeffers, even poetry and prose. Yet, what marks it as most distinctive is the survival of the protagonist, which in effect makes it Jeffers's major contribution to the "comedy of survival." The shorter

narratives of the 1930s provide the context for this most surprising of narrative developments in Jeffers's work, the emergence of a comic mode.

Endnotes

1. The exception to this in volume 2 is the lyric sequence "Descent to the Dead."

2. However, a too rigid application of Frye's theories as schematized here would misrepresent Jeffers's narrative practice. I find it unlikely that we would discover examples of a romantic or satiric mode in the mature work, not only because romance and satire do not seem suited to Jeffers, but also because Frye associates these modes with a dialectical movement that transcends the natural. The "cyclical movement" is "within the order of nature," according to Frye, but "The apocalyptic and demonic worlds, being structures of pure metaphorical identity, suggest the eternally unchanging, and lend themselves very readily to being projected existentially as heaven and hell, where there is continuous life but no *process* of life" (158). This state is in fact not a part of Jeffers's poetry or his view of the cosmos, in which there is no transcendental realm outside of natural process. In this sense, the circularity of Brophy's schema naturalizes an artificial aspect of Frye's theory. Whereas tragedy is primarily autumnal and comedy primarily vernal, what matters most is that both are temporal, that both represent an experience of temporality and the seasonality they manifest is natural rather than archetypal.

3. Una reports on various geographical and literary sources for the narratives in a letter to Lawrence Clark Powell from 1932. According to her, the poem's story is derived from the locale of the Tinajas Altas on the Arizona-Mexico border and a legend drawn from Sir Walter Scott (*SL* 199).

4. Of course, Jeffers continued to write the long, tragic poems that provide the title for each volume throughout this period: "Thurso's Landing," "Give Your Heart to the Hawks," "Solstice," and "Such Counsels You Gave to Me" (and the only exception to this rule occurs in this decade; the longest poem in *Be Angry at the Sun*, "Mara," does not give the collection its title). Along with the major poems, mid-length narratives of about twenty pages occur regularly: "Resurrection" and "Margrave" in *Thurso's Landing* and "At the Fall of an Age" in *Give Your Heart to the Hawks*, for example.

5. Volume 5 of *The Collected Poetry* contains revealing material from Jeffers's notes for this poem. One reads: "The human norm is a function of geography, and only becomes racial after thousands of years in the same place." Jeffers also seems sensitive to the fancifulness of the story: "Part of the function of poetry is to express things so basically true that in prose they would be ridiculous" (*CP* 5: 524). In the published version, the woman is nameless, and the man is called "Wolf." Their names in the notes are, respectively, "Dawn" and "Fish-hawk" (*CP* 5: 525).

6. Also intriguing is that Clare's final wanderings in this scene take her through the sites of two of the tragic narratives: she comes through "Cawdor's Canyon" on her way back from the ridge-top pastures (*CP* 2: 103) and stops at Point Lobos, where Tamar Cauldwell's residence is mentioned (*CP* 2: 104). That she finds kind treatment from the current inhabitants perhaps indicates something of a purification of those poems' residual sexual violence.

7. Hunt italicizes the title of the poem as a complete unit, suggesting its status as a narrative; he uses quotation marks when referring to the individual poem by its respective part of the full title. The poem is grouped with the other lyrics from the *Such Counsels* period—a small example of the liminal position the shorter narratives occupy.

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Robert Zaller

The Theme of Resurrection in Jeffers's Later Narratives

> And what the dead had no speech for, when living
> They can tell you, being dead: the communication
> Of the dead is tongued with fire beyond the language of the living.
>
> T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding"

Robinson Jeffers, the former medical student, exhibited a lifelong fascination with the processes of death and decay, and the possibilities of postmortem survival. One of his poems is, indeed, entitled "Post Mortem," in which he suggests that "Happy people die whole, they are all dissolved in a moment, they have had what they wanted, / No hard gifts; [but] the unhappy / Linger a space" (*CP* 1: 204). There is no doubt in which category Jeffers placed himself; as he continues, he wonders "how long the spirit / That sheds this verse will remain / When the nostrils are nipped," and proceeds to imagine his ghost surviving the last of the lane of trees he had planted, a "Gray impotent voice on the seawind," and finally a "long sunset shadow" in the seams of the coastal granite. He will be present too in his verse ("Though one at the end of the age and far off from this place / Should meet my presence in a poem"), but that will not suffice; he will remain, as he says elsewhere, "laired in the rock" ("Soliloquy" *CP* 1: 215).

Jeffers does not, of course, accept any conventional notion of an afterlife; in "Night," he scoffs at the idea of "harps and habitations" (*CP* 1: 116). Nor is he willing to entertain a separation between matter and spirit. He is a voice on the wind; a shadow in a seam. Similarly, Fera Martial tells Hood Cawdor that "'The flesh of my body / Is nothing in my longing. What you think I want / Will be pure dust after hundreds of years and something from me be crying to something from you / High up in the air'" (*CP* 1: 445). Even as a drifting dust from which all human identity appears to have been purged, spirit must still inhere in matter;

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ineffable divinity itself, in Jeffers's construction of the world, is still incarnate in it.

Death is, then, no matter of simple extinction for Jeffers, but the beginning of a lengthy and indeterminate process that, as both the speaker of "Post Mortem" and "Cawdor"'s Fera Martial suggest, might still be in progress after centuries and even end in permanent investiture. Since, as we have seen, spirit has a material base, indeed inheres in matter, then nothing that has once lived can ever wholly disappear and dissolve indifferently in matter. In this sense, life is immortal, an endless recycling of the divine essence. In the ultimate stage of death, the spirit, no longer manifesting itself, or, except in the exemplary case of Fera Martial, seeking human contact, finds its abode in the elements. The greater the spirit, the wider its dispersion, and, although Jeffers imagines his final resting-place in rock, he commemorates his wife Una in terms that might well serve to apostrophize his panentheistic, world-suffusing deity: "You are earth and air; you are in the beauty of the ocean / And the great streaming triumphs of sundown; you are alive and well in the tender young grass rejoicing / When soft rain falls all night, and little rosy-fleeced clouds float on the dawn" (*CP* 3: 397).

This would seem to be the final and ultimate transfiguration; Jeffers only once imagines something grander, in the remarkable depiction of the postmortem flight of an eagle in "Cawdor" whose passionate spirit, no longer encumbered by flesh, flies at the sun: "The great unreal talons took peace for prey / Exultantly, their death beyond death; stooped upward, and struck / Peace like a white fawn in a dell of fire" (*CP* 1: 513). This is perfect consummation, union with the godhead, such as cannot be posited of errant and divided humankind. Yet, for this very reason, there is a further stage, exclusive to humanity and encountered only in the most exceptional of circumstances. This stage is a reversal of the death process itself: resurrection.

Resurrexit: the divine command to the just to rise from the sleep of death on the Day of Judgment is the fulfillment of the Gospel promise of the New Testament that, at the same time, marks the supersession of the temporal order and the material world. The just rise from time into eternity, and the natural order, having fulfilled its purpose, is drawn back into the substance of God. It is the moment of rejoicing, when sin is annulled and the death which is its extension is no more. For Jeffers, however, resurrection is no escape of a perfected flesh into a post-temporal order, but a monstrous rebirth into the world of natural process. It is the act not of a beneficent deity, but of an intolerably tormented will. It is not the fulfillment of divine order, but its exacerbated reversal. It is, in short, an epitome of horror.

On the simplest level, the resurrected hero differs from the disembodied consciousness of the ghost in its materiality. Jeffers employs ghost figures, voices, and characters for an exceptional variety of purposes. Resurrection as such figures only indirectly in the Christ figure of "The Alpine Christ," Manuel Ruegg, who represents the reincarnated Savior. Although the Christ figure is absent, at least in any explicit form, in the major poems of the 1920s, ghosts and revenants play a prominent role. Such figures suggest a remarkably fluid intercourse between the living and the dead, but they do not cross the boundary of mortality itself. The closest approach to a resurrection figure in these poems is the character of Tamar's elder brother Lee, who, falling from a seacliff, crawls up the tidal margin "without consciousness . . . like a creature with no bones, a seaworm" (*CP* 1: 19). Jeffers suggests that Lee has actually entered death ("You shipwrecked horseman / So many and still so many and now for you the last"), but the opposite is true: death has entered him, marking him for a sacrificial victim, although he is at no point biologically extinct (*CP* 1: 19).[1]

Extinction is graphically rendered in the "death dream"[2] of old Martial, a minor character in "Cawdor" (1928). The ease with which characters and *figura* seem to pass between life and death in Jeffers suggests that death is a reversible portal in which spirit, if not easily flesh, can pass both ways, but in describing Martial's death he insists on the consequences of corporal dissolution in the most graphic, not to say fantastic, terms:

> Gently with
> delicate mindless fingers
> Decomposition began to pick and caress the unstable chemistry
> Of the cells of the brain . . .
> . . . . . .
> Sparks of desire forty years quenched flamed up fulfilment.
> Out of time, undistracted by the nudging pulse-beat, perfectly real to itself being insulated
> From all touch of reality the dream triumphed, building from past experience present paradise
> More intense as the decay quickened, but ever more primitive as it proceeded, until the ecstasy
> Soared through a flighty carnival of wines and women to the simple delight of eating flesh, and tended
> Even higher, to an unconditional delight. But then the interconnections between the groups of the brain
> Failing, the dreamer and the dream split into multitude. Soon the altered cells became unfit to express
> Any human or at all describable form of consciousness. (*CP* 1: 449–51)

This grim description of decomposition is important because the process of resurrection will involve its exact reversal: a body, already decayed, that knits itself up in the grave to return to life in a kind of autogenesis.

First, however, Jeffers would return to the paradigm figure of Jesus. In "Dear Judas," his dramatic retelling of the Passion, three actors, Jesus, Judas, and Mary, reenact the story of Christ's betrayal each night in the garden of Gethsemane, a purgatorial ritual for those helplessly suspended between death and life. Jeffers described the poem in his note to the New York staging in 1947 as an adaptation of Noh drama, which presents "a haunted place and passion's afterglow, [with] two or three ghosts or echoes of life, re-enacting in a dream their ancient deeds and sorrows" (Bennett 197).[3] The protagonists have *become* actors, as they must, reliving the same sequence of events over and again; at the poem's beginning, Jesus urges the reluctant Judas forward like a stage manager: "The kiss comes next. What, must I prompt you?" (*CP* 2: 5). Once begun, however, their roles become real for them, and their suffering—for each individual, and for each unassuaged—urges them forward, as it will with the next night bring them back.

The protagonists of "Dear Judas" cannot be considered as fully resurrected; they are revenants without bodily purchase in time and space and without true agency, since they can alter neither their own nor anyone else's destiny. Only one figure in the drama suggests the experience of resurrection in the flesh. In its last scenes, Lazarus comes forward to bring the ill tidings of Jesus's death to the still-hopeful Mary ("I am sent every night at this time," he says with quiet horror, "To tell this woman not to rejoice" [*CP* 2: 37]). Lazarus admits, not quite to resurrection, but to having known both death and life:

> I am Lazarus who laid dead four days; and having known death and the dreams of corruption and lived afterwards
> For several years, and again died, and rotted in the rock tomb, it is not possible for me
> To be deluded like others by any of the habits of death. (*CP* 2: 37)

At the very end, he is pitied by Judas, who offers him the cord with which he is about to hang himself to "undo the cruellest miracle man ever suffered" (*CP* 2: 43). Resurrection is the worst of evils, and Lazarus, who has lived and died twice and yet is still denied rest, might in some sense be regarded as the worst-used figure of all.

Yet the theme of resurrection exerted an ever-growing fascination for Jeffers. In 1929, the year in which *Dear Judas and Other Poems* appeared, he traveled to Ireland, Scotland, and England. The product of this

journey was a sequence of poems, *Descent to the Dead* (1930). It was the only commercial volume Jeffers published that contained no narrative, yet the poems as a whole, though not structurally connected, are so closely linked in theme and mood as to constitute an implicit or meta-narrative of a homecoming-as-death for the poet himself. In many respects *Descent to the Dead* was a matrix for Jeffers's subsequent career. It marked a personal caesura for him as well. Jeffers had intended to settle in England before the Great War, and the long-deferred journey was the first he had made to Europe since his childhood school days. The war had affected him profoundly and remained as the setting or situational ground of much of his verse: overtly in "The Alpine Christ," thematically in "The Coast-Range Christ," "Tamar," and "The Women at Point Sur." The war dead haunted him, and the figure of Edward Barclay, the secluded hero of the latter poem, is represented as having been slain in France (*CP* 1: 256).[4]

The British Isles offered no Great War battlegrounds, but plenty of fresh graveyards as well as ancient burial mounds. In "Ghosts in England," Jeffers sees a landscape of the risen dead:

> At East Lulworth the dead were friendly and pitiful, I saw them peek from their ancient earth-works on the coast hills
> At the camps of the living men in the valley, the army-mechanics' barracks, the roads where they try the tanks
> And the armored cars[.] (*CP* 2: 123)

Jeffers's dead are, as one might say, quasi-resurrected (or perhaps insufficiently entombed?); they differ from ghosts and apparitions in possessing active powers of observation (they "peek"), while lacking the full agency that would enable them to interact with the living or, like Lazarus, take their equivocal place among them. Some speak as well, though collectively rather than individually. The poet singles out Arthur, searching among reeds for his lost sword, the symbol of the lost potency of the dead but also of the desire of manslaying that even death cannot slake. Alfred, too, wanders the Dorset Downs, wondering, "'Who are the living, who are the dead?'" (*CP* 2: 124) from among so crowded a field in which—to second sight—the generations are promiscuously intermingled.

Jeffers sees in this England "An island of ghosts" (*CP* 2: 124) and a land soaked in blood, a single "grave-mound," as he concludes in "Subjected Earth" (*CP* 2: 128–29), from which all possibility has been exhausted, and where repetition alone remains the common fate. The gore is even thicker in Ireland, and the land more compromised:

> We have felt the blades meet in the flesh in a hundred ambushes
> And the groaning blood bubble in the throat;
> In a hundred battles the heavy axes bite the deep bone,
> The mountain suddenly stagger and be darkened. ("Antrim," *CP* 2: 118)

The combination of preternatural perception and psychic distancing in *Descent to the Dead* enacts a complex process in the poet's own mind. "We dead," he writes in "Ossian's Grave,"

> have our peculiar pleasures, of not
> Doing, of not feeling, of not being.
> Enough has been felt, enough done, Oh and surely
> Enough of humanity has been. We lie under stones
> Or drift through the endless northern twilights
> And draw over our pale survivors the net of our dream. (*CP* 2: 109)

Although Jeffers is, again, ostensibly speaking of ancient warriors, the game is given away in the last-quoted line: the living are not descendants of the dead, but "survivors." In "In the Hill at New Grange," he repeats the idea of the dead having not only temporal but ontological priority: "'The living dream but the dead are awake'" (*CP* 2: 116). The consequence is that the poet himself feels the pull of the grave, as in "The Low Sky," where "Among stones and quietness / The mind dissolves without a sound, / The flesh drops into the ground" (*CP* 2: 111). It is only a step from here to imagine himself actually interred, not in one plot alone but all:

> I have lain and been humbled in all these graves, and mixed new flesh with the old and filled the hollow of my mouth
> With maggots and rotten dust and ages of repose. I lie here and plot the agony of resurrection. (*CP* 2: 118)

Jeffers offers here a first hint of the theme of resurrection that he will pursue through two decades of narratives and verse drama. The syntactical construction is ambiguous, since the "I" who lies down, presumably an extension of the poet-speaker, is not the same "I" who, having mixed with the dead, "plots" resurrection. The speaker in effect creates a composite figure who, having tasted death, still yearns for life. Such a person—creature—will not be content to surface as one of the "shadows" Jeffers depicts in "Ghosts in England" but will desire agency among the living. To accomplish such a thing, as Jeffers suggests, will not be the joyful resurrection of the Gospels, but an "agony" unlike any other. In the immediately succeeding poem of the cycle, "No Resurrection," Jeffers imagines an ancient warrior (but, by now, we know he implies a

modern one) contemplating a return to the world, and he describes in graphic detail the process of resurrection:

> . . . if I should recall my ruins
> From the grass-roots and build my body again in the heavy grave,
> Twist myself naked up through the earth like a strong white worm,
> Tip the great stone, gulp the white air . . . (*CP* 2: 119)

In the end, Jeffers's warrior decides that it is not worthwhile to "suffer / Resurrection" to join the "midge-dance" of modern life, and, in "Shooting Season," the ancient dead similarly decide that "It is better to be dust" (*CP* 2: 122). The conceit remains, however, that those determined enough to accomplish a feat beyond the power or imagination of mere living men, to resurrect themselves through sheer power of will, would be invincible if they chose to do so.

Jeffers at last fully plunged into the subject that had so preoccupied his artistic imagination in "Resurrection," a short narrative published in *Give Your Heart to the Hawks* (1933) but written shortly after *Descent to the Dead*.[5] It has been little remarked in the critical literature, and Robert Brophy, in his brief mention of its connection to the mythic archetype of the resurrected god, notes with distaste its "necroscopic . . . detail" (290). The story is simple and, for Jeffers, a twice-told tale, for elements of it appear in "Cawdor," as well as in his immediately sequent narrative, "Thurso's Landing." George and Hildis Ramsay live on a remote mountain homestead, out of sight of the coast but close enough to hear a heavy surf. George is Cawdor's age, fifty, and like him he has taken a younger, passionate wife who had a child by a former lover, Carson Pierce, but having felt "the world's dog-teeth" (*CP* 2: 135) now thinks herself willing to settle for peace and security. There is a second child, perhaps George's, but "either herself or George were now barren," so that their occasional lovemaking, usually brought on as Jeffers wryly remarks by George's Bible-reading, is insignificant: it wakes neither sexual passion nor maternal interest. Hildis finds herself disturbed by a letter from her mother, who has seen a man resembling Carson in San Francisco; she dismisses this as impossible, however, for "Carson was dead and buried in France [i.e., slain in the war like Edward Barclay in "The Women at Point Sur"; also see endnote 4 below] and she in this mountain" [i.e., immured in a grave of her own] (*CP* 2: 137).

Hildis now confusedly imagines the dead breaking their graves, at first locally and then in a general resurrection that suggests a strange summoning without purpose or judgment, and which seems a mere reversal of temporal order:

Three old graves with painted wooden head-boards, suppose the buried people
revived and pushed up the earth,
It would be mounded upward as if by great moles, the net of grass-roots would
crackle and part and the people
Stand gasping, staring like mad, their feet in the broken pits.
. . . . . .
A thought swept through
her mind of all the graves breaking
All over the world, marble monuments toppling,
The rock tombs in the mountains unplugged, the graves by rivers and in muddy
valleys and under pyramids
Pouring their people upward into the air. The multitudinous agitation and the
eyes
Of captives released, the erected arms and the croaking voices, the cheeks of
the earth pitted like small-pox
With broken graves. (*CP* 2: 139)

Hildis's vision is followed by an earthquake; nevertheless, as her mountain seems to lift briefly under its thrust, it appears to her "as if some power in the rock weighed it on bloody shoulders, struggling to rise" (*CP* 2: 140), and when fungus pushes up through the "wet lips" and freed underground stream of a rift in the earth, she sees "dead people's hands" struggling to rise. Jeffers makes clear that Hildis is experiencing her own repressed sexuality, and that her own "directionless life" imputes to the earth what it is "afraid to feel in itself" (*CP* 2: 141). Nevertheless, a connection with Jeffers's own "vision" of walking phantoms in *Descent to the Dead* immediately suggests itself. If the dead of Flanders Field could appear in the guise of Saxon and Celtic warriors in the landscape of England and Ireland, imagination could as easily bring them home to the coast range of central California.

One warrior has, in fact, returned. A seasonal October storm brings a stranger to the Ramsay door, who asks lodging. At the sound of his voice, Hildis recognizes her slain lover Carson. He appears fully again a man in his prime; only a sallowness in his aspect suggests what has happened to him. Hildis searches for a natural explanation of his sudden appearance: perhaps the report of his death had been an error, or perhaps he had been hospitalized. But Carson disabuses her. In disgust at the war, he had exposed himself to enemy fire, only to find his desire unquenched by death. While the other dead lay peacefully, he alone gnawed "Like a growing cancer / In the body of death." The personification of death suggests a duel with an antagonist:

. . . "We were like two sucking monsters of emptiness, death
And I: our desires: two monsters in the earth: but I was the emptier."
. . . . . .

The tides were turned for fair, and the powers
Of much perished humanity came pouring in, not only the dead around me: the older dead:
That ground's charged like a mine: multitudes of strength, many forms of memory. I gathered my forlorn fragments
Like grains of gold under the grass-roots, with a hundred hands; each atom came shining with pain like fiery
Wires into place. Then sometime I broke the earth and swam in the embracing earth and came up and stood
Naked with the straining ribs of a man strangled,
And dirt in my mouth. (*CP* 2: 150–51)

It is himself that Carson pieces together, but with the dispersed energies of others, fused together by sheer force of will: "'there's nothing can keep you quiet,'" he says, "'If you *want* enough'" (*CP* 2: 150). Yet desire enforces the will, even against itself. "'Do you think, Hildis,'" he asks,

"That anyone who has passed the hard edge of death, and safe in the peace on the other side, *wants*
To crawl back and live? Not such fools as that. Ha, fuss with clothes, eat and drink and make dung, take pain
As it comes, and age, and suffer again the comical animal fear of dying that chills live flesh
In spite of reasons? Change peace for filth and fire, music for noise? I tell you I had perfect happiness
At first; knew nothing, wanted nothing, feared nothing,
Like a happy drunkard; the darkness down there was like a soft light. But when it began to reflect your face
My dream turned bad." (*CP* 2: 147–48)

Carson reflects something of Martial's death dream, but also that of Cawdor's son Hood, who enjoys "many minute delicious enjoyments" after being slain as well as balancing pains, until the last fragments of consciousness enter "the peace of the earth" (*CP* 1: 480). Carson's desire is involuntary, and his dream is "bad" because it will not release him, a Schopenhauerian predicament in which desire is constitutive of a will that no longer wishes to exist. Jeffers italicizes "want" and "wants" in Carson's speeches—a device he seldom employs—to emphasize this paradox, for in the first instance he affirms it as a force of life that brooks no opposition even from death itself, while in the second he depicts it as the very negation of a self that craves only peace. If Carson's desire is unwelcome to him, it is no more so to Hildis, whom he had abandoned with infant children to enlist in the war, a circumstance that reflected Jeffers's own disposition in 1917–1918. Their destined union is, Tristan-like, a love-death, and if Hildis accepts it at last, despising her husband

no less than her lover, it is with the tacit acknowledgment that life has nothing more to offer her than a single futureless ecstasy.

The theme of resurrection occurs again in "At the Fall of an Age," the verse drama that concludes *Give Your Heart to the Hawks* and immediately follows "Resurrection" in the volume.[6] The juxtaposition of the two poems, one referring to contemporary events, and the other to Greek mythology, was clearly intended to offer contrasting presentations of the theme. In the latter, Jeffers takes the legend of Helen of Troy's death on Rhodes, recounted by Pausanias, and adds to it the fable that the dead Achilles, tormented by Helen's beauty, had risen from the grave to possess her and left his Myrmidons, similarly risen at his command, to accompany Helen and "keep this woman whom our lord has enjoyed intact of any less lover till she dies" (*CP* 2: 294). Helen's description of Achilles's resurrection is closely akin to that of Carson Pierce. In both cases, there is a struggle with personified Death:

> He wrestled with
> Death in the shut darkness; he broke
> The mighty wrists and the mound of burial. He stood on the broken head of the mound and shouted to his men,
> Whose graves pit the wide plain. They had never failed to obey him, they heard and rose. (*CP* 2: 291)

In Carson's case, the war dead who surround him lie undisturbed, but in the dimension of myth, where "The wild male power of the world / Was mated with the perfect beauty" (*CP* 2: 293), Achilles's desire must master "The purpose of God" (*CP* 2: 290) itself, and the Myrmidons carry out his will even when he has returned to dust. There is of course tension in this description, for if the mating of Achilles and Helen is the final consummation of the world of myth—the "age" that is about to fall in the poem's title—then the larger "purpose" of God (or "the gods," or "Fate," which are also invoked) presumably requires it, and the sacrifice of Helen at the hands of her foe Polyxo that the poem enacts will complete it. Helen appeals to the Myrmidons for help, but their charge is simply to protect Achilles's honor, and it is soonest fulfilled in her death. Hanged from a tree—the disgraceful death of a common felon—she is not only henceforth associated with dendritic worship, but, in Jeffers's telling, she is a Promethean figure and a precursor of the Christ:

> Clash bronze, beat shields, beauty is new-born.
> It is not to be whispered in Argos that Helen died like a woman,
> Nor told in Laconia that sickness killed her.
> Strike swords, blade on blade, the daughter of God
> Hangs like a lamp, high in the dark, quivering and white.

> The breasts are thrust forward and the head bows, the fleece of gold
> Shakes on the straining shoulders, writhes to the long white thighs.
> When God looked down from heaven the mound in the Troad
> Swarmed like an anthill, what spears are those?
> Power that will pierce your people . . .
> . . . . . .
> Power to pierce death, helmeted heads cracking the grass-roots,
> Power to be born again.
> Come down and behold us O King of heaven and O hawks of Caucasus
> Come down and behold us . . . (*CP* 2: 303–04)

In death, Helen's beauty is still undimmed, and her divine origin is thereby revealed. She wears a colossal aspect, both Promethean (as the reference to the Caucasus makes emphatic) and, "hanged high" before a wondering crowd, a Christological one as well. In this sense, Helen is the "mother" of the Jesus who begins as an already resurrected figure, and whose legend takes its place in the series of sacrificial deities that begins with the fertility god Osiris.

Jesus reappears as a persona in "At the Birth of an Age," the companion verse drama published two years after *Give Your Heart to the Hawks* in *Solstice*. He is not named as such but figures as "The Young Man" in a scene with various presences, including the poem's now-posthumous heroine, Gudrun. There is no question of his identity; he describes himself as a deceived redeemer as he addresses a group of Christian "singers" and makes specific mention of Judas. The appellation Jeffers gives him recalls the character of "The Young Man Who Is Mourning His Father" in "The Alpine Christ," and the assorted spirits the poet invokes further suggest an effort to rework the earlier poem from the perspective of a disillusioned post-Christian consciousness.

Like the earlier "Young Man," the Christ figure of "At the Birth of an Age" has been in search of an absent father, conceived partly as a personal progenitor and partly as an (implicit) deity. This latter figure realizes that resurrection—for himself and for those who have followed him—is a mere delusion, and that death is simply a dwindling into nonexistence, for some protracted, but for all final: "there is nothing more" (*CP* 2: 470). No sooner has he made this assertion, however, than an epiphanic scene reveals the Godhead in the form of the Hanged God of Greek and Norse mythology. The Christ figure, still deluded, mistakes this form for his own projected image: "'I am finally betrayed and perfectly fooled to the end. It is only my dream of my own death / Hanged on the sky'" (*CP* 2: 472). Only when the savage Gudrun recognizes the Godhead does the Young Man acknowledge him, she with love and he with hatred: "'I . . . / . . . never feared him and never . . . hated him . . . before this time'" (*CP* 2: 474).

What the Young Man recognizes is that there can be no resurrection if that is taken, in the Christian sense, as abiding in love with the Godhead. "He has no righteousness," the Young Man declares, "No mercy, no love. . . . Oh merciless / God not my father" (*CP* 2: 474–75). Instead, the Hanged God appears as a self-tormented quester. Since he is literally all that is, he can only extrapolate his being in the material cosmos, "tortur[ing] myself / To discover myself" (*CP* 2: 482). Culture heroes and tribal gods—Prometheus, Odin, Wotan—figure this divine archetype; Jesus confusedly embodies it, only to find himself the image of an image. The Godhead is finally unapproachable; he is not love. But he is also indivisible, so that individual consciousness is already contained within him. Only in this sense can eternal life be understood; "resurrection" is a term that applies solely to terrestrial life. It does not signify peace, however, but unappeased desire.

