



Robinson Jeffers

NEWSLETTER

Contents *Number 89* *Winter 1994*

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ON THE COVER:

*Portrait of Robinson Jeffers by Rem Remsen of Carmel,
June 1926, 8 ft. x 5 ft. canvas hanging in the Jeffers Room
of the Occidental College Library, Los Angeles.*

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News & Notes

■ Ward Ritchie has published his autobiography, *Years Touched With Memory* (AB Bookman Weekly, 1993), which as the blurb says expands on encounters with Laura Riding and Robert Graves, Sir Frances Meynell, St. John Hornby, John Johnson, Elmer Adler, Robinson Jeffers, Jake Zeitlin, M. F. K. Fisher, John Cage, Rockwell Kent, Walt Disney, Ed, Jane and Robert Grabhorn, Alvin Lustig, Frederic Goudy, Bruce Rogers, Daniel B. Updike, W. A. Dwiggins, Dard Hunter and many other notables, along with his continuing relationship with Lawrence Powell. This is the life and career of a great book designer, printer, publisher, and author, spanning more than six decades. One need only glance at a Jeffers checklist to see how important he is in Jeffers studies and collecting. The price is \$38.00 plus \$3.50 shipping at P.O. Box AB, Clifton, NJ 07015. Telephone 201-772-0020. Fax 201-772-9281.

■ Ward has also printed a limited edition of Jeffers first and only published short story, "Mirrors" (*The Smart Set*, August 1913), 40 copies at his Laguna Verde Press. He has written a companion piece concerning the story's probable conception and publication, making it a "back-to-back" book.

■ The RJN regretfully notes the death in Carmel of Sam Colburn, who did the charcoal sketch of Jeffers that appears on the cover of *Robinson Jeffers: Selected Poems* (New York: Vintage, 1963).

■ The California American Studies Association (CASA) will hold its annual conference this year in Old Town, San Diego, Friday to

Sunday, May 6-8. A Friday panel topic will be "The Poet and the City" with discussions on Gwendolyn Brooks, Charles Olson, Walt Whitman and Robinson Jeffers. The Jeffers title is "City as Dystopia: The Apocalyptic Vision of Robinson Jeffers" by Robert Brophy.

■ The annual conference of the American Literature Association (ALA) will also be held in San Diego, at the Bahia Hotel, June 2-5. Tim Hunt has helped organize three sessions on narrative poetry, a genre much neglected since the advent of early 20th Century American Modernists. It is one, of course, central to Jeffers studies. The panel, "Jeffers and the Matrix of Narrative," chaired by Terry Beers, will hear and discuss: "'Wordsworthian Auspices': Jeffers and the Reinvention of the Narrative Poem" by Tim Hunt (WSU Vancouver); "Jeffers, Narrative, and the Freudian Family Romance" by Robert Zaller (Drexel University); and "Sex, Patriarchy, and the Arrogance of Power: Jeffers and Myth-Making" by Robert Brophy (CSU Long Beach).

■ A reminder: membership in the Robinson Jeffers Association, a special author group with the ALA, is still open. The purpose of the RJA is "to offer Jeffers scholars and other interested persons an opportunity to share in the study and appreciation of the life and works of a major American writer." It provides a periodic ALA *Bulletin* reminding of Jeffers events, proposing panels, recommending scholarly materials, noting new or unrealized resources, urging untried directions of research. Terry Beers, English Department, Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA 95053.

■ Also of note: The Society for the Study of Narrative Literature has announced a new journal, *Narrative*, to be edited by James Phelan of Ohio State University (Ohio State University Press, Columbus, OH 43210-1002). This should find frequent focus in Jeffers.

■ Several RJN subscribers have expressed interest in establishing a Collector's Corner as a regular part of the format. Such a category or department, whether regular or occasional, would list duplicates and desiderata sent in by individuals. From that point, participants would correspond on their own. At this juncture, the editor would appreciate feedback as to the general usefulness of such a service to the general readership. The column might also quote selected rare book dealer

offerings and prices. Or it might simply list names and addresses of dealers who deal frequently in Jeffers materials.

■ Daniel Kingman, emeritus professor of music at Sacramento State University, recipient of six consecutive awards by the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), holder of five resident fellowships at New Hampshire's MacDowell Colony, is the author of *Five Earthscapes With Birds*, a composition inspired by the poetry of Robinson Jeffers. Author of *American Music: A Panorama* (Schirmer Books, 1990), he divides his time between home in Carmel ("two minutes away from Mission Trail") and Sacramento.

■ A Bill Hamper 1987 postcard titled "Be Angry at the Sun" depicts a tearful, grimfaced, yellowish, behatted male grasping in anguish at the sun's white ball. Did the purport of Jeffers's title escape the artist? Be Angry at the Sun for setting if you are upset with war, repression, ethnic cleansing, warlording, government lying, industrial polluting (fill in your own anathema). But perhaps Hamper was right on target.

■ The Robinson Jeffers Association is planning a scholarly conference in conjunction with the Tor House Foundation's annual Jeffers Festival in fall 1994. The theme is to be "Robinson Jeffers and the Environment" and the place will be Carpenter Hall in Carmel's Sunset Center, Sunday and Monday, October 9 & 10. Send topic proposals with abstracts to Terry Beers, Department of English, Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA 95053.

■ It should have been noted long since: the 1993 *Edward Abbey Western Wilderness Calendar* dedicates December to Robinson Jeffers with a seascape and quote: "Walk on gaunt shores and avoid the people; rock and wave are good prophets; / Wise are the wings of the gull, pleasant her song" ("Advice to Pilgrims"). The December days are introduced and concluded with woodblock prints by Everett Reuss of Carmel cypresses and rock. Also quoted is "The Inhumanist," section 24: "I think the whole human race ought to be scrapped and is on the way to it; ground like fish-meal for soil-food; / What does the vast and rushing drama of the universe, seas, rocks, condor-winged storms, ice-fiery galaxies, / The flaming and whirling universe like a handful of gems falling down a dark well, / Want clowns for, Hah?" A calendar appendix contains a section, "A Wilderness of Poets," featuring poems: "Pledge to the Wind" by Everett Reuss, "Spell Against Demons" by Gary Snyder, "Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front" by Wendell Berry and "Their Beauty Has More Meaning" by Robinson Jeffers. The "Poetic Bibliography" [Biography] notes: "Robinson Jeffers is America's original 'inhumanist' poet and his visionary work on man and landscape and his harsh insights into the human condition have stood the test of time. Much censored during his own time, his voice is finding a new audience and he is recognized as one of America's great poets." Overall, the events noted for each day and annotations on each date throughout are riveting, often sardonic in their juxtapositions, always enlightening. That for January 10 notes "Thomas Paine published *Common Sense* 1776; Robinson Jeffers [birthday], 1887; Ray Bolger, 1904; Falling icicle killed man in West Germany, 1951." Collectors may request the outdated item: Golden Turtle Press, 3065 Richmond Parkway, Suite 105, Richmond, CA 94806. \$13.95 includes shipping.

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

■ Patrick Dennis Murphy. *The Verse Novel: Dialogic Studies of a Modern Poetic Genre*. University of California, Davis. 1986. 355 pp

Genre criticism has had considerable difficulty in defining the forms of modern American long poems, in part because of the tendency to apply historical definitions to contemporary poetic production and in part because of a lack of an adequate theory of poetics. This essay adapts Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogic method (published in volumes "authored" by Bakhtin, P. N. Medvedev, and V. N. Volosinov) and general poetics to a specific study of the poetics of American long poems in order to develop a genre definition of a major form of modern poetry, the *verse novel*, and to suggest genre designations for other major long poem forms. Chapter One introduces the problems encountered in defining the genres of modern long poems, outlines the key aspects of Bakhtin's poetics most relevant to this study, and presents a working definition of the genre of the verse novel. Chapters Two through Six provide close readings of a number of verse novels. Chapter Two studies Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology* and develops in particular a discussion of Bakhtin's concept of "double-voiced discourse." Chapter Three studies Robinson Jeffers' "Tamar," "Roan Stallion," and *The Women at Point Sur* and furthers the discussion of double-voiced discourse with emphasis on the relationship of the voices of the author, narrator, and characters. Chapter Four studies Wallace Stevens' "The Comedian as the Letter C" and emphasizes the relationship of the voices of author and narrator while introducing Bakhtin's concept of the carnivalesque. Chapter Five studies T. S.

