

**The 23rd Robinson Jeffers Association Annual Conference**

**Occidental College, Los Angeles, California**

**February 24-26, 2017**

# **Robinson Jeffers and the Modern Metropolis: Los Angeles and Beyond**

**Program**

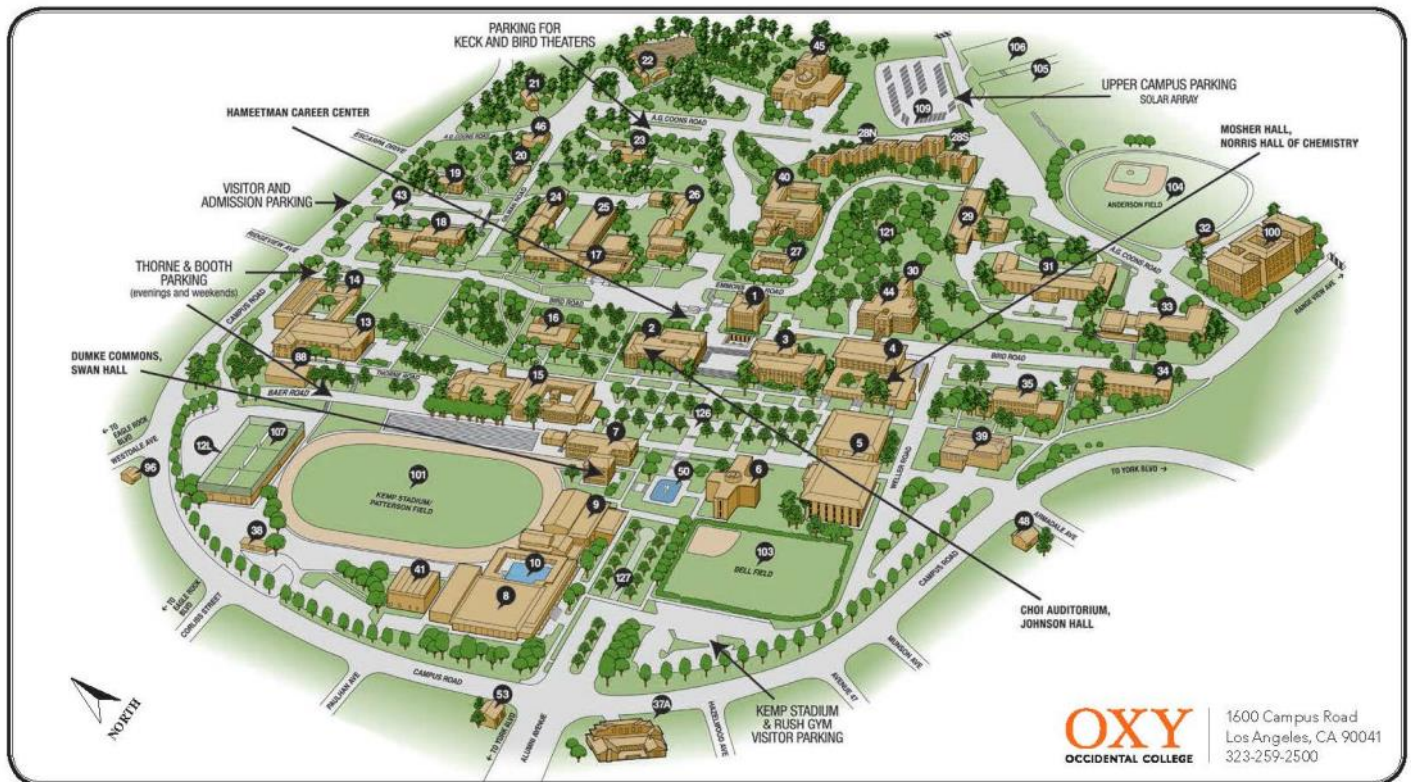
## Parking and Occidental College Campus Map

On Friday and Saturday, the conference will take place on the Occidental Campus in the Braun and Jeffers rooms and Gallery of the Academic Commons/Library. The Friday 3:30 pm panel will be in JSC Morrison Lounge and the Saturday keynote will be in Choi Auditorium, a few minutes walk across the quad.

The Sunday morning business meeting and presentation will take place at El Alisal, 200 E Ave 43, Highland Park (about 10 minutes from campus).

