



Robinson Jeffers

NEWLETTER

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*A Jeffers portrait by Michael Werhoff
from the collection of Mrs. Russell Matthias,
signed by Mr. Werhoff, September 22, 1939, Carmel, California.*

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NEWS & NOTES

- Jacqueline Vaught Brogan (Notre Dame University) directed a symposium on American Poetry at Cabo San Lucas on Mexico's Baja peninsula, November 12-15. The program included papers on Robinson Jeffers by Alan Soldofsky, Tim Hunt, and Terry Beers.
- The constitution and bylaws of the Robinson Jeffers Association have been approved by the membership. To be chosen are: president, president-elect, 3 members of the advisory board with staggered terms of 1, 2, & 3 years.
- Kirk Glaser has finished a dissertation under professors Susan Schweik, Robert Hass, and Carolyn Merchant at the University of California, Berkeley, titled "Journeys into the Border Country: The Making of Nature and Home in the Poetry of Robinson Jeffers and Mary Oliver." Glaser explores how Jeffers and Oliver, "two late romantic poets who span the modernist and contemporary eras, represent the interconnections between the body, imagination, language, and nature." In his abstract, Glaser explains his goal and strategies:

"In the introductory chapter, I locate sources of these two poet's ideologies of transcendence and immersion by examining the works of romantic predecessors such as Keats, Emerson, and Bryant as well as critical theories of romantic poetry. This literary historical context establishes Jeffers' and Oliver's shared project of revising (and at times replicating) the romantic ideology of attraction towards and alienation from nature. It also provides the foundation for examining their differing politics and relationships

between the self, nature, and culture, ranging from the prophetic, apocalyptic, and ultra-individualist stances of Jeffers to the communal vision and ecological feminism of Oliver.

“Chapters two through five, shaped by phenomenological and feminist readings, explore the values and desires that inspire both poets to seek immersion in a nature that they value for providing mystical and ecological insight that disrupts the anthropocentrism of modern culture. Jeffers, in more typical romantic fashion, often seeks to transcend nature of an ideal source, a ‘God’ beyond, if manifest in, physical creation. Oliver, on the other hand, strives to remain rooted in the cycles of creation, seeing these as necessary for the ‘spirit’ of ‘mystery’ to exist and express itself. The relations between how these poets inhabit nature and attempt to bridge the world and the word, as well as their relations to their poetic forbearers [sic], become clear in how they depict images of a ‘feminized’ nature, of ‘naturalized’ domestic spaces (houses, nests, caves, honey-filled trees), and of the processes of composition and play of nature and consciousness in these revisionary poets’ works provides new ways to think about the values we attach to these powerful and ambivalently held ideas.”

ROBINSON JEFFERS AND NARRATIVE: *A PANAL DISCUSSION*

■ **Editor's Note:** The following is the transcript of a panel arranged by the Robinson Jeffers Association for the May 1992 meeting of the American Literature Association in San Diego, California.

Moderator: Albert Gelpi, Stanford University

Panelists: Calvin Bedient, UCLA; Tim Hunt, Washinton State University; James Karman, California State University, Chico; Jacqueline Vaught (Brogan), University of Notre Dame

[This sessions, the second sponsored by the Robinson Jeffers Association at the annual meeting of the American Literature Association, was organized by Albert Gelpi of Stanford University. Professor Gelpi, a panelist at the previous year's sessions, enlisted a panel of two people whose research has centered on Jeffers, Tim Hunt, and James Karman, and two people who have written widely on modern American poetry but whose interest in Jeffers is more recent, Calvin Bedient and Jacqueline Vaught (Brogan). In preparing for the session, each panelist reviewed Jeffers' 1928 narrative *Cawdor* and used it as the basis for introducing questions and issues for the panel and audience to consider. About 30 people attended the session. Terry Beers taped the proceedings, and the initial transcript was prepared by Sue Fulton of Washington State University Vancouver. Panelists were given the opportunity to edit their remarks for clarity and continuity.]

— OPENING REMARKS —

Albert Gelpi: Some of you were at last year's ALA Jeffers session and will recall that it focused on Jeffers and his Modernist peers as a way to begin the effort to understand Jeffers not in isolation (as he has until

now been principally seen by his loyal band of critics and readers) but instead as part of his literary and cultural generation. That session was organized as a panel discussion. Each panelist made an opening statement of five to ten minutes, and we spent the rest of the time in discussion, first the panelists among themselves and then the panelists and audience. This year we'll follow the same format, and so we hope you will not only listen but join in the conversation.

To follow up on last year's panel on Jeffers and the Modernists we decided to focus this year on what is really the tough and crucial question, I think, in Jeffers and in the reception of Jeffers: the question of narrative—both the narrative poems themselves and the underlying and fundamental narrative impulse in Jeffers. The short meditative or lyric poems are, it seems, easier for readers, especially initially indifferent or hostile readers. It is more difficult to read and respond to those strange, disturbing narratives and verse dramas in which make up by far the bulk of Jeffers' poetic output, and they are disturbing because they are so filled with violence and sex and with sex as violence and violence as sexuality.

Even so, several critics of Jeffers have been arguing, very persuasively I think, that these narrative poems must be accounted for. Robert Brophy has shown how the long narrative poems can be read as myth and ritual. Robert Zaller has read them psychoanalytically. William Everson has argued that they finally have to be read in a religious and mystical dimension.(1)

So we posed as the topic of this discussion "Jeffers and Narrative," and to give the panelists some common ground to begin their remarks we decided to use one narrative poem, *Cawdor*, as the point of departure. Those of you who are Jeffersians know that *Cawdor* was published in 1928 and that it followed on the heels of that remarkable succession of early narratives beginning with *Tamar* (1924) and running through *Roan Stallion* (1925) and *The Women at Point Sur* (1927). Specifying *Cawdor* as a common text was not, though, meant to restrain the range of comments from either the panelists or you.

— THE PAPERS —

Tasting Both: The "Modern" Gesture of Jeffers' Narratives by Tim Hunt

Jeffers' narratives have been, as AI notes, the source of much of the controversy surrounding his work, and they *are* difficult and problematic, at times excessive and outrageous, often uneven. It's, thus, under-

standable that even some of the readers who take Jeffers most seriously prefer to base the case for his achievement on the shorter work—the finely modulated lyrics and meditations that at times (even today) make the anthologies. But Jeffers was, I think, right in seeing his long narrative and dramatic poems as his most important work, and I'd like to suggest that part of our difficulty in assessing the long poems may be that we are still not sufficiently clear just what sort of gesture the decision to write V narrative actually was for Jeffers and what we might need to do as readers (and critics and literary historians) to adjust our reading accordingly.

It's tempting to say that Jeffers was the only poet of his generation to write (at least seriously) narrative poems. That's not true, of course, but it nearly is. E.A. Robinson and Masters, for instance, were a half generation earlier. Really Frost was the only other major poet foolish enough to take up narrative in the Modernist period, and he, in contrast to Jeffers, had the good sense to keep his narratives relatively brief, cast them in blank verse, and keep them a relatively modest part of his overall body of work, while Jeffers, with what can seem West Coast extravagance, generated narrative poems as long as novels, cast them in a long (all but unprintable) line of his own devising, and in his collections let the lyrics and meditations tag along as seeming poetic afterthoughts, table scraps to the feast. Like it or not (many don't) Jeffers staked his ambition—aggressively—on narrative at a time when his contemporary up-and-comers, the poetic blue chip stocks to be, were already grabbing the market with Imagism or initiating the long poem of collage with such "long" works as "Maundering" and "The Waste Land."

For Pound (as much as for Poe) the narrative poem was a contradiction in terms and a modern narrative doubly so. What did Jeffers think he was doing? Typically our answer has been that Jeffers elected narrative out of a kind of poetic conservatism, that he bypassed the experiments of his Modernist contemporaries (whose initial advocacy of lyric and image led Jeffers to characterize them as "followers of Mallarmé's aging dream") in order to preserve, even foreground, the discursive and didactic possibilities of nineteenth century poetry that Pound and others wished to suppress as no longer poetic. Stories, that is, demonstrate what is already known, an ideologically shaped interpretation of reality that places us as readers in a belated position. In contrast, the imagist poem makes the world new and us with it. It stands as discovery, for poet and reader, not as belated interpretation. This conservative sense of what it means for Jeffers to have written narrative has led us to focus on the long poems as stories and then to assess these stories for the philosophical (that is the

discursive) lessons they put forth—or it's led us more simply to dismiss them as simply failed and irrelevant.

Story is certainly an important aspect reading Jeffers' narratives, but the very convolution of his narratives, their violational action, their ultimate inconclusiveness at the didactic level leave them anything but philosophically clear (however cathartic or disturbing they may be). As "stories" they fail, and it's thus no surprise some wish to invest their critical capital in the clarity and economy of the lyrics and short meditations. Ironically, though, the short pieces are the discursive, didactic side of Jeffers. They are, in spite of the radical positions they express, the poetically conservative gesture some have seen the narratives as being.

I hope the drift of what I'm trying to do is becoming gradually clearer. Rather than posit Jeffers' election of narrative as a conservative gesture, a rejection of his contemporaries' desire to make poetry modern, I want to posit it as a similarly radical gesture to theirs, one that involved 19 different means to a related end. Like his Modernist contemporaries Jeffers sought to break beyond the discursive and develop what might be termed a poetics of discovery. His different strategy for doing this, his decision to explore narrative rather than Imagism, likely stems in part (as I've argued elsewhere) from his involvement in modern science and his conviction that discoveries in such fields as biology and astronomy, discoveries that placed human life on the periphery of creation, required reconceptualizing the nature and implications of human life and consciousness and no longer seeing them as central. Narrative for Jeffers was a way to engage this. Rather than being discursive, it was a strategy to discover: an attempt to cast the figures of the poem as expressions of the natural world that produced them, then use them to evoke and enter nature's dynamic, and finally to release whatever recognitions this process might yield. For Jeffers, that is, narrative was a way of regrounding poetry not in discursiveness but discovery. It was a way of testing out one's relationship to the complex world of natural process and flux, a world without a still point to its turning.