Eliot's *The Waste Land* and, while continuing the discussions of double-voiced discourse and the carnivalesque, emphasizes the double-voicing of intertextuality, particularly that of literary allusions. Chapter Six concludes the close readings with a study of Hart Crane's *The Bridge* with a continuing emphasis on intertextuality and a new emphasis on intratextual debate. Chapter Seven concludes with a recapitulation and brief discussion of the concept of the verse novel as a genre, a summary of the value of Bakhtin's poetics for genre analysis and the study of poetry in general, speculation on other modern long poem genres, and suggestions for further research.

JEFFERS & KRISHNAMURTI

By Rom Landau

■ **Editor's Note:** The following account is taken from *God Is My Adventure: A Book on Modern Mystics, Masters and Teachers* by Rom Landau, London: Nicholson & Watson, 1935, pp. 375-79. Krishnamurti is a "frequent flyer" in the Jeffers letters of the mid '30s. K's obituary and connection with the Jeffers family can be found in RJN 67:8-11. Una's assessment of Krishnaji can be found in RJN 84:19ff. Landau's narrative is perhaps the only place where a Jeffers "conversation" is recorded. If the poet actually spoke these words, one can be fascinated by the ironies and double meanings inherent in various phrases. The sketch catches character traits such as Jeffers's habitually non-judgmental approach to persons. The interlocutor's single-mindedness regrettably keeps him from bringing out contrasts between K's "spiritual movement" and J's materialist inhumanism. And does the reader wonder about the ten-mile silent walk? The "great tenderness" at the mouth? Or the cozy uninterrupted interview in Una's paneled tower room? The basis for "friendship"? Or the house built with cobblestones!

Among these people [Carmelites] I met Robinson Jeffers, one of America's greatest living poets. Although he was not interested in "spiritual movements" or religious teachers, so that the name of Krishnamurti had meant nothing to him before they met, Robinson Jeffers was so attracted by Krishnamurti's personality that the two men soon became friends. I was anxious to talk to Jeffers about Krishnamurti, and I gladly accepted an invitation to visit him and his charming wife.

They live right on the coast in a house built by the poet's hands from the cobblestones that lay about on the beach. He had brought

them thence stone by stone until he had built the house—an unaided labour of five or six years. He spent another two years in erecting a mediaeval-looking tower in the garden, constructed also from stones found on the beach. This tower had a steep and spiral flight of steps, and on its top you entered a tiny and unexpected room with panelled walls, a comfortable bench and a superb view, looking across the beach towards the sea. The sound of the waves, the dark outlines of the rocks—from the grey stones of which the tower and the house had been built—wind and the salty freshness of the atmosphere made you

I spent an afternoon in the small tower room, talking to my host about Krishnamurti. A log fire was burning in the small fireplace, and California seemed very far away. Robinson Jeffers was reserved and shy, and his persistent silence almost suggested an inner fear that a spoken word might destroy images maturing in his poet's brain. He was wearing khaki breeches and leggings, and but for his dreamy eyes, and the great tenderness in the expression of his mouth, he might have been an English farmer. Both his wife and his friends had warned me that I should have to do most of the talking, but once or twice I succeeded in making him speak. "For me," he said in a slow and hesitant manner, "there is nothing wrong in Krishnamurti's message—nothing that I must contradict."

"Do you think his message will ever become popular?"

"Not at present. Most people won't find it intelligible enough."

"What struck you most when you met him for the first time?"

"His personality. Mrs. Jeffers often makes the remark that light seems to enter the room when Krishnamurti comes in, and I agree with her, for he himself is the most convincing illustration of his honest message. To me it does not matter whether he speaks well or not. I can feel his influence even without words. The other day we went together for a walk in the hills. We walked for almost ten miles and as I am a poor speaker we hardly talked at all—yet I felt happier after our walk. It is his very personality that seems to diffuse the truth and happiness of which he is always talking." Robinson Jeffers lit his pipe, which had gone out, and then again sat watching the flames in the grate.

"Do you think Krishnamurti's message is so matured as to have found its final formulation?"

"It may be final, but I wonder whether it has quite matured yet. It will be mature when its words are intelligible to everyone: At present there is a certain thinness in them. Don't you think so?"

"I quite agree. I confess that at times I simply don't know how to write about him. Whatever I put on paper sounds unconvincing and makes Krishnamurti appear the very antithesis of what he really is: it makes him look conceited, a prig or a complacent fellow. In writing, his arguments are irritating and his logic unconvincing. And yet they sound so true when he uses them in conversation. It is almost impossible to describe him, for so much depends upon his personality, and so little upon what he says."

"Yes, it is almost impossible to describe certain personalities."

"I think this may be mainly because Krishnamurti's intellectual faculties have not developed quite as completely as the spiritual side of the man. After all, intellectually he is still a youth. Most of his life has been spent in the theosophical nursery. Most of his ideas were stifled in those days. Many teachers impress us by their knowledge: Krishnamurti does it by his very person, which he gives to his listeners and which inspires them, and not by his particular brand of wisdom."

"I suppose it is so," replied Jeffers in his slow, quiet way. "Others will have to find a clear and convincing language to express his message. After all, it would not be the first time that the followers of a teacher have had to build the bridge across which a new message can reach the masses."

I met several people in Carmel and also in other parts of America who expressed similar opinions. Some of the inhabitants of Carmel told me that they were unable to grasp Krishnamurti's message or that they failed to see its practical value-but all of them confessed that he gave them a feeling of happiness and calm that they had never known before.

JOSEPH CAMPBELL & JEFFERS

By Stephen and Robin Larsen

■ ***Editor's Note:*** The following excerpts are from *A Fire in the Mind* by Stephen and Robin Larsen (New York: Doubleday, 1991).

Though Oswald Spengler did not inspire all of the Monterey philosophers, another creative source was to touch them equally: the controversial poet Robinson Jeffers, who lived just a few miles down the coast, drawing his inspiration from that spectacular liminal zone where the California mountains plunge into the Pacific around Big Sur. It was Carol Steinbeck who initiated them. "I remember Carol coming in one day," Campbell reminisced in his interview with Pauline Pearson, "... and saying, 'Really, I've got the message of "Roan Stallion"-' and she recited a passage that begins about two-thirds of the way along..."

Humanity is the

start of the race; I say
Humanity is the mold to break away from, the crust to break
through, the coal to break into fire,
The atom to be split.
Tragedy that breaks man's face and a white
fire flies out of it; vision that fools him
Out of his limits, desire that fools him out of his limits,
unnatural crime, inhuman science. ...

"'Desire that fool him out of his limits...!' It was a wonderful passage," said Campbell, "and it was Carol who came in with the interpretation of that. Then we spent the evening chatting about it..."

Those discussions stay with me as having been very important for my own understanding of the life of art. ... That's the kind of thing we would do."

John Steinbeck's and Robinson Jeffers' mothers were friends [highly unlikely—RJN ed.], and in latter years the two writers probably inspired each other as native Californian artists whose creative voices reached beyond American boundaries. "John was very respectful of Jeffers' work," said Campbell, "[but Jeffers also] made a big impression on me. He's one of the few poets that have ever really influenced my own thinking and style." Campbell did not know that Robinson and his old friend Krishnamurti were becoming increasingly close at around this time—and that Krishna often came up the coast to visit Jeffers from his retreat and spiritual community at Ojai, California [inaccurate information—RJN ed.]. It seems that after Campbell's resolve to go beyond Krishnamurti in his own thinking—never content to be a mere follower—they had gradually lost touch.

