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# Robinson Jeffers Newsletter

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## NEWS AND NOTES

### PUBLICATION NOTES

#### NEW RELEASES AND REPRINTS:

- Caedmon Records. The Poetry of Robinson Jeffers. Read by Judith Anderson. (See below).
- Jeffers, Robinson. Poetry, Gongorism and a Thousand Years. Folcroft Press Inc. (Box 182, Folcroft, Pennsylvania 19032). \$8.50, reprint.
- Gregory, Horace. The Dying Gladiators and Other Essays (chapter: "Poet Without Critics: A Note on R. J."). Greenwood Press (211 E. 43rd Street, New York, New York 10017). \$8.75, reprint.
- Nolte, William. The Merrill Checklist of Robinson Jeffers. Charles Merrill Publishing Company (1970), (Columbus, Ohio 43216). 25 pp., \$.75.
- Nolte, William. The Merrill Guide to Robinson Jeffers. Charles Merrill Publishing Company (1970), (Columbus, Ohio 43216). 45 pp.
- Powell, Lawrence. Robinson Jeffers: The Man and His Work. Haskell House (380 Lafayette Street, New York, New York 10012). \$8.85, reprint.

#### BOOKS IN PRINT THROUGH 1969:

- Alberts, Sidney. Bibliography of the Works of Robinson Jeffers. Burt Franklin (1933) (235 E. 44th Street, New York, New York 10017). \$18.50, reprint.
- Antoninus, Brother. Robinson Jeffers: Fragments of an Older Fury. Berkeley: Oyez (1968) (Box 5134, Berkeley, California 94705). \$7.50.
- Bennett, Melba B. The Stone Mason of Tor House. Ward Ritchie Press (1966) (3044 Riverside Drive, Los Angeles, California 90039). \$10.00.
- Carpenter, Frederic I. Robinson Jeffers. College and University (1963) (263 Chapel Street, New Haven, Connecticut 06513). \$1.95, paperback.
- Carpenter, Frederic I. Robinson Jeffers. Twayne (1962) (31 Union Square West, New York, New York 10003). \$4.50.
- Gilbert, Rudolph. Shine, Perishing Republic. Haskell House (1936) (380 Lafayette Street, New York, New York 10012). \$7.85.
- Squires, Radcliffe. The Loyalties of Robinson Jeffers. Ann Arbor Paperbacks AA81. University of Michigan Press (1956/1963) (615 East University, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106). \$1.85.

#### JEFFERS WORKS IN PRINT THROUGH 1969:

- The Beginning and the End and Other Poems. Random House (1963) (201 East 50th Street, New York, New York 10022). \$3.95.
- Not Man Apart. Sierra Club Books (1050 Mills Tower, San Francisco, California 94104). \$8.50.

- Not Man Apart: Photographs of the Big Sur Coast. Ballantine Books Inc. (1969) (101 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10003). \$3.95, paperback.
- Selected Letters of Robinson Jeffers. Johns Hopkins Press (1968) (Baltimore, Maryland 21218).
- Selected Poems. Vintage, Random House (1963) (201 East 50th Street, New York, New York 10022). \$1.65, paperback.
- Selected Poetry. Random House (1938) (Address supra). \$7.95.

## RECORDINGS: IN PRINT:

The Poetry of Robinson Jeffers. Read by Judith Anderson. Caedmon No. TC 1297, Ca \$6.95:

Side 1

Divinely Superfluous Beauty,  
To The Stone-Cutters, Night, Boats  
in a Fog,  
Granite and Cypress, Phenomena,  
Shine, Perishing Republic, Science,  
Apology for Bad Dreams, Ante Mortem,  
Post-Mortem,  
Sumner Holiday, From the Women at  
Point Sur (XII).

Side 2

Hurt Hawks, Birth-Dues, November Surf,  
The Bed by the Window, Rock and Hawk,  
Rearmament, Ave Caesar, Love the Wild  
Swan,  
The House Dog's Grave, Their Beauty Has  
More Meaning,  
The Old Stonemason, The Beauty of  
Things,  
Hunderfield (two sections).