Here had we time it would be helpful to develop Jeffers' particular reading of Freud and the Cambridge anthropologists and how their sense of the unconscious as natural force and of ritual actions as human expression of natural force became part of Jeffers' vocabulary and helped shape his sense that narrative poetry could be made a modern form, but instead let me turn to an unpublished preface he wrote shortly after "Tamar," his first major narrative, where he offers an implicit rationale for rejecting early Modernism and for his approach to narrative. In it he

dismisses "mere troubadour amusement" and claims that poetry in its "higher form" must adhere to three "laws." One is that it "must be rhythmic":

By rhythm I do not mean the dissolved and unequal cadences of good prose, nor the capricious divisions of what is called free verse, (both of these being sometimes figuratively spoken of as rhythmic), but a movement as regular as meter, or as the tides. A tidal recurrence, whether of quantity or accent, or of both.... A reason is not far to seek. Recurrence, regular enough to be rhythmic, is the inevitable quality of life, and of life's environment. Prose belongs rather to that indoor world where lamplight abolishes the returns of day and night, and we forget the seasons. Human caprice, the volatile and superficial part of us, can only live sheltered. Poetry does not live in that world but in all the larger, and poetry cannot speak without remembering the turns of the sun and moon, and the rhythm of the ocean, and the recurrence of human generations, the returning waves of life and death. Our daily talk is prose; we do not often talk about real things, even when we live with them; but about factitious things; expedients, manners, pastimes, and aspects of personality that are not real because they are superficial or exceptional.²

In other words, to Jeffers Modernism is the indoor world and an evasion of our increasingly problematized relationship to nature and consciousness. But narrative poetry—rather modern narrative as Jeffers reconceived it—was a way to engage "the inevitable quality of life, and of life's environment" by using the poem's figures to enact processes that would enmesh poet and reader in nature and consciousness and thereby provoke discovery through that experience. Narrative, that is, wasn't for Jeffers a didactic packaging of the known, wasn't discursive, wasn't a conservative gesture generically and formally. It was experimental and radical, and actually (if ironically) the side of Jeffers that can be construed as aesthetically conservative, as discursive, as didactic, is the lyric and meditative works—even though the critical vocabulary we've evolved over the century points us away from this recognition.

The sense of process in the narratives is perhaps most overt in the earlier ones—*Tamar*, *Roan Stallion*, *Point Sur*—with their obvious intrusions where the narrator jumps in and says in effect "my characters have gone crazy, I haven't, stammer on." The narrator's interaction with his

story in *Cawdor* is largely implicit, but it may be that some of the figure Jeffers develops in it do even more to tell us why narrative for him had to be pitched as process and discovery. Rereading the poem this time, I drawn to a passage I'd never paid enough attention to before. Late in till poem *Fera*, the heroine of the poem, has been shot in one of those wonderful plot convolutions Al referred to. She's lying in bed in the formal attitude of death, straight and arms crossed. Her husband *Cawdor*, who has in fact some awkward problems here to deal with, walks in, and as their conversation unfolds she says:

That's the way with us dead, we see things whole and never
Wonder at things...as time darkens
You'll find me the only comforter you have. And I can teach you
the way to blessedness: I've tasted life
And tasted death; the one's warm water, yellow with mud and
wrigglers, sucked from a puddle in the road,
Or hot water that scalds you to screaming;
The other is bright and cool and quiet, drawn from the deep. You
knocked the scummed cup from the boy's hand
And gave him the other: is that a thing to be sorry for? I know; I
have both in my hands; life's on the broken
And splinted left so I never lift it. (491-92)

Cawdor then notes, "I see there are two of us here twisting in hell," and she replies, "That's true. But I taste both." In this episode *Fera* herself becomes an author of her own narrative. Both alive and dead, she draws the deadened *Cawdor* back to the quickness of life, his pain, his damnation. She twists him to feel both arms and discover for her a deliverance from her own dilemma.

Neither Jeffers nor his narrator (a distinction that may not be useful in this case) explicitly breaks into the narrative here. Rather we have a moment where Jeffers uses the character's situation to advance a figure that expresses what he wants to become through the poem's process. The poet, that is, as Jeffers sees it, must taste both, must experience and attempt to accept both arms, must try to do what neither character is able to do: that is to participate fully and simultaneously in life's flux and the silence beyond it, to fully realize (in both senses of the word) consciousness and nature. The poet cannot, of course, do this fully either, since it would mean being fully alive and fully dead—a capacity God can perhaps realize but which human beings can at best only

approximate, but that then becomes the weight of the narrative poem. The narrative becomes a way to allow the poet (and conceivably the reader) to have-through the experience of the poem's elements and process—moments of reaching that particular simultaneity.

And if that's so, we must take Fera's comment seriously when later yet in the poem she turns and tells Cawdor he is a god with the power of death. Cawdor is (or rather momentarily becomes) a god in the poem. For all his failures, even because of them, he becomes god-like, an archetype, as he is destroyed. He is a product of Jeffers' own attempt to create the gods that he can consume—and we can consume—in the process of discovery. I'm trying to suggest, that is, that the narratives are attempts to use the poems' ritualized elements and patterns to evoke and explore these problematic states and that Jeffers' engagement of narrative reflects not his aesthetic conservatism but a radicalism that we have yet to adequately define and assess. In Jeffers narrative is a way of transcending the discursive and an attempt to reground and modernize poetry by engaging a broader sense of recurrence, of rhythm.

James Karman: Response to Tim Hunt

I'll step here from the general to the specific. I'll have less to say about narrative in general and more about *Cawdor*.

The enthusiasm generated by *Tamar* and by *Roan Stallion, Tamar and Other Poems* when they appeared in 1924 and 1925 respectively was diminished somewhat by *The Woman at Point Sur* in 1927 and then revived by *Cawdor* in 1928. *Cawdor* impressed the critics and Jeffers himself was hailed as a rare and vital talent. Morton Dauwen Zabel, reviewing *Cawdor in Poetry* (March 1929) praises Jeffers and describes him as "the only one of our contemporary artists who had plunged bravely into the darkest waters of experience and found there the incalculable tides and currents which the Greeks tried to fathom." What Zabel saw in Jeffers was a poet equal to the Greeks in stature—a poet who could dive into the same abyss of being that faced Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides at the dawn of civilization, a poet, that is, who was not just versed in Greek literature (like any other highly educated artist of his time) but immersed in the actual wine-dark sea.

Anne Singleton says something similar in her review of *Cawdor* published in the *New York Herald Tribune Books* (December 23, 1928). "From first to last," she says, "Robinson Jeffers turns up with his verse the fresh earth of experienced tragedy, the stuff of reality that *Oedipus Rex* must have had in it when the material it was made of was still alive and compelling in men's

minds." Jeffers was not just alluding to myths, she argues, he was actually making them. His poetry seemed more original and authentic to her, n sophisticated and primal, than the poetry of others in his time.

To corroborate this claim, it could be noted that soon after Cawdor appeared Joseph Campbell, destined to be one of the century's most distinguished mythographers, made his way to California where I sojourned for a while with Steinbeck and his circle in Monterey Campbell's discovery of Jeffers at this formative moment in his life, himself says, was a revelation—it put him into immediate contact with the mythic imagination—and he paid his debt to Jeffers by referring him in almost all of the books he wrote thereafter.

A useful exercise would be to point out all the mythic material in *Cawdor*—obviously, the Hippolytus / Phaedra story informs the poem, does, in part, the ordeal of Oedipus—but we will have to save that for another occasion. With time at a premium, I would like to discuss an aspect of the poem where, insofar as myth-making is concerned, the stakes cue highest—where, that is, mythology becomes ontology and where we find Jeffers making claims about the very structure of reality, both ultimate and mundane. To do this, I would like to focus on one character—Michal, Cawdor's fifteen year old daughter—for I think she provides an important clue to the meaning of the poem as a whole. (At one point in the poem, and this is parenthetical, Michal goes home by herself "along the thread of grey fog that ran up the great darkening gorge like the clue of a labyrinth." In that brief line, Jeffers manages to evoke the whole mythic background of the poem, for Phaedra in the original is Ariadne's sister and Theseus is the one who slays the minotaur. With Fera and Cawdor taking their places and with the labyrinth mentioned, we know where we are—and this time Michal is the one who possesses Ariadne's thread).

Michal is named, I believe, after Michal of the Bible—and before I go on I should say that Jeffers' mythopoesis was a rooted in the JudeoChristian tradition as it was in the Greco-Roman, which makes his work all the more compelling. In any case, if we switch to the Semitic world for a moment, Michal in the Old Testament was Saul's daughter, the one who married David, the one who mocked her husband for dancing before the ark when it was retrieved from captivity among the Philistines. Though those details about her are unimportant insofar as Michal in Cawdor is concerned, her name is richly suggestive. It means in Hebrew "Who is like God?" This question is central to Jeffers' work as a whole and certainly crucial to this poem. To answer it, I would like to say that just this side of the ineffable, where God in Jeffers' vision eludes imagining,

and just past the phenomenal, where God in Jeffers' pantheism can be anything, there is a penultimate theophanic zone where God can be found in the archetypes of the collective unconscious—the gods and goddesses that are familiar to us from myth.

Jeffers' vision of God, at the penultimate level, includes both male and female powers. In these opening remarks I'll focus primarily on the feminine side of God and only briefly mention the masculine.

From Michal's perspective, in this regard, who is like God? —or better, who is like the Goddess? Obviously, it is Fera. We ourselves see her, like everyone else on the ranch, as a remarkable figure. There is that extraordinary scene early on where she cuts her hand while searching for shellfish and presents the wound to Hood as if it were a bleeding vagina: "He saw the white averted lips of the cut and suffered a pain / Like a stab, in a peculiar place." A few minutes later, after their sacks are filled, they climb the cliff to go home. Fera is already at the top when Hood looks up and sees her as we see her,

like a lit pillar... / flushed with the west in her face
The purple hills at her knees and the full moon at her thigh,
under her wounded hand new-risen. (426)

Aureoled at nightfall in declining solar power, striding above the hills with the full moon right at the level of her womb and the moon itself beneath her wounded hand and therefore drenched in quasi-menstrual blood—this is a figure to be reckoned with, the very Goddess herself, the feminine principle incarnate.

