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Call for Papers

17th Annual Robinson Jeffers Association Conference

Co-Sponsored by the Department of English, California State University at Long Beach

February 18-20, 2011 (Presidents' Day weekend)

California State University at Long Beach

Conference Theme: "Robinson Jeffers and the Mid-Length Narrative Poem"

Featured Reader and Keynote Speaker: B. H. Fairchild

In his well-known essay "Can Poetry Matter?" Dana Gioia points out that narrative poems of middle length "have played an important role in English from Chaucer's Canterbury Tales to Browning's major dramatic monologues, but today they are shunned by editors, publishers, and critics alike." Robinson Jeffers is justly renowned for his lyrics of the natural world, politics and family, for his book-length narrative poems and for his tragic dramas, but Jeffers also wrote at least half a dozen mid-length narrative poems that are masterpieces of the genre. These poems, most of which can be read aloud in well under an hour, span his career, from "Roan Stallion" in the early 1920s to "Hungerfield" almost 30 years later and constitute an exciting body of work that deserves to be treated as a whole.

The Robinson Jeffers Association invites proposals on any aspect of Jeffers's mid-length narratives ("Roan Stallion," "Resurrection," "Solstice," "Margrave," "Mara," "Hungerfield," etc.) in the context of American poetry and literature and culture broadly conceived, including comparisons with other poets, writers and artists, definitional and theoretical concerns, and more. As usual, serious papers on other subjects and on the relation of Jeffers to other writers, artists and thinkers are also welcome.

The RJA has a long tradition of featuring major poets as keynote speakers. Past conferences have featured Mark Jarman, Dana Gioia, Dave Mason, W. S. Merwin, John Haines, Reg Saner and many more. The featured reader and keynote for this year's conference is B. H. Fairchild. The author of many award-winning collections of poetry and a scholarly study of Blake, Fairchild is one of the preeminent poets of his generation and a master of narrative. Fairchild will give a reading on Friday evening, February 18, and keynote on Saturday morning.

Proposals for papers should be relatively brief and must be postmarked by December 15, 2010. The conference has a number of different formats and includes opportunities for standard academic talks (15-20 mins.), longer plenary presentations, responses to longer talks, panel chairs, participation in discussion sections, and poetry readings.

Please send all queries and proposals both to Erika Koss, Executive Director, at executivedirector@robinsonjeffersassociation.org.

To learn more about the Robinson Jeffers Association and further details on the conference, please visit www.robinsonjeffersassociation.org. All presenters must be members of the Robinson Jeffers Association at the time of the conference.