Medea. Judith Anderson with supporting cast. Decca phonodisc DL 9000.

Roan Stallion. Read by Marian Seldes. Folkway Records (165 West 46th Street, New York, New York 10036). FL 9766, Poet's Theatre Series, No. 1, Ca \$5.98.

The Tower Beyond Tragedy. Read by Marian Seldes. Folkway Records (Address supra). FL 3767, Poet's Theatre Series, No. 2, Ca \$5.98.

Side 1

The Beauty of Things,  
The World's Wonders,  
The Old Stonemason, Joy,  
Final Speech: The Cretan Woman,  
Cassandra: Tower Beyond Tragedy.

Side 2

Final Speech: Tower Beyond Tragedy,  
Electra and Orestes.

Twentieth Century Poetry in English: E. E. Cummings and Robinson Jeffers, Theodore Spencer and John Crowe Ransom. Library of Congress Recording Lab. PL 5 (recently in print). Jeffers reading: 0 Lovely Rock, The Beaks of Eagles, Ossian's Grave.

Treasury of 100 Modern American Poets Reading Their Poems: Spoken Arts, SA 1043. S 3 - 20 Vol 4: Robinson Jeffers, Marianne Moore, J. C. Ransom, T. S. Eliot, and Conrad Aiken. (The entire set consists of three books containing eighteen volumes). Jeffers reading: Shane O'Neill's Cairn, The Low Sky, Now Returned Home, Hurt Hawks, Night.

On Robinson Jeffers. Big Sur Recordings M 502-1 one hour tape, Fall, 1969. Three addresses by Robert Brophy at the Monterey Peninsula College Jeffers Festival.

RECORDINGS: COLLECTORS' ITEMS

Robinson Jeffers: Reading His Own Poems. Harvard Vocarium Records P 1048-1049. Recorded at Harvard College Library, 1941. Jeffers reading from "The Tower Beyond Tragedy" (after the murder of the king).

Robinson Jeffers: Reading His Own Poems. Harvard Vocarium Records P 1050-1051. Reading: To the Stone-Cutters, Suicide's Stone, Wise Men in Their Bad Hours, Natural Music, Watch the Lights Fade, The Bloody Sire, The Truce and the Peace.

SPECIAL PRINTINGS:

Fr. William Monihan (Gleeson Library, U. S. F.) brings to our attention a quarto leaflet: FOR AN HOUR / ON CHRISTMAS EVE / BY ROBINSON JEFFERS. It prints three stanzas by Jeffers on the paradox of Bethlehem--a "New Year's Keepsake from Irving W. Robbins, Jr.," The Americana Series Number 7, printed by Grabhorn-Hoyem, San Francisco 94109. No date.

ADDRESSES:

William Everson (Antoninus) delivered an address "The Poetry of Earth", to a "Youth Walks for Survival" gathering at Memorial Stadium, University of California, Berkeley, March 15, 1970, using Jeffers' poetry (Science, 0 Lovely Rock, Hurt Hawks, Bloody Sire, Bixby's Landing) to assess the true spirit of ecology and to underline the mystery of nature which cannot be recovered and revered by mere utilitarian "good management" but ultimately only by the sacralization of man in nature through contemplation and the consecratory power of poetry.

Robert Brophy (Cal State Long Beach) made three presentations to friends of Jeffers, March 23, at the Century Club, San Francisco: "The Primitive Religious Character of Jeffers' Poetry," "Jeffersiana: Basic Texts and Collectors' Items," and "Jeffers and the Student of the '70's."

ARTICLES:

Richard Eberhart writes on "The Poetry of Robinson Jeffers," a ten paragraph essay for the jacket of Caedmon record T C 1297. This modern poet and critic gives an unusually sensitive "appreciation" of Jeffers' poetic concerns, his cosmic, time-collapsing vision, his moods and concentrations--"harshness, strength, the impersonality of things, fate, struggle, pain and death are his measures."

ERRATUM:

Thank you for the correction; the article, "A Sovereign Voice: The Poetry of Robinson Jeffers" by Robert Boyers, is to be found not in Saturday Review, but in Sewanee Review, LXXVII (July September, 1969), 487-507.