It was to be a decade before Jeffers approached the subject of resurrection in verse again, but it remained in mind. In a letter to Van Wyck Brooks dated January 3, 1938, and written at a time of personal travail, he suggested that a spell of oblivion would not be unwelcome, provided it were temporary: "I'd like to be buried for six years under forest by a waterside, not think, not remember, know nothing, see nothing but darkness, hear nothing but the river running for six years and the long roots growing, and then be resurrected. How fresh things would look."[7] During his lecture at the Library of Congress in 1941, he read "Antrim," glossing its last lines in a manner more robustly hopeful, perhaps, than the text seemed to admit: "We are a tough race, we human beings; we have lived through an ice-age and many ages of barbarism; we can live through this age of civilization; and when at length it wears out and crumbles under us, we can 'plot our agony of resurrection' and make a new age" (*CP* 4: 406). Here, as in the letter to Brooks, resurrection suggested not sterile return, but renewal. However, three years of a war unexampled in its suffering and brutality darkened Jeffers's vision as never before, and when he returned to narrative in 1944 in "The Love and the Hate," the theme of resurrection joined to the even more obsessive one of incest to produce a work which for horror and excess had had few peers since John Webster.[8]

The plot is briefly told. Its protagonist, Hoult Gore, slain in combat in the Pacific, pulls himself, like Carson Pierce, out of the grave and returns home to exact vengeance on his jingoistic father and to possess his unfaithful mother. This scenario goes back as far "The Women at Point Sur," as the secluded Edward "returns" from a military cemetery in France to challenge his father, Arthur Barclay, and had been further adumbrated in "Resurrection," where the return from the grave is depicted as a literal one. In both cases, elements of Oedipal rivalry and

incestuous desire are present. In "Resurrection" the image of Hildis Ramsay, whose unspotted and idealized body, "white as a stone" (*CP* 2: 148), haunts Carson, suggests a displaced maternal figure, while in the last of Jeffers's narratives of the 1930s, "Such Counsels You Gave to Me," a young man kills his father and is tempted by his mother.[9] "The Love and the Hate" brings these underlying Oedipal components to full expression and drastic resolution. Here, death is seen directly as a denial of the maternal body, and the father as a straightforward rival who, having removed the son and compassed his death, may be slain without compunction.

We may say that, in these terms, "The Love and the Hate" was the inevitable culmination of a theme that had haunted Jeffers for twenty years and more. Its expression, however, was bound up with the deep psychic disturbance caused in him by the world wars. For the young Jeffers, simultaneously attracted and repelled by the Great War, a full reckoning with its consequences and a rejection of its premises had awaited the postwar era, a period of disillusion for many.[10] No such ambivalence attended his response to the prospect of renewed war in the 1930s. In "Hellenistics," a poem from late in the decade, he warned that "Europe mixes her cups of death" (*CP* 2: 527) and counseled strict neutrality until the inevitability of America's involvement in the new war became evident, and then emotional detachment from it. The latter would prove impossible for him, as the wartime companion poems to "The Love and the Hate," many too emphatic for publication at the time, attest.[11]

The device of resurrection, which as we have seen had multiple valences for Jeffers, was ideally suited to express his revulsion at the war and at the old men—themselves the survivors, or perhaps shirkers, of World War I—who had sent a new generation to its death. In bringing Hoult Gore back from the grave to exact revenge on his father, Bull, and to cap it with the love-death embrace of his mother, Reine, Jeffers created a parable of vengeance for the war dead of singular intensity and horror. Hoult's return is not like that of Carson Pierce, who but for a darkened skin is indistinguishable from anyone else. In contrast, Hoult has a greenish tinge; his tunic, which he has not changed, is wet, stained, and smells of decay; his phlegm is the color of lead. In "Resurrection," Carson leaves his fellow dead behind to pursue his private obsession with Hildis, but Hoult sees himself as a representative figure, and imagines a universal resurrection of the war's victims:

> "There are millions and millions, but as far as I know I am the only one
> That has come back. It's unbelievable: how can they lie so still
> After being gypped and killed? Gypped by their governments

And their fathers and their women: gypped out of life, fooled and despised and lied to, and stuck
Under the mangrove roots and the black mud, under the coral sand and the Russian snow,
And the cabbages in Europe. They're too submissive, they ought to damn patience and rise. Think of the
Stinking armies of semi-skeletons marching on Washington: here comes your wah," he said, imitating
The President's manner of speech, "here is your wah, you made it,
How do you like it? While the German boys
Unfox the rock-holes of Berchtesgaden, and all the little killed Nips nip their Emperor to death:—ha? That would be fine,
That would be justice." (*CP* 3: 217)

Carson's resurrection, a process of years, is described at length and thick with metaphor; Hoult is direct and to the point:

I was killed on Meserole Island twenty days ago.
I lay in the shade and watched myself swell
Until they found me and buried me, but after that
I got so angry lying in the dark remembering, I poured my soul
With sickening pain into my body again,
And more or less fixed up the rotten tissues, and broke
The choking earth. (*CP* 3: 218–19)

Hoult chiefly blames his father, himself a war veteran, who had egged on his sense of adventure with "talk / About courage and honor" (*CP* 3: 220) and stalks him with grim pleasure, first killing his sheep dogs and then picking him off with a rifle as he rides to rescue cattle from a fire. As the elder Gore falls crippled from his horse, Hoult observes, vindictively, that he has been hit in the loins, and as he is consumed in the oncoming blaze, Hoult declares it to be "justice" (*CP* 3: 252), echoing a reverse situation in another narrative, "Cawdor."[12]

Hoult now turns his attention to Reine. He has already killed her young lover, Dave Larson, and attempted to force himself on her. Confessing at last that it was her image, loved and hated like Carson Pierce's vision of Hildis, that had dragged him back to life ("'I was nearly asleep, / . . . I saw your face / Leaning over me like a little thin moon / In that black sky'" [*CP* 3: 228]), he asks her comfort as death again begins to reclaim him. What occurs is veiled; Hoult dies once more—a death from which there will be no further return—and "The rest," says Jeffers, "is nothing / But a woman mourning a three weeks corpse" (*CP* 3: 254). We are offered a suggestion of what has happened when Reine tells the local soldiers who discover her that "'He melted into horror, his

brain ran out / Through his nostrils: how could someone long dead / Be alive from there down?'" (*CP* 3: 255). No longer able to distinguish the living from the dead—in the poem's later sections, Hoult seems to be accompanied by "shadows" (*CP* 3: 241)—she offers herself to the soldiers because one must be "kind" (*CP* 3: 255). But her paralysis is broken, and, left unattended for a moment, she commits suicide: the poem ends with no further comment.

In "Resurrection," when Hildis leaves with Carson, she tells her husband, "This man's from the grave; he'll turn black and untouchable / When his love's fed." She takes a knife with her, because "There's no security nor hope for any human creature in the way that I go." It is not clear whether the knife is intended for Hildis or Carson or for both of them, nor if it is needed. The end is clothed in a rhetoric that obscures rather than clarifies the tensions of the poem:

> They went out together,
> And down the gross darkness of the night mountain. They were rather like one star than two people, for that night at least,
> So love had joined them to burn a moment for each other, no other star was needed in all the black world. (*CP* 2: 156)

Love appears redemptive here, even if redemption is brief, and annihilation (presumably) follows. In what Bill Hotchiss has called Jeffers's "sivaistic vision," this is in fact the only consummation to be wished for, the "black crystal" and the "white fire" that he often refers to in order to signify escape from the wheel of being and the agony of recurrence. Such an undifferentiated resumption into the Godhead, the very opposite of the survival of identity that Christianity offers as bliss, is Jeffers's only formula for peace, the ecstatic instant that resolves long torment. Accordingly, "resurrection" is not something wished, but a task imposed upon the unwilling will, which can only issue in the futile, ritualized suffering of "Dear Judas" or the horrific return of Hoult, who is, as he says, "an offense against Nature," "gypped" out of both life and death and capable only of "evil" (*CP* 3: 229).

The Grand Guignol of "The Love and the Hate" would seem to have spoken Jeffers's last word on the theme of resurrection, but it returned yet again in his last completed narrative, "Hungerfield." Hawl Hungerfield, a veteran of both world wars, is nursing his mother, Alcmena, who, ravaged by cancer, patiently awaits death. Hungerfield has known the imminence of death too, as a young soldier during the First World War lying in a field hospital. In his delirium, he sees a personified Death approach, taking his pick of the wounded who are too weak to resist. When Death beckons him, however, making "a sign, / Such as one

makes to a dog," pride steels him to "a mask of fury," and Death turns aside to seek easier prey (*CP* 3: 380).

Hungerfield has long dismissed this memory as a dream, but his "blood" still believes it, and as he keeps watch on his mother, he awaits his old antagonist. Death comes indeed, "a column of heavy darkness" surmounted by the likeness of a sneering and arrogant head, visible in the ordinary course of events only to the souls he has come for but now, in his preternatural awareness, to Hungerfield as well. Death takes cognizance of the man who has seen him once before, but now dismissively; it is not, he tells Hungerfield, his turn. Then:

> Hungerfield saw his throat and sprang at it. But
> he was like a man swimming
> A lake of corpses, the newly harvested souls from all earth's fields, faint shrieks
> and whispers, Death's company,
> He smote their dim heads with his hands and their bowels with his feet
> And swam on them. He reached Death's monstrous flesh and they cleared
> away. It had looked like a shadow,
> It was harder than iron. The throat was missed, they stood and hugged each
> other like lovers; Hungerfield
> Drove his knee to the groin, Death laughed and said,
> "I am not a man," and the awful embrace tightened
> . . . . . .
> . . . He struck short at the throat and was bent further
> backward, and suddenly
> Flung himself back and fell, dragging Death down with him, twisting in the
> fall, and weasel-quick on the floor
> Tore at the throat: then the horrible stench and hopelessness of dead bodies
> filled the dim air, he thought
> He had wounded Death. . . .
> . . . . . .
> The iron flesh in his grip melted like a
> summer corpse, and turning liquid
> Slid from his hands. (*CP* 3: 383–84)

Alcmena Hungerfield has died; her throat has "clicked and ceased." But Death has not been able to bear her away, and she returns to life, alert and well. The next day, without a word, she resumes her household chores. Jeffers tells us she will live another two years—a significant remission for those who wish to live, but a useless burden to those who do not. Alcmena is among the latter. "Something has happened to me," she says, accusingly. Carson Pierce and Hoult Gore have resurrected themselves, a feat, as Hoult observes, not accomplished since the time of Christ. But resurrection has been forced upon Alcmena against her will, for the man who would preempt Death's deliverance is a mortal

enemy: "'I was dying,'" Alcmena says, "'and you filled the room / With beastly violence. My beautiful dark angel, my lord and love, who like a bridegroom had come for me, / You took him by the throat and killed him'" (*CP* 3: 386).

Alcmena is not the only one disappointed:

> This was the time—it was near midnight here—for a quarter of an hour
> Nobody died. Disease went on, and the little peripheral prophetic wars, the famines and betrayals,
> Neither man nor beast died, though they might cry for him. Death, whom we hate and love, had met a worse monster
> And could not come. (*CP* 3: 384)

Hungerfield has broken "the iron force and frame of nature," the bond of necessity that keeps natural process in its proper channels, and he has sown, however briefly, a universal chaos. The Redeemer of mankind, in healing the sick and raising a single man, Lazarus, had done no worse.

Lazarus, as we recall, is the unwilling participant in the nightly ritual of "Dear Judas," trapped forever in a limbo between life and death. He has not been consulted about being brought from the grave, and, not being permitted to return to it, has every reason to feel ill-used. If he shows no resentment, it is only because "being wholly released from pain / And pleasure, sleeping and waking are all one" to him (*CP* 2: 37). Carson and Hoult, however, are tormented by unfulfilled dreams; they return to life to act, although, having crossed a forbidden boundary, they can only bring destruction in doing so. Hoult understands this; he calls himself "'degradation and death'" (*CP* 3: 228) and "'an evil will / Bearing up a corpse'" (*CP* 3: 229).

What, however, of those whose only will is toward death? Alcmena turns wrathfully on Hungerfield, falsely accusing his brother Ross of sleeping with his young wife, Arab. This ruse fails, but later she tries to pull Hawl off the road as they drive above a precipice. It is Death, however, who plays the last hand, stalking the house, picking off its animals one by one, and finally leading Arab and her small son into a surf in which they drown. Hungerfield, enraged at Ross for his failure to protect them, kills him with a blow and sets the house ablaze. Alcmena is the only one to survive, the final, unwilling witness of the ultimately transgressive act.

Robinson Jeffers saw life and death as two sides of the coin of being, whose ultimate, ungraspable essence was God, just as he saw love and hatred as the opposite halves of desire. Resurrection reversed the coin

from excess of passion or grief, and the poet, where he found it in himself to report or to imaginatively recreate these emotions, was bound to honor them. In his early, apprentice work, Jeffers depicted an alter ego who, unable to rescue his father from death (or bear the Oedipally based guilt of his succession), seeks to join him: the Young Man in "The Alpine Christ" whose spirit revives, and who joyfully seeks to join the father is, in effect, resurrected *in* death, no longer as a competitor but as an eidolon of filial piety. In the figure of Jesus, Jeffers revised the idealized son, portraying him in "Dear Judas" as a man who, shamed by illegitimate birth, claims his patrimony only to have Death nightly intercede between him and Mary. In "Resurrection," the maternal love-object is displaced onto the form of a lover, but in "The Love and the Hate," it is expressly acknowledged, and with "Hungerfield," it comes full circle: it is not the father whom the poet's protagonist wishes to rescue from death, but the mother. It is significant, too, that there is no father figure to serve as an Oedipal foil or rival in "Hungerfield." Unlike "The Love and the Hate," where Bull Gore, the World War I veteran, sends his son to fight in World War II, Hawl Hungerfield is a veteran of both world wars, thus embodying two generations in one. Hawl is the father and the son, or perhaps more rightly the son who has absorbed the father, and who has therefore only Death itself to compete against.

Resurrection as a theme in Jeffers is thus inextricably bound up with the Oedipal dynamic that appears from first to last in his narratives. From "Resurrection" on, where it makes its first fully overt appearance, it is directed not at union with the heavenly father but appears as a quest, deeply ambivalent to be sure, for the earthly mother. In "At the Birth of an Age," Jeffers acknowledges the former in the person of the Self-Hanged God, who is simultaneously immanent in all things yet unapproachable in Himself. Such a God makes the very concept of a personal resurrection otiose, and forces it back toward life, the only ontological domain in which it can subsist. At the same time, however, the hero of resurrection, who embodies himself through a sheer assertion of will, brings himself closer to the painful self-dispersion of the deity than anything else in the cosmos. In this, perhaps, the Jeffersian quest-hero finds the final, anguished peace of an *Imitatio Deo*, and Jeffers's verse project its culminating expression.[13]

Endnotes

1. Cf. Robert Brophy's discussion in his *Robinson Jeffers: Myth, Ritual, and Symbolism in His Narrative Poems* of Lee as a sacrificial victim (18–23).

2. Martial's dream is not so categorized in "Cawdor" itself, but, when Jeffers excerpted the passage in *The Selected Poetry*, he gave it the title of "The Old Man's Dream After He Died" (183–84).

3. Jeffers's note on "Dear Judas" was originally published in the *New York Times*, October 6, 1947. Cf. his comment on the manuscript of the poem in Alberts (57).

4. Edward "appears" through his twin sister, April (*CP* 1: 295, 299, 305–07, 309), and in his father's fantasy as an antagonist (*CP* 1: 312–14). On the theme of the secluded hero, see Zaller, *Cliffs* (155–65 passim). In our present context, the secluded hero may be regarded as more than a ghost or spirit, but less than an independently embodied agent: a revenant, perhaps, who lives in the imagination of others.

5. Jeffers dates the poem from "soon after we got back from abroad" in a letter of January 8, 1932 to Albert Bender (*SL* 187). The Jefferses returned to Carmel on January 1, 1930 (Bennett 136).

6. Jeffers himself saw *Descent to the Dead*, "Resurrection," and "At the Fall of an Age" (originally titled "Helen in Exile") as forming a trilogy united by the theme of resurrection: "The[y] . . . form a sequence in thought, though not in scene, all being progressively concerned with the death-and-resurrection theme" (Alberts 78). Jeffers had begun a poem centered on Achilles rather than Helen in 1930 (*CP* 4: 512–14), but abandoned it despite a promising beginning.

7. Van Wyck Brooks Collection, Columbia University.

8. On incest and Oedipal themes in general in Jeffers, see *The Cliffs of Solitude* and also my "Tamar's Oedipal Transcendence." Cf. Chapter I, "The Destroying Prodigal," in Squires.

9. For commentary, see Zaller, *Cliffs* (65–67, 172–73, and passim).

10. On Jeffers's conflicted response to the war, see Karman (38–41) and Bennett (85–86). Jeffers might well have been referring to his own still-troubled emotions as well as the world's postwar confusions when he wrote, after the armistice, "After all, after all we endured, who has grown wise?" (*CP* 4: 296). The Great War was still on his mind as late as 1942, when he wrote "Wilson in Hell" (*CP* 3: 117), another poem that featured a posthumous character. (Cf. Jeffers's earlier verse dialogue, "Woodrow Wilson" [*CP* 1: 106–07], which depicts Wilson in the first moment of postmortem consciousness.)

11. The deleted poems were published separately in James Shebl, ed., *In This Wild Water: The Suppressed Poems of Robinson Jeffers*, and in the "integral" edition of *The Double Axe and Other Poems* published in the same year. They were reprinted again in Robert Ian Scott, ed., *"What Odd Expedients" and Other Poems*. Scott rejected Shebl's description of the deleted poems as "suppressed," arguing that Jeffers had stricken them from the final manuscript of his own accord. The most thorough examination of the textual and other evidence to date is by Tim Hunt (*CP* 5: 690 *ff*); cf. Hunt, "Double the Axe, Double the Fun: Is There a Final Version of Jeffers's 'The Double Axe.'" Hunt's conclusion is that "Jeffers's agenda," and not that of his Random House editor and publisher, "shaped" the final text of *The Double Axe* (*CP* 5: 692).

12. In the latter poem, the elder Cawdor, having slain his son Hood, stalks away from the murder scene muttering, "Justice. Justice. / Justice" (*CP* 1: 477). In both cases, the word rings hollow.

13. In a letter to Tim Hunt dated March 21, 1986, William Everson suggested that much of Jeffers's work could be seen as a variant of the Homeric notion of *Nekyia*, or the propitiatory descent into the underworld. Such a question goes

beyond the scope of the present essay, but it does throw into high relief the unusual incidence of supernatural phenomena in Jeffers, the frequent exchange between the living and the dead in his verse, and the significance of resurrection as a failed reconciliation between the upper and nether worlds. As Everson notes, *Nekyia* is a principal element in three of the seminal works of the Western tradition, the Christian mythology, Dante's *Inferno*, and Homer's *Odyssey* (Everson 79). Another suggestive comment is Jeffers's own, on the draft of "Boats in a Fog": "The hardship and the [power] of [poetry]—to express, by means of the music-songs and cradle syllables of humanity, the wisdom of demons."

Jeffers also drew on the rich tradition of English, Scots, and Irish balladry, which he might have imbibed partly from Thomas Hardy, whose verse reflects it. In "The Unquiet Grave," a ballad collected by Francis Child and known in many versions in southern England, a lover stirs the ghost of his sweetheart until she arises; in "Sweet William's Ghost," a young man slain overseas in battle returns to claim his love. This is precisely the plot of Jeffers's "Resurrection," and very nearly that of "The Love and the Hate." The "character" of Edward Barclay, who haunts "The Women at Point Sur," refers directly to the well-known Scots ballad, "Edward, Edward."

Jeffers's preoccupation with the theme of resurrection was deeply personal, too. After a near-death experience in Ireland in 1948 when he was resuscitated after a pulmonary embolism had stopped his heart (and he remained delirious for two days), he wrote of the event as a fulfillment of a psychically similar experience on his first trip to Ireland:

> In 1929 in wet quiet Ireland,
> . . . . . .
> . . . he thought of himself too as dead, and wrote
> Little poems that one dead in Ireland
> Might write; and he called the book "Descent to the Dead," but ended
> With forecast of resurrection.
> . . . . . .
> . . . [in 1948] the man knew death (that is, he knew nothing)
> For a certain time. But I say
> That also resurrection was whispered in those nineteen-year-old
> Poems: and it was so
> That a clever doctor working the ribs, injecting adrenalin,
> Stuck tension into the corpse,
> And it rose insane, and for two days remained so, and lives.
> ("Descent to the Dead" [c. 1949], *CP* 4: 533)

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Special Section

Dirk Aardsma

The Library of Congress *Cawdor*

Introduction

In February of 1941, Robinson Jeffers gave the first talk in a series of readings by American poets at the Library of Congress entitled "The Poet in a Democracy." Robert Frost read in March, Carl Sandburg in April, and Stephen Vincent Benét in May. Jeffers was paid $500 for his appearance, and this fee went a long way toward satisfying the $1,600 bill he had received from the Carmel Sanitation District for extending the sewer lines to serve the Point. While in Washington, the Librarian of Congress, Archibald MacLeish, asked each of the poets to donate material to the Library, and in July of 1941, Una and Robinson Jeffers donated the handwritten first draft of *Cawdor* to the Library of Congress "in memory of their friend Albert M. Bender of San Francisco."

At some point, the tan sheets of the manuscript were protectively laminated in rice paper. The manuscript comprises seventy-nine sheets including the cover sheet. Leaf 47 indicates that the sheets were numbered by Jeffers on 14 July 1941. Nine sheets have from one to four lines on the verso, while thirteen sheets show extensive work, including both lines and notes, on the verso (in the transcription, a dagger next to the page number indicates text from the verso can be found in the endnotes). On some of the sheets the writing flowed quite smoothly, while other pages exhibit significant reworking, editing, and changes. Of the final sheet, Jeffers remarked in a note: "page 72 — the last — seems to be notes made in the dark after I went to bed, — and preserved for some unknown reason." The sheet was folded into quarters, and Jeffers scrawled notes on each of the eight quadrants (counting front and back). Of those lines that can be deciphered, many are finished lines that appear in the published version of the poem. Thus, one can conjure

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an image of Jeffers going to sleep thinking of difficult lines, waking, and scrawling lines in the dark he would use in the morning.

The Library of Congress draft of *Cawdor* is one of the few extant drafts of a published poem by Jeffers. As such, it provides a unique archeological glimpse into his compositional process. Each leaf of the manuscript provides a compositional space—a space in which Jeffers experimented and found the words to express the ideas necessary for his narrative project. Each one stands on its own and yet is part of an accumulation, a process. It takes effort and patience to read Jeffers's handwriting. While he writes clearly, a's and e's are hard to distinguish. He tails off certain words, making it difficult to distinguish between words such as "you" and "your," "the" and "then." Capital A's look like H's, and so on. It is difficult, but with patience it begins to make sense.

The first iteration of this work was a page-based transcription that presented a typescript of the text on each manuscript page and used footnotes to describe and transcribe every change Jeffers made on the page. While very detailed, thorough, and precise, this approach conveyed the content while obscuring the context of the edits in the fog of detail. It was easy to find each word that had been changed, but it was difficult, if not impossible, to capture the temporal nature of these changes. It was hard to read the text, and the footnotes interrupted the flow of the poetry.

The second iteration involved deleting all of the footnotes and endeavoring to produce the text of the poem as Jeffers had intended it just prior to his abandonment of the draft. While the clean text was easy to read, the excisions created a sterile text devoid of all traces of the creativity evident in Jeffers's compositional process. The draft stands witness to the fluidity of composition and the fact that words at this point in the process were not fixed—change was possible and often necessary.

It seemed logical to change the point of reference from the page to the line. Since most of the changes occurred within the lines, it was possible to link notes with the corresponding line numbers. This is not as easy as it might seem since a significant aspect of Jeffers's editing involved reworking the lines. One of the most significant differences between the draft and the published poem is the length of the individual lines. The draft, which has significantly longer lines, is wordier than the published poem.

There are two types of edits: contemporaneous edits and revision edits. The contemporaneous edits were made during the original composition of the draft and are the source for most of the line notes. These edits encompass false starts, direct changes in words, phrases, and lines, and what might be called end-of-day edits and notes. An example of

one of these can be seen at the bottom of the first page, where several lines have been excised, and the first few lines on the second page are a clean, edited restatement of the ideas in the excised lines. The second group of edits, the revision edits, were coincident with the composition of the final version of *Cawdor*. Jeffers used the draft as source material for the final version, and he reworked and edited some of the lines of the draft as he wrote the final version. These revision edits, when they occur, are also included in the line notes. The versos of the draft were used for notes, experimentation, and planning as he composed the final version, and he used the back of one of the missing pages of the draft for a page of the *Cawdor* manuscript (see endnote for leaf 47). The material from the versos is included in the endnotes and is organized by page numbers; the manuscript page numbers are indicated in brackets along the right margin with the line numbers.

The transcription of the manuscript is intended to provide a reading text of the draft as Jeffers would have intended it just prior to abandoning it, as well as access to the primary changes and edits to the draft. In order to improve readability and in recognition of space considerations, minor changes such as capitalizations, single word changes, false starts (when Jeffers wrote a few letters of a word and then crossed it out), contractions, and most changes in word order have not been included in the notes. While these changes might be interesting if examined individually, the inclusion of every single one of them would detract from the accessibility of the project.

If we look at the first page, there are several examples of the types of changes that were not included in the transcription: In line 2, the phrase "A trackless passage that he remembered" was changed to "A trackless passage well-remembered." In line 3, the phrase "slopes of blackened brush" was changed to "slopes of skeleton brush." And in line 10, the phrase "the lank yellow-body, the color of September pasture, somersaulted" was changed to "and the lank September pasture-colored body somersaulted." While these changes are interesting, since they do not materially change the meaning of the text, they are not included in the transcription. The focus of the notes is on the major editing changes: the excisions and reworking of lines, changes to proper names, and word choices that materially changed the meaning of the text.

The easiest way to think of the transcription is in terms of time. The body of the text is a transcription of the poem as it was intended just prior to the abandonment of the draft. The notes capture the various edits to the text, always moving from the oldest, the first text on the page, to the edited text just prior to the final version presented in the body of the transcription. Thus the choice of the word "then" to cue the chronological ordering of these changes. As an example, we can look at

several iterations of lines 12–16 at the bottom of the first leaf and the top of the second leaf. The edited version of these lines in the reading text is:

They called it the Rock. 12
It is like an altar, and like a gray moon half sunk in the
hillside. High redwoods grow in grass at the foot, 13
And higher, but still about the base, its swallows in their
nesting spring flittered like gnats. 14
That was another world, deep in the humming canyon; the
path the hunter followed came down [2] 15
Through oaks to the bald granite head. 16

The notes detail all the changes that combined to produce the reading text, allowing the reader to recapture a sense of the original text and the changes that led to the reading text. The note for lines 12–13 reads:

> 'Rock: / No name but that; like [then 'Rock. / It was like an altar, and like'] a huge moon half sunk in the hillside. High redwoods grew at the foot like spear-grass. [then 'redwoods stood in grass at the foot,']'.

The final phrase "It is like an altar" was added and originally read "It was like an altar." The final phrase "grow in grass" was originally just "grew" and was changed to "stood in grass." These changes are noted in brackets using the word "then" as a marker to indicate the ordering of these changes in the time between the original text and the final edited text.

On the first page we see evidence of an end-of-day edit. Two lines at the bottom of the page were crossed out, and Jeffers crossed out the first line on the top of the second page. These excised lines are included in the note for line 14:

> 'flitter like gnats. / That was another world. The path that Alan followed came down through oaks to the Rock's head. / He tethered the horse on earth in a clearing of trees, himself went up to the Rock. At the height of the dome / [leaf 2] The granite was stained red with an old fire; there he brought sticks and built a new one'.

The transcription also has a note for line 15:

> 'the path Alan [then 'he'] followed came down'.

This part of line 15 originally read "the path Alan followed came down"; then it was changed to "the path he followed came down"; before it was

changed to the final version "the path the hunter followed came down." There are occasions where, after an intermediate change, the text is changed back to the way it had originally read. This is also the first time that this character is named in the text, even though, from the note, we can see that Jeffers chose to defer this disclosure.

Using the notes, the reader can track the changes Jeffers made to the text, uncovering both the first words on the page and any intermediate revisions that were made prior to the final version. Looking at these lines and notes, we can now see that the original text read:

They called it the Rock:
No name but that; like a huge moon half sunk in the
hillside. High redwoods grew at the foot like spear-grass.
And higher, but still about the base, its swallows in their
nesting spring flitter like gnats.
~~That was another world. The path that Alan followed came~~
~~down through oaks to the Rock's head.~~
~~He tethered the horse on earth in a clearing of trees, himself~~
~~went up to the Rock. At the height of the dome~~
~~The granite was stained red with an old fire; there he~~
~~brought sticks and built a new one.~~ [2]
That was another world, deep in the humming canyon; the
path Alan followed came down
Through oaks to the bald granite head.

Keeping all this in mind, we can compare this again to the final text:

They called it the Rock. 12
It is like an altar, and like a gray moon half sunk in the
hillside. High redwoods grow in grass at the foot, 13
And higher, but still about the base, its swallows in their
nesting spring flittered like gnats. 14
That was another world, deep in the humming canyon; the
path the hunter followed came down [2] 15
Through oaks to the bald granite head. 16

The reader now has access to the original conception of the passage and can follow Jeffers's compositional process: his choices about figurative language (adding an additional simile to characterize the rock), the compression of the narrative action, the addition of a vivid description that builds on the earlier images ("deep in the humming canyon"), and the changes he made in describing Alan.