To differentiate the feminine archetypes at work in Fera somewhat, we could say that Fera is certainly filled with Aphrodite power, dark and bitter as it can be sometimes. Like Phaedra in the original, Fera is the embodiment of tortured passion. She is also wild, imperious, and disdainful of men—very much like Artemis. She is Cybele, the Great Goddess from Phrygia, and to escape her grasp Hood has to stab himself in the thigh—"the Attis gesture," as Jeffers calls it, in reference to the self-castration once required of Cybele's priests. As the Magna Mater, Fera is Mother Earth, and here is where Jeffers' poem gets interesting, for Fera is in no way nurturing; she is, rather, aloof, disdainful, and cruel. At night, for instance, Fera "endured Cawdor if he pleased / As this earth endures man"—without respect and certainly without love. Refugees from Father God faiths, seeking comfort and concern from the universe, might find Fera's—or Mother Earth's—antipathy upsetting, but Jeffers is insistent. Two of his characters, Dante Vitello and

Concha Rosas, describe the brutal countryside around them as "matrigna and "madrstra," which means "step-mother" in Italian and Spanish spectively. The image they have in mind is that of a woman who has relation to and cares nothing for her children, even hates them at times. This, in their view, describes the California landscape—or, more precise Cawdor's canyon—perfectly. As Dante Vitello says of the "beautiful step-mother country" he finds himself in, "it make you fat and soon your neck."

Mother Earth as step-mother is personified by Fera, for that is wit she is in relation to Michal. And, like the cruel firestorm that drove Fera from her home and blinded and ultimately killed her father, Fe herself is an agent of destruction. Michal loses everything she values t her—her beloved brother, her father, even the eagle (who Fera compels her to kill). Through Fera, Michal learns what life is all about; in Fera she sees the destructive power, the careless wrath, at the very heart things.

Who else is like God in the poem? Insofar as the masculine aspect ,11 the cosmos is concerned, it would be Cawdor, Michal's father. A, Jeffers says elsewhere, "who feels what God feels / Knows the straining flesh, the aching desires"-the pain of life. Cawdor, as the poem progresses, becomes the very embodiment of strain and pain. "Day by day," says Jeffers, "the tensions of his mind / Were screwed tighter in silence." And the wound he inflicts on himself—stabbing his eyes out—rather than releasing him from his agony, secures his identification with the divine.

In this regard, Michal's eagle is like God, too, and through its experience we learn more about the meaning of Cawdor's blindness and about the kind of suffering that permeates the universe as a whole. After tile eagle is released by a bullet from its mortal cage, it apprehends the meaning of existence. It sees, in its death dream—

according to the sight of its kind, the archetype
Body of life a beaked carnivorous desire
Self-upheld on storm-broad wings: but the eyes
Were spouts of blood; the eyes were gashed out; dark blood
Ran from the ruinous eye-pits to the hook of the beak
And rained on the waste spaces of empty heaven.
Yet the great Life continued; yet the great Life
Was beautiful, and she drank her defeat, and devoured
Her famine for food. (512-13).

Who is like God? Michal's step-mother, Michal's father, Michal's eagle, even Michal's squirrels—the one's she traps and serves alive, with their crushed paws, to the eagle before it dies—and, finally, Michal herself. She is clearly at the center of this poem. In *her* innocence, cruelty, and suffering, it can be argued, a key feature of the divine countenance is revealed.

To sum up, I would agree with Zabel and Singleton that *Cawdor* is distinguished by its rich and deep mythologizing. And, with Campbell and any others, I would agree that there is something primal and authentic about Jeffers' work. Jeffers' mythopoesis, or theopoesis, was no "as if" game, no mere literary ploy. Like Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides—the only poets early critics could compare him to (a fact which hurt Jeffers' reputation later on)—he played for keeps, he played for real.

Robinson Jeffers' Cawdor: Textual Bonding or Textual Bombing? by Jacqueline Vaught (Brogan)

I.

Since this is supposed to be an informal talk, one which participates in or encourages conversation, I would like to give a series of hypotheses—or different ways I've thought about *Cawdor* since agreeing to be on this panel. My first inclination was / is to talk about or consider *Cawdor* from a new angle (though from one quite resonant with other ideas being presented here)—and from one I'm not even fully convinced is right, but I think would be well worth exploring.

That is, in a certain obvious, even if somewhat reductive way, there is no question that Robinson Jeffers thought of himself and of his work in the lineage of the "male poet" (with emphasis on "male"). Given certain facets of his life and the work prior to and including *Cawdor*, it might not be stretching it too far to say of Jeffers what George Oppen has said of Pound—i.e., that he "wanted to be the masculine poet, the pounding poet." We might note, with reference to Pound, that this obsession with masculine authority / authorship was not unique to Jeffers in any way, but was part of the climate. Wallace Stevens, for example, repeatedly stresses the need to be "the masculine poet"—specifically "the virile poet" in his well-known "The Noble Rider and the Sound of Words."

Despite Jeffers' affinity to these other poets in this regard, there seems to me in Jeffers an unquantifiable, but undeniable difference as well. And it is this difference I find so intriguing and that I hypothesize may not have been fully understood. What if (writing before Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence*, in which the script for the [masculine] poet is to arrest and surpass

the overwhelming Father/Author)-what if Jeffers felt not the "anxiety, d influence," but rather something closer to what critics are now calling in reference to women's narratives *textual bonding*. In place of that archetypal "I'll see you one better, Will"-what I've elsewhere called "textual bombing"-what if Jeffers felt the act of writing to be a communal bonding with antecedent authors and texts that empowered, not inhibited, his writing!

In this regard, it is interesting to note that in *Inspiriting Influences*. Michael Awkward has suggested that feminist narratives are something like a quilt-a product of communal enterprise-in which the new literary work (in this case *Cawdor*) brings out or exposes nuances latent in its antecedent textual matrix.(3) I think it would be well worth asking what latent nuances in *Oedipus*, *Hippolytus*, *Macbeth*-and a bit of *Leaves of Grass*, for that matter-emerge in *Cawdor*. (This really is a question-I appeal to my more knowledgeable colleagues here.) Anyway, considered in this way, *Cawdor*-otherwise so obviously a male text, concerned with heroic integrity (or the lack of it)-seems to me to anticipate these recent critical insights and, simultaneously to confirm-quite ironically-what was happening u, other, contemporaneous "feminist" texts, such as Jean Toomer's *Cane*, produced on the opposite seaboard at approximately the same time. No where, for example, do I find Jeffers in *Cawdor* trying to "oust" or better what must have been for him the inspiriting Greek drama. The same could be said of his relation to Shakespeare and to Whitman-and, perhaps more obviously-to native American myth and history. While continuing a basic tragic vision of what it means to be alive-of what life is, in any form-his narrative strategies in *Cawdor* seem to me to approach a metaphorically feminist interweaving, rather than an anxiety-ridden "pounding. Here, the eagle's death vision seems quite to the point:

It saw from the height and desert space of unbreathable air
Where meteors make green fire and die, the ocean dropping
 westward to the girdle of the pearls of dawn
And the hinder edge of the night sliding toward Asia; it saw far
 under eastward the April-delighted
Continent; and time relaxing about it now abstracted from being,
 it saw the eagles destroyed,
Mean generations of gulls and crows taking their world; turn for
 turn in the air, as on earth
The white faces drove out the brown. It saw the white decayed and
 the brown from Asia returning....

There the eagle's phantom perceived
Its prison and its wound were not its peculiar wretchedness,
All that lives was maimed and bleeding, caged or in blindness. (512-13)

This facet of Cawdor seems especially clear if we compare *Cawdor* to Jeffers' previous work-*Point Sur*, for example, especially in the related issue of the overt treatment of women. However, this is not to say that there are not many archetypal—more accurately, patriarchal or phallogocentric—elements in *Cawdor*. Quite the opposite. And it is this fact that brings me to a second hypothesis about the narrative strategies of Cawdor.

II.

What if in writing *Cawdor*, Jeffers actually inscribed a kind of debate or dialogue between the masculine hero story (*The Hero with a Thousand Faces*) and **feminine production**—i.e., textual bonding, a giving birth to nuances latent in the antecedent matrix? This seems to me to be a really interesting idea and corresponds to what Tim Hunt calls the competing "modes" of *Cawdor*—the psychological mode (the one in which the narrator has a stake in his own story) and, alternately, the distanced pose of realism.⁴

I should note that we will probably make an unconscious assumption here that the "psychological" mode is the metaphorically feminine one and that the "realist" mode is the metaphorically masculine one. But I need to clarify—NOT SO! If you think about what it means for a narrator *to have a stake in his—note his—own story*, you get in the psychological mode precisely that phallogocentric myopia so characteristic of what feminists mean when they describe history as "his-story." Furthermore, the realistic mode in *Cawdor*, which embraces, among many other things, the shells left by exploited, even obfuscated, native Americans, is most clearly interest in a communal story. Also, that Tim Hunt notes that Cawdor backs away from the apocalyptic quality of *Point Sur* also supports my point—it is, indeed, in every respect less pounding, less bombing, more bonding.⁵

III.