ABSTRACT:

An abstract of "The Tor House Library: Jeffers' Books" by Robert Brophy (RJN, 23, 4-11) appears in American Literature Abstracts, Vol. III No. 1 (December 1969), 56-57.

THESIS ABSTRACT: (Inadvertently overlooked in reporting the Occidental Collection, RJN, No. 25)

1966 Jerry Shields. "Robinson Jeffers and His Savior-Inhumanist Dilemma." (Duke University) Film 255.

Jeffers' poetry had a constant, central concern with human ethics. Torn between a savior complex and an isolate's withdrawal, he saw his own pity as weakness and argued with himself against it in his poems. Early treatment of this theme of love-turned-outward versus anthropocentrism can be found in "At Lindsay's Cabin," and in "Mal-drove" (Californians) where the first person narrator (foil) talks with a hermit who has renounced humanity. This dramatic strategy Jeffers used again and again to "face down" the schism within: "The Coast Range Christ," "Woodrow Wilson," "The Women at Point Sur," "Meditation on Saviors," "Theory of Truth," "A Redeemer," "An Artist," "Dear Judas," "The Loving Shepherdess"--all reveal the poet grappling with a motif which was to emerge in The Double Axe as the "Inhumanist's" wisdom and peace, a resolution of tensions and reconciliation of values.

EXHIBIT:

Peter Bartlett's collection of Jeffersiana was on display in the Walter F. Dexter Library at California State Polytechnic College (San Luis Obispo) during National Library week. A commemorative checklist was designed for the display by Jonathan Lindenthaler. Mr. Bartlett, on the faculty of the Department of Biological Sciences, has long read Jeffers to his students to give them a different view of their science. Dr. Bernice Loughran, head of Cal Poly's Art Department, displayed a painting inspired by Jeffers' "Storm Dance of the Sea Gulls" at the exhibit. William Everson (Antoninus) gave a talk in tribute to Jeffers.

JEFFERS FESTIVAL:

The second annual Jeffers festival will be held at Monterey Peninsula College at the end of July under the auspices of M P C's Community Services Program. A week's seminar is planned beginning the evening of July 24th and featuring films, recordings, readings, and discussions under the supervision of Elayne Fitzpatrick, M P C instructor in philosophy. The week will be climaxed by the Tribute Program, July 31st at 7:30 p.m. in the M P C Little Theatre. A number of Jeffers scholars are being contacted to take part in a panel presentation. Those organizing the tribute are still open to your suggestions and/or volunteered services.

DRAMATIC PRODUCTION:

The Santa Monica Theatre Guild presented "MEDEA" by Robinson Jeffers, a Morgan Theatre Special, May 22 and 23 at 8:30 p.m. H. Arthur Klein writes that it was enjoyable though not to be compared with the Judith Anderson dramatization. The play was directed by Byron Mitchell and featured June Salow as Medea.

RADIO-TELEVISION:

In an hour-long program, "This Land is Mine," April 6th, ABC T V news surveyed "the American countryside and its people in the quiet of winter." Woven throughout the program were the words of some of the nation's foremost writers, descriptions capturing the special spirit of different regions. Robinson Jeffers and his poetry figured prominently.

N E T Films Service (Indiana University Audio-Visual Center, Bloomington, Indiana 47401) offers the film titled "Robinson Jeffers" for rent (\$5.40) and for sale (\$125.00). It is 16 mm, 30 minutes long, in black and white, and identical with item #15 of the RJN "News and Notes" (25:2): "The Creative Person."

NEWS CLIPS:

The Los Angeles Times' Charles Champlin (April 13) mentions special Jeffers printings by the Book Club of California, publications by Ward Ritchie, Jake Zeitlin, and Primavera Press, and work by the Grabhorn brothers, as displayed at a meeting of librarians, collectors, authors, and antiquarian booksellers at U C L A's William Andrews Clark Memorial Library.

