

ROBINSON JEFFERS NEWSLETTER

Number 6

Robinson Jeffers Committee
Occidental College
May, 1964

Dear Members and Friends:

Due to the number of requests for our newsletter from non-members we have established a policy of accepting a donation from them towards the printing of the letters. This will release funds towards our other projects. Let us know if you wish anyone added to the mailing list.

The majority of those answering our inquiry as to the advisability of sponsoring a Robinson Jeffers Festival at the Big Sur are of the opinion that we should encourage the effort as individuals but not as an organization until after we have seen the quality of the Festival and are in a better position to judge its merits and its future.

A letter from Radcliffe Squires who is in Athens, Greece has many interesting comments. As to a bibliography he says: "Bibliographies may be useful tools for scholars but they never made anyone read a poem. A bibliography does not contribute to a reputation. And so I would stop squandering energy on the idea of a bibliography and see what can be done about restoring Jeffers' reputation. To a degree, of course, you do not have to worry about the eventual recognition--Jeffers is a great poet and in time--whether we do anything or not--will be seen to be. But I suppose what we want to do is to speed up the process. Very well, I shall be practical:--Literary reputations are made, not by committees, not even by Madison Avenue, but by critics and (to a lesser degree) by teachers. I therefore strongly suggest that a Jeffers critical quarterly be established. It need not be much longer than your present newsletter; it could be mimeographed. The idea would be to invite criticism, memoirs, explications, etc. It could also be sold--most good universities would subscribe, some large city libraries and some individuals, too. But more important, it would focus attention on Jeffers' work In addition, it might be a way of preserving some biographical material on Jeffers"

I hope this idea appeals as strongly to the members as it does to me. Practically every member would have something of value to write about Jeffers. How about starting with the three critics who gave him his start--James Rorty, Mark Van Doren, and Babette Deutsch? And follow with Lawrence Powell and the rest of us? I like the idea of both criticism and memoirs. I'll offer to underwrite the first issue and will hope for other volunteers. If we could all work at finding subscribers it might pay for itself at \$1,00 an issue. I'd like your suggestions for an Editor-in-Chief and a date for the first issue.

Contrary to general opinion there are countless scholars who are in need of a bibliography and an idea has been presented which may make it possible, after all. We hope to work out the details before our next newsletter.

Bruno Adriani writes from Carmel that he feels the most important action our committee can take is to promote a critical edition of Robinson Jeffers' complete work. "The work of the poet has the first rank." He kindly forwarded the #36, 1957 issue of the Neue Deutsche Hefte containing an article by Richard Exner, "Der Dichter Robinson Jeffers."

So we know Mr. Adriani will be happy with our announcement that Random House plans a paperback edition of a collection of Robinson Jeffers' short poems for fall or winter publication. Further publications will depend on its success so you can earn your place on the committee by helping to promote its sale.

The Book Club of California's Quarterly Newsletter announces the publication of the poem, The Poet is Dead, a memorial for Robinson Jeffers by Brother Antoninus, O.P. Send orders to The Auerhahn Press, 1334 Franklin Street, San Francisco 9, Price \$12,50. Edition limited to 200.

The February issue of Hoja Volante, publication of the Zamorano Club, has an excellent article on the Robinson Jeffers Committee written by our own Dwight Clarke. Our thanks and appreciation.

Will those of you connected with universities or libraries please send us a check list of their Robinson Jeffers collections, including manuscripts and letters. We have Alabama's (very complete) but want to compile a record of all existing collections.

The Readers' Theatre of the Speech Arts Department of San Diego State College on February 21-22 presented Robinson Jeffers' poem Night, set for reader and chamber orchestra by Frank McCarty, a brilliant young composer. On April 3-4 they presented a reading of Tamar with a cast of six readers, with musical score again by Frank McCarty and directed by William Poschman.

Future letters to me should be addressed to San Ysidro Ranch, Montecito, Santa Barbara, California. Which is by way of announcing that my husband and I will be back in the Guest Ranch business again after an extended "retirement," having leased San Ysidro for an indefinite period. We extend an invitation for luncheon to all members of our committee.

Faithfully yours,

Mrs. Frank H. Bennett, Chairman