Still, I would like to stress the inherent tension—perhaps dialogue is the better word, I'm really not sure yet—between the canonized masculine narrative of the hero and the kind of "feminist" narrative strategies I

appealed to earlier. We must not forget that the initiation rite of the conquering hero—the basic myth so clearly informing the plot and theme of *Cawdor*—is invariably contingent upon some erasure or "silencing" of the feminine. (In this regard, consider Fera's effacement when she dons the lion skin, or the devastation of her remark, "Whoa I not to be stained?") So a kind of third hypothesis here would be that Jeffers' attempt to enact a kind of textual bonding with a patriarchal textual matrix (one can hardly use the word in this context) confronts highly problematic crux or crucible—the necessity of erasing the matrix or the "feminine" in order to tell the story. There would seem to be the an almost necessary failure in the strategies of *Cawdor*—and here I am not talking just about the plot line inherited from *Hippolytus* and *Oedipus*—although failure is manifest in the plot line of *Cawdor*; as in the protagonist's meaningless self-blinding, Hood's metaphoric self-castration, and Fera's self-effacement. Furthermore—and this is a frightening thought to me—it may well be that this very crucible I've just described is precisely what makes *Cawdor* so compelling and, worse, so realistic (Consider, for example, the eerie description of Fera's cut as the lips of the wound (the nuances of which are manifold):

He [Hood] saw the white everted lips of the cut and suffered a pain, Like a stab, in a peculiar place.
(425)

In addition, note that it is not just Fera, as an actual female, who is sacrificed (for sacrificed she is, even if she is alive at the end), but also flood who is notably described as having "girlish breasts."

IV.

Before I end, I want to note just a few areas in which the patriarchal story vs. a kind of feminist concern and bonding merge. We see this ill theme, as well as in narrative strategies, including the concern with native Americans as a people (see p.412) and with Rosa as an individual (see p.424). It is this theme which gives rise to the humorous and devastating phrase "our beautiful stepmother country" (437). We see it again in imagery throughout *Cawdor*—from the landscape to the highly conflicting descriptions of Fera as extraordinarily passive and very aggressive. (Here, the opening imagery of "Apology for Bad Dreams" is relevant, enacting a similar dance: the phrase "a roof under spared trees" certainly privileges domesticity, but the word "spared" also points to the potential and on-going violation of nature.)

Perhaps most intriguingly, we see this dialogue or dance in the narrative voice itself—not just in mood. If we look again at that narrative intrusion in Section VII of the poem, we find an extraordinarily authoritative voice describing, ultimately, the communal matrix of life. The narrator intrudes quite authoritatively, remarking that "She [Fera] was mistaken. Sleep and delirium are full of dreams" (449), before modulating into a final vision of complete interconnectedness:

The ecstasy in its timelessness
Resembled the eternal heaven of the Christian myth, 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 the flesh -dissolving bacteria. The personal
show was over, the mountain earnest continued
In the earth and air. (451)

It might be fair to say that at all levels *Cawdor* is caught on the crucible of attempting textual bonding (rather than bombing or outdoing) with a canon, the very nature of which precludes communal bonding. Seen is this light, Cawdor's empty self-inflicted blinding is an indulgence—his realization that the most difficult thing is to do nothing gives us, at the end, a radical and expressly feminist inversion or subversion of our inherited heroic story that maybe has not been fully appreciated in Jeffers before.

Jeffers and the Erotic Sublime
by Calvin Bedient

My paper meshes in several ways with the papers you've already heard, though perhaps I differ from Jacqueline in seeing Fera as profoundly anti-communal—something we can maybe talk about later. But what I'd like to do first is to say a few words about Fera and what she focuses for Jeffers—in any case what she focuses for me—and then situate her and the poem *Cawdor* in the tradition of what I will call the erotic sublime.

For Jeffers, what is more important than pain and pleasure—though not unequivocally so—is pride, a stone-like separate personality. In *Cawdor*, when the eagle's ghost reaches the sun, it strikes the Peace it finds there like "a white fawn in a dell of fire" (513); there is no melt in its veins. Jeffers approves. The heroine, Fera, is repeatedly likened to this same eagle, and certainly she hates peace. But Fera does not represent

pride. Jeffers intimates that what women want—the question Freud famously opened and instantly shut upon enigma—is not independence but continuity with all that exists, cell with cell. And such abject minglings, such disregard of boundaries is, to Jeffers, as repugnant as it is *impossible not to love to imagine*. This is why Hood Cawdor says to Michael, his sister, "be like a boy, don't love. Women's minds are not clean, their mouths declare it, the shape of their mouths. They want to *belong* to someone" (425).

Women assault the law of separation; men would live stoically within the law: that is the difference instituted in Jeffers' poem. Fera says to her son-in-law Hood, "I would waken your soul and your eyes, I could teach you joy" (445). But Hood says to Fera, "I am not your dog yet ...I am not your thing" (464). Again: "We've not been made to touch what we would loathe ourselves for" (444).

In Cawdor, Jeffers offloads on Fera, in a rush and a flood, the erotic drive to connect. How he admires her sublime extravagance, her recklessness! On the other hand, how he fears her readiness to reconnect with the slime from which we arose. Her name is a virtual code for the ambivalence: both a truncation of *feral* and an anagram of *fear*. In this poem, Jeffers' treatment of a woman's capacity for what Georges Bataille calls erotic *continuity, immediacy, intimacy*, is misogynistic, if it is misogyny for a male author to foist all of his emotional temptations, fear, excesses and weaknesses (these may all be the same thing) onto the forward member of the opposite sex, implying that that is where they belong.

The misogyny consists in the alarmed notion that women are beyond the law, loose wheels of fire, slaves to the erotic and sacred longing for endless continuity, hence liable to attempt to tear down a man's pride, a man's strength. Fera's husband, Cawdor, reflects that "Women are not responsible; / They are like children, little children grown lewd; / Men must acknowledge justice or their world falls / Piecemeal to dirty decay" (477). Jeffers sets at large, here and elsewhere in the narrative, the suspicion that abjection is a woman's native place. Fera's first challenge to Hood is to don his belated wedding gift to her, an uncured mountain lion skin, and to protest too little that it is "sticky" (421).

Yet, to Jeffers' credit, Fera is a complex character. She too is repulsed by the abject, by life like "warm water, yellow with mud and wrigglers, sucked from a puddle in the road" (491). And one senses that her own behavior is a horror to her, the result of bitter need as much as of malice (if there is a difference): malice against the pain of individuation and

against those who block its cure. And, more superficially, malice against her parents, which she redirects upon Cawdor, Concha, and others in the Cawdor household. Malice against her mother for being a model of promiscuous exercises in continuity; and her father for letting his pride be stained by something so like “vomit” (it is Cawdor’s word) as a woman.

Fera hates her own sexuality—a hatred she lofts onto Concha, Cawdor’s “fitch of dark meat” (442). She praises her father’s magnificent mind above all things; “he was here like a man among cattle,/ The only mind in this ditch” (495). Her paternal identification is even strong enough to make her boast, late in the story, after the Cawdors have every reason to make her boast, late in the story, after the Cawdors have every reason to scorn her, that she’s superior to them. And her disappointed yet protective love of her weak father explains her passion for the strength that can withstand her—explains why she says of Hood, “he was straight and true and faithful as light.../there was not a spot to hold by” (516).

But Fera rages, all the same, to destroy masculine pride under the hammer of her eroticism. She represents the objection of the All, so to speak, to the existence of separate personalities. The emotion of continuity is her church, the emotion, not the sensation: and so she says to Hood, “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 in the air” (445). This is the early twentieth century California counterpart of the passion-cries of Catherine and Heathcliff on the moors.

For me, Fera, like Catherine, is the heroine of a modern—a neopagan---form of sublimity. This form might be called the erotic sublime. Eroticism attains to sublimity when it threatens the self-preservative instinct that, as Edmund Burke notes, is the sensitive point, the wound, in works of the sublime. True, as Burke noted, eros is conventionally associated with the beautiful: the beautiful is, he says, the socialization of lust. But eros can appear anti-social. Did not Burke himself acknowledge, in passing, the violent rapture of the sexual climax? This capacity for violence makes eros a wild card in the game of the beautiful and the sublime. When eros sets itself up as a religion of continuity, it forsakes the first for the second. So it is in *Wuthering Heights*, D.H. Lawrence’s *St. Mawr*, and again in Jeffers’ *Roan Stallion*, to stop there.

The extraordinary thing is that a man so seemingly convinced as Jeffers was of what he calls the “false earnestness/ Of passionate life” (451)—and he is speaking of Fera—could yet give his imaginative all to

heroines of the erotic sublime, to California in *Roan Stallion* and to Fera. He may say, in distinguishing Cawdor from Fera, that men are "more sensitive by sex and by their natures" than women (500)—an astonishing statement, the nadir of the misogyny of this work (which is not to say that a male reader might search the statement for some hope); yet how he loves his imaginative fellow-travellings with passionate women! As I see him, Jeffers was axe-split down the middle with respect to the value of both life and non-life, which is not quite to say death. Life is the "scapegoat of the greater world" (513), he says in *Cawdor*; life is always sacrificed to the inanimate. "But as for me," he adds, "I have heard the summer dust crying to be born / As much as ever flesh cried to be quiet" (513).

Fera is the sado-masochist of this contradiction in Jeffers himself, this more or less simultaneous rage to live and rage to be quiet. She registers both extremes to the hilt. And so Jeffers cannot but be in awe of her. Cruelly self-opposed, she is his own love-hate relationship with life in personified form.

No narrative, as such, could contain her. Without the sublime element of lyrical figuration, *Cawdor* would flap around grotesquely in the cage of realist convention. It is the language that carries the work, a language of large gesture and fiery tongue.

To be sure, the narrative has a momentum that mimes Fera's destructive passions—the sentences are rarely simple and short, the dialogue is introduced like greased lightning. But the story needs the ritualistic or ennobling dimension that only drama or lyricism could give it. Jeffers makes his narrative a vehicle for the Longinian nobility of figures, figures that work a delightful violence on the imagination or the ordinary run of words. The figures surprise, menace, exalt, as when Hood's fire up on the granite dome is called "A bright high blood-drop under the lump-shaped moon" (42), or as when Hood sees Fera standing above him "like a lit pillar ...flushed with the west in her face, / The purple hills at her knees and the full moon at her thigh, under her wounded hand new-risen" (426). That is, as an earth goddess asserting her sovereignty.