Karl Shapiro in a recent Los Angeles Times article (Sunday, April 19, Section E), "The New Poetry--A Literary Breakdown," deplores the Bob Dylan, Rod McKuen cult of poetry by contrasting them with the times and publications of Robinson Jeffers (and others).

JEFFERS SEMINAR:

Dr. Rex Campbell, professor of humanities at the University of Utah, read selections from NOT MAN APART in conjunction with an "Earth Day" seminar held by the Free University at Salt Lake City.

Elayne Fitzpatrick has for the last term been coordinating and directing a Jeffers Seminar at the Free University, featuring a series of readings, films, recordings, and discussions.

AWARDS:

The Selected Letters of Robinson Jeffers, edited by Ann Ridgeway, designed by Gerald Valerio, has won two sets of top honors--one from the Association of American University Presses, the other from the Chicago Book Clinic.

## COLLEGE TEACHING:

The English Curriculum Committee, Cal State College Long Beach, has added Robinson Jeffers to a highly exclusive list of authors to be taught in Major American Writers, a senior seminar. Jeffers will be presented in combination with Archibald MacLeish, Carl Sandburg, Robert Frost, or Edwin Arlington Robinson. The CSCLB English faculty has gathered three Jeffers specialists: George Stephens, Richard Spiese, and Robert Brophy (cf RJN, 25:5,7,8).

The Comparative Literature Department of CSCLB this fall will offer a course: "Religious Themes in 20th Century Literature": "an examination of the themes of alienation, anguish, and the absurd, guilt, sin, and salvation, the problem of evil, hope and despair, cosmic irony, tragic insight, free will, and determinism, a universe benign, indifferent, or hostile, the nature of God and the mystic experience, sacramental world and waste land, time and beyond, flesh and spirit, original sin and secular humanism, faith and the search for faith" as reflected in the works of representative authors. Jeffers is a major figure on the syllabus and reading list.

## NECROLOGY:

Joseph Wood Krutch, noted author, critic, and in his later years naturalist and conservationist died in Tucson, May 22nd. A former New York drama critic, he reviewed plays for The Nation from 1924 to 1952, publishing during that time a dozen volumes of literary biography and theatrical history. In 1950, in a Jeffers-like move, he left New York for Tucson to begin a new career as nature-lover, celebrating in his writing, the land and its creatures. (The Desert Year, The Forgotten Peninsula, The Great Chain of Life, expressing in each a yearning for a simpler, contemplative life. Mr. Krutch was a subscriber to the Jeffers Newsletter.)

## MISCELLANEOUS:

Gleeson Library Associates awarded the Sir Thomas More Medal for Book Collecting to C. Waller Barrett at its annual meeting, March 22, 1970. Mr. Barrett's address, "Why I Collect Books," was followed by a question and answer period in which he described his acquisition of the impressive Jeffers Collection at the University of Virginia, commemorated in the BARRETT LIBRARY / ROBINSON JEFFERS / A CHECKLIST (Charlottesville, 1960, 41 pp.)

Marci Mauthe of Newport Beach has printed some very attractive notecards using photographs of Tor House taken in the fall of 1969. (P. O. Box 1414, Newport Beach 92663.)

Nina West and John Gilpin, respectively of Carleton College and Lawrence University, have sent us checklists of their colleges' Jeffers holdings. Probably typical of many quality colleges, they reveal very good basic collections with strange lacunae. We would suggest a good deed--bring busy acquisition librarians up to date (especially on Jeffers books still in print) by checking card catalogs against William Nolte's current Merrill Checklist and noting the missing volumes for order or search.

One of the future services of the Newsletter may be quotation of current availability and price of volumes of Jeffers poetry and criticism. International Bookfinders Inc. and Serendipity Books have both recently provided catalogs or listings and invite subscribers to write for more information. Richard Mohr, International Bookfinders (Box 3003, Beverly Hills, California 90212); Peter Howard, Serendipity Books (1790 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley, California 94709). We also have correspondence from Bennett and Marshall (8214 Melrose Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90046), Constance Spencer, Books (442 Post Street, San Francisco, California 94102), David Magee (3108-B Fillmore Street, San Francisco, California 94123), Dawson's Book Shop (535 North Larchmont Blvd., Los Angeles, California 90004), and Zeitlin and Ver Brugge (815 North La Cienega Blvd., Los Angeles, California 90069).