Years later the single poem which Campbell most recited, and which he preferred even over his beloved Yeats and Blake, was another of Jeffers', "Natural Music."

For the Monterey philosophers-metaphysicians really—Jeffers' poem "Roan Stallion" crystallized their own vision of the God in nature, and the way toward Him—by seeing through the tragic side of life: "In some of Jeffers' poems," wrote Ed Ricketts, "the thing (Breaking Through) is stated clearly, with full conscious recognition, and with that exact economy of words which we associate with scientific statements: 'Humanity is the mold to break away from ...'" Ricketts goes on, in a vein very similar to Campbell's own insights: "This ... quality may be an essential of modern soul movements ... not dirt for dirt's sake, or grief merely for the sake of grief, but dirt and grief wholly accepted if necessary as struggle vehicles of an emergent joy—achieving things which are not transient by means of things which are."

Each member of the group took something home from Carol's gift of Robinson Jeffers. For Ed it was the quintessence of his philosophy of Breaking Through. For John the poem reconfirmed his own developing literary style, parallel to Jeffers' poems: to let the tragedies of life—as they struck his characters in their essentialized fictive worlds—open the eyes of their souls (a pattern which is found throughout Steinbeck's fiction). For Joseph Campbell it was to form a key piece in his own developing life-affirmative philosophy, the one he began to articulate in *The Hero*, and it is found still more refined in his latest writing and

lecturing: learning to say the "yea" to life's bittersweet offerings, searching for the genuine gift of spiritual awareness in the depths of suffering. [pp. 179-181]

[Much later in his career, Campbell was caught in the moral dilemma of the conscientious objector to the Second World War.-RJN ed.] In his agony he took comfort from Robinson Jeffers, who had offered him balm for the wounded soul before. He copied "Be Angry at the Sun" ("That public men publish falsehoods ...") and "Drunken Charlie" ("I curse the war-makers ...") onto the second page of his voluminous journal, as if he needed their encouragement for sanity, even to begin to detail his struggle.

From his reading of Jeffers, Campbell posed himself an exquisitely painful question: "Without these moral blinders [political self-justification-RJN ed.] how many men would permit themselves to be turned, even for a year or two, into professional killers?" Could he himself be a soldier without a belief in the cause? "... how many deaths can I see myself dealing out to my sisters and brothers before I lose faith in the importance of my survival? ... even of life's survival under such conditions?" [p. 305]

ROBINSON JEFFERS'S "OSSIAN'S GRAVE": AN ANNOTATION

By Ted Olson
The University of Mississippi

■ **Context:** Robinson Jeffers's poem "Ossian's Grave" first appeared in a slim volume entitled *Descent to the Dead*, published in 1931 by Random House. Featuring 16 short lyric poems inspired by Jeffers's 1929 visit to Ireland and Great Britain, *Descent to the Dead* is both a sustained meditation on death and an investigation of the poet's own Scots-Irish heritage (Zaller 168). "Ossian's Grave," arguably the most significant poem in *Descent to the Dead*, explores both of these themes with considerable eloquence.

Jeffers and his wife Una had intended to move to England shortly after their marriage in August, 1913; but war in Europe destroyed those plans. Instead of moving overseas, the Jefferses, upon the recommendation of a friend, settled in the then-quiet village of Carmel, California. Jeffers immediately identified with the rugged beauty around Carmel; in Una's words, Jeffers found the region's "treasures of natural beauty and vivid human life ... [to be] inexhaustible" (Bennett 71). As World War I worsened across the Atlantic, the aspiring poet worked to discover his poetic voice beside the Pacific, rather than in the Old World.

Even after the Armistice, the Jefferses remained in Carmel. After two imitative books (*Flagons and Apples*, privately published in 1912, and *Californians*, published by Macmillan in 1916) and much transitional verse, Jeffers was finally writing the poetry that would establish his literary reputation. The 1920s would be a decade of tremendous activity for Jeffers—his output from that period was considerable, the quality of his work astounding. After his first mature volume of poetry appeared in 1924 (*Tamar and Other Poems*, published by Boyle), Jeffers produced approximately one new collection per year: *Roan Stallion*, *Tamar*, and *Other Poems* in 1925 (an expanded version of *Tamar* and

Other Poems published by Boni & Liveright), *The Women at Point Sur* in 1927 (Boni & Liveright), *Cawdor and Other Poems* in 1928 (Liveright), and *Dear Judas and Other Poems* in 1929 (Liveright).

By 1929, Jeffers's productivity had left him exhausted; the poet wanted to recuperate by "playing dead for a few months" (Scott 206). The Jefferses decided to vacation in the British Isles, though in a letter written only a month before their departure, Jeffers revealed his ambivalence about the trip: "[W]e are going away for a year to Ireland and England—I hardly know why, unless for the children's sake" [Una and Robinson had twin sons Garth and Donnan, born in 1916] (Ridgeway 149). In another letter, Jeffers seemed more assured of the trip's value: "Foreign travel is like a pleasant temporary death; it relieves you of responsibilities and familiar scenes and duties" (Scott 206). In "Ossian's Grave," Jeffers suggests other motivations for travelling to the British Isles: the poet wanted to return to the "womb" of his imagination (line 78), to rediscover "the bitter dust of my ancestors" (line 41)—ancestors who had "lived splendidly / In the brief light of day" (lines 62-63), who were now immortal ("inhuman") in death (line 87), who now were part of the mythical Celtic earth, like the legendary Celtic warrior Ossian (Jeffers 108-10).

Whatever the real motivations for their vacation, the Jefferses set sail for Belfast, Ireland, on June 14, 1929. Spending only six months in the British Isles—not a year as stated in the aforementioned letter—the Jefferses returned to the United States in December, 1929.

Title: In 1760, James MacPherson, aged 24, published in Edinburgh a book entitled *Fragments of Ancient Poetry; Collected in the Highlands of Scotland, and Translated from the Gallic or Erse Language*. In this book MacPherson included verse "translations" of "rediscovered" Ossianic epic poems—epic poems that, according to MacPherson, concerned the legendary exploits of early Celtic warrior/bards like Ossian and Finn. Taking MacPherson's "translations" to be authentic, Western European literati in the late 18th Century believed possible a new literature, based on as-yet-untapped oral traditions. German intellectuals in particular responded to MacPherson's book: Klopstock, Herder, Goethe, and Schiller, among others, all "fell under the spell" of Ossian (Tombo 67). The German author Voss voiced the excitement of his contemporaries when he wrote: "Ossian of Scotland is greater than Homer of Ionia" (Smith 170). From their reading of MacPherson, these Germans developed their own con

cept of a national literature; German Romanticism was born (Tombo 67).

By the mid 19th Century, MacPherson's book was exposed as a hoax. Scholars determined that MacPherson's "translations" were not actual translations at all, that they were not based on epic poems as MacPherson had claimed—they were fraudulent (MacPherson x). Nevertheless, the influence of MacPherson's book on European literary and intellectual history is undeniable.

Jeffers in his "Notes to *Descent to the Dead*" explained that "the dateless monument called Ossian's Grave stand[s] ... on the Antrim coast" (Jeffers 130). In a letter he wrote while in Ireland, Jeffers described the grave:

I have just come back from a walk to the old stones they call "Ossian's Grave"—a most interesting place about 2 1/2 miles from our cottage. ... The place is on the shoulder of a hill, with a few old thorn-trees about, and a most magnificent view. There is a prehistoric circle of big gray standing-stones, and close beside it an oblong of big stones set on edge to enclose a grave—no one knows how old it is, but 800 or a thousand B.C. at the latest, perhaps much older. This part of County Antrim is full of Ossianic and other Gaelic traditions, and of sanguinary history as interesting as the myths. Being the nearest part of Ireland to Scotland the whole tide of Gaelic stories and migrations swept back and forth through here (Ridgeway 153).