These changes are then compressed into just three lines in the published poem:

> The skinning was a
> long toil; Hood came
> Burdened across the fall of twilight to the great dome of high-cliffed granite,
> they call it the Rock,
> That stands out of the hill at the head of Cawdor's canyon. (*CP* 1: 419)

While this transcription tracks the development of the draft of *Cawdor*, the draft itself tracks an important and necessary part of the development of the published poem. It is its own project, but must be understood as an unfinished and unpolished step in the process of composing the published version of *Cawdor*.

The reading text stands on its own. The notes recreate the compositional process enacted in the lines and on the page. The intent in each note was to use just enough of the text to clearly show the relationship between the edits and the final text while allowing the reader to locate the changes within the text. There are rare instances when the words in the note are completely different from the text, and such constructions indicate that the words in the note were completely removed from the final text.

Brackets always provide information that is not part of the text of the poem. If the brackets are blank it indicates that there was a word that could not be read or deciphered. Single words are enclosed in brackets when there is some uncertainty in the transcription of that word. The word "*sic*" is used in brackets four times to indicate a phrase or word that is repeated exactly as the manuscript indicates. And finally, as discussed above, brackets are used to provide information such as page locations and to enclose intermediate edits denoted by the use of the word "then" as the first word of the note.

Parentheses are used in the notes to indicate that the enclosed phrase was circled. Back-slashes always indicate a line break. Double back-slashes indicate a break in the text. Jeffers would normally use a line to indicate such breaks; occasionally the text might have been enclosed in a box, or it might have been written in a separate column on the page. Double back-slashes only occur in the transcriptions of the verso texts.

The first difference one notices between the draft and the published poem is in the names of the characters. Hood is only used in late notes and edits. The first mention of this character uses the Old and Middle English name Alden. After the second use of this appellation, it is changed to Alan with one L. On page 41, in chapter IX, the name is spelled with two L's, and from that point forward is spelled with either

an A or an E depending on how one reads Jeffers's hand. Fera is used only once in the text, on page 43, in a late edit changing the name she would like to carve in Allan's marble breast from Lora Cawdor to Fera Martial—an assertion of an identity apart from Cawdor as well as an acknowledgment of the taint of her father's blood. The first time we hear her name, it's Violet, a play on the purple lupin and sunsets, when Cawdor says: "It's Alan, Violet." Such misdirection is typical of the manuscript as Edward Nickerson has described in his article "Jeffers Scholarly Materials: Library of Congress."

The narrative of the draft unfolds in an organic linear progression from Alden/Alan/Allan/Hood's return, through the old man's death and burial, the attempted seduction, the shooting of Violet/Lora/Fera, finally ending just prior to the patriarchal filicide. One of the issues Jeffers explored in this work was whether Lora's attempted suicide would succeed. In a divergent draft included with the manuscript, he wrote an alternate thirteenth chapter that encompassed both her suicide and death dream. He speculated in his notes on the effect this event would have on the course of the lives of Michal and Cawdor. As Tim Hunt has noted in *The Collected Poetry*, this draft was an attempt to hew more closely to the narrative of Hippolytus (*CP* 5: 439).

Jeffers reminds himself in his notes to "*remember the form is choric*." As Robert Brophy has described, the published poem moves from the Introduction, through Complication, Crisis, Catastrophe, and Denouement (161–216). The published poem presents four Choric responses—Apostrophe to Kingfisher, and three death dreams. The draft of *Cawdor* does not exhibit such a defined construction. There are fourteen distinct chapters in the draft:

chapter 1	pages 1–5	return of the son
chapter 2	pages 6–11	introduction of the family, Violet, and the eagle
chapter 3	pages 12–18	hunt for shell-fish
chapter 4	pages 19–20	Michal, stains on the rock, fore-shadowing
chapter 5	pages 21–28	declaration of passion
chapter 6	pages 28–29	old man coma, rhythms
chapter 7	pages 29–38	interactions, Cawdor bargaining, Concha's gift, death
chapter 8	pages 38–40	old man's death dream
chapter 9	pages 41–45	Lora's seductive foray
chapter 10	pages 45–54	coffin, laurel, Alan/Hood's Attis gesture
chapter 11	pages 55–59, 57B–58B	funeral, Lora's plan, gunshot

chapter 12	pages 59–67, 66A	Lora shot, the torture-room, Alan leaves
chapter 13	pages 66A–69A	(divergent draft) Lora's suicide and death dream
chapter 13	pages 67–69	deceit to deceit, Cawdor leaves for the Rock

This then, was the trajectory of the manuscript. Robert Zaller explores the flow of the axis of conflict in the published poem from Fera and Hood; to Hood and Cawdor; and finally to Cawdor and Fera. But in the draft, ultimately, the conflicts encompass the personal torments of first Lora and then Cawdor. Cawdor's character and motivations have not been developed, and at this late stage in the poem they cannot be grafted onto this narrative. In many ways it seems as though Jeffers had written himself into a corner, and the established trajectory would not support the project he had envisioned. Jeffers rescued most of the set pieces from this draft as he developed the final version of *Cawdor*. The manuscript shows the traces of the compositional process as he worked through and developed the issues which would find their fruition in the published version of *Cawdor*.

Jeffers's manuscripts offer the opportunity to look over his shoulder as he composed his poems and worked with his words. With the advent of paperless technologies, such opportunities have become rare. This project was predicated on the idea that the transcript would allow access to both the text and the dynamic nature of the process enacted on the handwritten pages. There is much to absorb, but it is hoped that the reader enjoys this opportunity to look into Jeffers's compositional process.

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Transcription of Discarded Original Draft of *Cawdor*

I

He rode over the hills from the inland valley [1] 1
A trackless passage well-remembered. Nothing had
changed in the three years, until toward noon
He entered a fire's path, slopes of skeleton brush, heights of
dried pine. Now in December the grass
Began to return from the burnt earth, and ferns uncurling.
Mile after mile was the fire's country,
But when he looked from the hill into the redwood canyons
pitching to the ocean, these were unburnt, 5
Full-throated with dark green life.

The first canyon he entered,
A mountain-lion stood on a naked ridge between alder
and redwood watching him come down.
He checked the pony and slid the rifle from leather to
shoulder, thinking "The hills have not been hunted
Since I've been gone;" fired; and the lank September
pasture-colored body somersaulted 10
Over the ridge; he found it dead under a laurel-bush. The
skinning was a long toil and he came
Through twilight to the great dome of cliffed granite at the
head of his father's canyon. They called it the Rock.
It is like an altar, and like a gray moon half sunk in the
hillside. High redwoods grow in grass at the foot,
And higher, but still about the base, its swallows in their
nesting spring flittered like gnats.
That was another world, deep in the humming canyon; the
path the hunter followed came down [2] 15

Lines 12–13: 'Rock: / No name but that; like [then 'Rock. / It was like an altar, and like'] a huge moon half sunk in the hillside. High redwoods grew at the foot like spear-grass. [then 'redwoods stood in grass at the foot,']'.

Line 14: 'flitter like gnats. / That was another world. The path that Alan followed came down through oaks to the Rock's head. / He tethered the horse on earth in a clearing of trees, himself went up to the Rock. At the height of the dome / [leaf 2] The granite was stained red with an old fire; there he brought sticks and built a new one'.

Line 15: 'the path Alan [then 'he'] followed came down'.

Through oaks to the bald granite head. He eased the droop-
neck horse of girth and bridle and tethered him
Where grass was growing; himself went up to the Rock. He
stood and saw down the great darkening gorge
The reddish-yellow lamplit window in his father's house, the
iron-dark ocean a bank beyond,
Pricked at the gray edge with one pin-point ship's light.
Deep, vast, and quiet and sad. After a little
He gathered sticks under the trees and made a fire on the
Rock's head. The first light of the flame
Showed red stains in the stone, of a former fire.

Down at the farm-house
A girl about fifteen years old had lingered awhile outside the
door as loath to go in.
The bell clattered for supper; her brother George went in;
Jesus Acanna came from the stable,
He stamped his boots, and looking up the long canyon under
the lump-shaped moon, "Now who's camping
On the Rock," he said "A fire on the Rock?" He entered the
house. The girl looked up the hollow canyon
Between the silvered edges of hills and saw the ruby drop of
fire high up in the darkness.
She wasn't hungry; she'd go and see. After a half hour's
climb she peered under the oak-boughs
To the height of the Rock; her brother Alden had lodged
there the first night when he went away; and again
It was Alden; he had come back. She entered the fire's halo,
and they caught hands. "You're here, Michal. [3]
I thought maybe you'd come if I made fire here." His eyes
were happy. "But why," she said, "didn't you
Come down to the house?" "Well, father and I weren't
friends at the last meeting. Tell me, is he well?"
"Certainly."
They talked a little further and Alan again: "Michal: was
he well in August, not sick, no accident?"
"The fire was August . . ." "He was in danger: pitched from
the horse, fighting it, caught in a canyon?" "Why, no.
It never came near us, it spread from the south inland.
Why did you think of August?" "Oh," he answered,
"nothing.
I was north almost in Oregon by a little lake; the fellow
that hunted with me was gone

To the Indian camp. I slept in the blanket and felt a hand
shaking me but when I woke there was nothing
Except the big stars in the lake. It happened three times and
the third
I saw father beside the red of the camp-fire, I lay and
watched him blowing the fire and feeding it,
His face twisted with pain. I thought something had
happened. When I got up he looked pitiful
And lifted his hands toward me and then was gone. It was
not a dream; but it meant nothing. But afterwards
I thought about it and came south when I could." She
laughed a little and said "No, but he's married.
Last month, a girl about your age." "What, the old man?"
"She and her old blind father have lived with us
Since the fire passed. They had a little place in the hills;
they were new people; and when the fire came
He tried to fetch the saddles out of the shed. There was a
drum of coal-oil against the wall
Exploded and blew fire in his eyes. She got him onto a
horse and led him down the stream-bed. [4]
They've been here since. His face is awful to look at, the
burns, he keeps it covered; but most of the time
He's sick in bed, we think that he'll die." "And father's
married her?" "Oh yes, the place has a new mistress.
I used to like her at first." "Well," Alan answered, "I'll come
down in the morning. Ask father to-night
Whether he'd like to see me again. But tell him," he said
smiling, "that I'll not stay. No plowing.
I'm not a farmer." "You're still only a hunter," she answered.

They talked of the
interval; and little Michal:
"The worst day of the fire, I stood by the door and watched
the red reflections in the smoke-ocean
High over the hills: Ilaria Acanna
Was crying because her cousin's place was back there. We
looked into the canyon and saw the creatures
Go down to the shore: a drift of deer among the scared
cows, a lean coyote and then a bob-cat,

Line 53: "'I stood by the door and watched it boiling [then "The day of the fire, I stood by the door and']'.

A lone doe, and this girl behind, leading a horse with her
old father, bareback, his face
A twist of dirty cloth, and then we saw him fall off when the
horse stumbled. We went and helped them."

Later they spoke of
the evening three years before,
When Alan camped on the Rock, the night after the
parting quarrel with his father, and Michal had come
To bid him good-bye. She'd wanted to look down from the
domed edge into the moonlight depth,
It was bright moonlight then as to-night, and Alan had tied
the horse's tie-rope around her body
And held it while she scrambled on the falling edge. She
said "I felt the air falling around me,
And saw the great dark redwoods under me like moss in a
crack."

II [6]

Michal went home. Alan rode down in the morning and
found his father
Friendly but not disposed to make a holiday for him. His
dark-eyed brother George was equally
Unexpressive; they talked in the yard under the broken
cypresses, by the back door of the house,
The saffron banner of dawn, in the V of the canyon,
deepening to blue above them. Michal stood by them;

Line 59: 'They talked of their last evening together,'.

Line 61: 'domed edge of the Rock into the depth,'.

Line 62: 'around her body / And held it while she scrambled on the falling edge. She said "It [then 'Why, it'; then 'Oh, it'] was terrible but it was beautiful. / I felt the air falling around me, and the tall [then 'me, the tall dark'] redwoods under me were like moss in a crack." / Until the edge of the shadow in the canyon floor / was invisible under the Rock. [The two lines: 'Until … Rock' were written in a lighter hand and were not crossed-out.] / II / The dawn [then 'In the morning he went down to the house; the dawn'] was like a yellow flag in the V of the canyon / Behind his back, burnt like [then 'it flowed'] a vibrant liquid without any color [then 'without color'] but its erect light flowed [then 'but clearness erect from the west'] / Flowed [then 'Flowed up'] from the west / Behind [then 'Beyond'] the limit-line of the hard blue water.'.

And Cawdor, the father: "Michal says you don't intend to
live with us, Alan, but stay for a week,
I won't set you at plowing, we've done the plowing. My
wife's father," he said, "has your old room.
But you can have the one on the north, used to be
Concha's." Alan smiled at that but his brother
Frowned; after their mother died, when they were children,
Young Concha Rosas had been brought to live in the
house, half servant, half mistress; now she was banished;
Cawdor had married again; she lived in the outbuilding with
the other servants, a dark fat woman
Having a fatherless son, child with gray eyes like Cawdor's.
"Michal will show you the room, Alan,
If you've forgotten. Bring in your things." No one had heard
the door open, but all those four
Felt someone come, as if the life that she had, being more
than other women's, flowed out on the air
Like heat from a red coal. George frowned again and looked
at the earth, Michal half turned her face
As when a shoring wave runs up the land-wind lifting its
crest; Alan, looked up and imagined.
She was an unusual person to see; he thought that she and
Michal might have been sisters; both slender,
Dark-haired, light-eyed, both sunburnt rather sallow than
rose; the gray eyes opened wider and Alan
Felt breathless in them. "No wonder," he thought, "that old
stone father of ours - - - but why did she want him?" Then
Cawdor:
"It's Alan, Violet." "I've heard about you," she answered
but not approaching,
"Quite often. From Michal, not your father. — He looks
more like you," she said to Cawdor, "than either of the
others."
"Ah," Cawdor answered with shut lips, "so long as you don't
ask him to work. George works; but this

Line 77: 'life that she had — she had more than other women — flowed out'.
Line 79: 'land-wind, and its crest lifts, but Cawdor seemed not to change and yet, when Alan [then 'change yet Alan,'] looked at her [then 'crest lifts, when he, Alan, looked at her.'; then 'looked behind'].'.

Is only a hunter. I told him he could have the little room on
the north. Bring in your things.
If he stays long I'll set him to building fences." Cawdor
went down to the stable and George followed him,
While Alan fetched the puma-skin he had tied behind the
saddle, and a canvas sack under it
The bleeding skin marked with brown stains. The girl was
still in the door when he and Michal returned.
He unfolded the tawny eight-foot trophy and said "I owe you
a wedding present. If you'll take this
I'll dry it and have it tanned. I don't know what you'd want
it for, though. I shot it yesterday." Then Michal
Turned jealously away. It was not to another, [8]
In the happier days, that Alan used to bring the spoils of
his hunting. Violet took the long pelt
In both her hands, she made as if to fling it over her
shoulders and Alan: "Stop. It's not dry.
You'll stain your dress." "Who am I," she answered, "not to
be stained?" Her teeth flashed, and a lift of her arm
Settled the skin for a cloak on her left shoulder, the head
with the slits for eyes hung on her breast,
The monstrous claws dangling; she gathered the stiff cloak
into folds, the glazed red fleshy under-side
Showed at the borders, her bare forearm crossing it. "It is
fresh," she said, "isn't it? Come in."
And when he had carried his canvas sack up-stairs to the
small room on the north, "This was not yours,"

Line 86: 'Is only a hunter." Indeed they were much alike, the same long faces, the same droop of the eyes / And [then 'same leonine droop / Of the eyes and'] brows from the high nose bridge, like a big animal's / That never needs look sideways, the same leanness, the same length of bone, [then 'the same length,'] but Alan was slenderer [then 'Alan's were slenderer'].'.

Line 87: 'I'll set him plowing'.

Line 90: 'He unfolded the skin, nearly eight feet from muzzle to tail-tip, the tawny color a rich pasture [then 'color of a rich pasture'; then 'color of September'] / When summer has warmed the hills to the heart of the rock. "I owe you'.

Lines 92–93: 'Turned jealously away. In the old days / It was to her that Alan used to bring'.

Line 98: 'Showed at the borders, her bare forearm against it. / But Alan stood before her stupidly quiet and gazed north to the canyon, as a hurt boxer / Covers himself against his enemy. "Yes it is very sticky," she said folding it. "Come in."'.

She asked, "when you were here before?" "No. Mine was
where your father is now." "Then who had this one?"
He answered: "I don't remember - - - nobody: I guess it
was empty." "That Rosas woman," she answered, "had it,
Somebody said. The fat black Concha: her child is five or
six already, you ought to remember.
But the bed's aired since then." She left him there and went
down. [9]

After a moment he went out-doors
Looking for Michal but she was not to be found. He rode
down to the stable, he turned his horse
Into the field, and hung the saddle in the old place. From
the stable door he saw Michal,
He went to meet her, she carried a steel trap whence a live
ground-squirrel
Hung by the broken fore-paws. "What have you got, Michal?
Why don't you kill it," he said, pitying
The pain and fear in the white-rimmed eyes. "A treat for the
eagle. I've taught him to eat beef," she answered,
"But he loves to kill." "What, you've still got the eagle?"
"Yes: come and watch him. The squirrels are scarce in
winter,
This is the first in a week."

Alan remembered
The summer before he went away he had seen great sails
against the sky and against the mountain
Skim down the slope and rise for the redwoods; then partly
to protect the barnyard and partly wondering
"What make of hawk are you?" he had shot for the breast,
but the bird's fate having captivity in it
Took in the wing-bone, against the shoulder, the messenger

Line 102: 'Somebody said. Fat Concha Rosas: her child is four or five years-old already, you ought to remember. / But the room's [then 'bed's'] aired since then." She left him by the door [then 'left him there'; then 'left him by the door'] and crossed the hall [then 'went down the [ ] hallway'] to her father's. / ¶ / He had nothing to [ ] [ ] the [ ]; / After a little he went out-doors looking for Michal, and could not find her. He rode to the stable, / And turned his horse into the field with the others.'

Of human love, the broad oar of the wing broke twisting
upward, and a long moment, each plume
Distinct, stood up like a halved fern-leaf on the white of the
sky; then all together slid and pitched over
In bitter silence behind the dark green towers of the canyon.
Alan had found it trailing its wing [10]
On a bare slope. Its wing tripped it, he flung his coat on its
head. Though he had it hooded to handle 120
He still bore talon-scars in the forearm.

The cage was not in
the old place; "Violet," she said,
"She made me move it from the dooryard because it smells. I
can't scrape the wood clean." She had moved it,
To the only other level spot on the pitch of hill, a bench of
earth a hundred feet higher,
An old oak's roots partly upheld, a faint steep path trailed up
there. One side of the low leaning 125
Bole of the tree, that branched wide at a cow's height, was
the eagle's cage; on the other, a fenced enclosure
Three paces long, two wide, guarding two graves. The sticks
of the fence were weathered silver, the redwood
Head-boards of the graves, one large, one little, scaled with
gray lichen. Alan's and Michal's mother
Lay here beside a child of hers that had died before her.
"There was no other place to keep it,"
Michal said in apology; they stood before the cage, viewed
through the wires the hunched and monstrous 130
Captive, the one wing trailing, the great flight feathers worn
to quills, trailing in filth, large blow-flies
Buzzing about the weakened feet. The eyes remembered
their pride. But Alan: "You ought to kill it.
It is cruel to keep it. My God, these years!" She answered [11]
Nothing, and when he looked at her face the long blue eyes
were full of moisture that suddenly fell

Lines 120–121: 'his coat over its head. [And] though it was hooded / Alan had still white [then 'He still had'] talon-scars in his forearm [then 'wrist'].'.

Lines 122–123: 'the old place. "Violet / Made me move it from the dooryard because it smells. I can't scrape the wood clean." But in all that falling [then 'It had been taken'; then 'She had moved it up higher,']'.

Tears through the fence of the black lashes. "I know. But I
can't bear," she answered, "to let him be killed.
Although he hates me. And George threatened to kill him if
I should leave him beside the grave but I knew
George never would do it. It would be better, I know. And
now day after day I have to be cruel
To bring him a little happiness." She opened the cage door
and laid the squirrel inside, and opened
The jaws of the trap. She closed the door, Alan and she
stood back under the oak-boughs to watch.
The squirrel began to drag itself on the broken paws, then
the great-beaked brown-hackled bird
Extended one grim hand and gathered its prey under its
talons, but not for a long while
Stooped the lean head to rip the belly.

From here one
looked straight down on the house, all roof and dormers
Above the thirteen battered cypresses planted about it.

III [12]

In the morning
Michal said, " Her old father
Believes that food from the sea keeps him alive; the low
tides at full moon we always go down
For mussels and abalones, she wants me to ask you to
come, you can turn over the big stones
The abalones are under." They took sacks for the catch,
and blades of brown iron to pry the giant

Lines 136–137: 'Although he hates me. It would be better, I know. For now day after day I have to be cruel'.

Line 142: 'drooped its fierce head to rip the belly and draw the entrails.'.

Line 148: 'They took sacks for their catch, and iron [then 'old iron'] / To pry the giant shellfish from their hold in the tide rocks [then 'pry the giant shells from the rock,'] and went in the afternoon to the black waste of the ebb / Under the cliff, in a cove a little south the stream's mouth, the long reef and the black weeds, [then 'reef hung with black sea weeds,'] / The gray [then 'Gray'] granite [then 'granite cliffs'] and pools of sea purple. Between the long bared reef streaming / With sullen fleece of the sea, and the gray blocks fallen from the granite cliffs were acres of stone [then 'acres of level'] / Stone wilderness drowned in disheveled weed, the [ ] [ ] of the flashing and laughing surf'.

Shells from the rock; they went in the afternoon to the
black waste of the ebb under the cliff;
Stone wilderness furred with dishevelled weed, but under
each round black-shouldered stone, universes
Of color and life, scarlet and green sea lichens, violet and
rose anemones, wave-purple urchins,
Red star-fish, tentacle-rayed pomegranate-color sun-disks,
vague worms tuft-headed with astonishing
Blossom, pools of live crystal, quick eels plunging in the
channels - - - - the three intrusive atoms of humanity
Went prying and thrusting, the sack fattened with shell-
vaulted meat; then Violet said, "Go out on the reef,
Michal, and when you've filled the bag with mussels Alan
will fetch it." "Why should I go? Let Alan." † [13]
"Go, Michal, I need Alan to turn the stones." Michal
looked up at her brother, he did not see her,
Violet possessed his eyes. When Michal was gone
And walked beyond hearing on the long reef, dim little
remote figure between the blind flat ocean
And burning sky, Violet stood up and said suddenly: "Judge
me, will you. Kindness is like
The slime on my hands, I want judgment. We came out of
the mountain fire, beggared and blinded,
Nothing but a few singed rags and a lame horse
That has died since. Now you despise me because I gave
myself to your father. Do then. I too
Hate myself now, we've learned he likes dark meat — that
Rosas — a rose-wreath of black flesh for his bride

Line 152: 'Vague worms headed with astonishing blossom, [then 'Red stars and gold ones, cold purple-tentacled sun disks, vague worms headed with astonishing blossom,']'.

Line 154: 'Went prying and thrusting, filling [then 'thrusting, and filled'] their sacks with the doomed shellfish'.

Line 160: 'Love's like the slime that smears my hands [then 'Like the slime on my hands'], I want judgment. We came beggared and blinded out of the mountain fire.'.

Line 162: 'your father. Gave myself? Took him, / I will tell you openly. [then 'your father. Do. I despise']'.

Line 163: 'Myself too, since we've learned he likes dark meat — that Rosas — not mine to chew on — '.

Was not in the bargain —." Hood steadied himself against
the wind of her eyes and quietly:
"Be quiet, you are telling me things that don't concern me,
true or not. I am not one of the people that live
In this canyon." "You can be cold, I knew that, that's
Cawdor. The others have kindly mother in them,
Wax from the dead woman: but when I saw your face I knew
it was the pure rock. I loved him for that. [14]
For I did love him, he is cold and strong. So when you judge
me, write in the book that she sold herself
For someone to take care of her blind father, but not without
love. You had better go out on the reef
And help Michal."

He went, and
kneeling beside his sister to scrape the stiff brown-bearded
lives
From the sea-face of the rock, over the swinging streaks of
foam on the water, "Michal," he said,
"I wish you could get free of this place. We must think what
we can do. God knows I wouldn't want you
Like the girls in town, pecking against a shop-window. You
have the hills and the shore, leave them the house
While you live here. People are the worst company." "I think
so. What did she want to tell you?" "Nothing.
But the first time I saw her I thought she is bitter-hearted.
But that's for father to endure, not you.

Line 164: 'Alan steadied himself against the wind of her eyes and said quietly:'.
Line 166: 'Oh you can be cold, I know that, that's Cawdor. Your brother and the girl [then 'The others have wax from the dead mother — softness in them,']'.
Line 167: 'Wax from old dead woman. George has brown eyes to cry with, / But you were cut out of pure rock, makes a bad husband for fire.'.
Line 174: 'against a shop-window." "I used to be happy here," she answered, / "Before she came. I am still happy." He said "You have'.
Line 176: 'But other times I have thought from her talk and face she is bitter-natured.'.

He will be able. She is beautiful though." "Really, you think
her beautiful?" "Well: not as women are called beautiful.
Some fierce thing in a corner."

The sack was filled,
but some unreasoned reluctance to return [15]
Had kept him hewing at the thick bed of mussels, letting
them slide on the rock and drop in the water,
When he looked up Lora had come. "Why do you waste
them," she said, "you're right, waste is the purpose 180
And use of - - - Look, I've something to waste." She
extended her hand toward him, palm downward, he saw
bright blood
Trickle from the tips of the brown fingers and spot the rock.
"You're hurt!" "Oh, nothing. I turned a stone,
A barnacle cut me, you were so long coming I thought I
could do without you. Well, have you judged me?
With Michal to help?" "Let me see the cut," he said angrily.
She turned the gashed palm upward and heard
His teeth grating together; after a moment she held a small
red pool in the upper hand. 185
"I can't see." Then she flung it on the ocean and said: "A
hunter: you must have seen many a wild creature
Drain; and not paled a shade." He saw the white everted lips
of the cut and suffered a pain
Like a stab, in a peculiar place. After he had washed his
handkerchief and bound the wound they walked
In silence on the low reef. He carried the ocean-streaming
sack on his shoulder. Every third step † [16]

Line 177: "'You think her beautiful [then 'beautiful, really']?" "Well not the face. But terribly / But sharp as fire and deeper than water."; written lightly above 'sharp as fire': 'like as the mussels'; written lightly along the right margin at the foot of leaf 14: 'I can't judge, what are women to me? But I am not interested in women.'; at the head of leaf 15 the following lines were deleted: 'Beautiful just the same, if she had the strength. Some fierce thing in a corner: one living moment, / And not fierce, but a lynx I saw / I'm thinking of a lynx in the north - - -'".

Line 180: 'looked up Violet had come. "Why do you waste them?" she said, "You might, waste is'.

Line 187: 'Bleed; [then 'Stream;'] and not paled a shade." He saw the white lips of the cut and felt a knife-stab [then 'and felt a physical pain'; then 'and suffered a pain in his body']'.

A cold and startling shadow was flung across them; the sun
was near the horizon and the tide turning
The surf mounted, each wave at its height covered the sun.
A river of gulls flowed away northward,
Long wings like scythes against the face of the wave, the
heavy red light, the cold pulses of shadow.
The croaking voice of a heron fell from high rose and amber.

Michal went home
and under the cliff already the sky-reflecting water
Flowing landward crossed with crooked sheets of light the
night of the naked stones; whence bluish-pale mist
Breathed, the red dragon in the west lent it no warmth of
color. Michal, who walked ahead of the others,
Without a word mounted the cliff, the zig-zag natural stair in
the rock, not looking backward,
Depressed with a sense of desolateness. Cold, wet, her hands
and clothes slimed with the lymph of the sea,
Disgusted by the blood in Violet's cupped hand, the
exhibited blood; her own fingers were bleeding,
Scratched by the stubborn shells need it be shown?

