

ROBINSON JEFFERS NEWSLETTER

Number 5

Robinson Jeffers Committee  
Occidental College  
March, 1964

Dear Members:

There is a plan in progress for an annual Jeffers Festival in the Big Sur country. Hugh Chisholm, a resident of Big Sur, will direct the Festival and is responsible for the idea. He has already secured the cooperation of Dame Judith Anderson.

Because of the summer fogs on the coast it is thought wise to hold the Festival on an October or May week-end, though this is open to suggestions. Readings would be between the hours of 5 to 7 against the background of the sea and mountains which Jeffers praised so well. Evenings would be devoted to seminars and lectures. Undoubtedly this would be an excellent way of bringing Jeffers to the people and encourage appreciation and further study.

Other ideas already presented are to have outstanding American composers set Jeffers' poetry to music--symphonic and/or choral--to be presented at the Festival; and a revival of Jeffers' dramas.

We have just received a copy of Kamil Bednar's fourth publication of Jeffers poems. This book is entitled Robinson Jeffers-Poems from the Hawk Tower. Fifty copies have been set aside for members of the Robinson Jeffers Committee. Advance orders of 20,000 copies were received before publication. The book is beautifully presented and includes a recording. An enclosure of \$5.00 by anyone wishing to order the book will cover the cost of the book and the postage.

The address:

Ceskoslovensky Spisovatel  
Klub Poesie  
Praha 1, Narodni, 9  
Czechoslovakia

Kamil Bednar informs us of a Jeffers matinee held on January 12th in the Theater of Music in Prague. Despite the bitter cold weather there was a large audience of young people. Kamil opened the matinee with a short lecture about Robinson Jeffers followed by recitations of his poetry by Mrs. Blanks Vikusova and Mr. Brousek, an actor with the Prague Broadcasting Station. Music by the American composer Copeland was played during the intervals. Kamil writes "...the recitation was beautifully performed and the audience listened breathlessly..." A young composer by the name of Lecian was inspired to promise a musical work with a Jeffers theme.

Eva Hesse, Jeffers' German translator writes us, "Perhaps some of the critics will start getting around to Jeffers sooner than we imagined. After all, there's NOBODY among the younger generations of poets in the United States; or even in England, who comes anywhere near him in stature." It is a possibility that both Eva and Mary de Rachewiltz, Jeffer's Italian translator will be coming to the United States sometime this year. We'll keep you informed in case you'd like to meet them while they are on the east coast. They should receive a royal welcome from members of our Committee.

Donnan Jeffers has sent us some news-worthy items to pass on to you:  
(1) We recently received a publication, 'Proceedings, American Academy of Arts and Letters and National Institute of Arts and Letters.' In Part Three, 'Commemorative Tributes of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Annual Meeting of the Academy, December 5, 1962,' there is reprinted a very nice and appreciative talk on Robinson Jeffers by Mark Van Doren.

(2) On 16th February, on the program, "Look Up and Live," was broadcast by CBS News in New York City father's poem, "The Bloody Sire."

(3) The New York Public Library has informed me that The Beginning and the End and Other Poems is included in their publication "Books to Remember-1963," and has obtained permission from me to broadcast over station WNYC on 9th March on their 'Speaking Volumes' program the two poems, "Granddaughter" and "Let Them Alone. "

Frederick Clapp has sent us his thinking on where we should place the emphasis in our planning: "...I personally am inclined to think that the publication of all his (Jeffers) works, perhaps in paperbacks, would be more important than bibliography at this time."

We have called a meeting of our Executive Committee for Wednesday, March 25th at 2:30 at Occidental College. If you have any suggestions that you wish us to consider, please send them so they may be placed on the agenda. In our April letter we will report on the meeting.

Again we thank you for your interesting and encouraging letters and wish each of you a Happy Easter.

Faithfully yours,

Melba Berry Bennett