The earth goddess: has her come back in Western Cultures, limited though it may be to modern art, seemed necessary? Yes, to fill the vacuum left by the collapse of idealistic religions and philosophies and yes in view of what Robert Penn Warren calls "the century's mania." Reason leads to Auschwitz. And the balked but fighting emotion of continuity with all things—what does it lead to? Jeffers doesn't allow it to be either safe or pretty. Or, even, satisfied with the earth's limits. It

does not kneel to the goddess. It wants everything, which means nothing—nothing in particular, no particulars. It means a radical dissatisfaction with life. So it means that, as Fera says, echoing tragic Greek wisdom, "The best / Would be not to've been born at all" (503).

— *DISCUSSION* —

Gelpi: Why don't we start the discussion by having the panelists respond to one another.

Hunt: I'd like to add something that bears on what's been said. The seed for *Cawdor* is a four or five paragraph treatment, a possible opera libretto of all things, that Jeffers sent his editor in 1927. In this conception (to be called "The Song of Triumph") the figure parallel to Fera is the last living woman, and her only chance to reproduce is to seduce the god Attis. When he (like Hood) kills himself rather than satisfy her, she tries to seduce her elderly but impotent father. When her mother kills her and the last chance for renewing human life is lost, the gods gather to sing the song of triumph, the record of human history. The mode differs greatly from *Cawdor*, but the connection is still there, and significantly woman is both the central and the heroic figure. She has the right energy but is victimized by the failure of both the younger and older male to affirm the process of life. I think this complicates *Cawdor*. It grounds Jeffers' use of *Hippolytus* in a version where the feminine energy is clearly positive and underscores the comment about his ambivalence. Fera may be a figure he'd like to reject, but he can't. And it seems to me that your talks, Jacque and Cal, bear on each other at just this crux.

Vaught (Brogan): Well, even if he planned to focus the libretto on the female figure, he clearly changed the title to *Cawdor*. And even if Fera is an extremely powerful figure, let's be honest, you don't see a lot of women in this room, and there aren't a lot of women on this panel. I'd say this is very much a male text. It's difficult for females to read it and not feel angry. One of the ways women can try to accommodate it, though, is to recognize that Fera is so complex. As I said earlier, she's very passive; she's very aggressive. She's not simplified, and I think there's a way in which what you're saying and what I'm saying can be put together precisely because of this complexity. And the other way is to think about the poem in terms of its narrative strategy and to recognize that its relationship to the prior texts it incorporates is very different

from what I was talking about with the other male poets of the period—the anxiety of influence and so on. In *Cawdor* Jeffers clearly embraces a whole set of texts in a way that we can only describe right now in this new phrase "textual bonding." To see him, therefore, as not so anti-female as his text and the prior texts might indicate is a very complicated issue. I do think that Fera is these two sides of Jeffers magnified, and what I'm saying about these two possible strategies for reading *Cawdor* relates to these two sides. As such I don't think we're so much in opposition as focusing on slightly different aspects of the same crux.

Bedient: It's not quite clear to me what you mean by textual bonding in *Cawdor*. Do you mean the allusions to other texts or the working in a genre without trying to subvert that genre?

Vaught (Brogan): With "bonding" a writer regards the antecedent text not in any sort of adversarial or parental way but in what Michael Awkward calls an "inspired" way, where the writer tries to bring out the latent nuances in the antecedent texts. Awkward is working with feminist narration, and he's pointing out that the communal achievement, for instance, that Janie achieves in Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* becomes much larger in Walker's *The Color Purple*. It becomes part of a larger, more resonant community. *The Color Purple* is not an inversion or subversion but an act of love. So, that's what I mean. I was thinking it would be really interesting to think about what it means that Jeffers treats Cawdor's self-inflicted blindness at the end not as simply tragic but recognizes it as being self-indulgent. It just really collapses that heroic myth. It says this whole kind of singular, heroic pose is nuts, and that allows again a way for a woman to read this text without being so ...It is a difficult text for a woman to read.

Karman: I'd like to speak to that. The question of Jeffers' misogyny or the difficulty a woman might have reading the poems can be re-imagined if we grant that Jeffers was working with an archetype of the feminine that no one wants to confront—man or woman. I am thinking here of the death goddess or that aspect of feminine power that involves the capacity to kill. It is easy to imagine Demeter, or Artemis, or Aphrodite, or Athena—but Kali power, as it is named in Hinduism, is another matter. There isn't even a good Greek example of it among the gods, only in the human realm, and that's Medea. It's hard to acknowledge Kali power and Jeffers, more than I think anyone gives him credit for,

understood the dark side, the death side of the goddess and brought it into his work. That's why people turn away and that's why everyone, perhaps women especially are frightened by him. He forces women to acknowledge their own real power, not just to give life but to take it away. As one woman explained to me, citing abortion, women have a very real power to kill—and millions exercise it every day. The dark energy of Kali, when dramatized and made archetypally convincing, is certainly upsetting—but that doesn't make it misogynistic.

Vaught (Brogan): I don't think it is ultimately misogynistic, but you have to come up with ways to think about it or else that's where you'll end up.

I want to support what you said and what I'm saying, too, by using the death of the hawk in "Hurt Hawks" and the wounded eagle in *Cawdor*. They are very, very similar. Both have this soaring seen as positive and specifically masculine not feminine. The difference between the Hawk's death, which seems so isolated in the traditional "heroic" way, and the eagle's, which seems interconnected with all life, the wound, and on and on, is that Jeffers' has reimagined the heroic flight into something that embraces all life.

Karman: And that's where he becomes all the more distinguished.

Alicia Ostriker: Somebody mentioned Whitman as a possible source for Jeffers, and that connection strikes me as possibly helpful here. Whitman is also a figure who wants to embrace and be all: "I am of the woman as well as the man." But Whitman is only very minimally narrative, and one way to read Jeffers is as a working out of what happens if you put Whitman's encompassing vision into narrative. It turns tragic, especially when the vision, as with both Jeffers and Lawrence, approaches women with both compassion and revulsion. As long as the vision, like Whitman's is largely static, it can hold; it can include everything. But when you try to take that sense of an inclusive self and turn it into a temporal trajectory, it appears to self-destruct.

Robert Zaller: Well, this is an interesting point, and it's the first time it's been raised at all the Jeffers' conferences and sessions I've attended: how women can read Jeffers. My feeling is that it's going to be hard to reconcile Jeffers to a feminist reading. This shouldn't alarm us too much, though because Jeffers is hard to reconcile with almost anybody's point

of view. Anybody reading Jeffers will come at some point—early, middle, or late—to the sense, "God, this is terrible; there's something just inherently terrible here that you ought to take seriously." As Benjamin DeCasseres said about Jeffers sixty-five years ago, the man's "intrinsically terrible." I think, though, that to consider him misogynistic is a completely mistaken reading of the work. There are very few poets or dramatists whose female characters have the range, impressiveness, and strength of Jeffers'.

— *PARTICIPANTS* —

Calvin Bedient of UCLA has two recent books on modern American poetry: *In the Heart's Last Kingdom: Robert Penn Warren's Major Poetry* (1984) and *He Do the Police in Different Voices: The Waste Land and Its Protagonist* (1986).

Albert Gelpi, Stanford University, is the author of *The Tenth Muse: The Psyche of the American Poet* (1975) and *A Coherent Splendor: The American Poetic Renaissance, 1910-50* (1987).

Tim Hunt, editor of *The Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers* (1988-), teaches at Washington State University Vancouver.

James Karman of California State University at Chico is currently editing the letters of Robinson Jeffers. He is the author of the biographical study *Robinson Jeffers Poet of California* (1987) and editor of *Critical Essays on Robinson Jeffers* (1990).

Alicia Ostriker of Rutgers University is the author of *Writing Like a Woman* (1983) and *Stealing the Language: The Emergence of Women's Poetry in America* (1986) and an important contemporary poet.

Jacqueline Vaught (Brogan), University of Notre Dame, has written *Stevens and Simile: A Theory of Language* (1986) and *Part of the Climate: American Cubist Poetry* (1991).

Robert Zaller of Drexel University has published both history and literary criticism. He is the author of *The Cliffs of Solitude: A Reading of Robinson Jeffers* (1983) and editor of *Centennial Essays for Robinson Jeffers* (1991).

— FOOTNOTES —

¹See Robert Brophy, *Robinson Jeffers: Myth, Ritual, and Symbol in His Narrative Poems* (1973); William Everson, *The Excesses of God: Robinson Jeffers as a Religious Figure* (1988); and Robert Zaller, *The Cliffs of Solitude, : A Reading of Robinson Jeffers* (1983).

²Melba Berry Bennett published the Preface, dated August 1923, in her biography of Jeffers, *Stone Mason of Tor House* (1966).

³See Michael Awkward's excellent work, *Inspiriting Influences: Tradition, Revision, and Afro-American Women's Novels* (1989).

⁴These observations were made by Tim Hunt in a letter to the members of this panel (31 January 1992).

⁵Ibid.

UNA JEFFERS, CORRESPONDENT:
THE LUHAN LETTERS
EXCERPTS, 1935

■ *Editor's Note:* The letters that follow are excerpts from Una's almost weekly exchange with Mabel Dodge Luhan. Corresponding letters, Mabel to Una, are to be found at the Bancroft library, University of California at Berkeley. As usual, Una's colorful, strong-minded, sometimes caustic, othertimes fond observations provide a window into life at Tor House—insights into the public's perceived expectations, family dynamics in sickness, a hospital stay, Robin's publication process, Una's own occasional book reviews, the poet's perceived asociability, Una's interest in tarot cards and devils, unlikely friendships, family trips of exploration, Carmel and Tor House social life, the pain of family first partings, a new focus on college, lectures at Mills College, Carmel Highlands, and a teacher's institute, a fishing-boat anecdote which will become a noted poem ("The Purse-Seine"), dogs and mothers-in-law, acquaintances and strong opinions, operas and scandals-sheets, gossip and reading, deposed royalty and psychic visions. holidays and disputed authorships. Wording, spelling, and punctuation have been preserved from the original letters, with editorial notes in brackets.