Alan made haste
behind her but he had two sackfuls,
The crawling dripping meat and the heavy shells, to bring to
the cliffhead. "Go on with Michal," he said
Panting on the rock, "I have to go down for the other. Tell
her to fetch a horse and a bit of rope,
I'll lead them home." Under the second load he climbed
more slowly, and saw at the cliffhead, unreal [17]
To eyes upward and sidelong, his head cramped by the load,
one woman — Michal was gone — awaiting him,

Line 193–194: 'fell from the rose of sunset. / ¶ / Already the sky-reflecting water'.
Line 200: 'Bruised by the shells or matter. What was this woman, her father's wife or what, this lynx of Alan's? / A mother to them?'.
Line 203: 'on the rock, "After I get [then '"I'll get'] them up here'.
Lines 204–205: 'home. Wait! Michal," he shouted. But Michal seemed not to have heard. He turned and went down, / And climbed more slowly, the second load biting his shoulder.'; 'and saw at the cliffhead, from eyes / Downward [then 'Cast down'] and sidelong, his head'.

Too tall to endure, flushed with the west in her face
The blue hills at her knees and the full moon at her thigh,
under her wounded hand, new-risen,
It is not uncommon, one or another wearing attributed
divinity a moment through a trick of nature.
The race and the world remember their dreams.

He slid the sack onto
the grass, and Lora:
"I waited for you but Michal went on. My father says that
life began in the ocean and crept
Like us, dripping sea-slime up the high cliff. He used to be a
schoolmaster, but mother left him,
She was much younger than he. Then he began to break
himself on bad liquor. Our little farm
Was the last refuge. But he was no farmer. We had utterly
failed
And fallen to hollow misery before the fire came. To-night,
watching the west, I unlearned recklessness.
Nothing's worth risking, I shall be mean and cautious all the
rest of my life, grow wrinkled and mean,
And suck the greasy penny security." "It is wise," he
answered,
Offended at her. They went for the horse, and by the corral
gate she looked westward and eastward
From the ocean sundown to the great moon on the violet
hills: "No doubt you think all this is beautiful,
But when you grow — that sort of wise — you hate it. What
shall I do?" "Oh?" he said, "like everyone else,

Line 206: 'to endure in the red [ ], [ ] [ ] [ ] of the hills, the night of the wild darkening,'.

Line 208: 'It is not uncommon, some trick of natural stage-craft dressing one or another in divine attributes [then 'divine form;']'.

Line 209: 'and the world have good memories [then 'good unconscious memories.']'.

Line 210: 'and Violet:'.

Line 212: 'dripping sea-slime [then 'dripping slime'] up the high cliff." / They went together toward the corral to fetch a horse. [then 'up the high cliff. He used to be a schoolteacher but mother left him,']'.

Line 215–216: 'And had begun to be beggars [then 'paupers'; then 'beggars'; then 'And fallen into beggary'] before the fire'; 'recklessness. / I shall be mean and cautious all the rest of my life, grow old and mean, never risk anything.'.

Take what you dare and let the rest go." "That is no limit. I
dare," she answered. He looked aside
At the dark figures of the horses turning their heads gently
on the red west; he preferred
Not to tempt her face, he seemed to himself to have heard
the fire whispering under the flesh
And have taken warning. She said "I will think," or some
such word, lost
In the creak of the gate; a loop of chain too rattled when it
drew open; when he looked back she was walking
A good distance away toward the house, but rather like one
condemned climbing the thirteen steps.

IV [19]

High up the canyon, nearing the base of the Rock, he said
by a small heaped cairn "What's this, Michal?
A trap?" "Jesus Acanna sets them, poison for the coyotes." A
few flakes of stiff spume
Lay white on the brown redwood needles; one of the little
wolves had brought its famine to the bait
And crept away to die, slavering with pain. "They took two
of our turkeys, by daylight, under

Line 225: 'drew open; and he looked back she had gone [then 'she'd gone'].

Line 226: 'toward the house, but slowly, like one condemned mounting the thirteen steps / Steps that are not descended again. / IV / Like one condemned / She moved, the two next days, restlessly and thoughtfully about the house, not going outside the doors / Nor speaking without need to anyone. Her father was better again, and when he came to table with the others / Took all her care; she was most patient in serving him.'; after these deleted lines at the foot of the leaf are the following notes: 'Shoots a deer in the morning. / He walked up the canyon — coyote-poison — spalls of the cliff — [death] of lion that killed a calf — "You need a gun around this place." / His father in the time of his speech talks of the wild creatures pressing in / lion killed a calf — "George is no good with a gun." / He is refusing to stay when the hubbub in the dooryard, the dog dragging itself home. He agrees to stay. / Violet's lips moving as if in prayer, her eyes blazing at him. [then 'with a gun." / Violet's lips moving as if in prayer, her eyes blazing at him. / He is refusing to stay when the hubbub in the dooryard, the dog dragging itself home. He agrees to stay.'] / Violet's father present. / Comes [perhaps 'Comet'] before moonrise.'.

Line 228: 'sets them" she said, "it's poison on it. Coyotes have been so bad." [then 'sets them, coyotes']'.

The dogs' noses. You heard them last night? There never
have been so many." "Poison's too bad," he answered,
"Can nobody use a gun?" "Not since you left.
And a mountain lion ate one of the calves." "When was
that?" "A month ago." But then remembering the lion-skin
He'd given to Lora, she'd say no more about lions. They
went along the sunless water-bank, winding
About the bases of the thick shafts of the wood, the stream's
Winter music wandered among; then high, like a cathedral
window [breaking] the gloom,
The sunned face of the Rock shone on their faces. One
place, below it, opened a little clearance
Of forest, and a green straitened glade they came to, where
the stream forked. Here Alan was eagerly regarding
The crowd of little pointed hoof-prints, and the oval pellets,
the clean droppings of deer: when Michal
Caught home her breath like a sob, then he looked
Where the wide eyes in her whitened face were gazing, at
the foot of the Rock. The spalls and granite off-scale
Of many centuries of centuries made a gray moraine against
the rock-face; high up those fragments [20]
Lay something that looked like a man's body, in a splash of
blood. "It is only a shadow," he said," Michal,
And the red's lichen." After this they could not see it again,
although they had seen it so clearly,
Nothing but rock-shadows and the red lichen, but Michal's
mood remained shaken a little.

V

Violet Cawdor was like a sheathed knife in the house; she
had set her will toward quietness; it seemed [21]
Self-mutilation, she firmed her lips to inflict and endure self-
mutilation. The pang has nothing
Unbearable nor perfect about it, for one whom love of
heaven and her own soul possesses.

Line 246–247: 'III / Self-mutilation, she firmed her life to inflict and endure self-mutilation. The pang has nothing perfect in it [then 'III / She had set her will toward quietness; it seemed to her mind / Self-mutilation']'.

Line 248: 'Perfect in it, nor bitter but the end, for one whose love of God and her own soul possesses.'.

Though both were wholly imaginary with promise reward,
and all the after vanity of life
Ebbing to death is full of sparkles and whispers; but when it
is done for mere security - - - the will
Prevailed however; the five remaining days of Alan's week of
his visit she hardly spoke to him
Nor once gave him her eyes. But once when he had gone off
Deer-hunting, Michal was down the canyon, and Cawdor
and George fetching the calves from the hill, she entered
The narrow room on the north and nuzzled her hot face in
the pillow of the bed. She rose in bitterness
And burning shame, and drew smooth the coverlet.

The week ran to an
end and Alan gathered his things
To go next morning. That night the farm-dogs drew so
urgent a noise of battle and riot on the hillside
Both George and Alan ran out into the darkness, the late
moonrise cancelled with cloud. They found
Nothing, and called the dogs and returned. In the morning
the big square-jawed pit-bulldog, the fighter, lay dead
Against the door-step, opened so with one stroke of claws
like chisels that the dark purple entrails
Had dragged behind, were speckled with dust and twigs.

So Alan's departure
was put off, but a sudden † [22]
Rain-storm beat in from the ocean before noon and spoiled
his hunting. The northwest wind veered east,
The rain beat harder; in the night the wind shifted again
and grooved itself a raging channel

Line 253: 'Deer-hunting, [then 'Hunting,'] and Michal to the bee-hives, and Cawdor and George to fetch the cattle on the hill, she entered'.

Line 257: 'the farm-dogs barked alarm so furiously and yelled on the hill [then 'farm-dogs drew so urgent a noise of combat and']'.

Line 261: 'Had dragged behind [ ], they were speckled with sand of the hill. [then 'with sand.'] Then Cawdor said "Alan, you'd better stay / [leaf 22] A few more days. A mountain lion took one of the calves / A [ ] [ ]'; written in a light hand: 'First the hunting, then the storm.'.

Line 264: 'channel / Slant with the coast. When the southeaster blew itself out and all the creeks were thrusting muddy brown tongues into the ocean [then 'thrusting brown tongues of muddy water into the green ocean']'.

From the east of south, the slant way of the coast. There it
held strongly, slackening to south, at sundown,
While the house-roof groaned, the planted cypresses
Flung broken boughs over the gables and all the lee slope of
the canyon was strewn with green
From the leaves of the redwoods. That night in the lag of
the wind and black drums of the rain Violet's blind father
Began the last phase of his dying. He had been in fact dying
since the fire, and in the morning
It hardly seemed worth while to send for a doctor, such
weather as it was. Acanna was sent, for form's sake,
Though Alan offered to ride, George too. Every coast creek
Thrusting a knife-blade of brown water in the ocean, one
doubted whether all the bridges were standing;
And the rain continued.

There was a little
field deep in the canyon, toward the mouth of the creek,
Used for a garden, irrigable in summer through a wood
flume; but now the scour of the stream † [23]
Devoured its edges, Alan was down with the others weaving
a dyke to save it.

Lora Cawdor,
In her house-dress, her head unsheltered, came down.
Alan looked up the bank and saw her across the blue lines
of the rain, among the brown
And lavender lines of the straight leafless willow-shoots.
"Come," she said, "up to the house," her night-colored
hair
Running the rain onto her shoulders, her face like a wet
blade, "my father is conscious again,

Line 272: 'And river was thrusting [then 'Was thrusting'] [one] muddy tongue into the ocean, one doubted whether all the bridges / Were still on their piers [then 'Held their piers'].'.

Line 276: 'Destroyed its borders, Alan was down with his father building a dyke to save it. Violet Cawdor [ ] George [ ] / Above the barns against the water from the hill.'.

Line 277: 'Violet Cawdor,'.

And wants to speak to Alan before he dies." "To me? I'll
come," he said wondering. And Cawdor:
"What does he want? You might have sent Michal, dearest,
or one of the women, the rain's gone through you."
"Not you: it's Alan." Who leaned his axe on the block; he
had been pointing eight-foot fence-posts, which Cawdor
Drove with the sledge. He went with Lora
And drew her by the cold hand up the clay bank.

They came to the
room down the short hallway, he heard
Through the shut door before they reached it the old man's
breathing: like nothing he'd ever heard in his life:
Slime in a pit boiling: but the machine rhythm, intense and
faultless - - - She entered ahead [24]
And drew a cloth over the wrinkled eye-pits; the bald scars
in the beard and the open mouth
Were not covered. "Oh shut the door," she said, "against the
wind on the stairway." He came reluctantly
Into the dreadful rhythm of the room, and said "When was
he conscious? He is not now." And Violet:
"He is in a dream: but I am in a dream between blackness
and fire my mind is never gathered
And all the years of thoughtful wonder and little choices are
gone. He is on the shore of what
Nobody knows: but I am on that shore."

Lines 282–283: 'And wants to see only Alan before he dies." "What? Me?" "Yes, Alan." "Well, I will come," he said wondering. And Cawdor: / "My God, Violet, no coat? Couldn't have sent [then "Me. You might have sent'] Michal or one of the women [then 'or Concha's boy,'], the rain's gone through you. / Go on, [then 'through you. Me, does he want? / Go on,']" he said to Alan, "and get her back to the house. If I'm wanted, send down." She answered'.

Lines 284–285: '"Not you: it's Alan [then '"He wants Alan']." Who leaned his axe on the block; he had been pointing long fence-posts for piling, / Which Cawdor with a sledge-hammer sunk in the earth to found the dam on; and Alan went up [then 'in the earth, they wove them with cut branch-wood; he went'; then 'earth, to weave earth and stone. He went'; then 'pointing eight-foot fence-posts, which Cawdor / Drove in a row with great blows of the sledge. He went'] with Violet [then 'Lora']'.

Line 289: 'Like nothing human: a clockwork plunger stirring slime in a pit,'.

He had almost
always kept his room but Alan had seen him
Four times before; twice at the table, the hood over his eye-
pits, Lora feeding him, and once
Passed in the hallway and once walking among the cypress-
trees, his frequent custom, that Concha's
Queer light-eyed boy led him by the hand.

"I was the one that
needed you Alan, I was too lonely
And grew afraid. There is nothing for me to do, I used to
feed and clean him but now there is nothing,
He has flown away from my hands, where do you think it is?
Feels nothing at all. You don't think, Alan,
He suffers at all." That breathing-machine, he thought, mere
dreadful rhythm of a noise? "Oh no, Lora."
"It is only because I am cold," she said wringing her hands,
violently trembling, "the cold rain water [25]
Rains down from my hair.
I hated my loose mother but this old man was always gentle
and good even in drunkenness.
Lately I had true delight in doing things for him, he used to
do for me when I was a little one,
These last few months, I almost blessed his blindness that
made him need me. We'd traveled so far together;
So many faces of pain." She mastered her shuddering and
said
"All that I loved is here dying: and now if you should ask me
to, I would strike his face
While he lies dying." But Alan standing back in the ice-
colored wind of eyes felt but not looked at

Line 297: 'Three times before;'.
Line 298: 'Passed in the corridor, once walking among the cypress-tree, as he used often to do,'.
Line 299: 'The Rosas woman's boy leading him on by the hand.'.
Line 300: '"I was so lonely [then '"Yes, it was I that called you," she said, "I was too lonely']'.
Line 302: 'it is? He suffers nothing. You don't'.
Line 311: 'But Alan cringing in the ice-colored wind of her eyes felt but not seen'.

Believed that he had misheard and not understood; he said
anxiously "Let me watch here, Lora,
Until you change your clothes and come back, you cannot
help him nor touch him, wet and cold as you are- - -"
She answered "I will not leave him." They stood in silence,
the rain might have been heard, except that dreadful
And faultless rhythm filled all the room.

Then Michal, who
had been down-stairs, rapped at the door and entered
And looked from one to the other, with jealousy unconfessed
in her own heart. "Oh, I came up,
Could I help, Lora?" "There is nothing to do," she said, and
Michal saw the teeth racking her lip
And tears beginning, Lora seemed not to feel them, nor
lowered her face nor lifted her hands, the drops
Ran down to the raised chin and fell clear of the breast. And
Lora again: "Here he lies pitiful, [26]
For you to look down on.
Dear Michal: you are kind to come up and I am wicked to
think, although I love you so much,
That he is repulsive as well as pitiful to you. It was enough
shame to be pitied. I am bitter
Because I am sorry; and because I knew him before he was
pitiful. You hunter with a rifle, one shot's
Mercy in the life: but the common hunter of the world uses
too many; wounds and not kills, and drives you
Limping and bleeding, years after years,
Down to this pit. One hope after another cracked in his
hands; the school he had; and the newspaper
He labored day and night to build up, over in the valley.
His wife my shameful mother abandoned him.
He took whiskey for a friend, it turned a devil. He took the
farm up here, hunted at last

Line 320: 'pitiful, / And you look down and never knew him. I think that to you I well believe / He is even repulsive; you never knew him. / He is worse than pitiful, repulsive to you. It is [then 'was'] already a bitter enough shame to be pitiful. / When he [then 'He'] was turned [then 'made'] blind and almost [then 'nearly'] a beggar and you never [then 'none of you'] knew him.'.

Line 326: 'years, there is no mercy. [then 'years, down to this pit.']'.

Line 329: 'friend, and it found a devil. He took the farm up here, we were hunted to the mountains,'.

To the mountain, and nothing grew, no rain fell, the cows
died
Before the fire came. Then it took his eyes and now it is
taking his life. Now it has taken
Me too, that had been faithful so long. For I have to tell you,
dear dear Michal, before he dies
I love you — and Alan for your sake, Michal —
More than I do this poor old man. He lies abandoned." She
stood above him, her thin wet clothing
In little folds glued to the flesh, like one of the girls in a
Greek frieze, the air of their motion [27]
Moulds lean in marble; Michal saw her through tears and
thought how lovely she was, and heard but dimly
Her saying to Alan: "Do you not wish you were like this man
Alan? I wish I were like this man.
He has only one thing left to do. It is great and maybe
dreadful to die but it is easy.
He does it asleep. Perhaps we are like this man: we have
only one thing left to do, Alan,
One burning thing under the sun.

I love you so much
Michal, that you will surely forgive
Whatever it is. You'll know it is not done wickedly but only
from bitter need, from bitter need- - - -"
She saw then startled, and said quickly:
"You needn't pity him; for even in this deformity and shame
of obscure death he is more fortunate
Than any Cawdor on the coast, king of fat steers; under the
bone, behind the burnt eyes
There have been lightnings you never dreamed of; despairs
and exultations and hawk agonies of sight

Line 330: 'And nothing grew and the cows died [then 'grew, the rain']'.

Line 339: 'And he feels nothing, you [then 'we'] were sure he feels nothing. Perhaps we are like this man: we have only one thing left to do, Alan, / One burning thing under the sun. / But no one can do much until he has taken leave of life like cloth from around his body / And thrown it away.'.

Line 342: 'Whatever we do.'.

Line 343: 'She saw through her tears Alan lean forward, and the question flicker in Michal's eyes,'.

That would have cindered your eyes before the fire came.
Now leave me with him. If I were able I would take him up,
groaning to death, to the great Rock
Over your cramp cellar of a canyon, to flame his bitter soul
away like a shot eagle
In the naked sky. I will call Alan when I need help at the
end; you mustn't come back, Michal, [28] 350
You are not grown, it would pain you too much."

When they were
gone she knelt against the board of the bedstead,
Close to the fountain of the dreadful rhythm in the room,
and whispered "In that dim world — in that
Dim world — in that dim world - - - ?"

VI

As one driving a
stormy errand of his own in the fall of darkness 355
Looks up from his own lights on the road to the faint
lamplight in a farmhouse window and wonders
"What are they thinking in there, sitting about the table,
vacant, patiently waiting to die?
Or do they think anything at all?" So Lora wondered a
moment.

Sleep and delirium have dreams,
And even this locked coma trailed its clue of dream across
the crippled passages, but gathering 360
With a wider web, fragments of life to play with. They
flowed and wove themselves in the vague dance —

Line 347: 'the fire came. [then 'came. And knowledge of the beginning and the end.']'.

Line 349: 'Over this little world of the canyon [then 'Over your little corner of the world'; then 'Over your cramped cellar of a canyon'], to flame'.

Line 359: 'The whole of sleep is a dream, [then 'All sleep feeds its long dream,']'.

Line 360: 'And this unconsciousness [then 'And this unconscious coma'; then 'Likewise this unconsciousness'; then 'Likewise this deathboard coma'; then 'And so deathboard coma'] trailed its clue of dream across the crippled passages, but gathering fragments'.

The vague forms in the tyrant rhythm — around a sort of a
marsh, a place of darkness and blood,
That corresponded in the field of the dream to the actual
hurt of the clot, the small burst artery
That marred the brain. Bits of things read and heard of
besides priests experience enriched the imagery;
A Greek woman was one who appeared at intervals, Phaedra
her name, but her name never appeared, [29] 365
And a hanged woman he failed to recognize in the dream for
the same person. The elements were there
From which his past misfortunes and a forecast of death, and
small bits of the living future,
Might have been reconstructed; but all were turned into a
train of senseless forms and absurd
Passionless event[s]. A sweep of terror at intervals; for that
survives in a dream; but that, even,
A ghost, pithed of its power. His blindness recent, his dreams
remained visual. 370

His daughter in ignorance
Knelt by the bed, seeing only the scarred beard and the open
mouth. She rose and fetched dry clothing
From the other room. Her will and her mind were caught in
the dreadful perfect rhythm of the old man's breathing,
Like the hilt and guard of a sword caught in a net; the bright
desirous blade wavered in the air;
Not caught but helpless, the hilt entangled; like a flame in
the wind. 375

Line 362: 'The forms vague but on the rhythm [then 'tyrannous rhythm'] — around a dark and foreign spot in / Bits of things read and learned besides priests experience [then 'around a dark and foreign spot, place of displeasure']'.

Line 364: 'Bits of things read and learned besides priests experience made the dream rich, various,'.

Line 368: 'and all were turned into a train of absurd forms and events [then 'train of senseless forms absurd'] / Events, even the feeling subtracted from them. Except an excessive gust [then 'burst'] of terror'.

Line 369: 'Passionless [then 'Dispassionate'] event. A gust of fear at'.

Line 370: 'Was pithed and emptied of power [then 'Pithed of its meaning'].'.

Line 375: 'entangled, not cutting anything but air.'.

VII

Under the slate-
color sky twilight
Darkened without perceptible change of light. Cawdor's foot
at the door was light as Alan's
For all his labor, and the thirty years' and twenty lean
pound's difference. Lora looked up at his entrance.
"Is it raining still?" "Yes. Not so hard. Does he change at all,
Lora? He hasn't been conscious again?" [30]
"No." "Let me light the lamp. Here on the dresser it
wouldn't shine in his eyes." "His eyes?" she answered.
"True. I forgot." The match flared in the dark, he settled the
lamp chimney and looked at the bed,
And said across the snoring rhythm: "I will keep watch for
awhile, there is nothing to do, is there?
While you go down to supper and to rest a little. To-night
Ilaria or Concha Rosas can watch
And let you sleep." She answered "I am better here than
anywhere," yet went to the door, and there, turning:
"Yes, I should like Concha to-night. But not to let me sleep;
to keep me company." He felt
A little wonder, she had always hated Concha. She went
downstairs.

In the smell of beef-
steak cooking
That spread through the open doors she felt the mad
irrelevance of things and said to Michal "Will Alan
Go when the wind turns and it clears?" "Go hunting?" "I
meant, of course, go hunting. He has something to kill
And then hopes to go clear. Well, death's a treasure."
Michal, afraid of the strain in the pale face
And the eyes too lighted and wide: "Oh spare yourself Lora,
It comes to every house in the world. I can't remember
mother dying, I was too little,
But father will die and I shall be here, we have to endure it."
"There's nothing for you to fear less.
That rock? Don't be a fool. That rock will plant us all in the
hill like seed-corn beside your mother,
You and me and Alan and mark the places, and George like
the black bean that comes in the pack of white ones. [31]

Then death will break his teeth on that rock after we've all
made grass. I left my father with him.
Where's Alan?" she said. "I don't know: he's been working.
Washing his hands probably." "I will be quiet,"
She said, "I have listened to his breath so long
That not to hear it unsteadies me."

They sat at the
table and Alan came in late, then Lora lifted
The pale oval between her throat and the dark hair. The
lamp on the table lighted her throat,
The white glass lamp-shade shadowed her face, her eyes
made their own light. She gave him her eyes, as if
She were giving herself. He had felt their power before, he
had never tasted their pleading sweetness, the golden
Bees hived in the harsh hollow of the lion, the drunken
honey, his heart
Forgot his father. She might spoken, but George sitting
beside her had his dark gaze aslant
Under the heavy brows on her face. She lowered her eyes
and the oval face and said nothing,
And Alan talking with George about the ditches they'd run
above the stable to turn the hill-water
Drew into his inmost life a tactile sense of the soft throat
warm in the lamplight, above
The curved hem of the low-cut house dress. That crossed
and veiled the [past] hollow of the gentle valley
Between the breasts; but he could see the lit hollow
Above the breast-bone between the slender clavicle-ends,
the young warmth and the birdlike motion,
The reed flute that could sob or be fondled. In a moment she
left the table and went through the next room [32]

Line 405: 'She might spoken [*sic*],'.

Line 408: 'Drew into this [then 'into his'] inmost life the reddened [then 'life remembrance of a'] throat warm in the'.

Line 409: 'That [then 'It'] crossed and veiled [past] hollow of the gentle valley [then 'crossed the upward hollow of the valley'] / Between the breasts; [then 'valley between the breasts. / But one could']'.

Line 410: 'the lighted [then 'the smooth strip and the lighted'] hollow'.

To the outer door; she opened it, there was clear among
clouds over the ocean, the wind northwest
And stars gleamed in a patch. She went up-stairs, Cawdor
came down.

After two hours Alan
Went up to the room that waited for death. The dreadful
snoring rhythm flowed through the door but Lora
Heard him before he knocked and drew it open. "You
haven't - - - I was waiting for you - - - you haven't come up
To say you're going away in the morning? Ah no, Alan, that
would look wrong, it would be indecent,
We have to let them take their own time dying. I am being
tortured, you know. Feel," and she caught
His hand and held it under her breast, "it is falling to pieces.
Why even for your father's sake Alan
It would be wicked to call despair in here
Before it must come. I might do strangely
If I were driven." "Certainly I shan't go," he answered,
"before - - - this grief's finished . . ." He inclined † [33]
His weight backward, against her drawing him inward across
the door-sill, her hands holding his hand
To the struggle of that wild bird in the bone cage, under the
softness. "But. Oh you must rest somehow
And spare yourself. Dear child. Let someone else watch here
to-night Lora." "When you said 'child,'
Your face," she answered, "was as hard as your father's." She
freed his hand. "I shall have Concha with me.
But think of me to-night, Alan." She called him back and
said "I didn't come out of the fire
To fail or die easily. Good-night."

Line 413: 'To the door of the house'; 'ocean, the wind had changed'.
Line 415: 'After a time Alan'.
Line 422: 'I might do strangely / If I were driven." He said "But you're wrong Lora, I haven't thought of going, while - - -" "Do you promise?" / "Until he - - - until this strain is over for you." "Kiss me," she answered, "before this bed of death, / And I will be strong." He felt no strong emotion, only a light forgetfulness of any hindrance, / His passion speeding itself easily outside his conscious feeling, in the effort of that erasure, / Left only a little to be felt and remembered. A tension of which he had no knowledge was knitted / Within his mind; but [then 'while'] hers relaxed a little in the confidence of his promise. He thought rather'.
Line 429: 'To die easily. Good-night.'.

Soon Cawdor
came, with Concha Rosas. He opened the door
And entered the dreadful unchanged rhythm of the room.
Lora not rising from the chair by the bed
Looked up and made a difficult smile, as if she painted it on
her mouth from inward, and said
"I was thinking of a thing that worried my father, in the old
days. He made a bargain with a man
To pasture his horse, the horse died the first week. The man
came asking pay for six month's pasture
For a dead horse. My father paid it at last, I wouldn't have
paid it." "No, hardly," he answered. And Lora:
"The bargain ends when the horse dies. Wouldn't you say?"
She looked at her dying father and said
Shuddering, "I'm sorry to keep you up all night, Concha; but
you can sleep in your chair. He was always
A generous fool, he was not made for the world." Cawdor
looked down at the bed through the dull noise
Like surf on a pebble shore: "To-morrow about noon the
doctor will come, if the road's open.
No change all day." "That would be late," she said, "if there
were hope in the world." "Dear," he said hoarsely,
"Dear child: we all die." "Those that have blood in us. When
you said 'child'
Your face," she answered, "was as hard as a stone. We know
that you and the Rock over the canyon
Will not die in our time. When they were little children
Were you ever kind?" "I did not love them so much as I love
you, Lora. And though your sorrow
Makes you bitter," he said stiffly. "I am kind." "Oh, kind - - -"
she leaned sidewise and smoothed the coverlet

[34]

Line 431: 'dreadful rhythm unchanged since dawn. Lora not'.

Line 434: 'his horse and the horse died the first week. Each month the man sent in a bill for'.

Line 439: 'pebble shore: "There's been no change all day. To-morrow morning or about noon,'.

Line 440: 'The doctor will come." "That would be late," she said, "if he could help. But he can't."

Line 442: 'was as hard as the Rock. We'.

Line 444: 'ever kind?" The pity that she refused to see eased [then 'refused eased'] from his face, the hardness she [ ] appeared'.

Over the dying man's breast, but rather as a little hawk slips
sidelong from it's flapping vantage
In the eye of the wind to a new field - - - "but about blood in
the stone veins, could Concha tell me?
Look, his face now, Concha, pure rock: a flick and it shows.
If somebody whose eyes are not stone
But able to wink, should come and make me love him and
carry me off: you'd be kind and not care,
Wouldn't you? The canyon's your wife, the Rock's your - - - "
Though she could see no motion in him her voice ran
down [35] 450
And hid in silence. But what a shame to be awed silent by
nothing visible. "As long as they leave you,"
She said, "the fields and cattle - - -" Concha was afraid, her
breath whined
Across the dying man's breathing intervals of noise and
silence, a whimper like a slight mouse running
Between bars of rough iron. But Lora in a last fling of
bravado: "What would you do then?
Kill us?" He answered quietly, only his eyes appeared in the
coarse uncertain lamplight to have lost 455
Their clear direction: "No doubt." "Forgive me," she said
rising and standing before him, "Rather you'd strike me
Than let me tease you like this. Here I am half mad with
watching him die so pitifully. It makes me
Mad at your strength. He had none: but his mind had
shining wings but they were soon broken. Good-night
dearest."