In Ireland, Ossian was also spelled "Oisín," as in William Butler Yeats's poem, "The Wanderings of Oisín" (McHugh and Hannon 53).

Subtitle: Cushendall, located on the Antrim coast, was once the site of the most highly skilled stonecarvers in all of Ireland (MacAlister 45), a fact that surely fascinated Jeffers during his stay in Antrim in 1929—by then he had already built in Carmel a stone house ("Tor House") and a stone tower (in homage to ancient Irish stone towers and to Yeats, who owned one). Una once remarked that Jeffers's growth as a person and as a poet were a direct result of the years he had spent working with stone: "As he helped the masons shift and place the wind and water-worn granite [while building Tor House], ... he realized some kinship with it and became aware of strengths in himself unknown before. Thus at the age of thirty-one there came to him a

kind of awakening such as adolescents and religious converts are said to experience" (Scott 200).

Antrim is a county in Northern Ireland (part of the United Kingdom); in 1973" an administrative reorganization of Northern Ireland divided the county into smaller districts for political management ("Antrim"). Once the center of Stone Age culture in Ireland, Antrim is located just across the North Channel from Scotland, where this particular Stone Age culture originated (MacAlister 29).

Line 1: Lubitavish was evidently an Antrim township located near Ossian's grave, though the annotator could find no map reference to confirm it still exists.

Line 2: Jeffers here is referring to fencing-circles, which are "rings of standing stones, or ... boulders laid upon the surface of the ground. ... These no doubt mark out the sacred area surrounding the grave-sanctuary" (MacAlister 106).

Line 7: The "gorge of Glenaan" is the glen which has been carved by the Glenaan River as it flows through the Antrim Hills toward the North Channel (Michelin Italiana). This particular glen is one of the nine Glens of Antrim; according to travel writer Virginia Creed, the Glens of Antrim "are a series of wildly romantic valleys running inland from the coast of the North Channel, cutting the hills that rise between Lame and Ballycastle. They are characterized by wild ravines, woods, and waterfalls" (Creed 235). A parallel glen to the "gorge of Glenaan" is Glen Ariff, which travel writer Stephen Gwynn described in 1899:

[T]he day from Cushendal [sic] will be considerably lengthened if you decide to see Glen Ariff, and it is one of the prettiest bits of what one may call artificial scenery in the kingdom. ... Forty years ago a traveller wrote that it was pitiable to see Glen Ariff left as barren as the other valleys; now the whole recesses of these upper glens are deep in larch and hazel. And the country deserves such embellishment, no less than Killarney or the Wicklow Dargle: better indeed historically, for ... on the hills of the glen lies buried, so they say, the bard Ossian, last survivor of the Sons of Finn (Gwynn 283-87).

Lines 15, 16: Located in northeastern Ireland, Aura (an Anglicization of the mountain's Irish name, "Slieveanorra") and Trostan (approximate elevations: 1,678 and 1,817 feet above sea level, respectively) are individual mountains in the Antrim Hills chain (Michelin Italiana): Geologically speaking, the Antrim Hills chain is an ancient basalt plateau covered with moorland and peat bogs and carved by deep glens ("Antrim Hills" 469). T. W. Freeman in 1950 described the Antrim Hills:

The plateau surface, around 1,000-1,500 ft. [above sea level], with a few rounded hills such as Trostan ..., is a dreary peat bog redeemed by the glens and the narrow coastal fringe: in these sheep are the major resource, though as much as one-quarter of the land is tilled, for barley, oats, potatoes and hay. Although the population per square mile in the inhabited areas is around 100-150 to the square mile, the decline of population since 1891 has been as much as 40% around Ballycastle (Freeman 492).

In a letter he wrote while in Ireland, Jeffers praised Aura: "Perhaps the most beautiful place [that he had seen in Ireland] is Aura mountain" (Ridgeway 154).

Line 22: "[T]he greatest ocean" is the Pacific Ocean; Jeffers of course had already built his house and tower on the Pacific coast (see *Context* section above).

Line 26: "The quick-tempered Moyle" refers to the North Channel, the narrow strait separating County Antrim, Ireland, and Kintyre, Scotland. Early Celts seeking to settle in Antrim from Scotland were forced to cross the moody "Moyle" (as the North Channel was unofficially called) in crude handmade boats ("Moyle" 382).

Line 35: Cushendun is a township located approximately six miles north of Cushendall. In another *Descent to the Dead* poem, a sonnet entitled "Shane O'Neill's Cairn," Jeffers describes Shane O'Neill as a "lord of Ulster. / A man of blood who died bloodily / Four centuries ago", (lines 9-11, Jeffers 107). Shane O'Neill, murdered by the MacDonnell clan in 1567, played a major role in the Irish rebellion against the English monarchy of the last half of the 16th Century (Creed 236); according to Virginia Creed:

Shane O'Neill, descendant of the Race of Conn, ruling in an Ulster that had hardly bent its knee to the English conqueror, raised the standard of rebellion first. Elizabeth, who was inordinately fond of handsome men, did everything she could think of to win him over, and was confident she had won over his nephew' and successor, Hugh, educated at her court. Her vanity deluded her. The Irish princes, brought up and, as it were, indoctrinated at the English court, would upon reaching their majority cross over to Ireland, journey to the Shannon [River], cast off their English clothing; bathe, put on Irish garb, and go home to have themselves elected chiefs of their tribes. Shane O'Neill, after harrying the lords of the Pale ["the Pale" is the section of Ireland, centered around Dublin, that the Anglo-Normans continued to occupy into the 16th Century, after they had lost to Irish chieftains most of the land they had once taken from the Irish], died in a fight in the Glens of Antrim, and was succeeded by the young Hugh, fresh from the Tudor court. Hugh O'Neill deserved his title, the Great O'Neill, for he was great in person, character, intelligence, courage, and diplomacy. He understood perfectly the problem before him. He must rally the native and Old English lords, must fight a war in the open field, for although his forces were up-to-date and well trained he lacked heavy artillery and siege machinery; and he must drag the war out until Elizabeth died, because her Protestant successor, James, would come to terms. Finally, he must secure aid from outside Ireland.

[Hugh] O'Neill was successful in rallying the princes. His most effective and spectacular ally was Hugh O'Donnell, who flung down the gauntlet to England when he had himself elected The O'Donnell (a title forbidden by law) and made a united Ulster possible. In battle [Hugh] O'Neill was also successful, he and his followers routing the English at Benburb, at Tyrrell's Pass and, most spectacularly, at the Yellow Ford. He got outside help too, when the Spanish landed at Kinsale; but this was his undoing. The Spanish commander insisted on giving premature battle, and the Gaelic and Spanish forces were defeated. O'Donnell fled to Spain, where he was poisoned by English agents. O'Neill, unaware that Elizabeth was already dead, submitted and also left. This was the tragic, much-sung "Flight of the Earls," which left Ireland virtually without leadership. The Plantation of Ulster, whose aftermath still plagues the world, began at this time (Creed 41-42).

Line 36: In his "Notes to *Descent to the Dead*," Jeffers stated that "Shane O'Neill's cairn and the dateless monument called Ossian's Grave stand within a couple of miles of each other on the Antrim coast" (Jeffers 130).