— *JANUARY 14, 1935* —

—Oh do give him some other portraits than Robin and Una [see *Una and Robin*, RJN 81:7-32]. Our friends say that gives the wrong impression & would do *such* harm in the East. I don't know *why*—I thought it so interesting & more than kind to me at least and full of lots of truths that most people never would see if they stood about us & watched & watched—but there it is—Not one of the people I showed it to wanted it

to go into print. Since they have no axes to grind by its non-appearance there is no reason that I know why they should oppose it—except that they didn't like it. So I feel very self-conscious & uncomfortable about it. I think it may be we are not as fine in nature or living as beautifully as they wish—or prefer to think we are.

We all had flu during the holidays. I got it somewhere & expected to lie down & rest & read & have a nice time. My temp. was 103° but I didn't feel very sick but boys got it and Robin who quickly soared to 104° & so I had to get up & take care of them. We all, except R., went to Tevis' last night. Dickie got a motion picture camera for Christmas & has taken some fine pictures. Also he had rented from a motion picture *library* in S.F. a film "*The Lost World*"—Its the first picture the boys ever saw. It is founded on a Conan Doyle story of a plateau in Brazil on which is a big collection of prehistoric animals. —Ever see it?

I talked to Kay Goringe justice's husband on the street & he says Jaime de A. [Angulo] has stopped his furious mad drinking & acts madder than ever. Keeps Nancy practically a prisoner up there [coastal ranch below Poin Sur] & beats a tom-tom all night. Weird.

Hans Barkan has long tales to tell of Germany which I will tell you when I see you.

— *UNDATED FRAGMENT OF A LETTER* —

A passage from Hazel's letter "Thank Mabel Luhan for me, please, for her very gracious enclosure with your letter. I've pondered about her—her thrift of energy is so directed almost ruthless compared to Robin's (or even D.H.L.'s) helpless kindnesses, and yet she isn't rude nor offensive, disarmingly gentle in fact—she thinks of such plausible alibis to save the bore's face—yet her determination not to suffer is virile."

Saturday—Thanks so much for these letters. I am returning promptly. I feel with Myron [Brinnig] that Cady [Wells, Taos artist] may have a real original talent lying in it. His things do show up well when you see those Carnegie pictures—a certain intensity & freshness—but Lord! Such a lot of painting going on everywhere. —Too much writing also!

Here is a copy of Robin's letter you wanted. I'm amazed that (word? he?) is capable of such a diplomatic letter—one of the most so I ever read.

I've just spent an hour making a leather boot for Haig. He cut the bottom of a foot on a shell and when gravel get in it bleeds. It's cunning.

— FEBRUARY 12, 1935 —

I don't know when I've been so interested as in hearing of Tony's final & ultimate reinstatement. Tell me when I can speak of it. People have so often asked me if he had been "cast out of the tribe" [for putting aside his wife and marrying Mabel] & I have always said that I believed he had every right except some ceremonial ones. I have felt that any sort of restriction of that kind would be a wound-unhealed to Tony. I know he must be happy to have all straight again. Now I wonder very much will it make any difference in your life? Will it take him away oftener—

I am home now and feel all right but I get tired easily & so many people shouting at me to take care *makes* me careful. & I rush to lie down. I hope very soon to be entirely myself again. I stayed at hospital 12 days & 4 days after at Ellen O'Sullivan's where I was taken such care of! [elsewhere described as "gynecological repair work."]

— FEBRUARY 23, 1935 —

I think Tony's complete reunion with his tribe is grand news! I think it is fine for both of you. It has seemed to me I felt a growing *strain* about Tony in these years I have known him, which I could not actually define—it is extremely hard to know what an Indian really is experiencing or wishing.

— MAY DAY, 1935 —

Today I received from Sydney Alberts some leaves of laurel from a wreath on Edwin Arlington Robinson's coffin! The laurel came from a favorite tree of E.A.R. at Peterboro!

The modern Library edition (.95¢ you know—) of "Roan Stallion" is out. It has a very interesting few pages of introduction by Robin, which you'll like. Also the poems hitherto unpublished in his regular volumes from Harcourt-Brace Miscellany of 1927 (Poems= Apology for Bad Dreams, etc) are included.

Noel [Sullivan, devout Roman Catholic friend] came just now. He was very amusing about his appearance as Pope Leo XIII. Said he'd never imagined the horror and confusion behind stage in an amateur performance. He was wearing a white cape—the only one to be found at any costumers in S.F. It was a white lining—the proper side of the cape of some gaudy affair—had been used as evening coat for some famous harlot I believe.

[UNDATED NOTE APPENDED EVIDENTLY TO THE MAY DAY LETTER]

Did you like my review of *Winter in T?* I forgot to comment on Myron's talk about Robin & social contacts. Perhaps he (Robin) does see people more freely than he did. I've insisted on some people for the boys' sake—then too in his own home he probably makes more effort to talk but Myron is wrong about his feeling any need for contacts. He never would meet any people if he could avoid them. —and he *is* so queer. Except for the several people he is already fond of, all the rest are of equal unimportance to him. —The other day a teacher & his wife from Los A. came to call by appointment. I told them he could give them exactly an hour. They stayed 2½ hrs. & were duller than ditchwater.—After they left I reproached him and said, "Why did you keep on being agreeable when you saw me trying to snub them at length—*such* a waste of time!" He looked so hurt & said, "They were no duller than almost Every one-else!" I persisted "don't you find *-so & so & so* more exciting?" Answer = "No" —

— MAY 14, 1935 —

You have heard of tarot cards—the old Egyptian cards used for playing & for telling fortunes. They were famous in Italy in the XIV cent.—Very very few people can "lay them out."—A woman here is supposed to be the best anywhere. She offered to lay them out for me at least twenty years ago. —I never arranged it but happened to meet her the other day and we have an engagement for Wed. evening. —She does not do them for money—Its just a hobby of hers.—Do you know mention of these cards keep coming into Eliot's "Waste Land" like *the hanged man*, the wheel of fortune, "the female pope" etc.

— [LATE MAY], 1935 —

The Golden Bough [Kuster's Carmel theater] burnt to the ground on Sunday [May 19, 1935]. We are all very unhappy for Teddie.—

We (Robin & I) were away Sunday at Marie Welch Wests [leftist poet] near Los Gatos. Then went on to see Sara [Bard Field, activist friend]. She was in a chaise longue in the garden *very very* weak but recovering [from abdominal surgery].

We are off & away for the day to the old Mission of San Antonio Jolon, 25 miles to west of King City. Are going for week-end to Olga's

ranch [Olga and Sidney Fish's Palo Corona Ranch in the canyons south of the lower Carmel Valley].

— JULY 22, 1935 —

I wish I had written more cards to you on the way home [from Taos by way of Wyoming]. I sent only one but kept thinking of you camping away at Twining and hardly a night did we stop anywhere there were cards! We had a very interesting trips of *seven* days. I am very glad we did it but it was tiring. The heat became very severe as soon as we came down from Ouray and each state seemed hotter than the others. We stayed nights almost without exception at dirty little inns because that's where nights overtook us. I think the boys wrote you of our journey & the most startling things we saw.

Well, we got home Wed. P.M. The next four nights I have been to the *Bach Festival* and it was magnificent!! (I had been scornful in advance.) 3 nights in Sunset school auditorium and last night in old Mission. A great chorus and instruments. Lots of professionals from around San Fran. and people like Jascha Jacobinoff concert meister with the Philadelphia Symphony fiddling away. —And Dr. Leo Eloesser the great (abdominal) surgeon fiddling and a girl named Thomas from S.F. playing a flute with the most exquisite windblown quality of grace—and as exquisite a tone as I've ever heard.

My house is a riot of confusion—We left in such haste after boys' college [Salinas JC] year was over. I've done two huge washings and am still ironing— (20 shirts is one item) —Hamilton Jeffers came for the day yesterday. Garth and Donnan went up to Tevis ranch. We are going *there* Wed. night.

This time was the very loveliest we have ever spent at Taos. We enjoyed every moment and said farewell to it all very sadly. Our deepest thanks to you for *Everything!* I have with you that deep comfortable sympathetic understanding that I have with only one other person (-Robin—). I love you dearly. [Note this is the next to last summer at Taos before the 1938 attempted suicide by Una from circumstances instigated by Mabel!]

— SATURDAY, AUGUST 3, 1935 —

Horrors! What a visit from Noel & friends-are you sure it was as dismal as you say? Perhaps it was all a great fatigue after many drinks in the middle of the day.

Yesterday Aug 2. was our *22nd anniversary* & we had to spend it very busily. The woman who is writing on Robin & *the Sea* (owner of Deep Well Ranch, Palm Springs) brought her Ms. for me to correct errors of fact. She came way down from border of Oregon and Calif. where she is spending the summer for the purpose, & I sat up the night before until 3 a.m. reading it.

Garth's eyes shine at the idea of a career in New Mexico [eventually as a cowboy at the Bell Ranch].

— *AUGUST 21, 1935* —

I have been busy beyond description getting boys ready for college [U C Berkeley]. They go up to stay tomorrow! Clothes mended, pressed, washed and bought. They have very nice outfits. We went up and shopped in Berkeley so they could get college *cuts*—and planning their study courses, attending to teeth, everything. Now all is ready, except finishing packing & I have a terrible *sinking* at the pit of my stomach.

We take them up in the morning & I hope they will let me unpack & start their room off right. We went up the other day and Robin was delighted with the look & atmosphere of International House and their view is marvellous—to the west over the bay and Golden Gate. Lloyd has a room just above theirs with same outlook.

— *AUGUST 26, 1935* —

We drove up with boys on Thurs. & left them at International House. I had been so busy getting them ready, washing, mending, sewing, shopping & planning their courses that I had only given way a little at night. (Two nights they called out from their beds with just a tinge of delight in their affectionate interest "Is Mother still sniffing?") Well, we started at 7 A.M. & soon after we got under way I felt sick—pain & nausea & had to get out of the car & be sick. For two & half hours on the way up I sat in a horrid misery. Then I tried with all my might to concentrate on some more work still to be done on planning their courses. I had promised to work half an hour on this on the way up & I began to feel that I was going to fail the boys at the last but, glory be! I came out of my disabled state & finished their *courses* information.