"What did he think, Concha: you know him better, I am
only his wife:
That I could be fool enough to jump the fence, Concha?
The man is a little crazy, do you think? 460
What person does he imagine I'd find for a lover — Jesus
Acanna? In this wilderness." She found
The chair again, and felt under the coverlet, found the dying
man's hand. "Only one man

Line 450: 'the Rock's your brother." He stood "I have done nothing to make you [ ] / This is your grief talking, not you." He laughed silently. "Why, if you want to [ ], Lora, dearest,'.

Ever could love me with any kindness." The dark wide
Spanish-Indian woman squirmed uneasily
And said, cuddling a newspaper-wrapped parcel she'd
brought, "You never" — in her soft uncertain English —
"Would do a wrong, Mis' Cawdor, to Ilaria Acanna? Jesús is
not beautiful or young. She drop [36] 465
Tears in the dish when she was cooking because he have to
ride to Monterey in the storm.
She fear' the bridge, Mal Paso and Garapatas. She fear'
Monterey w'iskee." But Lora [not] smiled,
Saying "No, not Jesus. Though it's in the house to like dark
meat." "Because," said Concha Rosas, "Ilaria
Love you, and send you something because she sorry. Send
you a present." She gave Lora the parcel,
Who undid a basket carved of bone, Acanna had made it
long before, of a whale's vertebra 470
Picked up on the beach; had fitted it with a cow's horn
handle, and crusted it all over with rainbow
Pieces of shell, glued in rings and patterns. "How pretty it is,"
Lora said vaguely, "Ilaria
Is much too kind. She set it on the chest behind her and said
"But you, Concha, must have hated me
For being his wife." "Oh no, we love you." "Why didn't you
make him marry you," she said, "before I came?
When little Manuel was born, he should have married you.
— Would God that he had," she thought in silence.
Concha 475
Trembled a little through all her flesh. "You never seen him
when he was much angry, Mis' Cawdor.
I only once, I walk on the hill with one vaquero. That man
ride far that night, that man
Never came back to the coast. But Mr. Cawdor never like'
me after Manuel was born.
His eye," she said, she touched the left side of her face, "one
eye go terrible off to sidewise
The time he angry." "It must be worth seeing." Lora felt a
burning sponge of disgust † [37] 480
Move in her throat. "And does he roar?" "Oh no, Mis'
Cawdor."

Late in the hollow
lamp-smelling night

She had dreamed in a moment's catch of sleep that Michal
clothed herself in the stiff mountain-lion skin
And was shot dead, mistaken for a beast. The dream faded;
Lora hearkened to her father's breathing
And miserably remembered his coming death. Oh, Concha
Rosas was here. She called, but the one
Was no more conscious than the other. She alone in the
sealed house. A moment her mind conceived it whole
With its night-world, the small dark jewel box of several
people hugging their personal dreams, in the wet throat
And splay of the canyon outward to the infinite space of the
night ocean; rain-trailing hulls of cloud
Passed high in the air rifted with stars like flints, and there
was one lit window in the little box
One outward mind among the folded ones. "Concha!" She
crossed over and shook the flabby shoulder,
The broad face lifted and groaned. "It is turning bitter and
here's a blanket you must wrap yourself in,
Not to sleep cold." The woman muttered "Yes is too old,"
laboring to seem wakeful, and Lora:
"Wrap the blanket around you. Who did Alan make love
too, Concha?" "Nobody. He love the deer,
He's only a boy and he go hunting." "Brown thing, go tell
Ilaria I wish to God † [38]
That I had been you, to scrape the mud from his boots when
he came in from hunting; or Ilaria Acanna
Cooking him little cakes in the oak-smoke, in the white
dawns when the light shakes like water in a cup

Lines 483–484: 'moment's catch of sleep that the mountain-lion Acanna had shot proved to be Michal / Done in the skin of the [then 'Clothed in the tawny skin:'] but instantly the dream was forgotten; [then 'was brushed off;'] she listened to her father's breathing'.

Line 487: 'One sane moment, the small dark jewel-box of many people sleeping, [then 'of several people hugging their hearts dreams,'] lodged in the wet throat'.

Line 488: 'And dark splay of the canyon [ ] short ravine to the gray waste and space of the night ocean; [tented] hills of cloud'.

Line 490: 'And one turned-outward mind among the folded ones. "Concha!" She bent and shook'.

Line 494: 'He's only a boy and he go hunting." / Toward dawn the rhythm of the old man's life clearly ran slower. / [leaf 38] "Slug of brown flesh go tell Ilaria I wish to God'.

And the hills are foam: for now who knows what will be?
Oh sleep; I am sick at heart for my father, nothing has
changed."

Toward dawn the
rhythm of the old man's life
Slowed with each breath; the breathing shallowed and
ceased, the throat clicked when a breath should have
been drawn.
A maze of little wrinkles, that seemed to express surprised
amusement, played momently about the eye-brows.

VIII

The dream he dreamed, if it had been relative to any
movement outside
Would have grown slower as the life ebbed and stagnated
when it ceased; but the only measure of the dream's
Time was the dreamer, who geared in the same change could
feel none; in his private dream, out of the pulses
Of breath and blood, as every dreamer is out of the hour-
notched arch of the sky. The brain growing cold
The dream hung in suspense and no one knew that it did.
Gently with delicate mindless fingers
Decomposition began to prick and caress the unstable
chemistry
Of the cells of the brain; Oh very gently, as the first weak
breath of wind in a wood: the storm is still far,
The leaves are stirred faintly, to a gentle whispering: the
nerve-cells, by what would soon destroy them, have
stirred
To a gentle whispering. Or one might say the brain began to
glow, with its own light, in the starless [39]

Line 497: 'And the hills are gauze: for now who knows what will be? [then 'will be? / This was his room.']'.

Line 501: 'amusement, played on the brow and relaxed. / Lora again awakened her fat companion.'.

Line 509: 'have stirred / To a gentle whispering. Say rather the brain began to glow, in the starless cave, in the skull of the dead,'.

Darkness under the dead bone sky; like bits of rotting wood
on the floor of the night forest
Warm rains have soaked, you see them beside the path shine
like vague eyes. So gently the dead man's brain
Glowing by itself made and enjoyed its dream.

The nights of many
years before this time
He had been dreaming the sweetness of death, as a starved
man dreams bread, but now decomposition
Reversed the chemistry; who had adored in sleep under so
many disguises the dark redeemer
In death across a thousand metaphors of form and action
celebrated life. Whatever he had wanted
To do or become was now accomplished, each bud that had
been nipped and fallen grew out to a branch,
Sparks of desire forty years quenched flamed up fulfilment.
Out of time, undistracted by the nudging pulse-beat,
perfectly real to itself being insulated
From all touch of reality — the dream triumphed, building
from past experience present paradise
More intense as the decay quickened, but ever more
primitive as it proceeded, until the ecstasy
Soared through a flighty carnival of wines and women to the
simple delight of eating flesh, and tended
Yet farther, to an unconditional delight. But now the
interconnections between the groups of the brain
Failing, the dreamer and the dream split into multitude.
Soon the altered cells became unfit to express
Any human or at all describable form of consciousness.

Line 511: 'Darkness under the bone sky in the skull of the dead; like bits of rotten wood in the cloud wrapped / Night, the warm rains have soaked the forest'.
Line 517: 'Now in death border a thousand [then 'Being dead a thousand']'.
Line 519: 'Old [then 'Older'] sparks of desire forty years quenched found fuel to flame within.'.
Line 520: 'Ignorant of time, free of the nudging pulse-beat,'.
Line 524: 'Yet higher, to an unconditioned pleasure. But now the interconnections between the groups of nerve-cells'.
Line 525: 'multitudes. Then the charged cells'.

Pain and pleasure are
not to be thought [40]
Important enough to require balancing: these flashes of post-
mortal felicity by mindless decay
Played on the breaking harp by no means countervalued the
excess of previous pain. Such discords
In the passionate terms of human experience are not
resolved, nor worth it. 530

The ecstasy in its
timelessness
Resembled the eternal heaven of Christian belief, but
actually the nerve-pulp as organ of pleasure
Was played to pieces in a few hours, before the day's end.
Afterwards it entered importance again,
Through worms and flesh-dissolving bacteria. The personal
play was over, the mountain earnest continued
In the earth and air. 535

But Fera, in her false
earnestness
Of old love and new love strangling each other
Knew none of these things.

IX [41]

I should have
thought this dead man's daughter,

Line 527: deleted lines head leaf 40: 'IX / When Concha [then 'Concha R.'] awaked and the gray / In the windows began [then 'Windows had begun'] to stale the lamp, Lora was standing beside the bed as if she had stood there / All the long night. The two women moved haggardly in the two lights. / But Lora forbade the other to call anyone / the face unlined; they were afraid of his eyes'.

Line 533: 'Played out its past in a few hours, long before [then 'soon after'] burial. After [then 'Afterwards']'.

Line 534: 'bacteria, after the show was over, on the far side of desire the personal play was over, the mountain earnest began, / Over [then 'Beyond dreams, over'] the far side of desire and pleasure.'.

Line 538: 'things. / The show was over / On the far side of pain [then 'desire'] and pleasure'.

Line 539: 'IX (He is dead in the other room; we live in this one.) / I should'.

When the gray panes began to stale the lamp, having
present death to lean on in the mixed light,
And sense of the hills over the house, and heartless mass of
the [law]-keeping night ocean for neighbor,
Might have spared insolence and done quietly awhile. With
gradual country paths to walk in toward peace,
And the calm goal under her eyes: but no, she must go out
and build agony, must let the birds fly.
And quarry a block of pain on purpose from the marble hill,
For fear a little patience might reconcile
Her life to its place. She passed hastily between the cool
dawn and the murk lamp to awaken
Her dark companion in the room. "Get up, Concha. He has
died, I was alone and have closed his mouth.
Now I'll go out." She went and found a door down in the
dark hallway. "Allan" she whispered,
Then she began to tremble, "Are you here Allan? Oh yes,"
she saw him in the gray, lifting his head,
And heard drowsily through the open window,
The sea-lions barking far away in the dawn on the water.
They float in the pewter wave's flank,
Some five or six with oblique throats, thrusting their bristled
muzzles and wet voices from the ocean.
He raised himself the like manner in the bed, but watchful
and silent. And Lora: "I was eaten with fear
You'd sneak away from here in my night. It is finished and I
Alone was by him, your father's flitch of dark meat snored in
the corner. He has died. All the wild mind
And jagged attempts are sealed over." Her voice lifted and
failed, he felt the wind from her face

Line 543: 'but no, she must build agony on purpose, she must let the birds fly. / For fear a little patience'.

Line 547: 'Her fat companion in the room. "Wake will you. Stand up, Concha. He has'.

Line 548: 'went and found a door in the dark hallway. Allan [*sic*], she whispered,'; '(I thought you had gone.) (ride away on Michal's two horses) (This is the clean thing to do.)'.

Line 553: 'He lifted himself the like manner [*sic*]'.

Line 554: 'You'd ride away'.

Line 555: 'was by him when he died, your father's dark meat snored in the corner. He is dead I tell you. [then 'He has died. All his wild mind']'.

Line 556: 'And broken attempts are sealed in quietness [then 'are closed over']." He felt the wind from her eyes [then 'face'] flowing above his head'.

As one looks up at a storm and the cloud streams [42]
Between the moon and the tall trees the spate of a river, the under air still is not moved,
And he said "I'm sorry. Go and call Michal. I'll get dressed and come if you want." "Do you think I will call
Michal?" The gleaming oval moon of her face was turned and the bitter wind blew through the wood,
She said "Death is no terror, I have just left there. Is there anything under the sky to be afraid of
And not take what we want, openly with both hands? I have been unhappy but that was foolish
For now I know that whatever bent this world around us, whether it was God or whether it was blind
Chance piled on chance as blind as my father,
Is perfectly good, we're given a dollar of life to gamble against a dollar's worth of desire
And if we win we have both but losers lose nothing,
Oh nothing, how are they worse off than my father, or a stone in the field? Do you sleep naked, Allan,"
She asked him, seeing his arm and shoulder shine in the dawn. "I brought no night-clothes with me," he sullenly
Answered, I didn't expect visitors at night. What do you want?" "Nothing. Your breast is smooth
Like polished marble, no hair like other men in the groove between the muscles, it is like a girl's
Except the hardness and the flat strength. No, why do you cover it, why may I not look down with my eyes?
I'd not hide mine. No doubt I'll soon die,
And happy if I could earn that marble to be my gravestone. You could cut letters in it. I know
It never would bleed, it would cut hard. Fera Martial you'd carve, the letters of a saved name, [43]

Line 564: 'Chance upon chance as blind as my father,'; '(She could not tell what fear, what pre-conviction of failure held her from touching him.)'.
Line 569: 'Sullenly, "I didn't expect to sleep in public [then 'a visit before morning']. What do you want?" "Nothing. His breast [then 'The breast'] is smooth'.
Line 570: 'And hard like stone, like polished marble [then 'As polished']'.
Line 571: 'why may I not look down and be glad?'.
Line 574: 'It would never bleed, it would cut hard. Lora Cawdor: ten letters would not deface it, ten letters I'd carve, ten letters [then 'cut hard. Fera Martial you'd carve, eleven letters'] of a saved name,'.

Why should I fall like a grain of sand and be lost forever
On the monstrous beach? But while I breathe I have to come
back and beat against it, that stone, for nothing,
Wave after wave, a broken-winged bird
Wave after wave beats to death on the cliff. Her blood in the
foam. If I were another man's wife
And not Cawdor's you'd pity me." "Being what you are," he
answered: he rose in the bed angrily, her eyes
Took hold like hands upon the beautiful bent shoulders
plated from the throat with visible power,
Long ridges lifting the smooth skin, the hunter slenderness
and strength: "being what you are you will gather
The shame back on your mind and kill it. We have not been
made to touch what we would loathe ourselves for
To the last drop." She said "What are you saying? Do you
think I should be shameless as a man making
Love to reluctance, the man to you the woman, if I had time,
if you were not going to-morrow,
If I had time, I'd use a woman's cunning manners, the cat
patience and watchfulness: but shame
Dies when time shortens, mine's dead." "I hear them stirring
in the house," he answered. "No. No. You hear nothing.
This little room on the north is separate and makes no
sound, your father used to visit his thing here, [44]
You children slept and heard nothing. You fear him of
course. I can remember having feared something . . .

Line 575: 'Why should my name [then 'should it'] fall like'.
Line 576: 'In the monstrous beach? So long as I breathe I must come back and beat against it for nothing,'.
Line 577: 'Wave after wave like a broken-winged gold sea-gull'.
Line 578: 'on the cliff. You know what I want. Her blood tinges the foam. If I were another man's wife [then 'another man's']'.
Line 581: 'smooth skin, "being what you are you will gather back into your mind / All that's not said and kill it there; and go and be quiet'.
Line 582: 'Disgrace back on your mind and kill it there. We have'.
Line 583: 'To the end of life. [then 'To the last drop of an enemy and the desolate end.'; then 'To the last drop of an enemy at the desolate end.'].
Line 586: 'Needs time to breath in, mine's dead.'"; 'answered. "You lie. You hear nothing.'.
Line 587: 'to visit his whore here,'.

I forget what. Look at me once,
Stone eyes am I too horrible to look at? If I have no beauty
at all I have more than Concha had
When she was more fawn than sow, in her lean years, did
your father avoid her? Oh tell me: what is it I've done
Drives you to hate me? If I could help it, would I come
Fresh from the death of the one life I have loved to make
myself
Your fool and tell you I am shameless, if I could help it? But
that's the matter, you look at me and see death.
I am dressed in death instead of a dress, I have drunk death
for days, makes me repulsive enough.
No wonder; but you too, Hood,
Will drink it sometime for all your loathing; there are two of
us here
Shall not escape. Oh, but we shall though. There is one
clean way."

He saw her face
clearly, the light increasing, how pitifully the chin
Shuddered, and the cheeks cut sharp with tears, he hadn't
imagined that she was crying - - - "If I spoke roughly:

Line 589: 'I forget what, that at least is outlived. [then 'what, that's outlived at least']. Look'.

Line 591: 'in her lean youth, did your father hate her? But tell me, what have I done'.

Line 592: 'To make you hate me [then 'hate me utterly']? Do you [then 'You don't'] think it is likely I would come [then 'likely that I'd run']'.

Line 593: 'of the one man I have loved'.

Line 594: 'that's the thing, I have death all about [then 'death wrapped all about'; then 'death all around'; then 'death wrapped all around'] me,'.

Line 595: 'I have drunk death all night, I am dressed with death in the silver dawn, makes me repulsive to you,'.

Line 598: 'Shall not escape. But now he is dead I am free, and where you go I will follow, and after years / It will wash off, then you will see me. Remember to tell Cawdor that I have been with you and not / Touched you , and been shameless but not touched you [then 'Touched you, but I will touch you sometime']." / balances between, love and hatred / She went away and came to the room of her father's death. / horses: the only clean thing. [then 'Shall not escape. Oh, but we shall though. There is one clean thing to do.'"]'.

I didn't know you were crying. You've been held in the
house too long, our minds like Michal's eagle
Go bad in a cage. You'll ride on the wet hill, and look back,
and all this † [45]
House and the people look like a leaf of willow shoaled on a
bar in the creek." She answered "I've got
All that in my mind, and the whole coast crinkled with
canyons like paper in a fire and the hills motionless
Tongues of fire in the yellow sky.
Remember to tell him that I have been with you and never
touched you. It is not the body. What you think I want
Will be pure dust after hundreds of years and something from
me be crying to something from you
High up in the air. - - -" She turned on the opening door.
"Oh Michal
Has Cawdor called you? I knocked at your door but this one
was unlatched and when I knocked it flew open.
I haven't been able to get him awake. Oh I needed
someone."

She said in the
hallway "Are you well, Michal?
I am not. But when I slept a minute of the night I dreamed
about you. You wrapped yourself in the skin
That Allan gave me, and Jesus Acanna shot you for a lion - - - "

X

Michal remained all
day by her side.
She rested half hours in Michal's room, a little quieted in
Michal's presence, thinking "If Allan
Should go I'd know it, he'd bid Michal good-bye first." But if
she slept a moment on Michal's bed
She'd cry in her sleep, widening white eyes. † [46]

Line 601: written in a light hand at the foot of leaf 44, then deleted: 'Concha had lighted the candles, Michal was there / telling Michal her dream of the lion-skin.'.

Line 608: 'She turned on the door.'; '(I came from the fire / Only to fail and fail and fail. It's in the blood.)'.

Cawdor came twice
to see her, grave and new-shaven, sincerely
Grieved for her grief; the first time to consult her wishes
about the burial, and the other time
He desired her to sleep in her own room, he had darkened
the windows. "Ah truly " she answered, "not there I
couldn't.
Sleep: I was wondering why we do it at all: lie and play dead
in the dark, might be worth something
If it lasted - - - That's the coat you wore the day we were
married." "I'm not working. The doctor was here
And has gone back." "Why, Michal," she said, "but that's a
pity.
Came all the sloppy way for nothing, the doctor!" And
Cawdor after a moment: "Well: the rain's over.
He'll have the drive." "Oh, it's common," she answered,
"How many — my father knew geography — (ninety or) a
hundred million
In just this country I think — come all the sloppy way for
nothing, and turn around and go back.
They get the drive." "Well," Cawdor answered "- - - - Yes.
What more do you want?" She trembled. "I'm not like
that.
I'll have more. My father betrayed himself through
recklessness, again and again,
That was his ruin, I've always that in my mind. Where's
Alan? Did Allan see him?" "Him?" "Yesterday I thought

Line 618: 'After the doctor had come, and gone home, Cawdor came [then 'came in'] / To Lora,'.

Lines 624–625: 'the doctor!" And Cawdor: "Well: the rain's over. He'll have the drive." / "That's what they get," she answered, "out of it. How many [then 'she answered, "I knew it. How many'] — my father knew geography — a hundred million'.

Line 627: 'They get the drive. Or they have to walk. Some of them have to walk. Where's Allan?" [then 'the drive." "Well, yes," Cawdor answered, "Yes. What more do you get?" She trembled. "I'm not like that.']'.

Line 629: 'mind. Where's Allan? [then 'mind. Did Allan'] Did Allan see him [then 'see the doctor']?" "See for?" "Yesterday'.

Allan looked sick, he ought to have seen him." "Oh, Allan,"
Cawdor laughed with closed lips, "His health and mine." 630

Here some pages of the manuscript seem † [47]
to be lost. — R. J.

~~July, 1941.~~ The numbering of the pages
was not done until to-day — July 14, 1941.

Like a trapped hawk's. "That's what I'd like. What time
to-morrow will you bury my father? I'm drawing [48]
The half my heart away from him not to be lost. It make me
restless. No I can't rest, not now.
I'll go and see him. You said, about noon? Listen," she said,
"Why do you lose two days for him? He never
Required more than his due." Cawdor stood up. "He could
be buried to-day, Lora. You seem
Under a strain until it is done." "Oh yes, I am tortured."
"This afternoon." "For awhile," she answered, 635
"He was a drunkard. He failed in everything.
I loved him so." Her hands pressed to her cheeks, he saw the
tears running above the knuckles
And thought it was grief had made her act strangely. He
went away to see that things were made ready in time,
And Lora, weeping, returned to her father's body. Michal
followed her.

There was a candle
burning 640
Each side the bed. Concha Rosas had placed them, vaguely
remembering some childhood belief in magic,
And having to stay alone in the room. By daylight the
candle flames were like two yellow stones
In the trance of the air; when Lora drew down the sheet they
trembled. Michal dared one reluctant glance

Line 630: '"Oh, Allan," Cawdor answered with closed lips, "His health and mine." / We ought to have had a sickness for him. It's a common thing. [then 'health and mine." / He talked wildly looked as if he might die.']'.

At the bed, and choked; she was glad when they went.

In Michal's room Lora
Was like a caged leopard; as if she had eaten fire. They went downstairs. Ilaria Acanna [49]
Was not in the kitchen; Lora found live coals in the stove and fed them with little sticks and soon
Crossed the blaze with billets of earth-red oak. "Now help me to fill the water-boiler." "What for?"
She answered, fetching water in a pail, "To bathe in, of course." When the tub was filled and the fire fed
They wandered out-doors; they heard a hammer in the work-shop. They wandered over and went in, where George Cawdor
Built a box for the dead; and Lora,
Admiring the dark wine-colored redwood boards: "And it smells sweet. How long will they last, George,
Before the rottenness that works everything lets in the earth?" "These never will rot." "Oh, that's a story.
Even redwood," she answered. "Well, he will have his room
As long as he needs. They're digging the grave?" "Allan," he said, "and Jesus Acanna." "You're not building it
Big enough for two, and yet I should be better - - -" she saw the puma-skin
That Allan had given her nailed to the far wall of the workshop to dry. "I'll take that. That's mine," she said.
"To line the coffin, help him remember the hills." George grumbled and drew the tacks of its crucifixion,
Then Lora in the door shook out the salt and alum from the stiff hide. She took it quickly to the house;
Michal, tired out with the long fever of her excitement remained with George.

In the room up-stairs
Lora spread the long skin over her father's body. "Oh, that looks horrible." She troubled the candles, [50]
Twitching it off; she crumpled it into folds and flung it down on the floor of the closet, under

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Line 644: 'At the beard and scarred pits of the eyes / And turned [then 'choked']; she was glad when they left the room.'.
Line 645: 'Lora was like a caged leopard awhile. "Ah, that's no rest."'.

Her father's nail-hung clothes; on his old shoes. "I dreamed
last night,"
She said to Concha Rosas, "someone walked on the hill
wearing the lion-skin and was shot for a lion.
I thought I'd bury him in it, but no, it's horrible."

She returned
out-doors and now was alone.
She panted in the steep path; the eagle's cage had been
moved west from the oak-tree; Jesus Acanna
Leaned on a shovel beside a mound of red earth between
them. At his knees tan arms and a dark head
Rose in one wave-shaped mass and surged forward, vanished,
and rose in a wave, and surged forward,
They had reached the sandstone, Allan was laboring still to
drive the pit deeper, the pick-axe beak,
Struck dead in the stone. Acanna from under the cloud of
the oak, his opaque eyes and Indian silence
Watched Lora come up the hill, and the eagle from the cage
watched Allan; the one with dark indifference, the other
With dark distrust, it had watched all the grave-digging.

Lora stood by the
heap of serpent roots
And axe-cut earth-limbs of the old oak. She said "I was worn
out this morning with not having slept.
Forgive me now for having (if I did) talked foolishly. I came
only to tell you, now I'll go back.
Good-bye, Allan." He said "good-bye" and saw her
Now the third time standing above him; and as when he was
climbing the sea-cliff the globed moon † [51]
Hung under her hand, so now the cloud-warped sun was in
her hand the captive against her thigh,

Line 666: 'I thought I'd line the coffin with it, but no, [then 'line the coffin, but no,']'.
Line 667: 'Returns [then 'Returned'] outdoors, she was alone and climbed'.
Line 671: 'And Acanna spoke. [then: 'They had reached']; Allan was laboring still to sink the grave deeper, but the pick-axe rebounded. [then 'deeper, the pick-axe point / Fell dead in the rock.']'.
Line 675: 'Lora stood at the pit-mouth, among the cut roots'.
Line 680: 'in her hand a lantern against'.

But prideless and pale, she and the sun, she offered a pitiable
strong angel of renunciation
Leading her light to the grave. "Oh, one thing more, Allan.
Tell me where there's a mountain laurel,
I'll break a branch to lay on his box." He was glad, for now
in her subdual the hungry liking
Dared again to be part of his mind, he said "I'll show you."
He rose from the grave and said to Acanna
"We can't go deeper, dig the rock at this end and level the
floor."

Dark aboriginal eyes,
The Indian and the mountain-eagle, like this dark earth
that watches our alien blood, watched them
Go down together to the wood in the canyon. There in the
shadow under the shining bitter laurel-leaves,
"No, it's not possible. Indeed I was lying," she said. She
stood apart and rigid from him, her arms
Straight down, stylized Egyptian stone; only the breasts
arched out by her brittle erectness, he saw them
Beat like a heart. "You see that. I'm not sure you've
understood what it means. That I must die
Is nothing much, though it's been pitied in youth. When
nothing's fulfilled. But to die in hell. I've lived [52]
Some days of it; it burns; how I'd have laughed
Last year to think of anyone taken captive by love. A girl
imagines all sorts of things
When she lives lonely, but this was never - - - Who knows
what the dead feel, and it is frightful to think
That after I have gone down and quenched myself in the
hissing ocean: roll, roll on the weed: this hunger

Line 682: 'That brings him to the evening grave.'.

Line 685: 'go deeper, but try to level it off.'".

Line 688: 'under the polished bitter [then 'polished and shining bitter'] laurel-leaves, / He had drawn the knife to cut the bough and she stopped his hand. "We have no right to abuse our betters. / The trees are decent but we! A redwood cut to make the coffin, an oak's roots for the grave.'.

Line 690: 'down, a stylized Egyptian figure [then 'form'; then 'stone carving'];'.

Line 692: 'Is nothing much, though death has [then 'death in youth has'] been pitied. When nothing is fulfilled.'.

Line 696: 'ocean; for that seems hasty [then 'for that's all'; then 'that's a small trouble'; then 'roll, roll in the weed']: this'.

Might not be quenched; this fire nor this thirst - - - .
For how can anyone be sure that death is a sleep? I've never
found the garden flower of temperance
In any of the acts of God, would seem to promise - - - Oh no,
all's wild and monstrous
Outside the garden: Long after the white body beats to bone
on the rock-teeth the unfed spirit
Will go screaming in hell along the flash of the foam,
gnawing for its hunger a wrist of shadow,
Torture by the sea, screaming your name. I know these
things. I am not one of the careful spirits
That trot a mile and then stand."

He had opened his
knife to cut the bough, that now he drew down, but Lora
Caught the raised wrist. "Let it be. We have no right. The
trees are decent but we! A redwood cut
To make the coffin, an oak's roots for the grave: some day
the coast will lose patience and dip
And be clean. Ah. Is it boys you love?
That makes you ice to me? What do you love? Only the deer
and the wild feet of the hills and follow them
As men do women. Yet you could dip that little knife-blade
in me for pleasure, I'd not cry out [53]
More than a shot deer or the rifle: indeed you had better, I
am turning poisonous. I will never leave you
Until you quiet me." She felt him trembling; his face was
bleak as a spent runner's beaten at the goal,
Gray pallor streaked with leaden sweat. Then she exalted at
heart and said "I have found you." But he
Like a man hanging on a crag's face by the eagle's keep,

Line 698: 'If I should still remember you Allan [then 'remember your face']: how can anyone be certain that death'.
Line 700: 'Outside the garden: I once got outside long after the white body beats to shreds on the rock-teeth'.
Line 702: 'Screaming your name. I know these things, they make death hard. I am not'.
Line 708: 'Only the deer and the wild beasts of the mountains and forest [then 'mountains and hunt them']'.
Line 710: 'More than a shot deer, but I will never leave you'.
Line 711: 'She felt his own trembling; his face was like a spent'.