Line 37: Hugh McQuillan [sic] was part of the Anglo-Norman MacQuillan family, which controlled a large section of Antrim into the 16th Century. According to Stephen Gwynn, the MacQuillan family lost its territory to the infamous MacDonnell clan after being defeated in a mid 16th Century battle on Aura mountain:

[A] marriage alliance of great moment was contracted by a later Macdonnell [sic] with Marjory Bisset, daughter of a Norman family, who originally settled in Scotland. But the Bissets being in trouble for slaying the Earl of Galloway, fled across to the Antrim coast, and there seized and held an estate in the Southern Glens, which came with Marjory to her husband. But the foundation of the Macdonnell power in Antrim dates from Alexander or Alastar Macdonnell, who about 1500 occupied a position on the north of Ballycastle Bay, and built there his stronghold of Duneynie. Under it lay Port Brittas, where there was easy landing for his galleys when they ran across from his lordship in Cantire [Kintyre, Scotland]. The Lordship of the Isles was now by law a thing of the past, but the Macdonnells were insubordinate vassals of the Scottish crown; and as their foothold on the Scotch coast grew less secure-and indeed from 1500 they were practically outlawed in Scotland-so they strengthened themselves on the Antrim shore: Alastar Macdonnell had six sons. James, the eldest brother, married Lady Agnes Campbell, the daughter of the third Earl of Argyll, thus for a moment reconciling two bitterly hostile houses. Moreover, though it was now treason to bear the title, he was elected Lord of the Isles. His lands in Antrim centred [sic] round Glenarm, which had come to Clandonnell as the heritage of Marjory Bisset. His brothers set themselves to extend their power northward into the Route, which was then defined as what lay between the Bush and the Bann [Rivers] on the shore, and between the Bann and the Glens inland. Colla Macdonnell, third of the brothers, built Kenbane Castle; whose ruins may still be seen about two miles west of Ballycastle. But he did better than that.

The lords of the Route were the MacQuillins [sic], a Norman family settled in Ireland: whether the name represents Mac Hugolin or Mac Llewellyn is disputed, but up to the days of Shane O'Neill it was recognized that the MacQuillin (it is commonly Anglicised McWilliam) was an "Englishman." MacQuillin was naturally at war with the O'Kane [a rival clan], for their lands marched at the Bann: and Colla brought his army of redshanks to help MacQuillin, and was victorious. Whether by MacQuillin's gratitude, or, as is more likely, by his own imperious claim for *bonachta*-free quarters for his soldiery-he and his men wintered in Dunluce, and he married Eveleen MacQuillin. But little peace came of the alliance, and there were pitched battles between the clans. The final issue began to be fought out at Ballycastle, and was finished on the second day at Slieve-anAura [the mountain that Jeffers in "Ossian's Grave" refers to as "Aura"], up in Glen Shesk. The MacQuillins were totally defeated, and James Macdonnell made Colla Lord of the Route and Constable of Dunluce (Gwynn 236-37).

Line 43: "Rotting freestone tablets": historically, kings in Northern Europe commissioned their scribes to write important messages and legal documents on tablets. From the 2nd Century, A.D., to approximately the 16th Century, scribes throughout Northern Europe used the Runic alphabet, which was a crude, simplified alphabet derived from the Roman alphabet. The Runic alphabet was designed for easy drawing on soft wooden tablets; however, in countries like Ireland and Scotland, where wood was not always available, the scribes would use flat stones- they would either write on the stones with chalk or chisel into the stone (MacAlister 211).

Line 44: Round towers, though found throughout pre-Christian Europe, remained in existence longer in Ireland than in any other country. A defensive structure, round towers were built circularly to allow full vision of the area to be defended; those manning the loft of the tower could throw rocks and sticks down onto the interlopers below. Often there was a small hole in the side of the tower to allow for spying (MacAlister 257).

Una Jeffers was particularly fond of round towers; in a letter written in 1937, during the Jefferses' second trip to Ireland, Una proudly conveyed to a friend that she and her family had been "to Gran Is. to Yeats

[sic] tower ... [and] [p]ursued and found about 20 round towers" (Bennett 161). (Regarding Jeffers's experience in building a replica round tower, see the annotation for *Subtitle*.)

Line 45: Connaught (also spelled "Connacht"), one of the four provinces of Ireland, is located in the west-central part of the island (Rand McNally 11). Two passages by Virginia Creed clarify Jeffers's reference to the "great Connaught queen":

The pagan kings succeeded one another in a blaze of bardic glory. We reach documented history with Macha Mong Ruadh, the redhaired warrior queen who, in Alexander's time, founded Emain macha, royal residence of Ulster. Here, when Christ was born, ruled the gentle and handsome Conchobar MacNessa, whose court achieved immortality through the saga of the Red Branch Knights. ... Conchobar's court saw Deirdre of the Sorrows, and its great hero was the Champion Cuchullain, best beloved of Celtic heroes, who fought against the warrior queen Maeve of Connacht in the famed Cattle Raid of Cooley [an ancient Celtic saga entitled *The Cattle Raid of Cooley* commemorated the event] (Creed 32-33).

And:

Up on the summit of Knocknarca is the memorial cairn of Maeve, Queen of Connacht at the time of Christ. The Queen Mab of fairy tales, she [Maeve] was certainly one of the most remarkable women of antiquity, and, thanks to the genius of the bards :..., has come clown to us in the full vigor, color, and engaging humanness of her original personality. Maeve was killed when bathing in a Mayo lake. They buried the great queen at Rathcrogan, but erected her cairn in the most commanding spot they could find in the north (Creed 202).

It is interesting to note that the Jefferses' first child—a girl born May 5, 1914, who died the next day—was named Maeve (Bennett 67). Although their 1929 stay in Ireland was their first trip to that country as a family, Robinson and Una had long been interested in Irish culture. Both had Irish ancestors, both were well-versed in Irish litera-

ture and history, and Una had previously travelled to Ireland, during her 1912 visit to Europe (Bennett 55).

Lines 83-85: Tievebuilleagh, Trostan, Lurigethan, and Aura are all mountains in the Antrim Hills chain. Trostan is the highest of these four mountains, with an altitude of 1,817 feet above sea level ("Antrim Hills" 469). (See annotation for **Lines 15, 16.**)

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DIDACTIC CONFESSION: *WHERE DOES JEFFERS'S "SIGN-POST" POINT?*

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■ "Sign-Post" (first published in 1935 in *Solstice*) is a good example of the sort of Jeffers poem his detractors love to hate, and part of the reason is its didacticism:

Civilized, crying how to be human again: this will tell you how. Turn outward, love things, not men,
turn right away from humanity, Let that doll lie. Consider if you like how the lilies grow,
Lean on the silent rock until you feel its divinity
Make your veins cold, look at the silent stars, let your eyes Climb the great ladder out of the pit of
yourself and man. Things are so beautiful, your love will follow your eyes; Things are the God, you
will love God, and not in vain,
For what we love, we grow to it, we share its nature. At length You will look back along the stars'
rays and see that even The poor doll humanity has a place under heaven.
Its qualities repair their mosaic around you, the chips of strength And sickness; but now you are free,
even to become human, But born of the rock and the air, not of a woman.

The speaker's assurance (we are seemingly asked to believe the speaker is already redeemed) and the way the poem foregrounds its message was unfashionable when it appeared and is still unfashionable: no irony for the New Critic to uncover and savor, and at first pass both our current deconstructors and new historicists would likely conclude that the poem is simply too simple to be an occasion for demonstrating the poet's failure to realize the roots or implications of his work's evasions. We could, it's true, note the way Jeffers contrasts images of health and

sickness, strength and weakness, to create a figure of rebirth that is naturalized yet religious, then use this to show how the poem's concluding gesture escapes (or transcends) the speaker's rhetoric, and thereby argue for the poem's resonance and complexity. But having done so, we would still probably have to admit that the way Jeffers subordinates the poem's images and figures to its rhetoric and the way the pronoun "you" in the early lines enforces the speaker's authority seem part of an attempt to construct a poem that would allow us (poor lost readerly souls) to take to heart this Truth the poet offers and redeem ourselves with it. And having admitted this much, it would be hard to counter the opinion held by too many of the critics and teachers who set the agenda for what is to be read that Jeffers tended to write versified tracts rather than poems.