We caught up with some new sweaters & each an ordinary suit.the Tevises on the way to take Lloyd up & so had a regular day of it up there. The boys & I went to get their clothes which we had ordered a week before & needed some alterations. They look

stunning in their dinner jackets and they have some stunning top coats &

International House is very luxurious—but no more expensive than other good college boarding houses—if you can get in—It's a Rockefeller foundation you know. Lloyd had a room directly above the boys. All of them seem happy.

The registering took more than two hours so much red tape & so many people to see & appointments—while they were at that Robin & Haig plodded around by—ways around the campus and I got a pass to their room & unpacked & settled them in. Donnan on the left in closet, left dresser, left bed, left desk etc. Garth right. Their room has a magnificent western view out over the bay & Golden Gate. Just as I finished—alarm clock ticking on the dresser—a basket of nuts and fruit sitting very handsomely & a little picture of Tor House on the wall, they arrived—It was by then 4:30 so we said farewell—me very calm by then—I was tired out.

I am still busy straightening up & washing etc. I get along all right all day. It's when we come home from our walk in P.M. & it's time to get dinner I feel utterly lost.

— *SEPTEMBER 12, 1935* —

I've been going through quite a severe time but things are on the upgrade now. Once I had pulled myself up by my bootstraps Robin gave way & looked just *ghastly* & confessed he had never imagined how *terribly* he was going to miss the boys. So I just devoted myself to him & never went anywhere without him. We were both ashamed—I was any way, to be so sad about such a normal & happy march of events as the boys growing up!

Some months ago Robin got a letter from a ranch in Northern California. A man asked him to criticize some verse and he would in return send him some *farm produce*! Something about the letter made me get Robin's thought about the verses and jot it down and send it back, but I said it wasn't done thoroughly enough for recompense. In due course 3 crates arrived, 2 of grand celery, 1 of asparagus! The other day the man and his wife were going through here and asked to call. They were simple, naive, but I saw very successful ranchers—He suddenly said he had some relation with *writers*—he was a cousin of an Englishman who was quite well known in England. He came from Dorset. —He was a *cousin of Thomas Hardy* and looked exactly like him only much heavier! It was *so odd* and he was so delighted that I knew of Hardy and told us some things about him.

I think [Thomas] Wolfe sounds boring. —not the kind I like at all: I couldn't read his book any more than I could his "Look Homeward Angel." Such a long book has to be about people I'm interested in. It seemed turgid. Nice to have so much vitality if it wasn't just rank growth. He sounds spoiled and bombastic & conceited. And *you* know how contemptible I find drunken people.

— OCTOBER 1, 1935 —

My lecture was a great success. I can't remember whether I told you how it happened—Albert Bender and Dr Reinhard[?] President of Mills college asked me to open the Yeats exhibit—Mss. letters. photographs. 1st editions. I said I would then found when I recd the program I had to speak—Thought I couldn't at first but gathered myself together & did it & people liked it, about 250 people filled the hall and Dr. R. asked me to come back & give it again for the students alone. I may, — I stayed the night at Jean Mc Duffie's & slept again in that lovely Spanish bed blue (like your mother's shawl) & gold-Robin stayed all night at International House with the boys. For \$1.00 the boys can occasionally have a cot put in their room for a visitor to spend the night. They & Robin had a grand time. I was all envy. The boys look so well & happy & alive & Lloyd is most improved of all. Garth is loving his anthropology & Donnan his history. It's fine for them-but we do miss them *frightfully every day!*

Now listen to a tale of horror. You know the fishing fleet (of Italians mostly) go from Monterey bay every night. Robin has long wished to go with them once for material for his verses. We met a man named Townsend at Noel's who has a pull & he said he'd take Noel and Robin one night as guests of a Capt. he knew. Came for Robin at 4 P.M. By that time Robin had backed out, not wanting to leave me alone but as Townsend said they would be back by midnight or 1 am at the latest I urged him to go. They departed. Townsend said it was the "*Western Maid*" they were to go on. —I read till late then went to bed. Haig *guarding* so well he kept me awake he was so alert. —Morning came-no Robin. At 10 am I drove over to Noel's to see whether he had got home & there Noel was-he hadn't gotten back from San Francisco until 4:30 & then when he rushed over to the pier he couldn't locate them. He said he couldn't make the fishermen understand & he couldn't understand them. —So I went to an Italian barber here & he told me where to go to find out. I spent an hour running around the piers & canneries & the fishermen's union—found the fishing boats were all in, had gotten in at midnight, found moreover that the *Western Maid* hadnt even

gone out because the day before's catch hadn't been unloaded yet! When I first went there one man said that two passengers had gone out on the big purse seiner *Ambassador* but that boat is not of the regular fishing fleet & sometimes goes way to San Francisco before it starts back so I thought that couldn't have anything to do with me. Then when I later in desperation went back to find this man & ask about the two passengers I couldn't locate him—

Well, they had gone out on the purse seiner. Robin was not told it would take so long & they did get back about 3 P.M. finally. You can imagine my anxiety. It was a wonderful experience though & you must get Robin to tell you all about it sometime. The seine brought up 70 tons of fish—sardines—all phosphorescent & gleaming in the night. The technique is very complicated—they had gone way up to Half Moon Bay.

I forgot to tell you I have a lovely new black velvet gown I wore for my speech! Its a copy of that one of Blanche's—did you ever see it? Gathered full skirt—tight waist shirred down middle front. V shaped neck and long tight sleeve. I think it is becoming.

I think I mentioned in my last how much I enjoyed Ann Lindbergh's *North to the Orient*—so sensitive. I am longing to read Raswan's "Black Tents in Arabia." I read a few chapters in a friend's house. Grand book. Have you read it?

Good Lord! you letter has come about the devils—Do tell me *everything* about it & them! I'd risk fainting or burning for the pleasure of beholding the horns & eyes. How are Eve & John [Young Hunter, father of Gabrielle Kuster] aside from devils near by? Did she say anything about seeing Gay and family?

I am heart broken to seem to slight York. but our life is so complicated with just Haig that I can't face it. I can't own a dog without loving it so much that it's on my mind all the time. One circumstance of many will show you the difficulty. Often the boys will be brought down Fri. nights to Gilroy to Tevis Ranch & we will meet them there & spend the night. Willie Tevis doesn't like dogs in the house so Haig always has to sleep in the car. If York were in it too, they's tear out the inside before morning. I feel very sorry but I don't see how I can manage it. That's just a sample of present emergencies.

— *OCTOBER 16, 1935* —

I am delighted that you like Robin's book so much!-Yesterday Bennett Cerf was here for lunch. He is a great dear. He has just married

Sylvia Sidney—is deserately in love with her-but already is feeling the stress of Hollywood. She has started a new picture instead of going back m N.Y. with him—couldn't even drive up here and to S.F. Lots of amusing N.Y. stuff & gossip.—

I loved having the boys over Sunday. So sweet & dear & tender. They are a blessed treasure for Robin & me. & Haig almost ate them up. Did I tell you how he grabbed their soiled shirts which I brought home to wash from Berkeley & was sorting-colored from white. He leaped into the pile and hugged them & went to sleep with his head on a shirt he held between his front feet!

— *OCTOBER 28, 1935* —

It is true Mabel there was a queer—really queer sort of being-sweptup-&-away at the [Yeats] talk at Blanche's [the Matthias studio in Carmel Highlands] —It was not so tremendous a subject but some sort of power went out of me that gave me a queer feeling to see its effect. Some people wept (Mr. Dickinson the hard boiled!) & Gay's eyes were full of tears—& Ella said Stef wept when she was telling him—I don't know *why* for there was nothing pathetic! —Susan Porter told Blanche that Yvette Gilbert or Ruth Draper would give a year of their lives to have that added—whatever it was—I am *telling you* because it isn't likely I'll ever speak anywhere again & you'll never see! —Perhaps if I did the power would never emanate again-It's all happened as I told you in the house Claire and John had above O'Shea's—It is empty and sparkingly clean—The room was full of sunshine & flowers-Nothing else but the semi-circle of nice cream-colored chairs from Del Monte with peacock colored cushions. Tea & coffee afterwards in the rooms at the side.

We rode back through a late red sunset and tea & highballs at the house and Noel came with Leslie Roos (who was interested in Mario Ramirez that day remember?) Leslie was looking very handsome and just inherited some *more* millions,—and Ernestine Black the feature writer just back from Washington a very clever, sad person (She has been very unhappily married) We had some amusing talk. Olga sang a lot of new "Porgy" music. Lester played and talked about the Stowkowskys. Olga had just been doing two weeks of theatre with Percy Hammond in N.Y. Said [Martin] Flavin's play was *terrible*.

I told you we are going a week today to San Fran. to Noel's? I go with him to "Die Walkure" & Robin & Haig stay all night at his house and

boys come over from the city—Flagstad sings. And did I tell you about his dachshund Roniface cured by Christian Science. Its a long story.

— *MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1935* —

We must take the boys back to college today. They had their 19th birthday Saturday & a long weekend (Armistice Day today). We all went to Ellen's for birthday dinner, roast turkey etc. Blanche & Russell are in S.F. for a fortnight of opera & her maid baked a great birthday cake, & ice cream for boys. Blanche offered to pay their way (& ours too—for she was sending them to a grand hotel & I could have stretched it) to Yosemite for a birthday present but they thought it too much a treat just to stay home here—We have adored having them & Haig is beside himself!

The opera was magnificent! Flagstad as Brunhilde—I can not tell you the purity & grandeur of her voice & the clear thrilling quality of her Valkyrie cry!-But to tell the truth I hate opera-the fake forum of it all, & the start of Walkure is intolerable for fifteen minutes or more at first. I did a thousand deaths of boredom. —I went with two such handsome men! Noel & Mario Ramirez, who was also visiting Noel. He is a dear! Robin & Haig stayed at Noel's while we went to opera. Garth & Donnan were there for dinner & evening.