EDITORIAL MEETING:

The editorial board of RJN met at Occidental College, February 20, 1970, to consider fundamental questions of the Newsletter's role (see attached questionnaire). Present were Lawrence C. Powell, Ward Ritchie, Tyrus G. Harmsen, H. Arthur Klein, Robert S. Ryf, and Robert Brophy.

PLEA FOR NEWS ITEMS:

It seems obvious that what we gather each issue is just a small sampling of Jeffers lectures, publications, readings, presentations, exhibits, radio-TV, studies, work in progress, courses, newspaper clippings, etc. that occur across the country and around the world. Subscriber response is always disappointing, almost non-existent--a loyal few send in what they see, hear, or get rumor of. If in doubt, let us be the judge. Please drop a card noting any news items or queries.

FROM THE EDITOR

At a recent (February 20) meeting of the Robinson Jeffers Newsletter editorial board, the fundamental question of the Newsletter's role was considered. (Present were: Lawrence Powell, Ward Ritchie, Tyrus G. Harmsen, H. Arthur Klein, Robert S. Ryf, and Robert Brophy.) Specifically we asked: was the RJN fulfilling the most useful purpose possible, should it be reaching a wider public, should it try new things or is it already over-extended, does it need a change of format, just what should be its basic appeal, its precise aim (raison d'etre), realistically what cost is it able to hazard in pursuit of its aims, etc.

The 1969 subscription list yields the following categories and approximate numbers: 25 teachers (mostly college), 11 poets, 25 Jeffers friends and family, 20 libraries and librarians, 10 professional writers, 1 newspaper, 1 literary society, 1 other newsletter, 1 bookseller, 3 collectors, 4 publishers, and about 50 others. The subscriptions have been considerably augmented since then and the categories expanded but this basically is the pattern.

It is our feeling that the Newsletter should go through a major subscription expansion--to reach graduate students, writers of M.A. and Ph.D. theses, poetry teachers, librarians, students, etc. We will ask your help directly but here we specifically look for your suggestions because the question is not a simple one.

Subscribers' response to the recent issues of RJN has been disappointingly meager--there have been two or three letters per issue. News and query contributions have been very limited. Does this reflect indifference, complacency, dissatisfaction, passivity? Only you can say. We need your reactions in order to fulfill our purpose and to this end ask that you communicate your thoughts on the form enclosed.

You will also find enclosed forms to solicit additional subscribers. Please send them to whomever you think potentially interested. Should you wish to be less direct, send us names and addresses and we will mail a sample issue of RJN without charge and make our own appeal.

#### JEFFERS' INHUMANISM AND ITS POETIC SIGNIFICANCE

by Andrew K. Mauthe

The doctrine of "Inhumanism" that underlies Jeffers' poetry is based upon the belief that the universe is organized around an inevitable cyclical process. This process, a kind of cosmic law of conservation of matter, moves endlessly through the life, death, and renewal of all forms of existence. In terms of this process, man's relationship to the cosmos is similar to that of any other particle of matter, except that it is possible for him to go "beyond tragedy." As Frederic Carpenter writes

In Jeffers' poetry, man ceases to exist as an autonomous human individual, independent of nature or of God. Rather he appears in two new roles. First, he is a natural object, motivated by the forces of nature . . . . Second, man appears in the roles of a god-like observer of human folly and of an ideal actor in the cosmic drama . . . .<sup>1</sup>

In either role, however, man can never be the center of the universe; unless he is able to transcend the human milieu, as Orestes does in Tower Beyond Tragedy, man must act out his own part within the limitations of the larger process.

Though the universe in Jeffers' poetry is a well-ordered whole, there are discernible divisions within it that are concentrically related to one another. The largest ring in this relationship represents the all-encompassing cosmos, the next largest, the natural geophysical cycle, and the smallest, the life cycles of living things. As a living thing, man acts out his cycle within this last division, but not at the center, and not independently. Rather, man is one moving part among all others that comprise the universe, and is thus a "natural object motivated by the forces of nature" (Carpenter).