One response would be to question both the basis and adequacy of current definitions of poetry; some theorists and scholars have begun to do this, though none (that I know of) have noticed the possible relevance of Jeffers to their arguments. Another response would be to note that "Sign-Post" is not the only sort of shorter poem Jeffers wrote. In such early 1920s pieces as "Natural Music" and "Point Joe" he manages to invoke a nature that is whole, transcendent, and potentially redemptive yet does so without emphasizing the speaker's separation from (and authority over) the reader. Even in the mid 1930s he was also writing poems like "Oh Lovely Rock" that dramatize the speaker's apprehensions of nature's beauty and capture complex moments of awareness in which we, as readers, are invited to participate. If we were, really, to want to argue a case to an imagined array of appropriately fashionable literary theorists, we would likely begin with poems such as these, or even some of the narratives, rather than a piece like "Sign-Post," which is (arguably) a lesser poem. But whatever our grander strategy or our specific tactics, at some point we would need to confront the sorts of issues raised by "Sign-Post" and similar pieces like "The Answer," if only because we tend to believe (I think) that they—in their doctrinal clarity and the speaker's assurance that he is justified in instructing his readers/listeners—reveal aspects of the "real" Jeffers that should guide our reading of the poems that are less doctrinal and dramatically more complex. This may be a reason why (i.e. that sense that here is Jeffers in a nutshell) "Sign-Post" has been anthologized from time to time. At the least it's a reason to want to understand as much as we can about the actual nature and basis of the authority Jeffers has his speaker assume in

the poem and his own relationship to the claims he has his speaker make.

As it happens the character and authority of the speaker in "SignPost" as published and what seems its original draft (a manuscript, titled "Crede Experto," in the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library) differ markedly. The manuscript begins with a note ("But free, / and like one born of a rock, not a woman") that anticipates the poem's closing line. The actual draft begins a bit below this and shows that the poem was originally a longer piece with a quite different beginning:

I have done wrong to think about culture-ages. I have done wrong to think about economics. A poet
has no business with dusty pages,
The world's catastrophes and the world's comics.

Not while the sea hangs on the granite shore.
~~Not while an apple hangs on the heavy bough~~
Or hawk on wind or an apple on the bough.

The hunter and the plowman laugh you to scorn,
You wonder how to believe again.

When Jeffers abandoned this draft he apparently hadn't yet resolved these lines to his satisfaction, though it seems he planned to arrange them as a pair of quatrains. But even in their unfinished form they set up a dramatic and rhetorical situation that is markedly different from the one in the finished version. In this first draft the speaker is not indicting the reader's failings but his own, and his failings are both human and poetic. He (not the reader) needs to be instructed, to be reminded, about what is important.

As it happens the remainder of the draft closely approximates the final version, but even these fourteen lines, their images and claims, function quite differently in this first draft, because the quatrains Jeffers would later delete establish a quite different sense of speaker and occasion. In the original version the "you" in the ninth line ("You're civilized, crying to be human again: this will tell you how") is the poet/speaker, not the reader (as it is when the revision of this line becomes the first line of the finished poem). In the original draft, the lines that become the final poem show the poet diagnosing himself

and dramatize the speaker's attempt to recover his assurance. The poet exhorts himself, not the reader, to recover from having become too "civilized."

In the original draft the lines that become the final poem (everything that follows the two discarded quatrains) evolve through various cancellations, rephrasings, and insertions. These workings further clarify the original intent and mood (even though the precise sequence of revision and in some cases the final form of the lines in the draft cannot be completely determined). At one point, for instance, 1.10 began, "You will look back as God." And a few lines later the speaker in one stage tells himself "You will see it [The poor doll humanity] without disgust or desire." In 1.12 the phrase "Its qualities" once continued "and significance, feature by feature," and the line concluded "even to be human." And in the final line, Jeffers originally characterized the air as "woundless." In the original draft, that is, the context provided by the discarded opening and the alternate material shows that what Jeffers was first writing was in part a confession that he was deeply fascinated by—deeply enmeshed in—human desire, that he struggled with a sense of disgust and of being wounded by his humanness, that his tendency to pronounce on politics and history in the poems of this period did not necessarily stem from some ultimate strength and the privilege of some transcendent perspective that set him completely above and beyond his readers, and that he was the one who needed the guidance (the reassurance) of a "sign-post" that might point a way beyond frailty and disgust.

But if in these workings the speaker/poet is wounded not "woundless," part of "the poor doll humanity" rather than something grander and more assured, what does that mean for our understanding of the quite different poem Jeffers constructed from this material? Do we, for instance, reinterpret the "you" of the final draft as the speaker himself rather than the reader? Do we reread the finished poem as a drama of doubt and affirmation rather than an assured teaching? To some extent the way we answer such questions as these will turn on our specific critical perspective—New Critical, Deconstructive, reader-response, whatever. More importantly, though, the dichotomy between the poem Jeffers set out to write and the one he actually published makes clear that the speaker we encounter in the final draft is a figure Jeffers constructed, not a transparent portrait of what he was or thought he was. The dichotomy also demonstrates that Jeffers chose, by and large, to efface or sublimate the matrix that generated the poem. These

aspects of "Sign-Post" raise fundamental questions about Jeffers's understanding of himself, the nature of his poetic (including his sense of rhetoric and its place in his practice), and his sense of audience. These are central issues for understanding the nature and significance of Jeffers's work, issues we have only begun to explore.

UNA JEFFERS, CORRESPONDENT:

THE LUHAN LETTERS

EXCERPTS, 1939

■ ***Editor's Note:*** The tone of the letters here excerpted must seem surprisingly cordial after the Taos near-catastrophe of August 1938. To some extent Una has reverted from the colder "Dear" to "Dearest," again closing with "Love." In letters to others she admits her misjudgment and naivete regarding Mabel and her lethal deceits (see letter to Matthias RJN 51:34). The apparent friendliness may be protesting: "Everything is all right with us; our marriage is unique and solid" as against Mabel's seemingly successful testing to the contrary. Or Una may be pretending that nothing really of consequence happened. Or she may feel Mabel might be useful in augmenting future opportunities for her sons. Certainly there is no longer the abandon of soul-sisters nor the intimate exchanges of admiration and advice.

The letters detail Donnan's attending UCLA and Garth's adventures on the 475,000 acre Bell Ranch, New Mexico, bordering Texas, Donnan's career-search and the death of the Jeffers bulldog. The April 13th letter regarding this latter seems incredible from any distance—Una's putting Haig's passing above her own motives for suicide. Then there is the ominous approach of World War II and Carmel real estate activity which begins to force retrenchment of Tor House properties. Una is clearly pleased with Edith Greenan's memoir. She notes with ambivalence Yeats's passing. She and Robinson seem resigned to the new distancing from their maturing sons. Jeffers is working on another house-addition, a room for the twins east of the garage (see diagram RJN 86:24). Friendship with Edwin P. Hubble (1889-1953), a noted U.S. astronomer for whom the space telescope has been lately named, has to be significant. Jeffers has used the image of galaxies fleeing our corner of space as an overbearing pathetic fal-

lacy in the narrative "Margrave" (1932); he will use the "oscillating universe" hypothesis as his grand, final metaphor for the "heartbeat" of his pantheistic god, who discovers ever new possibilities of being and beauty through suffering worlds-without-end. Jeffers's imagery, no matter how much localized, is ultimately astronomic.