Stunned by the wings, his eyes pressed to the cliff to save
them, leavings of blood from his torn hands
Print the ledge teeth, he groans against the luxury
Of only to let go and only to fall clear, a moment yet and a
moment: "Nothing
Is worse nor more vile than what we're doing." "What? With
a little - - - sin if you like - - - to slay great misery?"
She triumphed: and said "When not to do it
Means death in torment. And how can he know? Who's
injured while he's in ignorance? Ah that was a mean
saying,
Whether he is hurt: for this I'd stab God. Ah. Ah." She
welded her consuming body against him,

He felt her teeth in
his lips, he pressed the little knife into his thigh and felt
no pain † [54]
A moment, but then a lightning of pain, and in the lit
clearance: "I am not your dog yet," he said easily,
"Go up and tell my father that you are not shared." Her
shoulder he felt turn stone under his hand,
Her face went by him, wrinkled and mumble-jawed around
the young eyes. He felt the blood gliding
Down his knee, soft and warm, and Lora like a daft old
woman at a street-crossing muttered to herself.

Line 718: 'She cried in triumph, his arm jerked [then 'triumph, and felt his arm jerk'] like the tiller of a lost boat in whirlpool rapids [then 'in the whirlpool']. "When not to do it'.

Line 720: 'Whether he is hurt or not: for this I'd kill God. Ah. Ah." She welded her consuming body against him, / He felt her teeth on his lips, but being drawn down to the earth / Remembered his father. The ~~stone~~ aching column of desire was like a stone tower, all the wood timbers / And floors burning together, locked in the vault of the roof; desire and revulsion there like two waves / Meeting and wrestling in the wash of a river, when storm meets flood, then clash and midnight went over him / Draining his mind, in the laurel shadow, in the dense wood, he held [then 'had'] the little knife in his hand / And struck it into his thigh [then 'right thigh'] for the anguish / Of the pillar of fire. The spirit of Attis, that reddened the brown needles under the Phrygian pine wood' [continues on next leaf see notes at line 729 and verso leaf 54].

Line 725: 'Soft on his knee, and heard her muttering [then 'and Lora muttered'] like a daft old woman by an alley-entrance:'.

But four words clear, some shaken sequence about a wolf and
a wolf - - - - "Oh fool!" she rang clearly
Going up through the trees. He heard her spitting up there,
she had bitten her hand.

Poor hunter that was
not lucky,
Just, nor decent, however laughably righteous.

XI † [55]

A man at each
corner carried the oblong box,
Cawdor and his sons and Jesus Acanna. Certain ungraceful
untimely callas that Michal had found
Lay on the lid, but Allan was lame and when he stumbled
the flowers fell off, then Michal gathered them
From under the men's feet; the box was let down, she
dropped them upon it. All was done roughly and hastily

Line 727: 'spitting among them, she had bitten her hand. / (Nor just nor gentle, however laughably righteous)'.

Line 728: 'was not wise / However [then 'Nor loving, however'] laughably righteous [then 'righteous it was'].'.

Line 729: 'Loving nor decent, however laughably righteous. So deep [then 'Too self-controlled is unlucky [then 'not lucky']. So deep'] in the trap had better perhaps have taken the bait? / [repeated at the left margin 'Have taken the bait.'] / But she had regained it / Before she came to the house; she came with a stone face. You had too little a yacht to yaw in that storm wind. / XI / But Lora also, the same bright medicine pain / In her gnawn hand, conquered her nerves before she had come to the house; She came with a stone face, / locked a worm of fire in the white / stone of her face; not willing to die yet.'; two additional lines are written at the left margin at a slight upward angle: 'four men, one at each corner.' and 'Allan limped.'; line drawn across the leaf two inches from bottom.;

The following lines, written as though the foot of the leaf were the head, are a continuation from leaf 53, line 720; crossed out and deleted with an X: 'And since has roamed the word and made men mad, found flesh a moment again in this hunter. The knife-point / Came out streaked with an inch of red. There was no pain for a long instant; then it began, / And the locked waves rolled over, one beaten, and their shadow / Passed from his mind. "I cut myself.'.

Line 730: 'Jesus Acanna / Stands in the grave and soon gave over [turning] the [tough] stone. He looked at the eagle and said silently [then 'XI / A man at each corner']'.

By shame-faced people, and the eagle watched from the
cage.
Then Cawdor said uneasily, "We know nothing of God, but
we in our turn shall discover death.
It might be good to stand quietly a minute before we fill in
the dirt, and so if anyone
Is used to praying" — he looked at Concha and Ilaria —
"might say it in his mind." But Lora while they stood
silent
Muttered "Cold, cold," rubbing her hands, and with a sob
like harsh laughter leaned in the blindness
Of sand-bright eyes behind Michal toward Allan; her hand
before her dutifully stroking the air
Touched him, he stepped aside and passed beyond Concha
Rosas. Then Lora pressed her knuckles to her mouth
And went down the hill; the others remained.

Because of the dug
earth against the foot of the oak
They were all standing on the west side of the grave, a
curious group, Cawdor's gray head the tallest,
Intent, ill at ease, like bewildered cattle nosing one fallen.
Not one of them, now that Lora was gone, [56]
Had any more than generic relation to the dead; They were
mere man mourning man's end. The low sun
Reddening to fall in the sea streamed up their stooping
shoulders a lamp from a pit in the winter clearness,
Their shadows like a bundle of sticks lay over the shallow
grave up the red mound of earth,
And stretched up the dark mass and storm-burnt surface of
the oak's head. Beyond these bars of shadow another,
Broad, startling, and rectilinear, was laid from the eagle's
crate-poled box

Line 734: 'the cage. Lora looked down'.

Line 735: at right margin: '(a little more said?)'.

Line 737: 'they stood silent. / Went down the hill saying "Cold, Oh cold," rubbing her hands. The others remained; the silent moments / Lengthened because no one thought how to end it. / Breathed a harsh [then 'dry'] noise like laughter, a sob that seemed to tear her throat like a knife, she moved [then 'knife, and swayed'; then 'knife, and leaned'] in the blindness / Her absent eyes vacantly fixed on the oak-leaves, behind Michal toward Allan, her hand at her side'.

Along the grassed bank at the grave's head and up the picket
fence that enclosed older burials
East of the oak: seven slender human shadows and one of
another nature.

Jesus Acanna
Saw something like a jewel gleam in the rays on a heap of
surface earth at his feet, he stooped
And picked it up, knife-edge flake of wrought chalcedony.
The smooth fracture was pleasant to feel,
He stood and fondled it with his fingers, never suspecting
that his own forefathers had chipped and used it
To scrape a hide in their dawn or meat from a shell.

At length Cawdor
leaned over and took up a shovel
And said "I'd rather he lay near Jessie, on the other side of
the oak, near the boys' mother and Michal's:
For he was Lora's father and she loved him: only there
seemed to be no room, the slope is so narrow.
Let us fill in." Michal was weeping silently; the sun hid in
the wine-colored ocean, then the deep west fountained
Unanticipated magnificences of flying rose and heavy
purple; atmospheres of flame-shot
Color played like a mountain surf over the abrupt coast, up
the severe hills,
On the women talking, on the men's bent forms filling the
grave, on the oak, on the eagle's prison, one glory
Without significance dyed all the world.

Lora had gone down
the hill and set her face toward the ocean. [57]

Line 750: 'On the earth slope over the grave's head, to the paling fence that sheltered the older burials'.

Line 754: 'up, a ~~flake shell-like~~ shell-formed flake of clear chalcedony. The smoothly-chipped conchoidal fracture'.

Line 759: 'For he was my wife's father'.

Line 761: 'magnificences of rose and gold and purple; a flood-light color upon color / And flame over flame'.

Line 764: 'Possessed them all [then 'Dyed all the world'; then 'Stained all the world'] and presently was gone.'.

Against the road-gate she stopped, like a sleepwalker
awakening, her mind began to move and be aware
A step in advance. The act was simply inactable. Many
things could be done but not this, to drop
Her little spark into the general flowing, cold, and diffuse
grave. Than life-bound? But neither was life
Endurable now. She stood with both hands gripping the
second rail of the gate, tasting her misery
Like an ache in the world outside her body. Again she was
unconscious of all but that; her mind
Ran back and forth in the cage but none of its thoughts were
known to her; her lips formed blankly "Why: I can swim!"
Herself was thinking neither of water nor anything.
"But with his gun," her lips answered. Death with a personal
element in it, a jewel in its head
To make it joyful. Herself had no knowledge of going into
the house nor up to Allan's room,
But when the rifle was found, leaning against the wall in the
corner, herself awakened and took
Command of the world. What she had wanted: if she could
remember - - - - if she could be killed by his gun not only
But by his hand: how printed his life would be with hers
forever and forever!

She deceived herself.
The grotesque plan that grew in her mind was not really an
attempt at death but again another
Attempt at love: his aim would miss, she thought
unconsciously, or else his eye pierce her disguise,
And see her despair, and she could live and not die.

The next two pages –evidently discarded [57 verso]
from the draft are numbered 57B and 58B.
Then pagination starts again with 58.
--R.J. July 14.

Line 766: 'like a somnambulist awakened,'.
Line 767: 'A step ahead. The deed was simply unactable'.
Line 772: 'neither of death nor anything.'.

Lora meanwhile,
wrenched with her dry hiccoughs of sobs, † [57B]
Had gone down the hill and set her face blindly toward the ocean; but at the gate a sudden direction
Transformed her bearing, she turned under the cypress trees and entered the house, and in Allan's room
Saw his rifle in the wall-corner, she well remembered,
She'd seen it in the twilight before morning. Now in the house-twilight toward evening she crouched before it.
Her movements of her body had gained in beauty and lost in spirit; a certain angular valor
Was vanished, her gestures now were curves of a sagging chain. A humbled prisoner adores the key
His jailer has dropped and dares not take it: she cowered, her hand at her throat, and adored the rifle, she extended
One shaking finger to touch the sullen sheen of the barrel.
Moaning she rose, with no wild look
But wondering about her lost courage. She went to her father's room and flung herself on the mattress
On the stripped bed; among a hundred dreary visions of memory the lion-skin that had been dreamed of
And brought up here and dropped in the closet was seen.
She rose and found it, and on the closet floor † [58B]
Some shoe-laces from her father's shoes; she gathered them up and took the skin and went out. Ilaria
Acanna and Concha Rosas already approached the house,
but they were talking and failed to see her.

Line 787: 'angular valor / Was wholly vanished, she cowered supply and adored the rifle. A broken prisoner adores the key / His jailer has dropped and dares not take it, so she extended one shaking finger and touched the sullen / Sheen of the barrel'.

Line 789: 'she cowered supply and adored the rifle, she extended at length'.

Line 792: 'On the unmade bed; among a hundred dreary visions of memory the lion-skin that she had dreamed of / And brought up here and flung [then 'dropped'] in the closet passed through her mind [then 'closet was seen']. She rose, and found it. [then 'and claimed it again.'; then 'rose, found it, and went out-doors.']. Ilaria / Acanna and Concha Rosas already approached the house, but they were talking and did not see her.'.

The twilight still had a faint richness of rose, it blackened
soon like the face of a spent runner,
While Lora hid in the oak-bush watching. The men must
have gone down to the stables. Now Allan approached
With Michal, who asked him how he came lame. "I pulled
a tendon, slipping on the hill. That poor old blind man
Had lead in his bones." "Night," Lora thought, "so suddenly?
Oh that spoils all!" She clung to the twigs, and twilight
Returned, but perhaps in the moment faintness
Influence from what she wore and from the mountain had
entered her, now she could feel the very passion
Of wild creatures that stare at dim-lit windows, at night in
the mountain.

They were gone.
Acanna came next.
A twig snapped and he saw the tawny shoulder, quartering
away, in the clear by the oak-bush. His foot-steps
Hardly faltered; they changed their rhythm and he entered
the house. How long it took them! He had left the door
Wide open; a long dim shaft of light - - - that keen hunter'd
be lamplight-blunted - - - when he came, she moved
A little outward from the oak, four-foot on hands and knees,
feeling the thongs draw at her wrists.
She dared not look, not to show the white face.

The gun spoke; the
wild beast fell by the oak-bush.

Line 796: 'spent runner, / Beaten at the goal. She lingered and watched behind the oak-bush, at length [then 'oak-bush until at length'] Allan approached, with Michal, / Who asked [then 'Allan approached, / With Michal who asked'] him what made him [then 'how he came'] lame, "I pulled a tendon" he answered, " when I slipped on the hill. That poor old blind man / Had lead in his bones.'".

Line 797: 'Beaten at the goal; while Lora hid'.

Line 799: '"Night," she thought "should not fall so suddenly? Oh that spoils all!" She clung to the twigs, and twilight / [Dawning] again she knew she had fainted but not fallen. The brother and Michal and her brother laughed in the door / And entered the house. They had gone indoors. Acanna came next.'.

Line 805: 'How long it took then – and a light-shaft again / Shone from the door'.

Line 806: 'that keen hunter'd be dazzled from the light - - - when'.

Line 807: 'from the oak, with just the puma's grace of bunching muscles and slinking flanks. Some spirit perhaps from what she wore possessed her,'.

She left the room;
no one had yet come home; [58] 810
And went to her father's; she found the lion-skin, where she had flung it down in the closet, on the old shoes;
And here were shoe-laces too, to bind the forelegs against her wrists and the head to her head. She gathered
These things in haste and fled from the house. Ilaria Acanna and Concha Rosas already approached;
She heard them talking and coming, she escaped them easily.
The twilight still had a faint richness of rose, it blackened soon like the face of a spent runner 815
While Lora hid in the oak-bush watching. The men must have gone down to the stables. Now Allan approached
With Michal, who asked him how he was lame. "I pulled a tendon, slipping on the hill. That poor old blind man
Had lead in his bones." Lora had drawn the skin over her head and body, but the evening was not
Dark enough yet for any so crude deception. Her flesh in the sound of his voice was fire in a wind
Panting, with neither love nor hatred; those feminine passions had died of pain; they were servants of life, 820
Their last rebellions are only slave-rebellions; to overcome in the passion, to consume.

Those two
Had entered the house. The yellow windows intruded more and more on the brown twilight. The oak-smoke
Dropped wreaths of fragrance from the chimney against the sky, a planet wavered in the vapor. The wilderness-hearted
Shadow-gathering night came down the canyon and entered her heart. Acanna came up toward the house. † [59] 825
A twig snapped and he saw the tawny shoulder, quartering away, in the clear by the oak-bush. His footsteps
Hardly faltered; they muted themselves and entered the house. Had he seen, really? He had left the door
Wide open; a long dim shaft of light - - - the keen hunter'd be lamplight-blunted - - - When he came, she moved
A little outward from the oak, four-foot on hands and knees, feeling the thongs draw at her wrists,
Not daring to look, not to show the white face. 830

XII

Cawdor and George
Cawdor were coming up
In the pale of the west sky under the ragged cypresses. They
heard the gun fired from the door
Like a shot over a barrel, and the rattle of echoes.
Acanna was calling the dogs. Michal spoke, Allan answered,
and suddenly he said "Ah, fetch a light.
My . . God - - -" One of the dogs yelped at being struck, and
a match flared. A gentle moaning began
As if it had been heard all the while.

The scene was so
unreal, the lion-skinned body and the bloodless
Diminished face, chalky with pain, a splotch of earth
staining the sunken cheek, and the teeth
Shining dry by the white lips in the match-light: that no one
made a marvel of it, but Cawdor
Knelt and found life. The bullet had struck lower than the
shoulder and shattered the arm. She screamed with pain [60]
And fainted when Cawdor and the others began to lift her.
They carried her into the house, the lion-skin still
Bound to the wrists. Allan supported the dangling arm.

The others would
have laid her on the floor,
But Cawdor inflexibly: "Take her up-stairs while she feels
nothing." When she was laid on her own bed
He said "You, George, ride for the doctor. Get him here in
the morning." Then Allan: "I fired the shot.
I'll go and fetch him." "You - - - " Cawdor answered; and
checked himself, snapping his teeth together. "Go,
George."
Michal was bathing the shrunk face, Concha had brought a
pitcher of water; while Cawdor cut
The cords that bound the skin to the wrists. He slit the
sleeve and drew it from the pierced arm, the fingers
Were hooked and waxy; the flesh of the arm was smooth on
the outer surface to the red and black puncture,

Line 845: 'Then Allan: "This is my fault.'.

But where the bullet had issued the flesh was raised and
dreadful. Cawdor looked up from that and he saw
Allan by the bed. "You bastard," he said, his throat swelling,
"get out of this place." The young man faced him
A moment long, and turned and went out.

Lora began to moan,
she flapped the hurt arm, the hand
Lying still and hooked, the marbled flesh heaving between
the shoulder and the elbow: Michal remembered
Her eagle in the fresh of its wound waving the broken flag:
another of Allan's rifle-shots: almost † [61]
She hated Allan. Lora's eyes opened wide,
Gray seas rayed with black lashes, small images of the lamp
like yellow sparks in the central pools
Of night; around them the strained life hardened and stood.
Then Cawdor seeing her conscious again:
"Lie quiet. Does it hurt much?" "It hurts. I fail in everything,
like my father." She scanned the room
With her great eyes, not moving the head on the wet pillow.
"You wouldn't have brought me up to this bed
If you had known what I - - - what has been done to me - - -"
"Perhaps not," said the stone face. "I must fasten your arm
Afterwards we will talk of these things." "He has sent for the
doctor," Michal whispered, while Cawdor daubed
The wound with the stinging salve he used in the cuts of
horses. The hurt flesh seemed to writhe on the bone
But Lora's pale lips were not opened. Blue lines appeared
along their borders before the bandaging
And slinging were done. "It is cracked in jags, I cannot set it.
Give her some water, Michal." She drank
And opened her lips, but the voice failed. She opened them
again and said "Did Allan go for the doctor?"
"No, dear," said Michal, "George went." She thought, and
then said: "Allan has gone away then?" "No, he's
down-stairs."
And Cawdor said: "She has something private
To tell me. Concha will do what's needed. You can go down,
Michal." Lora with jeering eyes
And bitter white lips: "She is used to doing what's needed."
But Michal: "Let me stay, father, I will be still." † [62]
"No," he said. She went down and said to Allan "What will
she tell? It is a torture-room." He said

"She has nothing to tell. She wanted to die, no doubt, and
has failed." But Michal though hearing the hard voice
Thought that his face was worse tortured than Lora's. She
said "I will kill my eagle. There's too much suffering."
"You'd better," he said.

Cawdor, upstairs,
with a sort of gentleness.
"If you are ashamed to tell me before Concha, she too can go
down." "I am learning pain," she answered,
"But what does shame mean? You are common to us." The
crease behind his mouth blackened; she, lifting her chin:
"You needn't make faces, you can have all the news for
nothing. Life bored me and I envied the beasts,
That make quick ends." Under his hooded spying she
remembered her greater misery, the present
Pain had almost put it from mind, but now that it stood in
mind the pain married it and bred
Abominations. "I shall die somehow. There are more ways."
Bitterly and alone to go down
And the others prosper. Cawdor and his cattle; [little light]
Michal be married sometime and breed babies: † [63]
Beaten out of the world, and the others prosper: and Allan
walk free in woods. "Once a man stole," said Cawdor,
"Some calves of mine, I had no proof but a guess; and
slaughtered them with his own. I talked to the fellow
And touched him with my hands, in ten minutes he told me
- - - on his knees. His neighbors thought, a hard man,
But all these liars are cowards." "Oh, if you twist my arm,"
she answered, "the ruined one." "I would do that
Sooner than - - - Ah, God pity me, Lora,

Line 875: 'Cawdor said with a sort of gentleness / Like grass growing on a stone: "If you are ashamed before Concha, I will send her down too.'.

Line 876: 'she too can go down." "How could I be ashamed? / You are common to us.'.

Line 877: 'The crease blackened behind his mouth; she, lifting her chin: / "You won't scare me by making faces, I tell you [then 'tell you the truth'] for nothing. But if you'll twist my arm you can scare Concha. / I'll tell more than the truth.'.

Line 879: 'That [then 'They'] make good ends. That is all. I had watched a slow one.'.

Line 884: "Five heifers of mine,'.

You are so much nearer to me than life or breathing: if my
heart fell in the dirt and bred worms
Can I stick it back with the white filth in it? Have you
forgotten
The evening you gave me a promise? I am old and wear
stone, but I can be driven mad like another,
When his heart crawls. You will tell me, or I will force you."
"He did," she answered. "But why will you squeeze
destruction
Out of my mouth, I hoped to have bathed my mouth in
bloody stillness, and he muffed his aim. Wait, dear,
Let me keep silence only a day or two, I'll never
Wear you out with living too long: you'll mourn me
cheerfully, She was a dear girl and died for no reason:
You and George will drive the steers, Allan will ride away
north, and all your lives go quietly as if
I'd never come from the fire. But only a pleasant-smelling
memory of me for Michal to water
Among green plants. Silence would buy that. Oh— say I
wanted to die because I was sick of seeing
Those tallowy charms of this Concha of yours [64]
Roll through the house." She had watched the mounting
violence in prison in him, that made his knees and his
hands
Quiver like an over-engined hull. "Strike me if you like."
She thought he would do it. "I am down, now,

Line 888: 'You are so much nearer me than life or death:'.
Line 889: 'Could I help but clean it? Do you remember'.
Line 891: 'why will you be reckless? [then 'why will you force destruction']'.
Line 892: 'in bloody silence, he bungled his aim. Think, now dear,'.
Line 895: 'will herd the steers, and Allan ride away north, and everything be quiet and pleasant as it was'.
Line 896: 'Before I came out of [then 'came down from'; then 'came out of'] the fire. Except a'.
Line 898: 'This greasy Concha in the house." [then 'The tallowy charms']'.
Line 899: 'Shone [then 'Float'] through the house, I was jealous of her." "You know the words to make me angry," he said, "You chose them carefully."'.
Line 900: 'hull. Rather than strike her face he turned on the Spanish woman [then 'hull. "Ah, strike me']'.

But you are not up." He ruled his flesh with his iron and said
grievously "I think Lora, you'd tell me
In a few words, if you could feel - - - no doubt your shoulder
aches a little but you feel nothing
Like the blind slowly-turning hell
Of fire in here - - -" "Oh, don't I? We'll match hells," she
answered, "in a minute." Lifting her head thirstily
To look at his eyes, either she strained the hurt arm or the
quick motion sucked the brain of its blood,
The eyes curtained and the head fell.

Down-stairs they heard
The chairs pushed back, scraping, and the violent weight of
Cawdor's movement. Michal went up and entered
The room, even Allan went up and stood in the door but
Michal turned back and closed it, then he returned.
Concha had chilled with water the small pinched face and
snow-image throat among the dark hair, and Cawdor
Poured whiskey, he made her drink, and spilled it on her
mouth. The smell clouded the room. He took no heed
That Michal had come; and Lora choked on the liquor and
sighed. She moved her face on the dark hair [65]
And said, being faint, like one struggling for memory, in a
white voice like a tired good-tempered child's:
"What I was saying: it was under a laurel-tree.
I am not strong, and when he drew me onto the ground I
seem to have fainted. I did just now."
Cawdor stood like a column, all the quivering had ceased,
his face sad but not marred with any
Tumult of thought; but Michal stood perplexed like one lost
in a forest. And Lora plaintively:
"That first time, I was not to blame. He knew of course that
I loved him. But loving or hating is done to us

Line 901: 'He conquered himself again, and was able to speak. "I think, Lora, you would tell me'.

Line 909: 'The room, and even Allan looked in [then 'went up and stood to'] the door, but Michal turned back and closed it, then he returned but dawn returned. [then 'closed it, then went to his own room.']'.

Line 915: 'when he threw me to the ground I seem to have fainted. As I did now.'".

Line 918: 'loved him. These things are done / By something'.

By something not ourselves, by God I suppose. The next
time, I went willingly." "Who was it?" he asked.
"Why, he. Allan." Michal screamed "Lies. Lies. Oh, Oh; she
is lying." He said "Is Allan in the house?
Why did you want to be killed, you had your enjoyment?"

But Michal ran
down-stairs and cried to her brother,
"Go Allan, go Allan, she is lying horribly. I think she is
lying. Oh, you must go far to-night, Allan.
She has made him mad. Oh please." He caught her hands
that beat the air and his face like a [ ] wings
Against a window, he made her tell him what had been said.

While Lora said to
Cawdor: "I thought
He'd take me away; I am not a shameful woman; but he
laughed and said, Oh no, how can I take you? [66]
Wait here, for I have a whore in the north too. Then I
wanted death." She watched his hands clench and extend,
And heard him answer dully "I am not your dog." So Allan
had said too. His eyes were changed the vile way
Concha had said, so that she doubted whether they saw at
all. "It is not in my nature," he said
"To give you that." "Not? You are charged with it. Not a
drop?" He crossed the room and felt the wall with his
hands,
And along the wall to the door.

While he was yet at
the stairhead
Michal said, beating her hands together: "If he should strike
you what would you do? You would not strike him.

Line 919: 'by God I suppose. But wait, "she said, / "The second [then 'next'] time I came willingly'.

Line 921: 'Why did you want him to kill you, you had'.

Line 924: 'beat the air and his face like a bird's wings'.

Line 927: 'shameful woman. But when I spoke of it, when my father was dead, he laughed and called me a fool'.

Line 928: 'wanted death." Cawdor said dully, "It is not in my nature / To give you that." He walked like a man struck [then 'gone'] blind, and felt along the door-joint to find the door,'.

Please go. Out of his way. Go to the stable to sleep.
Anywhere out of his way, Allan.
If she was lying she'll take it back to-morrow. Let him not see you." She pressed him to the outer door.
"Certainly," he said, "she's lying." He returned and took his rifle. "Not leave it for a madman," he said.
"It's done enough harm." "Please go. Please. Please." He was almost passive to her power, having lost confidence
In his own mind since that ridiculous rifle-shot. He let himself be driven from the house, the door

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The next four pages are a divergent draft, [66 verso]
and are numbered 66A to 69A, accordingly.
They were evidently discarded.
Then the page numbering begins again,
with 67. — R. J. — July 14, '41

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but he laughed and said, Oh no, how can I take you? [66A]
Wait here, for I have a whore in the north too. Then I wanted death." Cawdor said dully "It is not in my nature
To give you that." He walked like a man gone blind, and felt along the door-jamb to find the door,
Saying "No. You have to make a distinction."

XIII

Michal said, "I am in terror. Concha has not cried out.
I know you are not afraid, but she has poisoned his mind. If he should strike you what would you do?

Line 939: 'since that mistaken rifle-shot.'.
Line 941: 'It is not in my power / To be the pimp between my wife and death, like the nigger in Shakespeare." He walked blindly and struck / Against the door-jamb, feeling to find the door.'.
Line 943: 'Oh no, not kill a woman you have to draw it somewhere, not kill a woman."'.
Line 944: 'Neither timid, nor feeble enough to be persuaded / By Michal's fear'.

You would not strike him. There is nothing sane for you to
do but go out of his way. Go up to the Rock.
She will unsay her lies to-morrow. I'll go early and see you."
Reluctantly he left the house,
The rifle in his hand, and went limping through the thick
darkness to saddle his horse. Michal ran up
To ask Concha what more had been said. Cawdor had not
come down, but started into Allan's room
Before he went down.

In the night Michal
saw like a star on the Rock a little fire and was glad.
Lora smiled and moaned in her sleep. Michal went looking
for her father and could not find him,
While Concha, weary to death, slept in her chair. Then
Lora stealthily undid the narrow belt [67A]
That strapped her left arm to her side. With her teeth and
her right hand she knotted it up on the bed-post,
And turning back the tongue to let the strap slide in the
buckle wore it like a leather collar
About her throat and slid her body from the edge of the bed.
The hurt arm was so wrenched that perfect
Night hooded her eyes before the strap drew.

Orion and diamond-
sparkling Sirius went up through tatters
In the traveling cloud; the small red star of fire high up the
ravine on the night-invisible Rock
Was moved and flung down, a shower of sparks on the
redwood darknesses. Certainly the great unconcerned hills
Converse together in the high gray starlight. The ocean
smiting their feet is like a voice from a cave.
In the self-murdered woman began
The incapable dream that suffocation, and later the slowly-
orient decay of the branched cells,

Line 946: 'for you to do but go up to the rock.'.
Line 953: 'Then Lora with her right hand undid the belt'.
Line 955: 'in the buckle she wore it like a dog-collar'.
Line 956: 'throat and slid from the side of the bed [then 'and twisted herself over the bedside']. The hurt arm was so wrenched that perfect darkness [then 'night'] / Hooded her eyes before the strap tightened.'.