Jeffers emphasizes this insignificance of man and the inconsequential nature of his actions in comparison with the cosmic process while he employs them as micro-cosmic representations of the larger cycle. In most of his significant

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<sup>1</sup>Frederic L. Carpenter, Robinson Jeffers (New York, 1962), p. 137.



longer poems he adheres to the principle he articulated in "My Loved Subject":

Mountain and ocean, rock, water, and beasts and trees  
Are the protagonists, the human people are only symbolic interpreters--  
So let them live or die.

The rationale behind this idea is made clearer in "Point Joe" when he emphasizes that

Permanent things are what is needful in a poem, things temporally  
Of great dimension, things continually renewed or always present.

Man, then, becomes the "symbolic interpreter" of the "permanent things" that are the natural phenomena of "mountain and ocean, rock, water, and beasts and trees" that themselves reflect the larger permanence and greater dimension of the cosmos, the largest concentric ring. Jeffers attempts, then, to capture the permanence of the cosmic cycle by staging a human drama against the backdrop of the physical universe--the human drama emphasizing the renewal process, and the physical universe emphasizing the permanence of the cosmos.

Jeffers accomplishes the poetic representation of this complex set of relationships in two ways. The first, and most obvious, depends on the use of setting. Jeffers places many of his stories in the rugged Big Sur and Monterey Peninsula locale to emphasize the influence of the natural forces on man.

The second method, more subtle than the first, relies on the shifting application of imagery associated with one level of existence to another level. The result of this technique is a feeling similar to that of looking through a "zoom" camera lens that is constantly twisted in and out. Jeffers focuses on the immediate, human element, describes it in, natural terms, then shifts the view to the cosmos, using the same imagery. Or, he may describe the human in cosmic terms, then shift abruptly to the cosmic view, then return as quickly to the human level. This constant play between the microcosm and the cosmic and between the animate and the inanimate fuses the form with the content in much of Jeffers' poetry.

The opening lines of "Margrave," for example, serve as a conceptual and structural statement of the cosmic relationships between the levels of existence:

On the small marble-paved platform  
On the turret on the head of the tower,  
Watching the night deepen.  
I feel the rock-edge of the continent  
Reel eastward with me below the broad stars.  
I lean on the broad worn stones of the parapet top  
And the stones and my hands that touch them reel eastward.

In the first five lines we are shown the three levels--the "broad stars of the cosmos, the "rock-edge" of the natural land, mass, moving through the infinity of the universe, and, finally the human "me." In the next two lines, Jeffers focuses on the smallest unit, "me," while using the terminology he had first applied to

the physical solidness flying through the universe. By this repetition of "reel eastward" Jeffers has unified the three levels into one symbol with shifting significance. Moreover, it results in a multiplication of meanings of the stones and the hands. The stones become miniature "rock edges" and the hands become the acted upon member of the man doomed to a microcosmic puppet dance under the influence of the "natural forces." The stones, then, may represent the cosmos which controls all levels of existence, and the hands may represent the smallest cycle within these levels.

At the end of the same poem, man actually becomes a part of the physical world. Jeffers describes the end of Margrave's cycle in anatomical terms--the terms of the science of the construction of the physical body of man. Man's place in the cycle is then made explicit:

The (stars) also shall perish I believe.  
Here to-day, gone to-morrow, desperate wee galaxies  
Scattering themselves and shining their substance away  
Like a passionate thought. It is very well ordered.

As the microcosmic representation of the larger process, man must finish his cycle, so that the new one may begin. The stars, as the rest of the universe, are just as alive as man is, and as dependent on the cosmic cycle. Jeffers unifies this passage with the sense of man on earth watching this cosmic order and meditating on the cyclical nature of the universe. Everything is self-destructive and regenerative--the stars burn themselves out, and new ones appear; rivers fill themselves with silt, and find new channels; men kill each other, expend their vitality, and reproduce themselves before they die. This is the basis of "Inhumanism," and is the paradoxically beautiful tragedy of existence.