— *JANUARY 21, 1939* —

Sidney Fish has just married Esther *Moore Roark* (Geo. M's ex-) & is not interested at the moment in any plans for that kind of thing [Tony Luhan and others were scheduling an unspecified performance]. They may travel a bit. Seem very happy. George Moore [local wealthy rancher who kept wild Russian boars and Irish wolfhounds for hunting] has been going through one of his frightfully hard-up times-has been away for months. We were there for lunch last Sunday, -first time in ever so long. We heard (not from him) that the ranch is to be made into a dude ranch & run by three stockholders.

Denny-Watrous [Carmel business and booking managers] seemed to like the idea of their [Luhan's] costumes

As ever Una

— *[No DATE]* —

Dearest Mabel: Thanks for your letter. Cannot answer for few days-work piled up & Garth & I are going to San Jose tomorrow with *Noel* to hear Marian Anderson.

All is very well with us, better than ever now!

Garth got his job. He mailed letters to you & Judge Kiker; [Mabel's Taos friend, and lawyer for Bell Ranch] yesterday about it-not air mail.

Yeats' death was a blow to me-although it now leaves Robin at the top. -There is an exceptionally good article on him in Sat. Rev. Feb 25 by Mary M. Colum.

Listen to the queer epitaph for his tomb stone written by himself.

"Cast a cold eye
on life, on death,
Horseman pass by"

— APRIL 13, 1939 —

Dearest Mabel: Thanks so much for wanting us to come to Taos. I have gotten so much to look upon it as a second home & should miss it very much. If we came this year it must be late—autumn, for that summer passage of the desert is hell, no less.

We are very down-hearted at the moment. 1) *Haig*. He got a severe *canine flu* going around here. He seemed to recover but after a fortnight relapsed & is now in a desperate condition. There is an extraordinarily fine vet in Salinas attending him. He advised us until yesterday to care for him ourselves—but yesterday said he must stay at hospital. He has ulcers under his tongue & must be fed with a tube, etc. I am sunk and so is Robin & we look at each other in amazement & say how in God's name could we quarrel this summer about inconsequential things while *real* things might happen like harm to the boys or Tor House or Haig. What idiocies! We hope we've grown up! We never had quarrels until we were idle & vacant & thoughtless 2) Garth goes tonight. What a darling he is & how lovely to have him home these months. I think this is a grand berth for him at Bell Ranch & if he finds at length he doesn't want to *ranch*—still the experience is fine but oh the loss to us. —his absence !! We had intended to drive him down to L.A. & see Donnan, but Haig's illness has interfered.

Sonya [Levine, Mabel's friend in films] has been fine to Donnan—all kinds of possibilities open up. Nothing definite but very hopeful. Sonya writes "He is so attractive & so sturdily on his own."

The Clapps have arrived to spend 4 mo. in Calif. Just for the moment they are in Death Valley.

Matthiases have cancelled all their European trip & will be here within a fortnight.

I have the most amusing letters from Marcella [Burke] from New York. She is at a million parties & seeing everybody and exploding all over the place. People seem to all meet every P.M. in N.Y.C. She was here for 2 mo. ghosting Edith Greenan's "Of Una Jeffers."

Dearest love & send this letter of Dorothy's [Brett?] to Mamma.

Yours. Una —

— APRIL 21, 1939 —

Dearest Mabel—You can imagine how utterly lonely Robin & I felt coming back home last Sunday—no Garth & Donnan, —no darling

Haig. We miss him every moment. I don't know how much I told you on my card— (I got your wire today). Wednesday the doctor said I must leave him at the hospital (in Salinas). He agreed to telegraph me if he got worse. Garth was to start to L.A. on bus at 10:30 P.M. from Monterey or 11:00 from Salinas Thursday. We decided to take Garth to Salinas & if Haig was about the same to drive to L.A. with him that night, but if worse, we would not go. We got there around 10 at the hospital & he was dead! —just slipped away in his sleep. We turned around & brought him back to Tor House & buried him wrapped in his travelling rug—then set out for L.A. in a very daze of sorrow—drove all night & got to Donnan's about 7:40 a.m. Spent that day & night until Sat. PM at 3:30 with him. Garth started from L.A. on bus at 3:30, got to Tumcari [sic] next PM at 10:30. I had a letter from him written Mon. Apr 17. He was just leaving Tucumcari for the ranch with the foreman on a truck. It was snowing! I imagine he will have plenty of hard work but he won't mind that if he is in the open. I hope he will work into something good there. He weighed 207 lbs and looked so handsome & dear!

Shim [Gabrielle Kuster's son by first marriage who died of thymus gland complications] is a very sick boy. In fact Gay said the doctors have all given him up, except one who was to make a further gland test last Monday. He was home from the Santa Barbara Sanitarium for a few days. He looks *awful* —just like a little ghost & is pathetic, so patient & weak. They have had the best specialists in Calif. & one from Chicago, & none of them has found out what ails him. The enlarged heart condition has been rectified with care but he is no better. His blood pressure is 200 (should be 114) & he has had hemorrhages in various places from the weakened capillary walls—some behind his eyes which have left him half blind—he cannot read at all. Teddie's rich Aunt Lou has financed all the doctor & other bills for Shim. He is having the best of care.

Gay is not very well either—back strained in car accident. Has to sleep on a board.

[The letter ends here. Two clippings on Edith Greenan's *Of Una Jeffers* seem to have been enclosed.]

— [No date] —

[Initial pages are missing; this is possibly a continuation of the previous fragment, though separated at the Beinecke Library.]

Gay & their two children are living in a sweet little house up Benedict Canyon—10 minutes beyond my friend Hazel Pinkham's house on Tower Road. I would die there, I think, though, it's so shut in—you can't see more than a few rods in any direction. Horrors! Any way I hate Los Angeles].

Of Una Jeffers is a very simple & affectionate little book about me and us here at 'Tor House—mostly little memories of twenty or more years ago: Yes, its by Teddie's second wife—When we came back from Taos last summer she confessed she was doing it—dictating her memories to a young man named Harvey Taylor who claimed to have helped Elinor Wylie's sister Nancy do the one of Elinor. —The Ms dragged along—he was kind of a bum & got a lot of money out of Edith, for she has plenty. —Finally Marcella Burke [writer for films and magazines] came up & stayed & whipped it into shape. It will be published very shortly by Ward Ritchie Press Los Angeles].

Yes, we've read Krishnamurti's books—some of them for Blanche. Always got all the pamphlets. We admire him tremendously & respect him. He is so disinterested—wants nothing.. But I cannot say his ideas fit our needs or that we perhaps really understand his ideas. They seemed always so indefinite & in general, he would not explain clearly—fearing to crystalize & hinder their expanding if stated definitively. His friend & sec. Rogagopal stated them more clearly than Krishnaji did. He is always present at the talks & often by questions would lead K on to explaining a little.

I do not expect war—but plenty of people do! Russell Matthias felt enough anxiety to cancel their trip. My friend Percy Peacock writes from England that he does not but says people are depressed there and business bad.

Had tea yesterday at Fishes. They are truly sweet & contented together. Grace [Morales] & Tex Raiburn up there are separated & Grace has left the ranch.

Lots of Love from.

Una

Jack Hastings [painter, disciple of Rivera, Earl of Huntingdon's son] fined big sum for alienating affections of Edgar Wallace's son's wife. Wonder what Cristina [Hasting's wife] did. Once years ago she cut a woman with a pair of shears in a London drawing-room for tampering with her husband!

I enclose a poem by Robin. [There follows Una's transcription of "The Dog's Grave—Haig's grave" (sic).]

— MAY 9, 1939 —

Dearest Mabel: Donnan came home for the week end & made us happy—also he clipped the trees in the driveway and he is the only one I can get to do that properly. Robin would let us live in a jungle & Garth dunks the boy too per[s]nickety. I am getting a lot of cleaning out & cleaning up the cupboards done now that we are alas! alone. Robin worked three afternoons last week on the boys' room. It will be ever so long before it is done—or needed: but there is no hurry & the expense of finishing it (roof etc.) will be *something*. So let him dawdle along with it.