Breed in the brain. That white and gray jelly of nerves —
hypertrophied in the human animal
To monstrous dimension and form, like a great fungus on the
soil of the body — now the soil was dead
Began slowly to glow with its own light, in the starless
Darkness under the dead bone sky, as bits of rotting wood on
the floor of the night forest
Warm rains have soaked, shine by the path like eyes. The
stirred ocean, and earth-worms trodden in the dark
In a damp place make the like brightness, their wounds are a
pale green earth-stars under the bruising feet. [68A]
Here some initiate observer might have perceived
The chemic changes of the dead cells like spots and zones of
glow travel on the wrinkled hemispheres
And the hinder brain and marrow of the spine; merge and
diminish, and expand, making their dream for themselves.
No distal pain nor nudging pulse-beat disturbed it. Time was
not there. The dream lacked the felicity
That filled her father's after he had died. This one began
with vague terror; soon it presented
The fiction of love under the laurel she had made for
Cawdor to hear; but the real passion, the dreadful
Reality of her desire persisted in death. Now insulated from
all external reality
The very nature that made the dream had brought her own
kernel of real to complete the dream.
The phantom tissue of fulfillment wrecked on the
undissolved relic of life, the dream-wright nerves

Line 968: 'soaked, you see them beside [then 'soaked, are seen beside'] the path shine like vague eyes. Worms that you tread in the dark'.

Line 969: 'brightness. They burst and shine a pale green fire under the bruising feet. / The brain so shone.'.

Line 972: 'And the hinder brain; and merge and diminish [then 'diminish, thicken'] and expand, join into one steady [then 'final'; then 'last'] brightness [then 'splendor'] of dream [then 'of a dream'].'.

Line 975: 'for Cawdor to hear; but the real passion, the terrible / Reality of her desire persisted in death and herself half believed it. / Then while she told it, though all the while her pleasure was concealed in it, knowing it in spite of belief [then 'for Cawdor to hear; but the real passion, the terrible']'.

Spun spider-webs of splendor in vain, the dream knew it was
dreaming. It made and essayed a future
Beyond the laurel; the birth-pang that all women desire at
heart was a red river to ford.
Nothing seemed real on that bank either, and the dream ran
back
To make her father alive and herself a child, in vain. It came
and cried under the laurel-tree,
The phantom lover came and took it by the hair, he
breathed falcons of fire into the eyes [69A]
And the writhing mouth - - - never reality; burning; no
illusion, "Oh hollow and hollow," a bitter shade
Cried out in the air, breaking itself away from the decay-
glowing brain. That faint and mortal
Effluvium with its torturing bit of reality in it blind as a fog
went down the house,
Crying "father" at first, knowing it never could find anything
cried for. Unheard, unbeheld, it passed
Crying "Allan," across a bitterness it was blind to, of living
people, and wandered on the black hills
Outcast between the cattle and oaks.

This was not Lora
Cawdor but only a drifting wind
Of energy and desire that could not die at her death. The
dream remaining in the dead brain was equally

Line 979: 'in vain, they knew they were dreaming. Defeated, the phantom stream pushed forward [then 'in vain, the dream knew it was dreaming, It made a future and flowed up']'.

Line 987: 'knowing it could never find anything cried for. Unimagined and [then 'cried for. Unheard, unseen, unimagined']'.

Line 988: 'people, and crying up the black hills / It's lonely grief between the sages [then 'gray sage'] and lupine [then 'gray lupine'] [ ], and the unregardful cattle, its lonely despair. / Its grief between [then 'Between'] gray sage and lupine, and the unregardful cattle, shearing the grass with long green tongues [then 'cattle, with long green tongues shearing the grass'; then 'cattle, licking their muzzles'].'.

Line 989: 'Homeless between the cattle and oaks, its lonely despair.'.

Not Lora Cawdor; Lora was dead. The dream continued
awhile; it grew too simple to describe.

Was shut behind him. He stood a moment outside, and went
to the outbuilding and called Acanna. † [67]
"I have to be away for the night. Go in and help the
women," he said, "my father is sick.
Go quickly, will you." Acanna went to the house and Allan
down to the stables. He thought, ashamed, 995
"I was well in the north, why did I ever - - - to this damned
place. I'll not hide like a rat in the hay,
But make my camp," he said, "on the old Rock." Three years
ago, after the parting quarrel
He'd camped there; his mind ran in the groove. He fetched
the riding-leathers and a long tie-rope, and caught
His pony snuffing gently in the sweet darkness. Being come
to the Rock he made an oak-twig fire there,
The old way, thinking Michal might see it. True he must go
in the morning and face their crazy trouble; 1000
Here meanwhile was a movement toward the wished
departure.

XIII

Michal had shut the
outer door and turned back
To face the room, then Cawdor came down. He stood and
peered about with the deformed gaze

Line 992: 'The dream continued; but it became too simple to describe. / The drifting image on the hill / The outer night of the coast was [then 'is'] like a giant mind too full of darkness to govern itself, / A few unorganized impulses like night-birds passing not knowing each other: so the outer night,'.

Line 993: continued from line 939, leaf 66.

Line 995: 'Help them to watch him. / Go quickly, will you." Acanna went to the house and Allan toward the stables. There, in his shame / At fleeing; he thought "I'll not hide like a rat in the barn.'.

Line 998: 'fetched the saddle'.

Line 1000: 'In the old manner, thinking Michal might see it. He'd make another fire in the morning; she might come up / And bring him news. True he must go in the morning and settle this stupid trouble;'.

That Lora had noticed before. He gathered himself sighing
and went to the table the lamp was on,
Picked up a paper and unfolded it and said steadily "Where's
Allan?" "He must have gone to his room,"
She answered, her voice shook with the strokes of her heart.
Her father twitched his head and returned upstairs, [68]
Tottering like an old man. She heard him, while Acanna
came in, tottering from room to room,
Making his search. He was long in Lora's.

When he came down
he shook at seeing Acanna, and checked,
Saying "What do you want?" He waited for no answer but
went out-doors. Michal followed him. He went
To the stables and walked in the corral with the horses. She
thought it dreadful, under the peering stars
And rags of cloud, to watch him pass from one to another,
questioning the horses. A low red star
In the east, she turned and saw it, a spark of fire on the
Rock. She trembled and crawled in through the gate
Between the bars, panting with fear, and plucked at his
sleeve.
"He is gone, father, you can't find him to-night. I sent him
after George to hurry the doctor.
George doesn't know what pain she is suffering." He
answered patiently "I must find him, I have to ask him."
He fetched a bridle but no saddle, she followed him to the
road and saw him start north. She then
Returned to the house, weeping. [69]

But Cawdor had seen the small red star on the rock when he fetched the
bridle
And made no sign, but with deceit answered deceit.

Line 1008: 'Making his search; where [then 'his room where'] Lora lay was the last he entered; Concha moved in her chair'.

Line 1012: 'questioning the horses. She went in there, / Panting with fear, and plucked at his sleeve. / "He is gone, father, you can't find him to-night. I sent him after George to hurry the doctor. / George doesn't know what pain she is suffering. There was a star [then 'suffering. A star']'.

Line 1013: 'on the Rock. He must not see it. She entered the gate'.

Line 1017: 'no saddle, she saw him go north.'.

End of draft

The next two pages are evidently from another draft, but are numbered 70 and 71.

Page 72 — the last — seems to be notes made in the dark after I went to bed, —and preserved for some unknown reason.

— R. J.
July 14, 1941.

By the arm at the elbow, his fingers went to the bone like a
smith's tongs. "Wait here," he said, and went in; † [70]
The other stood still.

Her eyes were open,
with great pupils, and regarded him entering. The left
one's white
Was grained with a jagged splotch of red; a little vessel had
broken there in the stress of her blood.
"Fool," he said, " was this needed? The debt is paid." He'd
meant to caress her hand and soothe her terror 1025
But the eyes were calm, there was no terror. What did she
mean with her smiling attentive eyes? He turned
On Concha and said: "Where were you?" She panted,
holding her heavy breasts with her hands, "She send me
down.
Send me for water. She send me down for water. I come
back: Oh!"
"I will have you and Ilaria," he said, "sit here all night." He
went to the door and said, "Dante.
To-morrow notch the ear of the cow you like. She is yours,
and her calf." He returned to the bed, Fera's 1030

Line 1021: 'at the shoulder, his fingers'.

Line 1026: 'there was no terror. She smiled and croaked half-audibly from the bruised throat, "I've broken [then '"My father's'] / Luck's broken; no failing at last [then 'no failing', then' no failing at last']. What'.

[Radiant] eyes were like the element he moved in, and
examined the bandage. "You're lucky," he said. And
angrily,
Can you speak, or not?" She moved her head and touched
the throat with her finger, smiling. "That will be well
soon,"
He answered. She watched his face shudder in a change, the
whole stiff face
Became like a scar. It was ironed smooth and he sent
Concha to warm linen and a blanket; himself
Tore strips of linen to bind the arm to the body. When
Concha was gone, Fera from the bruised throat [71] 1035
Croaked half audibly: "I know. But don't mourn him. We
dead
Are happier, though pain continues awhile." He tore the
strip to the end carefully and said "You know
Nothing. He ran. I saw him like the scut of a deer between
the hill and the stars. He has gone north."
She smiled to herself.

Coyotes, the little
wolves that fox the farmyards and snare vultures from carrion, 1040
Night after night in winter scream on the hill and no one
heeds them. But then, while Cawdor was binding
The bandaged arm to secure its quietness, a distant crying of
coyotes: he stopped at the first voice,
She felt his wrists at her flank shake like struck iron. He
knotted the strip and went out. Concha and Ilaria
Were both in the room, sitting like tan brown tents
On either side of the bed. Their turning eyes 1045
Followed Cawdor until he was gone, and returned to Fera,
Who smiled to herself.

Line 1038: 'Nothing. He is gone. I saw him like the scut of a deer between the hill and the stars. He has gone north." / She smiled and whispered painfully. "The pain in here's gone," / Touching her breast, "the other will [then 'other's easy]." He was binding the arm, she said: "My father's luck turned. At last / No more failure."'.

Line 1047: 'Who lay and smiled. / Whose face revealed nothing. // But Cawdor went up / To the foot of the Rock. He [hiked] about all night, / Because the earth was nothing but broken stone / Under the drop of the cliff.'.

[72]

If you will let me? He followed hiking [upper
Outside the oaks and watched her creep down toward the left
house. quadrant]
The blood gliding by his knee he held a handful of earth
rubbed
Against the stain to embrown the color.

Her mind began to [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [upper
[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] right
[ ] -- quadrant]
half-metamorphosed
A rose-breasted white girl in front, an erect mountain-lion
Behind, she escaped from the house.

The others perhaps Hood gone down to the stable
After the burial. Oak-smoke to spread
And be fragrant among the leaves.

The head and slant shoulder [lower
And half the side drew crouching out of the bush left
The hindquarters were hidden, it lifted itself quadrant]

On straightened forelegs and stood up to [quarter] from them

Its raised head tuned up canyon away

Hood held his [fire], [lower
Astonished at it, thinking it one of the dogs right
But both were splotched with white this was yet light enough quadrant]

Leaf 72 was folded into quarters creating eight quadrants. See Jeffers note after line 1021.
Leaf 72 upper left quadrant: lines correspond to lines 1262–1265 of *Cawdor*.
Leaf 72 upper right quadrant: lines correspond to lines 1357–1358 of *Cawdor*.
Leaf 72 lower left quadrant: lines correspond to lines 1369–1373 of *Cawdor*.
Leaf 72 lower right quadrant: lines correspond to lines 1373–1377 of *Cawdor*.

To [show] the autumn color and texture of the hair even.
And the brindle, that had no white about him was dead.

---

more likely [verso
Gone down the granite slide into the gulf upper
With the other ----: but the choice was not left
conscious quadrant]
And in a moment no choice,
Let him meet somebody soon, for dramatic expression
Well, I have killed my son
He possessed himself

was dipping a sponge: it was the dark clot
stringing from the red sponge that overcame him

Oh, you can't fool me, [verso
pure as Jesuses turn in hell. upper
right
He [thought] of [indecipherable] it to Judas quadrant]
the terror in the eyes — a pitiful [indecipherable] smile on
the
lips. The [more] became her own more nearly
black
The breasts were pink, the tip [was] so
white and against
Concha kisses the breasts
"Do you love me, Concha? He
loved
"I don't kill women." me better."

Her madness is fear of pain." ~~But Cawdor~~ [verso
"Your lying?" he cursed lower
~~lies have truth enough~~ left
To stain with. I have seen, I have seen quadrant]

Leaf 72 verso upper left quadrant: last two lines in quadrant written upside down correspond to lines 1408–1409 of *Cawdor*.
Leaf 72 verso upper right quadrant: lines correspond to line 1681 of *Cawdor*.
Leaf 72 verso lower left quadrant: lines correspond to lines 1477–1479 of *Cawdor*.

The brown laurel-leaves
On the ground, and that dog's flesh to her flesh You naked
Between the dog and the brown laurel-leaves slut
It is [finished].
You choose to die?" The one that
defiled my life to finish it,"
"Sweetheart--- He
threatens to kill her
I never called you before. Then she
is angry and fights back.

Exploded in his mind like a light blindness [verso
so that the body leaped and struck while the mind lower
Astonished with hatred stood still. There was no divide right
He saw Hood with loose body roll under the rock quadrant]
[ ] [ ] [ ]
Like a thing without [then 'with no'] hands and screamed at
the fall
in the air

Leaf 72 verso lower right quadrant: lines correspond to lines 1547–1549 of *Cawdor*.

Endnotes

Verso leaf 13: 'It's true that he hasn't visited'.

Verso leaf 16: 'he says that someone will take care of him.'.

Verso leaf 22: 'The horses' legs straddling against the wind / Like the splayed legs of broken chairs / fences broken and cattle frightened / In the storm on the hill / The three intrusive atoms of humanity / Cawdor and his sons' // 'Bring out the storm of desire and resolution in Fera's mind — the under storm; the inner storm — the noise [then 'master-noise'] of the world, the redwoods — the noise [then 'master-noise'] of the house, the old man's snoring. / Rain — rain — rain / in the iron mercy of open heaven' // 'But Cawdor / as if he had nerves / Along the roots of the grass / was never taken unaware / By the acts of nature, as if he had nerves / Along the roots of the grass / The redwoods in the canyon bent their great [loins] / To spill the storm, but in the ridged hills / They felt the spray of water / ~~In the steel wind~~ / And wreck of broken rain clouds in the steel wind. In the open mercy of heaven / And saw the horses legs like the splay legs / Of broken chairs sidle and straddle — the ridges' // '~~Fera felt the world~~ change [then 'The change of the world'] / — and anger at Cawdor and the house for having a window that would break. / But her mind cried / Another matter at Michal's entrance: / "if this poor mortal for whose sake neither nature nor man / Had ever stepped from the path!" / ~~She screamed, Michal came up,~~ she tells Michal that the storm is come because her great father is dying. Nothing can hurt him. / hand wrestled it into service' '~~At the tap of a broken cypress bough~~ / ~~The window exploded inward~~ / ~~She screamed, Michal comes up~~ / ~~The rattle of sand pebbles~~ [then '~~of earth~~'] ~~gust flung down from~~ [then '~~blasted from~~'] ~~the hill~~ / ~~From its hill above~~ / ~~Lay inert and breathing~~ / ~~The deep layers left ungoverned~~ / ~~Decided life in a dream~~ / ~~ghostly rhythm~~.'.

Verso leaf 23: '~~All that I loved is here dying.~~ ~~and soon if you should ask me to I would strike his face~~ / ~~While he lies dying.~~ / ~~Do you not wish you were like this man?~~ / ~~We have something to do,~~ / ~~And no one can do much until he has stripped off the love~~ [then '~~he has taken his love~~'] ~~of life like cloth from around his body~~ / ~~And thrown it away.~~ / ~~Perhaps you are like this man~~. / whatever his refusal, / I used to be proud. But now I will not ask you to take me away, I will only ask you to stay here, and be in secret with me. // ~~Michal comes up by instinct and is present, [overborne] by Lora's power.~~ // ~~We ought to take him up to the Rock (his superiority over the others) to die exalted against the sky.~~ // Late in the night again: no change of power or rhythm: how strong he was! // ~~Let Alan come up again sometime.~~ / ~~Not you, Michal, it is too painful.~~'.

Verso leaf 33: 'How incredible it was the noise on the bed continued rhythmic, unchanged, never wore itself out with no replenishment inexhaustible, / Not changed in time over time since morning.'

Verso leaf 37: '"During the night Lora dreamed vividly that Michal dressed herself in the mountain-lion skin and was shot by Acanna. Toward dawn her father's breath weakened, was at length a mere click in the throat and ended.'.

Verso leaf 38: 'He had freedom at last / out of past experience present paradise. / sensuous delirium / The dream became like the dream multitude / been unfit to express any human or describable sort of consciousness / Perfect, this nudging

pulse-beat was quiet, the peripheral nerves / Free [then 'Ignorant'] of time, free of the nudging pulse-beat, perfectly real to itself become reality [then 'itself being insulated'] / Could / From all touch of reality the dream triumphed, building from past experience present paradise / More intense as the decay quickened, but ever simpler as it proceeded, until the ecstasy / Soared through a carnival of whiskey and women to the simple delight of eating flesh, and higher [then 'and tended'] / Yet higher to an unconditioned joy of existence. [then 'unconditioned pleasure.'] But now the inter-connections between the cells [then 'the groups'] of the brain / Began then to be switched off and abolished [then 'brain / Failing, the dreamer and the dream fell [then 'dream split'] into multitude'] / and presently the charged cells became unfit to express / Any human'.

Verso leaf 45: 'I was looking through the house to find someone who loved him. / What did you do [ ] that he was [then 'do finding him'; then 'do when I was not there, you found him'] unprotected and dead, spit on him [then 'stood and [ ] down'; then 'spit on his face']? / I should have thought that the dead were safe. / I tell you the dead look above and laugh and despise the living / Let me tell you that death / Is over life like heaven over deep hell.' // 'Cawdor had caught her falling; she thinks his hands are the earth of the grave closing on her, and protests and struggles against being buried alive.' // '"I had no choice then / But Hood to take me away or make him kill me."' // 'But Hood pretended to have been asleep, and hardly / Even yet awake to the world [then 'Even yet awake']. / The more his intent was innocent / The more his looks tasted of guilt; and Cawdor / Hood lighted ritual candles / Well, he's not now. She can't have reason to call you again. / Get dressed // Folded his doubts, like a man folding / A living coal into the palm of his hand.'.

Verso leaf 46: 'Why Hood didn't go. The dead man's dream / The lion-skin, the redwood coffin / The grove / The laurel tree / Fera sick again / The funeral / Fera, Romano Rosas, The lion-skin / Fera shot / She smelled the oak-smoke / ~~heaven and hell in the same house~~ / vile base suspicion / ~~They looked at each other like two ghosts~~ / Yet he could not shut the door / Hood — Why did my father tell me to stay? To watch us? — then himself from a height / Fera goes over [then 'Fera hears Hood go out, goes over] in her mind all the means of death. Long living. / Then her excited tidings / She is her burnt survivor, / The dead man dying all the while / ~~After Hood goes by innocently he resolves to leave her unwatched~~ / his ~~mind had not the art, common to more sophisticated minds of regarding~~ / ~~his own baseness with a smile.~~ / Remember the form is choric. / When she saw him at home, returned from hunting the ~~pain~~ anguish of having / flesh, instead of the numbness of despair - - - her excitement / resumed, she could not be quiet anywhere but / went about like one who has eaten fire.'.

Leaf 47: One of these lost pages was used for its clean verso during the writing of the final *Cawdor* manuscript. This page [verso leaf 52 of the Beinecke's copy of the *Cawdor* manuscript] seems contemporaneous with the LOC draft since the name Allan is used in the text. The following lines from the verso of the Beinecke *Cawdor* leaf 52 are used on leaf 44 of the final manuscript and lines 871–883 of the published poem: 'He was pale and said strangely. I've heard that the wills of people who're going to die, and their ways change, / Though it's all hidden." Cawdor's mind began to stand in his narrowing eyes, then they glanced

by her / And he said: "You're wrong. What did he say?" "Oh, nothing to matter. But I thought it strange that he should come to me / The day that my father was dying / To boast that he'd never loved nor touched a woman. What did it matter to me whether he'd loved / Or touched a woman?" He was silent; but Michal, her face aging suddenly to power: "If it is true / That Allan said that: he spoke truly no doubt: what had you said to make him say it?" "I? Nothing. / What could I have said? He was as pale, Michal, as you are now." Then Cawdor: "You came in the rain / To call Allan, what did your father want of him?" "That was not yesterday." "Yesterday morning." "Ah no. / The days are long, but not to that measure." "What did he want to say?" "He was unconscious again / Before he could come. He wanted perhaps to talk about his travels, Allan had been a traveller, / My father despised people who live and die in one place. Like toad-stools he said. Now I am tired." / "I want you," he said, "to lie and rest in our room. It will be quieter." "Ah, no! - - - If you wish. But Michal / Will have to sit by the bed. I am afraid / To be left alone." "I'll sit by the bed; I am not working." Her eyes went back and forth in the room'.

Verso leaf 51: 'I'm in the desert begging for a cup of water / Hood, with that bit [then 'piece'] of kindness or help has your father bought you / That builds a wall between you and me? I know you want me, I can see you trembling. / But once to do with me / What I desire'.

Verso leaf 54: 'The only person that ~~cared~~ loved the dead man had gone; so that whatever remembrance of sorrow there was, was a ~~common~~ generalized sorrow over the common human destiny. It was merely a death of humanity. ~~When the whole race faced [ ]~~ One of the common swallowings and takings back of the — earth. / Their backs to the sea-sunset and to the eagle; the oblong shadow of the eagle's cage. / Jesus Acanna picked up a flake of jasper and looked at it curiously—his ancestors — / Cawdor took up the shovel and said "We would have buried him / Near Jessie, on the other side of the oak; near the boys' mother: for he was / my wife's father and she loved him; / Only there seemed to no room [*sic*], the slope is so narrow." / Lora handles Allan's rifle / The dull-shining steel barrel [ ] [ ] had gone out of [then 'had left'] her nature, she dared not touch / Acanna was again dispatched to fetch the doctor. Coast, notched like gun-stock. / The sun is still well above the blazing sea. / She is [then 'Shot in the twilight. She is'] wounded, wearing the lion-skin. "He took me by force. I had [then 'force under the laurel-tree. I had'] wanted to shoot myself but I did not dare. I asked him to shoot me." / Allan tries to defend himself and Cawdor drives him from the house. / He goes to the rock.'.

The following lines, written as though the foot of the leaf were the head, are another abandoned continuation from leaf 53, line 720; crossed out and deleted with an X: 'Remembered his father [at left margin]. judgment [at right margin]. / remembered his father. Desire and revulsion / Were like two waves meeting [then 'meeting and wrestling'] in the mouth of a river when storm meets flood, then clash and midnight went over him / Draining his mind: in the laurel shadow, in the steep wood: he had still the little knife in his hand / And struck it into his right thigh, to ask pain to help him against this hunter [then 'this woman'], not to be conquered, / Poor hunter hunted to bay. He felt the blood running and

then the hurt, and the locked waves / Reeled over and he said in the lit clearance " Ah beast, be quiet will you. Keep off me. I cut myself.'.

At the foot of Verso leaf 54, below the reversed excised lines, are the words 'will failure.'

Verso leaf 55: '~~but in a new country, cast away from old culture and faith~~ [then '~~belief~~'; then '~~religion~~'] // ~~"I was cutting a tough root carelessly and the knife slipped~~, / ~~It struck my leg.~~" / ~~blind panic~~ / ~~remnant for dress~~ / ~~remorse~~ / ~~the coffin grounded like a boat's stone keel~~ [then '~~a shored boat, the stone keel~~'] / ~~need of ceremony, no talent for it.~~ / ~~insignificant splendor~~ / "I had not the courage to kill myself, I thought the man who made it necessary for me to die had better kill me. But I fail in everything like my father." / ~~The blind panic that he had held prisoner all day~~ / ~~Broke free now and it controlled him~~' // Naked—partly because she was unable to fasten the skin over her clothing, and partly because she thought "after he has [then 'he's'] killed me, he will [then 'he'll'] see I'm beautiful." // ~~A slit of sky between the cloud and the sea~~ // ~~Cawdor watched her go down and was more at ease~~ // all hunter; forgetting all else / "There's the fellow that I've been looking for, Michal. / Watch. While I get the gun." // What were her reasons? She had none, she acted before she thought. / I cannot tell how much her desire to die ^1 by his hand ^2, and this was the only ~~trick she could think of,~~ possible trick to effect that, how much her desire to change her / form from a human form, in her humiliation and intolerance of life. // Oh — —, Why, Why? Assume another body?'; along right margin: '(Fera's wrist <u>found</u> / gnawed by her teeth.) / (Acanna again sent / for the doctor)'.

Verso leaf 57B: 'She asked him what made him limp; he answered "I sprained a muscle when I slipped on the hill, / I shouldn't have thought the poor old man could be so heavy // She lingered [then 'lingered and watched'] behind the oak-bough. At length Allan approached with Michal'.

Verso leaf 58B: notes written as though the bottom of the page were the top separated from the passages marked for insertion (lines 793–795 and 800–803) with a heavy double-line: '~~"Father?" It could [not find]. then it went screaming "Alan" / A bitter and indignant shadow.~~ The spite of ghosts spirits / In few words: Concha wakes and finds Lora dead. Michal finds the rock vacant. Cawdor makes Acanna kill the horse and bury it with the rifle. The doctor. // Sense of Lora's and Allan's death in a dream or vision? // Another burial on the hill. The eagle. I can not kill you, what else have I got to live? She imagines it demanding death. // Cawdor's trancelike self-possession. Bad luck — he became garrulous as he began to break — storm — spring — foot and mouth disease — comet — the slaughter — the rifle — Cawdor breaks — the eagle killed, the eagle-song. Cawdor. Michal sets all her love on Cawdor and furnishes the pity. // Cawdor to the sheriff's men, the blood and lymphs streaming on his face from his burst eyes: "I am a murderer. There was a fellow named Allan Cawdor came and seduced my wife, she killed herself and I murdered him. But my first sin was in lusting after women. My eyes followed them. I have cured that."'.

Verso leaf 59: 'She does not mean to tell, but as Cawdor is setting the splintered bone he thinks he is torturing her – and cries out "It is not my fault! He forced me!" — He threw me down under a laurel tree. / Her terrified eyes — she thinks she is being tortured intentionally. // The eyes that had been half open flew wide

/ dilating and contracting / Hold the lamp Michal. / George ~~will help~~ hold her quiet. / nausea again / Oh, the bad hunter! / That she is more sensitive– // The ends of the bone scraping — her hissing breath — I will tell you anything — "I am not to blame" / After she has told, he answers: "I must set the bone." The strap / How little I knew. I thought I tasted torture before. / Appeal to Concha. "He used to love you." And I have never been mean to you because of that." / ~~Oh but the darkness was sweet~~ / Her breath in little gushes "Before he died" / "The reason" he said / Her face looking no bigger than a doll's answered. / It is not for punishment I must set the bones. You can't stay here. You'll need two arms / To earn your living. // Look here at the wrist I tore with my own teeth before I went out to be killed.'.

Verso leaf 61: 'but ~~the parted lips were white~~ / Were white but pencilled ~~at the borders~~ with fine blue lines ~~at the margins~~ / Fera's eyes opened, she lay still. Concha. Michal at the window [then 'east window'] — corner room. / "What do you see?" "A fire on the Rock." 15 minutes. "Is it still there?" / "Yes. Ah!" It has rained down "Oh. Oh. I am going up to the Rock." / It is almost out. ~~It has fallen in~~ "A rain of sparks ~~from the Rock~~ in the night." / it is like the faintest stars. // (Cawdor in his confession. I yearned for him as if I loved him. I did not mean death, I intend to question him.) // Michal meets her father in the dark path, who says that he has sent Hood away, and forbidden him ever to return. He will not stay with her. "I have cast off my son." // "The laurel," he said. / "My God has she told you the truth?" / He [flung] up the gun / And fired over his father's head, instantly / Terror, not of death but of dying mocked and subdued / And the outrage unresolved. / his manhood gone / Since the Attis gesture under the laurel tree. / To bring you back / The death made of twin terrors / Michal was but a child and believed it true. / The depth, as he [clung] onto the Rock / The depth [then 'starlight depth'] and height of the starlight were [then 'and steepness were'] narrow to him, / And no wind blew; he was like a man coming out of a cave / With anguished hunger of the air and light, all powers / And desires concentrated on the pale spark / Of day at the end // The dog that was my son left his ~~blanket~~ pack and rifle / On the Rock, I went to see him and he ran away. / Go up and bury them. The dirty coward / Never will come to fetch them / And I will sweep his leavings under the ground.'.