The opera was gayer than any since the war, such clothes & such jewels & tiaras! Olga was there very beautiful in white and a diamond tiara. We walked up & down between acts & saw everybody. Mrs Denman came up very excited to see Mario. She has gained weight & looks less nervous. After the opera we went back to get Robin and go to supper party with Matthias at Mark Hopkins.

Found Haig & Robin had passed an interesting evening listening to Greta the police dog in her bathroom having 7 puppies. Haig felt very involved—whenever he heard a whimper.

I spoke of a lunatic. It's such a long story I can't tell you until I have more time. But a man named Moore wrote an article in a scandal sheet [*Apertif*, see RJN 80:9-13] about Robin-not a *scandalous* one but *vulgar* about a love affair he is supposed to have had 25 & more years ago—which because the girl refused him made him into a pessimist! This woman claims to be original of all his early poems to Helen & so on & so on. All rubbish—except Robin did have a flirtation with her in 1909!! The whole thing was so distasteful & vulgar & impossible—the man seems a blackmailer. I guess the woman is just hysterical. The sheet is

published by Baroness von Romberg who is "crazy and lousy" Olga said. She and Sidney wrote a very sharp letter to the Baroness whom they do not know but as she is a climber she won't like their letter -. Anyway after much thought & talk too with Stef who knows how that sort of thing goes on, Robin wrote an itemized denial of it all & it will be published in next issue. They wired apologies too. Wasn't it maddening! to have to dignify it by notice. but the woman had already found Melba Bennett and told her tale & Melba had made a whole chapter in her book about Robin & the Sea about it [ms currently at Gleeson Library, San Francisco]. Fortunately she brought it to show us & had a spasm when Robin landed on her!

The paper published in Santa Barbara has almost no circulation (but there are clipping bureaus!) —It's "*Apertif*." Noel went around S.F. and bought up all the copies he could find.

— *NOVEMBER 13, 1935* —

I forgot to add yesterday to my letter, I think, that we went to lunch in town with Noel & Mrs. Downey Harvey's, a very notable person in San Francisco. An amazing amusing figure a great grandmother but full of energy—racy, salty, with taste for marvelous food! She was an intimate (and I guess I mean intimate) friend of old Senator Phelan (Noel's uncle). He gave her this gorgeous top apartment, a whole floor with a sun porch all around the building such a view! She and her daughter went around the world with Phelan & Noel. She is the wife of Downey Harvey who is son of Mrs. Eleanor Martin who was for 75 yrs the Mrs. Astor of S.F. She died about 5 yrs ago at age of 100! —The other guests were Gertrude Atherton, younger than ever and writing a novel about Horace and Mrs. As a service Downey Harvey's daughter, Mrs. Barron, who is about 50 I guess & very strange and interesting. Much lined in face and a husky voice I found out later she has to make frequent stays in insane asylum.

Then we went over to International House for dinner with boys & rode home in brilliant cold moonlight. Ellen O'Sullivan rode with us.

— *DECEMBER 3, 1935* —

I gave my talk before the Institute [Central Coast section, Teachers Association at Monterey High School, November 26] & pocketed my \$50.00 such a triumph!

Boys came home over Thanksgiving. Garth had broken his nose—& it was mended & he hadn't told us—Did it boxing—He is hipped about it & wrestling. They are sweeter than ever.

In the terrific crowd at Big Game (1935, Stanford & Berkeley) Hans Barkan talked with them & I said "However did you find them?" & he said "They were like two pillars of silence in that jam."—

Donnan is going dancing—the girls are after him.

Went to dinner at O'Sheas for Ella Young. She looks better than I ever saw her & happy. Geo. Moore was there, very jolly until he drank too much brandy.

Went to cocktail party at Noels yesterday & wore my dear Lindsay plaid dress with lace collar & cuffs you gave me. Its an angel dress.

— **DECEMBER 15, 1935** —

We have been riding many Sundays back to Fish ranch. We went again yesterday. Last Sunday Prince & Princess Vassili Romanoff were there too. He is the nephew of the late Czar & she a Princess Golitzen whose father & mother [?] knew years ago when they were fabulously rich. Now nothing. Also Colton playwright (Shanghai Gesture and Rain) & Lester Donohoe & Peggy Wood who played so long in "Bitter Sweet") 2 years in London, straight). She sang for an hour from it—lovely songs & she's very pretty. They were all here next day for tea. Very nice The Princess is lovely to look at—tall & slender & dark with little head & finely cut features.

If you see Dec. *Travel Magazine*—there is a picture in the Calif. coast article of my wax madonna who lives in the tower.

Thanks for Gide (the F. Paget Catalogue). Its interesting in parts. The Wilde part & the where he discovered his perversion but Gide isn't an interesting man to me. I am returning it insured parcel post today & with it the book I am sending you for Christmas. Chas Morgan's *Epitaph on George Moore* which is short but marvellously well done.

Garth came down with Noel Friday. He will have 4 weeks holiday. Donnan is through with his exes tomorrow (Tues.) & we are going up for him. Garth had a queer psychic experience—at least Noel had it in Garth's presence. As they passed by the Rodeo grounds about a mile north of Salinas about 4 P.M. Noel suddenly sat up & looked pale and sick & said "Have you ever thought about a head-on collision? It would be horrible. What do you think it is that kills people so instantly in them?" —Well, just a few hours before, a head-on collision had happened

right at that spot. Two people were killed one of them was Mrs. Rockwell the mother of a classmate of the boys. Two more people are dying, one of them an old friend of mine, Clara Smith Lawler. Garth was amazed when he got home & found out about it. Noel said yesterday it was the queerest experience he ever had for suddenly there had broken in upon his train of thought the most sickening horrible realization of "Head-On Collision"!—That's a first hand true Psychic Experience.

I got along very well with my teacher's institute lecture. I have been asked to talk on Irish Music before the Century Club in S.F.

Do read *Joseph Conrad & His Circle*. Never never was there such another difficult person.

— *DECEMBER 28, 1935* —

Christmas Day & following night we spent at Willie Tevis' ranch at Gilroy, houseparty of 17—all family but us. Boys played polo that day & next. (Robin & I had to drive about 75 miles away to look at some property that Hamilton is thinking of buying.) Willie Tevis gave each boy a grand polo mallet which made them happy. He is thinking of (just for his own fun) pushing a polo team at the University & would mount the boys. For the first time I got to see what he is all about. Geo. Moore admires him so much you remember. He flies in & out of his ranch which is set down in a fold of the hills—& makes it look so simple—other fliers say it's awfully dangerous—so many canyons & cross currents & little space.

Did I tell you about James Stephens telling Mollie & John O'Shea & George Gordon Moore that he wrote Geo Moore's "Story-Tellers Holiday" for £100 & they *believed* it & told us all & I nearly burst with indignation & Ella Winter put it in her *Tell Me* column & of course all the people in N.Y. were flabbergasted as I was (The people here seemed to think that kind of thing is done.) James Stephens was interviewed as he boarded ship for home—of course he denied it *absolutely*. He must have been drunk or just joking & they, Mollie etc, were so in a trance at his charm they swallowed it.

— *DECEMBER 31, 1935* —

I had yesterday a letter from James Whitall whose *English Hours* I reviewed. A *charming* letter. —In it speaking of the Moore story (Stephen's claim) he said "Stephens must have been crazy or drunk. How could he

have expected to get away with such an absurd statement? Actually I often saw the ms of 'A Story Teller's Holiday' and it was in Moore's usual triple spaced dictation on bluish paper. Also I heard him tell many of the stories in it, in the well-known Moore way." If you read "Eng. Hours" you know Whitall saw Moore daily for ten years. 1914-1924. Stephens denied to the N.Y. reporters that he had said it at all!

Guidelines for Submissions to *RJN*

The *Robinson Jeffers Newsletter* will print short notes, notifications of work-in-progress, announcements requests for information, inquiries from collectors, bibliographic findings, etc. It especially welcomes short anecdotes relating to the poet and his works.

It has not been RJN policy to publish unsolicited poem tributes. Photos relating to Robinson Jeffers and family are most welcome and may be printed if not restricted by copyright.

Significant letters from or about the Jeffers family are equally welcome, as are drawings, maps, family-tree annotations, and reports on cultural allusions to the poet, use of his poems, and difficult-to-access articles.

SUBMISSIONS

Whenever possible, please make submissions by computer disk. IBM and Macintosh programs are both acceptable—identify software and version number used. Along with the disk, submit two typescripts of the piece, double-spaced on 8½" x 11" standard white typing paper. To have disk and copy returned, include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Address correspondence to Robert J. Brophy, editor, *Robinson Jeffers Newsletter*, Department of English, California State University, Long Beach, CA 90840; (310) 985-4235.

Essays:

Place the title one inch below the top of the page, the author's name one inch below the title, the text two inches below the author's name. Affiliation of the contributor should appear at the end of the essay.

Notes, Book Reviews, and Bibliographies:

Follow the form for essays, except that the author's name (and affiliation) should appear at the end of the text.

References:

Consult the *MLA Style Sheet* Second Edition. Mark references in the text with raised footnote number (not author-year citations in parentheses). Double-space endnotes following the essay on a new page headed "Notes."

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The standard edition of Jeffers' work is now *The Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers* (Stanford University Press, Vols. I, II, 111: 1988, 1989, 1991), abbreviated CP. Of course, for peculiar purposes, the original printings may be referred to, in which case the title in full or (when repeated) appropriately abbreviated, should be cited, along with an explanatory note. Until *The Collect* 1-29-04, p. *ed Letters of Robinson and Una Jeffers* (Stanford) is available, references should be to *The Selected Letters of Robinson Jeffers*, edited by Ann Ridgeway (Johns Hopkins, 1968), or to the appropriate number of the *Robinson Jeffers Newsletter*

Submit two typescripts, double-spaced on 8 1/2" x 11" standard white typing paper. To have one returned, include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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