We have been taking some long walks lately. We've rather neglected long walks for some time because we hated to leave Haig alone & he got too tired after a few miles.

The time has arrived when we fear we must at last put up some of our land for sale. We are to be stuck with a terrific sewer tax. There are 36 lots You know & an entirely new sewer system is being put in—a reduction plant over *beyond* the artichoke fields on the way to Fish ranch 'The horrid ruin of that thing south of us by the river mouth will be taken away.

(Donnan says he saw Gabrielle [Kuster] in Beverly Hills. She told him they had moved from the canyon house where we called. I am glad. It seemed most impractical & inconvenient to me and so shut-in which makes me breathless. Donnan said Gabrielle told him that Shim had not gone back to the sanitarium which surprises me for the other children Marcia and Colin Kuster almost reduce him to tears with nervousness, they are so, noisy. I don't know what is being done for him at present. Donnan promised to ask Gabrielle tonight when he is going to a play produced by Teddie at the school. He said Gabrielle acted serene & cheerful.

Garth writes such amusing letters about his experiences at the ranch. He is into all the roping & dehorning and butchering (for ranch use) & Spraying against grass hoppers. He tells us that the doctors give Mitchells [Albert K. Mitchell, Bell manager] young man no more than two months to live. He has a white blood corpuscle disease & has just come home from hospital in Amarillo. There seem to be flocks of rattlesnakes there, very big ones.

It is sweet heavenly weather now—with sun & flowers arioting and blue sparkling sea. I am glad because the Clapps are here & they need the sun. They are in great form. I've never in all these years (35 years now) seen him look so well. I love him as much as ever.

We went up to a very grand dinner Noel gave at the Bohemian Club—stayed with Leon & Leslie Roos [San Francisco clothing family]. I've gotten extremely fond of her whom I thought at first when I met her five years ago, so cold. She is rather a great lady—in her poise & dignity & unfailing courtesy. I was amazed at her bearing when Mario [Ramirez, film actor] died. —They were such intimate friends.

Cape is about to publish a *History of Moore Hall* by Joseph Hone. He is using some of my journal and snapshots.

Yes, I've met the Hubbells' [Edwin P. Hubble, astronomer, who first showed in 1923 that some nebulae were really galaxies outside the milky way and receding from it at red-shift velocities; see Jeffers's "Margrave"] several times and like them tremendously. He is not only a friend of Hamilton's but they are both devoted to my old time lover, Dr. Clinton Judy, who is head of the English Dept at Cal. Tech. (where the son of Sonia Levine goes).

I wonder what you will think of Edith's book. It's so very objective about me that one can check its accuracy—mostly conversations and our early life here in Carmel. It does not pretend to analyze or appraise me except as I affected her & my household. You will perhaps think there is too little of Robin in it, or, at least, of his genius. He is just the husband in it & friend to Edith & *at the start*, according to some of my friends a liability! The poems in it are fresh & lyrical & were some of the morning-songs he used to write me, along with the little nose-gays he picked for me in Belle Mere's [Robinson's mother] garden. They are charming. Never before published, full of freshness of youth and early morning.

I've got to dash now. Collect Robin from the stones & take us down to vote on school bonds.

Love from Una

Pitiful letter from the old lady—! & why do these fans get the idea that writers are sitting longing to receive & write letters.

Rhys Williams is here just back from Spain. Very jittery. He & Lucita live in Canada. Did you hear Duke of Windsor broadcast from Verdun yesterday?

— *June 21, 1939* —

Dearest Mabel—you are probably up & doing now. I tried to find out about sage tea without much success as it would be necessary to know the exact species to get an opinion from an expert. Our only connec-

tion with such a person is through young Lloyd Tevis & the U.C. *Botany* Dept. Young Lloyd is away camping. In our botany book all the sages are edible and can be used as *meal*. It seems likely to Robin & me that you were using, however, either California Sage Brush or Desert Sage Brush both of which are used medicinally by the Indians; the former for bronchial troubles. It has some of the characteristics of wormwood The latter is used for treating diarrhea & also for poultices for bruises. Both these do not belong to any family connected with Salira but to *Artemisia*.

Did I tell you that we went down to Los Angeles last week. Another Honorary Degree upon Robin. By University of Southern California this time—Doctor of Humane Letters. Also O B K key. We stayed with Frank & Melba [Bennett] who have a house in West Los Angeles for the summer. They gave a great cocktail party for us—lots of fun.

I had a perfectly stunning new dress from Magnin's plain black crepe—beautifully cut, square neck, short length with a little heavy chiffon *tucked* rose color jacket edged with black crepe. Melba gave me *a* gorgeous little hat from a N.Y. shop. Black with a bit of rose. I looked *so* nice I felt in terrifically high spirits!

Michael & Adrienne [Myerberg] came to call & we talked over Donnan (his term at U.C.L.A. is just over)—whether to try to send him to Rinehardt [acting school with which Edward Kuster was connected for a few months or, as Roland Young [British film character actor and friend] begs, to Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London. I think he is going to London in late August. Imagine my envy! We all went to *a* fine & *rowdy* production of the *Taming of the Shrew* with Galt Bell.

Teddie & Gabrielle came for cocktails. We went to see them. They are in a nicer house now—not so closed into a canyon. Shim is no better & is in a pathetic state. They have a special children's nurse who read to him a lot since he cannot see to read or cannot even strain his eyes to do any handwork. It is heart-breaking to see him. I feel unhappy every time I think of what they are going through.

Alex Tiers (who first came to call on us several years ago with Libby Holman & Mimi Durant) is here now and may rent Teddie's house next us. He went down to Santa Fe for 20 hrs—then dashed back. Had dinner with Cady Wells [Taos painter]. Said Myron [Brinig, novelist] had been there but had left, I suppose for Taos.

We've been at George Moore's several times lately. He is in great form these days. Once we had Timmie Clapp with us who served in a

British Aero Squadron & he drew Moore out about a lot of those mysterious doings of his in London during the war. Last Sunday there was a woman there—Countess of Glasgow's niece & we three & he was quite amazingly interesting. At end he pressed upon me two late books of English memoirs, one by Haldane and one by Valentine Williams that tell a lot about Moore.

Did you ever hear of the mysterious superhuman people who are said to live on the slopes of Mt. Shasta? A long folk-lore has grown up about them. Melba Bennett's people own a great ranch at the foot of the mt. and Edith Greenan was born there at Sisson. Noel & Susan Porter also have been collecting data for years. We had a symposium here at Tor House one day. Really thrilling tales—a regular Saga. We had promised—we & the Clapps—to visit Melba up there next year and climb—all that can-Mt. Shasta.

Give our love to Myron if he is there. Love from Una

Fran Lilienthal (Ted's wife) has acquired a fine old handpress. She is printing a few copies of Robin's poem about Haig's grave for a gift to me [San Mateo: Quercus Press, 30 copies; had already printed Jeffers's "Hope Is Not For The Wise" and "October Week-End," both in 1937]. I shall send you a copy. Beautifully done. Letitia font.

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 end version number used. Along with the disk, submit two typescripts of the piece, double-spaced on 8 1/2" 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 be included.

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.

Citations and Notes:

Consult the *MLA Style Sheet*, Second Edition. Citations should be to author and page number in parentheses within the text referring to an attached bibliography, "Works Cited." Double-space endnotes (explanatory, not citations) following the essay on a new page headed "NOTES."

Quoting and Citing Robinson Jeffers:

The standard edition of Jeffers's work is now *The Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers* (Stanford University Press, Vols. I, II, III: 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 Collected 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, in the case of Una's letters, to the appropriate number of the *Robinson Jeffers Newsletter*.