Verso leaf 62: 'I thought it best for him not to stay in this place. / Fera says that after death the whole of the past life is present to us, she can touch any part of it, ~~like~~ from the conception to the death; what a poor thing it is! / Meeting Acanna on the trail, trembling. "Oh, his face is not white." / Imagination of what it feels like to fall through the air. // Went back to dispose of the blanket-roll and the rifle, but it was not possible for him to touch them. He swept the fire over instead. // ~~betrayal / By the hands of his own act~~ / Incredible that someone had been beside the fire when he came, and now there was no one. // Hood appears to Acanna, who is going to get the rifle to give him but Hood disappears. / I saw him run up the hill like a rabbit-scut / Vestigial belief in magic [phrase boxed] / Alone on the hill "By God you earned it!" / "A guilty conscience, Michal. He has done a thing / There's no forgiving." Michal argues in his favor. / Then why did he run?" Oh no. - - Like the scut of a rabbit. / You didn't strike him father? By God I had no chance. / Like the scut of a rabbit. / But the third

time of saying it / The word was pithed of meaning and became useless. / ~~Come up and find him.~~ Is that you Michal?" "No." Up the hill like a rabbit-scut. // These final lines were written upside down as though the foot of the leaf were the head: They are so troubled about ore [then 'rock-ore'], about steel, but here is what it will all come to. LIME HEAD Golden finches among the thistles at Mal Paso.'.

Verso leaf 63: '"Well, I have killed my son. ~~"Shall I quit living~~ Whether he continued living or quit at last. / ~~Because of that?~~ / It would be a pity Michal should know // nor flowing by // rape // Was now believed; it had become needful [then 'necessary'] to believe the woman Fera's [then 'woman's'] story. / Orion had not gone south yet - - - coyotes night came - - / (175 24L written at left margin) / But if you meet him Michal / Tell him not to come home. / I looked for you between the stable and the house / I thought maybe you'd gone with George. / (64 34L written at left margin) / A moment of senseless harm he thought it was Hood coming / To claim the rifle / He stooped [then 'turned'] to take up the things he had hidden, and a voice "Hood, is that you? / He felt the sweat creep on his forehead in the cold night / One of the horses I guess. It's gone // Asks Vitello how high does he think is the Rock cliff? 600 ft. sheer. // Fera opens her eyes and says wearily to Concha: "I had no other way to keep him. / He would have gone." / Than to tell: she acts as if she believed she had told the truth. Now her father and her / lover were both safe in a place where she can go down to them and find them. // "I thought I heard a shot. But I was in the house. Then I went out." "No, there was none." // ~~glimmer of her face retreating~~ I promise you not to touch him if he comes.'.

Verso leaf 67: 'Was shut behind him. In the still darkness / He stood a moment. He stood a moment in the still darkness'.

Verso leaf 70: 'She entered, and having heard what Fera had done / ~~And been saved from~~ Ran back to the door and called him but got no answer. / ~~But got no answer.~~ / ~~He'd seemed going toward the sea when she left him.~~ / ~~He seemed to have been going toward the shore.~~ / ~~He had gone down, she thought, toward the shore.~~ / He heard her, from toward the shore, but went on in silence'.

Aaron Yoshinobu

The Great Sheet

A Rosetta Stone of Poetics, Stonemasory, and the Seeds of Robinson Jeffers's Mature Voice

With the publication of *Tamar and Other Poems* in 1924, Robinson Jeffers set forth a thematic discourse that would span nearly four decades and arguably spark more adulation, controversy, disdain, and ultimately enigma than any other twentieth-century American poet. By embracing a philosophy of eternal recurrence as manifested in the cyclicity of nature, and utilizing a newly discovered tidal-cadence in his poetics, *Tamar* represents the crystallization of Jeffers's mature poetic voice. During the eight years between publication of the pastoral and emulative *Californians* in 1916 and the transformative, controversial and incendiary *Tamar*, Jeffers's work underwent a gradual yet startling change in poetics. The ultimate result of this transformation was the development of his unique tidal rhythm and, with few exceptions, the recurrence of themes and settings in twelve subsequent books of poetry he published before his death in 1962.

The transformation to the poetics of *Tamar* coincided with Jeffers's initiation into stonemasonry, his apprenticeship in the construction of Tor House, and his eventual design and construction of Hawk Tower. In an oft-quoted letter to Lawrence Clark Powell, Jeffers's first biographer, Una Jeffers stated how the construction of Tor House in the summer of 1919 engendered a sort of "kinship" between granite and poet. "Thus at the age of thirty-one there came to him a kind of awakening such as adolescents and religions converts are said to experience" (*SL* 213).[1]

Much has been written on this transformative period, although little direct evidence in the form of dated manuscripts or letters exists in which to contextualize the evolution of Jeffers's poetics during this pivotal period.[2] Jeffers made a habit of reusing the versos of poems for other subsequent poems and stated in a letter that he had burned the *Tamar* manuscript soon after it was published (*SL* 52). In this brief

Jeffers Studies 10.2–11.2 (Fall 2006–Fall 2007), 225–37.

article, I wish to focus on a single manuscript that contains the seeds of Jeffers's future voice, design sketches of the eventual Hawk Tower, and even a few lines about the projected rhythm and cadence of *Tamar*, all from the poet's own hand. I include facsimile copies of the manuscript as well as my transcriptions and a map of the relative chronology of the different workings. This manuscript remains the Rosetta stone for deciphering Jeffers's poetic maturation.

The Great Sheet

In a letter dated 25 November 1925 to his Boni Liveright editor, Donald Friede, Jeffers refers to a "great sheet" that contains "[t]he first germ of the Tamar story, dramatis personae (several of whom were lost or changed in the telling), incidents, metrical indications . . . [t]he first, and final, draft of 'Continent's End' . . . [f]ragments of two other short poems that were never finished. . . . [and] [p]lans for the stairway of a granite tower that I have built with my hands beside the house here" (*SL* 52).[3] In fact, the Great Sheet is a bank ledger detailing the holdings of Jeffers's younger brother Hamilton, from the Los Angeles Trust and Savings Bank, covering the period from 17 January to 17 February 1922. The document measures 13.5 inches by 23 inches and contains on the verso the numerous verse fragments and sketches mentioned above as well as much more. One sketch of a plan view of the stairwell to Hawk Tower measuring 1.75 inches by 1 inch is included on the front side of the ledger. Curiously, this small sketch represents the only fragment on that side even though abundant space exists on the front side for drafting verses or sketches. A full-size facsimile of the Great Sheet is included in this issue.

The artistic and historical significance of the Great Sheet was recognized and succinctly stated by William Everson in his Introduction to *Brides of the South Wind and Other Poems*:

> there exists an extraordinary document, perhaps the most significant (certainly the most unique) of all the surviving oddments to escape Jeffers' bemused disinterest—a document long accounted for, indeed, but the relevance of its positive date heretofore going unnoticed. . . . On its reverse side the poet has set down the first, and final, draft of "Continent's End" and beside it, wonder of wonders, he gives terse, suggestively fertile notations to himself for the incipient narrative "Tamar." Among preliminary sketches of Hawk Tower and its interior stairway we see, brought into focus from the confusion of the scribble page, the poet's emergent destiny. Here, early in 1922, Ode, Tower and Narrative float in tremulous suspension, quickening in the cloudy alchemy of creative truth. It is a document almost too naked to touch. A poet's torturous evolution coils on its breakover moment. In its depths we gaze on an astounding birth. (xxxii–xxxiii)

Structure and Chronology of Workings on the Great Sheet

Transcribing Jeffers's longhand is subjective and in many cases impossible. I have utilized Adobe Photoshop to enhance and magnify the original high-resolution scan and then compared letter and word shape against manuscripts at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at UT Austin and other scholars' transcriptions of Jeffers's autograph manuscripts (e.g., Hunt, *CP* 1–5; Rob Kafka, unpublished transcriptions). For alternative transcriptions of portions, but not all, of the Great Sheet manuscript, consult *CP* 5 (326–38), *Selected Letters* (52–53), and *Brides of the South Wind and Other Poems* (126–27).

For the sake of discussion I have divided the document into three sections, A, B, and C (see facsimile) that follow the folds of the document. These three sections are then divided into ten groups in a plausible relative chronology. Each group is denoted by a number, with 1 representing my conjecture of the earliest fragment and 9 the latest; 10 cannot be placed in the chronology. Note, however, that groups 6 through 9 do not cross the fold that separates section B from section C. Therefore, it is plausible that groups 6 through 9 (and group 10) might precede fragments in sections A and B. However, I follow Hunt's argument that the workings that eventually became "Continent's End" were written before *Tamar* (*CP* 5: 61). Therefore, as I discuss below, Section C likely represents the last set of fragments written on the Great Sheet. Also shown are three sketches of Hawk Tower, two of which may be placed with some accuracy into the numerical relative chronology. I utilize symbols from geologic maps to indicate the relative age difference between two fragments: "Y" = younger, "O" = older. Therefore, a fragment that contains "Y" is interpreted to have been written after the fragment that contains "O." A legend is provided to explain various transcription symbols. The table on the next page outlines a relative chronology of fragments on the Great Sheet.

In observing the manuscript in total, it is reasonable to infer the chronology of and relationship between sections A and B. Section A begins with fragments that link Jeffers's ambivalence about not serving in World War I, the motivations for the war, and construction of the house (Figure 1). Below that, he wrote "The Niobe," perhaps the title of an imagined narrative based on elements of the myth of Niobe, the daughter of Tantulus, whose children were slain and who was turned to stone by Apollo and Artemis for boasting that she was greater than their mother, Leto. This is followed by scratched-out fragmental meditations on the acceptance of war and death.

Table 1. Relative chronology of fragments on the Great Sheet.

Chronology (oldest to youngest)	*Group*	*Comments*
1	1, Section A	"Ah miserable ghosts . . ."
2	2, Section A	"The Niobe"
3	3, Section B	Scratched-out fragment; linked to group 2 thematically.
4	4, Section B	"Humanity in a moral sense . . ."
5	5a, Section B	"At the equinox . . ."; this section was written before section 5b, based on the flow of the text as well as the placement of group 5a between group 4 and group 5b.
6	5b, Section B	"The Ocean–the Sea, tentative title for "Continent's End." Section 5b was revised in section 5c.
7	5c, Section A	"The tides are in our veins . . ." Final stanzas of what was to become "Continent's End."

The next sections can be placed in relative chronology with respect to each other, but it cannot be stated with certainty when groups 6–8 were written with respect to the other groups on the sheet because none of the text crosses the fold separating Section B from Section C. Following Hunt (*CP* 5), I accept that the "Continent's End" workings ("The Ocean–the Sea") were written before *Tamar*.

8	6, Section C	"The [ ] that is not seen . . ."; "The trees of my planting . . ."
9	7, Section C	*Tamar* plot workings.
10	8, Section C	"Tamar and Lee's rape . . ."; because group 8 appears to be squeezed between groups 6 and 7, I conclude that this plot detail was the last group added to Section C.
>8	9, Section B, dungeon profile	It is not possible to place this sketch of the north side of the dungeon of Hawk Tower into the chronology with any certainty.
?	10, Section C, stairwell sketch	This sketch comes after group 6, otherwise Jeffers would have likely deflected his text around the sketch.

In section B, group 3 represents a telling fragment that seems to link "The Niobe" with themes that are central to *Tamar*. While mostly illegible, the fragment seems to link the "fear" mentioned in groups 1 and 2 with a story about "another girl in a further canyon, the [incestuous] one," referring to Tamar (Figure 1). This fragment was scratched out by Jeffers but likely predates group 4 and certainly predates groups 5a–c because the latter wrap around the pre-existing group 3 (compare Figures 1, 2, and the fold-out facsimile).

The top of Section B begins with a fragment and a preliminary sketch of the dungeon of Hawk Tower as seen from the north (Figure 2). The fragment that begins "Humanity in a moral sense an exception in the universe" portends lines and themes from *Roan Stallion*, written in 1924. The primary element of section B, however, is the "first and final draft" of what was to become "Continent's End," here titled "The Ocean–the Sea" (group 5a and 5b). The verse order is curious in that the autograph text beneath the title (group 5b) is the middle third of the published poem; the bottom portion of Section B, group 5a, is essentially the first third. I have divided group 5 into 3 sub-groups that are lettered based on my interpretation of the chronology of each verse. It is plausible that Jeffers began the verse at 5a, then wrote 5b, and finally the horizontal verse, group 5c, on Section A (Figure 3). This postulation fits the order of the verses in the published poem (*CP* 1: 16–17). Furthermore, group 5b contains a number of the lines from the last four verses of the published poem, but in a less-developed form. Group 5c contains the final three verses of the published poem and includes revised lines from group 5b. Therefore, although the three groups represent all of the verses of the published "Continent's End," the poem did undergo some revision between the writing of groups 5b and 5c. Additionally, the lines in group 5b are somewhat anomalous in that they were written in a near-prose form, with no capitalization at the beginning of each line. It is plausible but speculative that Jeffers wrote group 5a in a few minutes, conceptualized the ideas for the latter half of the poem and quickly wrote them down in group 5b, and then re-wrote them in the verse and cadence structure that he began in group 5a. This would suggest an iterative method to his versecraft, at least for this poem, where he would mix prose with poetry to quickly assemble his ideas and themes, and then place them in a cadence and verse structure that fit the poem.

Section C contains three distinct workings that reflect the cornerstone of the document, as they intertwine stone masonry, poetics, and the plot workings for *Tamar* (Figures 4 and 5). The first, group 6, includes the fragment "The trees of my planting . . ." which mentions a great storm that came during the winter solstice and lifted waves over the Tor, ravaged the new trees that Jeffers planted, and left only the

house and the sea wall standing (Figure 4). This verse is separated with a penciled line from a libidinal sequence of verse fragments that involve Jeffers and a female in the dungeon of the yet-to-be-completed Hawk Tower. The next verse begins "The foot of my tower is sunken under ground, it is walled . . . with thick granite. . . ." Following this verse, Jeffers then penciled another line and re-wrote this sequence using six numbered lines. Two more penciled line breaks occur separating two more verses that relate to the same dungeon-captive sequence and end in the lines "I have no jealousy, I have only desire / And a wolf's caution."

The last material to be written in Section C concerns the plot workings, themes, character profiles, and title of *Tamar* (group 7; Figure 5). In addition, notes regarding the verse rhythm are included at the bottom of the *Tamar* workings. There, Jeffers writes "5 beats to the line doubled in a few passages to iambic 10s quickened to anapests, bring in anapests and ⏑ ⏑ ⏑ . . . lyrical passages, sometimes broadened to 8s." These brief notes represent a rare glimpse into the poet's methodology and design regarding the rhythm of the long narrative and defy criticisms that Jeffers's verse was undisciplined and prosaic. I conclude that group 7 was written after group 6 because the former appears to fill the space that was constrained by the margins of group 6. Specifically, near the bottom of the group 7 workings, Jeffers penciled in a curving "divide" that separated the lines "Indians, missionaries, old Spanish families and / bandits, Vasquez and [ ], work in the picture" in group 7 from the previously written lines of group 6.

Group 7 was followed by plot workings in group 8 which include notes regarding the incestuous relationship between Tamar and Lee Cauldwell. The slant of the fragment in group 8 indicates that it was written in the small space between the *Tamar* workings of group 7 and the sequence of racy dungeon fragments that form group 6. Based on this argument, I suggest that the *Tamar* workings are the latest additions to Section C, and for reasons described below, possibly the last written fragments on the Great Sheet.

Sketched on top of verses in group 6 is a detailed plan view of the stairwell of Hawk Tower as well as a more skeletal plan view of the stairwell with a circular (?) turret on top (Figure 4). On the annotated facsimile I have noted the cardinal directions to help orient the reader to the sketch. I interpret the sketch to post-date the verses for the following reason. When Jeffers wrote a line that continued to the edge of available space, he might bend the line into open space, or carry it over to the next line below. Examples of this can be seen throughout the document. Because he did not do this, I contend that the sketch came after the dungeon-captive verses.

Implications of the Absolute Chronology of Poems and Sketches on the Great Sheet

For an extensive account of the absolute chronology of poems written during the 1916–1924 period, the reader should consult volume 5 of the *Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*. My inferences and interpretations about the chronology of poems and sketches presented here are restricted to what can be gleaned from the Great Sheet; therefore, during the interval between 22 February 1922 and April 1924, when *Tamar and Other Poems* was published. In the following discussion I evaluate the known constraints for the initiation of *Tamar*. I then present two hypotheses that attempt to explain the initiation and evolution of *Tamar* and other important workings on the Great Sheet in the context of the relative chronology developed above.

In August of 1923, Jeffers wrote a "Preface" that was intended for a volume titled *Tamar* (*CP* 4: 379–81; Alberts 17–19). Therefore, the critical period of development must have been after 22 February 1922, and before August of 1923. In a fragmental "Preface" written in June of 1922 for a projected volume of poems, Jeffers wrote

> The greatest dramatic poetry in English is not rhymed, the greatest narrative poetry is not rhymed. . . . until quite lately I was unable to discover any rhymeless measure but blank verse that could tell a story flexibly, without excess of monotony. Blank verse I could not use, because it has been so much used by such masters; it carries their impress and inflections. I think I am at length discovering rhymeless narrative measures of my own; but the poems are not finished . . . (*CP* 4: 376)

In 1933, Jeffers's first bibliographer, Sidney Alberts, noted the date of the fragmental "Preface" quoted above, and suggested that Jeffers was referring to the yet-to-be-completed *Tamar*. It is probable that the "rhymeless narrative measures" that Jeffers referred to include *Tamar* and/or the early workings of *The Women at Point Sur*, titled *Point Alma Venus* (*CP* 5: 59). What is known is that *Tamar* was written after 22 February 1922, the end of the period covered by the bank ledger, and prior to the August 1923 "Preface" (*CP* 5: 59). Tim Hunt suggests that *Tamar* was likely completed by late winter-early spring of 1923 after considering the chronology of other poems contained within *Tamar and Other Poems* (*CP* 5: 61). In the next sections I explore two possibilities on the initiation of *Tamar*, neither of which can be discarded at this time.

HYPOTHESIS 1: *TAMAR* CONCEIVED AND WRITTEN BETWEEN DECEMBER 1922 AND SUMMER 1923

An intriguing reference in Section C might complicate our understanding of the initiation of the *Tamar* workings. In Section C, group 6, the following verse describes a severe storm that affected the headland at the winter solstice:

> The trees of my planting are russet and yellow, they have perished in the wind,
> A great wave came at the winter solstice and has taken my garden
> From the [brow] of the cliff in the rains of Orion and left bare rock.
> Only my stone cliff, only the stone of the house and the stone of the sea-walls
> Remain after the storm, delight is escaped, only strength is strong.

In "The Building of Tor House," Donnan Jeffers recounts a Christmas Day storm in 1922 or 1923 that bulged the windows of Tor House and lifted the roof off of the garage and sent it flying "some hundreds of yards into the field below the tor" (115). In perusing the historical weather records of Carmel, California, I have found no mention of a severe storm during the Solstice-Christmas interval for the period between 1920 and 1924. However, it is not implausible that the effects of such a storm were much less destructive in the Carmel Village center, where the Del Monte forest provides a natural wind barrier. Thus, if Donnan's account can be uniquely placed in either 1922 or 1923, and if it is indeed the same storm to which Jeffers refers in the fragment, then it is likely that the winter storm occurred in December of 1922. It is reasonably clear from the line positioning of the fragments in group 7 (the dramatis personae for "Tamar") that they were written *after* the fragments in group 6 (containing "the trees of my planting"). Hence, the relative age of different fragments in group 6 are interpreted to indicate that the *Tamar* workings are younger than the description of the solstice storm (as well as the dungeon sequence). Thus it can be inferred that the *Tamar* workings were written in early 1923, after the winter solstice storm of 1922.

This hypothesis is apparently supported by the timing of the construction of Hawk Tower. From an assessment of the pictures of Hawk Tower under construction that are housed in the Tor House Archives, Carmel, California, and the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, at the University of Texas, Austin, it appears that the dungeon and the first floor of Hawk Tower were not completed until late 1922 or early 1923. I infer from "A room at my tower's root is buried in the bedrock . . . / You can hear there the rumble of the waves but no murmur of the rushing of the wind" that the lines in group 6 were written after the

dungeon was completely walled and had a roof. The detail in this verse implies that the dungeon was completed, rather than open and prone to the roar of the "rushing wind." This lends credence to the supposition that the plot workings of *Tamar* in group 7 must have been written in early 1923, since they were written *after* the winter solstice storm workings in group 6, and therefore, after the construction of the dungeon and the first floor of Hawk Tower.

Hypothesis 2: *Tamar* Conceived and Written between March 1922 and Summer 1923

An alternative hypothesis, and one that is implied by Hunt in the *Collected Poetry* (*CP* 5: 58–62) is that all of the workings on the Great Sheet were completed shortly after the spring equinox of 1922. Given that Donnan would have been between the ages of 5 and 7 when the winter solstice storm struck, it is not inconceivable that he misremembered the date of the winter solstice storm described in group 6. Therefore, the storm might have occurred on the winter solstice of December 1921. If this supposition is correct, then much of what is contained on the Great Sheet was likely written in the early spring of 1922. If "The Ocean–the Sea" was influenced by the spring equinox in March of 1922, as can be inferred from the opening lines (cf. Hunt, *CP* 5: 61), then it follows that Sections A and B were likely written in March or April of 1922 as well.[4] Then, in one scenario, a short amount of time passed before Jeffers returned to the folded document, turned it over to expose Section C, and began to write groups 6–8, including the recollection of the winter solstice storm, followed by the *Tamar* workings. At some point later, perhaps as late as early 1923, Jeffers then drew the stairwell sketch.

Discussion and Conclusions

A number of questions arise upon considering the chronology and diversity of fragments that are preserved on the Great Sheet. Is it coincidence that the poet sketched the stairwell to the tower on top of the first verses to directly refer to the tower? Given Jeffers's apparent disinterest in any systematic cataloging of autograph manuscripts, it seems unlikely that he searched out the Great Sheet to sketch the design of Hawk Tower on top of, or next to, a verse about Hawk Tower. Why Jeffers chose to sketch over existing text, rather than in the open space that was available elsewhere on the document or on the front side of the ledger, is open to speculation. It might have been that the ledger was folded along the crease that separates Section B from Section C, and

that the face of Section C was facing up on his desk when the need for a sketch of the stairwell came to mind. If so, this implies a certain hastiness in his thought process or perhaps an indifference to the requirement of a blank piece of paper with plenty of space. Alternatively, and very speculatively, Jeffers's muse might have been intertwining verses concerning the dungeon with the design and construction of the tower. I suggest there is a causal relationship between the verses in group 6 and the sketches of the stairwell. Perhaps Jeffers re-read the verses and was pausing to consider the imaginative sequence in the dungeon and was then struck by some sort of burst of subtle vision of the form and shape of the stairwell. The placement of this sketch on top of the dungeon-captive verses demonstrates the subtle idiosyncrasies of the poet's methods, akin to the intuitive placement of stones in the walls of Hawk Tower.

A group of related questions arise upon considering the chronology. Is there any justification for accepting or rejecting either of the hypotheses for the initiation and completion of *Tamar*? Does the chronology provide any new insights to our understanding of Jeffers's poetics? Following the line of reasoning that I have outlined for hypothesis 1, namely that Jeffers wrote *Tamar* in a brief span of time between about January and June of 1923, it follows that *Tamar* was written in a relatively rapid succession of weeks and months, and that the manuscript must have been completed by summer 1923. This interpretation is in contrast to the current notion that Jeffers wrote *Tamar* soon after the 22 February 1922 date on the bank ledger. However, previous researchers assumed the ledger was mailed to Robinson Jeffers. Because the ledger lists holdings in Hamilton's name, it is less clear when the document came into the possession of the Jeffers household and onto Jeffers's desk as scrap paper.

While it is quite likely that this new interpretation does not realign our understanding of the poetics of Robinson Jeffers, it does provide an intriguing alternative perspective on Jeffers's creative process and sequence. If correct, this chronology implies that at the beginning of 1923, with Hawk Tower well underway and taking coherent shape, Jeffers came into "the zone" of creativity that would spawn in quick succession *Tamar* (1922–23), *The Tower Beyond Tragedy* (1924–25), *Roan Stallion* (1925), the complex and emotionally draining workings that eventually became *The Women at Point* Sur (1920–26), *Cawdor* (1927–28), *Dear Judas* (1928), and *The Loving Shepherdess* (early 1929) (years represent estimates of the dates of composition from Hunt, *CP* 5). Seven long narratives were created in relatively rapid succession over six years, in addition to the more than 60 published lyrics and meditative shorter pieces that he wrote during this same interval (*CP* 1: 2).

The alternative hypothesis 2 states that Jeffers began *Tamar* soon after "Continent's End," around the spring solstice of 1922. This hypothesis has been suggested by a number of different authors, including Everson and Hunt. An interesting implication of this hypothesis is that the Great Sheet had a protracted history on Jeffers's desk. The poet might have written the preliminary sketches of the *Tamar* narrative soon after writing the workings in Sections A and B. Then, the document lay fallow until he mailed it to Donald Friede in 1925. This introduces an interesting, minor conundrum. Because the group 6 fragments that concern the dungeon-captive sequence were written before the *Tamar* workings, the former verses must have been written soon after the March 1922 equinox that is described in "The Ocean-the Sea," and which is interpreted to have been written soon after that date (*CP* 5: 61). Given that it is unlikely that Jeffers had completed the first floor of Hawk Tower by the spring solstice of 1922, I conjecture that the dungeon-captive sequence in group 6 refers to the dungeon as if it were already completed and is therefore a product of his imagination inspired by his ongoing work on the tower. It is exciting to conjecture that the act of placing the stones that made the walls of the dungeon might have directly influenced Jeffers's imagination ca. 1922, and inspired the verses conceived in group 6.

Based on this chronology, it is not possible to discern how soon after the 1922 winter solstice storm Jeffers began the *Tamar* plot workings. Certainly by spring-summer 1923 the narrative was complete. It follows, then, that *Tamar* might have taken over a year to conceive, germinate, and complete.

Without additional dated manuscripts it is not possible to accept or reject either hypothesis. Both require certain inferences regarding the timing of the poem's conception and the duration over which Jeffers wrote *Tamar*. What can be taken away from this analysis is a unique glimpse into the composition of foundational works in Jeffers's career: the meditative themes and tidal rhythms of one of his most sublime lyrics, "Continent's End," the plot workings and themes of his most significant narrative, *Tamar*, and the design of Hawk Tower, all enmeshed on a single document.[5]

Endnotes

1. Rob Kafka informs me that this famous passage is taken verbatim from a draft written by Jeffers himself, which survives at the Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin. He adds that a number of passages in Una's letters about Jeffers and his poetry have an identical genesis.

2. See *CP* 5: 244–311. William Everson wrote three extensive introductory essays on the 1916–1924 period in the republication of *Californians* in 1974 and the publication of *The Alpine Christ and Other Poems* in 1973 and of *Brides of the South Wind and Other Poems* in 1974. Tim Hunt's "The Problematic Nature of *Tamar and Other Poems*" is also a central reference in my attempt to reconstruct the absolute chronology of the *Tamar* workings and the Great Sheet.

3. The document is currently housed in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University.

4. It is plausible that "The Ocean–the Sea" was written after the spring equinox of 1923. While this scenario cannot be ruled out based on the workings of the Great Sheet alone, the arguments based on the chronology of verses for this era outlined by Tim Hunt (*CP* 5: 61) seem to suggest that "The Ocean–the Sea" was written in the spring of 1922, soon after the bank ledger came into Jeffers's possession.

5. I wish to express my debt and gratitude to Robert Brophy for the graceful way he has encouraged my understanding of Jeffers's poetry and prose. I also wish to express my deepest gratitude to Rob Kafka for his patience and constant encouragement in continuing with my "night job" of studying and analyzing Jeffers's manuscripts. The published work of William Everson and Tim Hunt has been my guide through deciphering the chronology of Jeffers's poetry during the 1916–1924 period and I am indebted to them. I also wish to acknowledge Celeste Yoshinobu for her continued patience with my dual employment as a geoscientist and neophyte Jeffers scholar. This work was supported by a Texas Tech University Big XII Fellowship that allowed me to visit the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas, Austin. I wish to acknowledge the Beinecke Library at Yale University for supplying facsimile reproductions of the Great Sheet, and the Tor House Foundation, particularly Alex Vardamis and Joan Henrickson, for access to the autograph manuscript and photograph archives.

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