

ROBINSON JEFFERS NEWSLETTER

Number 2

Robinson Jeffers Committee
Occidental College
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REPORT FROM MELBA B. BENNETT

We hope that you have all recovered from the summer vacation feeling that things will get along very well without you; that you in the East have put your gardens away for the winter while we in the West plant ours for winter color; that you are ready to listen to a report on what has been happening since you last heard from us.

The last poems of Robinson Jeffers, The Beginning and the End, published in March of 1963 by Random House, is a collection of forty-eight poems. Through a misunderstanding, the proofs were not sent for correction so that the book unfortunately contains seventeen errors, including omissions of lines and sentences. If any of you are interested in having your own copies corrected please write me and I will give you the corrections. Although I paid a personal visit to Random House hoping they would feel a responsibility to publish a corrected edition they seemed quite content to leave it as it is. The only two notices of the book which I have seen were William Turner Levy's review in the New York Times Book Review of May 5, 1963, and the Time review of May 3, 1963. The Reverend Levy is a member of our National Council, and we appreciate his taking time from his busy schedule to write this comprehensive review.

The Fall issue of the Quarterly News Letter of the Book Club of California published an article on "The Robinson Jeffers Committee" by Theodore M. Lilienthal, a member of our Executive Committee. Others with facile pens might follow Ted's lead in getting articles in literary publications.

In April, 1963, Steuben Glass opened an exhibition of "Poetry in Crystal" in their show rooms on Fifth Avenue. Of the thirty-one poems translated into crystal, Birds and Fishes (by Robinson Jeffers) is the most ambitious piece. The glass design is by Donald Pollard and the engraving by Robert Vichrey. It is priced at \$8,500, the most costly in the collection, and is still available! One hundred thousand persons visited the exhibitions, and Steuben has published a handsome book under the title Poetry in Crystal, which sells for \$5.00.

Interest in Jeffers may be at low tide in America (for lack of reprints of books obtainable, a bibliography and biography), but in Europe I found three translators at work. In Tirolo, Italy, Mary de Rachewiltz, daughter of Ezra Pound, is working at fever pitch on a translation of The Cretan Woman

for a stage production scheduled for next season. Her translation of Hungerfield, just off the press, was already receiving plaudits. The Italian title is Campofame. In February, 1962, Mary's first translations of Jeffers appeared in the Italian magazine Segnacola as a series of ten poems. She lives with her attractive husband, Prince Boris de Rachewiltz, an eminent Egyptologist, in a castle of enchantment with a magnificent view of the Alps. Walter, their sixteen year-old son, already has to his credit a translation of his grandfather's poetry.

I visited Prague, too, to meet Kamil Bednar, Jeffers' Czech translator. Kamil first became interested in Jeffers' poetry in 1950. In 1958 the translation of Mara was published in a charmingly illustrated edition. In 1960 two books appeared--a collection of short poems under the title Jestrabi Krik, and Roan Stallion and Hungerfield. In 1962 a 5,000-copy edition of The Loving Shepherdess sold out in two days. Kamil then translated Medea, which had its first production in Prague in April, 1962. He is now at work on the translation of Women at Point Sur, with publication set for 1964. Kamil has written a very interesting article in English, yet unpublished, explaining Jeffers' popularity in Czechoslovakia.

Eva Hesse of Munich is primarily interested in Jeffers' dramas, and has translated Medea, Tower Beyond Tragedy, and The Cretan Woman. These were published in book form in 1960. Previous to this the dramas had been successfully staged not only in Germany, but in Austria and Switzerland. Dissatisfied with the original presentation of the Tower, Eva made a new adaptation, with Jeffers' permission, which proved to be better suited for stage production. It was Eva who introduced Jeffers' poetry to Mary de Rachewiltz. Eva and Mary are both beautiful young women in their thirties--and are considered two of the most brilliant women in Europe today. We are fortunate to have them and Kamil Bednar as members of our National Council.

The Bollingen Foundation was to meet this Fall on our request for a grant to publish a Jeffers bibliography, and we are hoping to receive a favorable answer in the near future.

I am sorry that my attempt to meet with our eastern members of our National Council in April was not successful. As only two were free to attend the luncheon I cancelled it. I shall try to choose a more convenient time of year for you on my next visit. In the meantime, please let us know what you are doing in your areas to forward our cause so that we may include it in our next newsletter.

Faithfully yours,

Melba B. Bennett

(Mrs. Bennett's address is 1184 Camino del Mirasol, Palm Springs, California.)

NOTES ON PUBLICATIONS

The Loyalties of Robinson Jeffers by Radcliffe Squires, published by the University of Michigan, has now been issued as an Ann Arbor Paperback at \$1.85...The Christmas, 1963, issue of Ramparts (published by The Layman's Press, 1182 Chestnut Street, Menlo Park, California; \$2.00), contains Brother Antoninus' poem, "The Poet is Dead," as well as a review by Brother Antoninus of The Beginning and the End..."Robinson Jeffers" by Ward Ritchie, and Dr. Lawrence Powell's address given last year at the Jeffers dinner are included in the 1963 issue of Impromptu (a faculty-alumni publication of Occidental College; \$1.00).

DEATH OF COUNCIL MEMBER

Mrs. Bennett has received word of the recent death of Mr. Lloyd Tevis of Carmel, a member of the National Council.

JEFFERS ON TELEVISION

In June a half-hour television program, "Son of Sad Fall," was released over the Los Angeles Station KNBC on "College Report." The film presentation was prepared under the direction of Dave Bell, Independent Colleges of Southern California television producer; Mr. Richard Berg, then Director of Public Information; and Dr. Leland Roloff, Assistant Professor of Speech and Drama, of Occidental College, who wrote the script. Much of the film was taken at Tor House and in the Carmel area. The program may be shown in other parts of the country this year over affiliated NBC stations. A note on the film and the Robinson Jeffers Committee was included in the Occidental College Alumnus for May, 1963.