### Parking

Conference locations on campus map, below, are Academic Commons/Library (5), Johnson Student Center, Morrison Lounge (15) and Choi Auditorium (2). Parking on campus is free. Enter the campus via Alumni Ave, the main entrance, then turn right into the parking lot and find general parking. Street parking is also available on Campus Road, the road encircling the campus. You can then walk into campus. Upon arriving at the Central Quad (126), JSC Morrison is to the left and the Library is to the right.



Academic Commons/Mary Norton Clapp Library	5	Center for Gender Equity (Stewart-Cleland Hall Lower Lounge)	31	Johnson Student Center and Freeman College Union	15	Samuelson Alumni Center	37A
Admission Office (Collins House)	19	Central Quadrangle (Academic Quad)	126	Keck Theater	45	Samuelson Campus Pavilion/Tiger Cooler	16
Anderson Field	104	Chilcott Hall	25	Kemp Stadium/Patterson Field/Henry Track	101	Soccer Fields (lower and upper)	105-106
Annenberg President's House (1852 Campus Road)	23	Child Development Center (1824 Campus Road)	20	McKinnon Center for Global Affairs at Johnson Hall	2	Spencer Field House	32
Arthur G. Coons Administrative Center (AGC)	1	Community Literacy Center (Thorne 9 - at rear)	13	McKinnon Tennis Center (Upper Level)	107	Stearns Hall	40
Athletics/Alumni Gym Fitness Center	9	Culley Athletic Facility	41	Moore Laboratory of Zoology	30	Stewart-Cleland Hall	31
Bell Field	103	Emmons Student Wellness Center	27	Mullin Entrance/Mullin Grove	127	Swan Hall/Dumke Commons	7
Berkus Hall	34	Erdman Hall	24	Mullin Family Studio and Art Gallery	46	Sycamore Glen	121
Berkus House (1601 Campus Road)	53	Fowler Hall	3	Newcomb Hall	18	Taylor Pool/Field Building	10
Bioscience Building	44	Gilman Fountain	50	Norris Hall, North & South	28	Thorne Hall	13
Bird Hillside Theater/Trehouse Building	22	Haines Hall	26	Norris Hall of Chemistry (Moshier Lecture Hall)	4	Trehouse Building	22
Booth Music and Speech Center/Bird Studio	14	Harnettman Science Center	39	Pauley Hall	33	Upward Bound (1737 Campus Road)	96
Braun Hall	29	Herrick Memorial Chapel and Interfaith Center	6	Psychology Laboratory	38	Urban and Environmental Policy Institute (1882 Campus Road)	21
Campus Safety/Facilities Management (Lower Level)	12L	Intercultural Community Center (1501 Campus Road)	48	Rose Hills Foundation Student Activities Center	15	Wengert Center for the Liberal Arts	17
		Johnson Hall/McKinnon Center/Choi Auditorium	2	Rush Gymnasium	8	Wyle Hall	35

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February 24-26, 2017 | Occidental College, Los Angeles, California

## Program at a Glance

### Friday February 24, 2017

**3:30 pm Blackness and Nature: Artists in Conversation | Johnson Student Center, Morrison Lounge**

Artists | **Zinzi Clemmons, Camille T. Dungy, Douglas Kearney**

**5:00 pm to 7:00 pm Reception and Welcome | Braun Room**

"Preserving Jeffers' Legacy" exhibit opening in the adjacent Gallery

### Saturday February 25, 2017

**8:30 am Continental Breakfast | Braun Room**

**9:00 am RJA President's Welcome and Opening Remarks | Jeffers Room**

**Geneva Gano**, President, Robinson Jeffers Association

**9:30 am The Terrible Arrogant Cities | Jeffers Room**

*The Terrible Arrogant Cities: The Origins of Robinson Jeffers' Anti-Urbanism* | **Whitney Hoth**, Fanshawe College

*Robinson Jeffers and Italian Futurism: 'Nature' vs. 'City' as*

*Contrasting Symbols of Cultural Decadence and Renewal* | **Brett Colasacco**, University of Chicago

**10:15 am "What are Cities For" | Jeffers Room**

*Reflections on a Theme* | **Geneva Gano, Rob Kafka, James Karman**

**11:15 am Keynote: The View From Hawk Tower Today | Choi Auditorium**

**Camille T. Dungy**

**12:15 pm Box Lunch | Sycamore Glen**

**1:30 pm Jeffers and the Anthropocene | Jeffers Room**

**Robert Zaller**, Drexel University

**2:30 pm Jeffers' At the Fall of an Age | Jeffers Room**

*Jeffers as Mythmaker* | **Kevin Batton**, Independent Scholar

*Spurning the Polis: A Braid for Helen* | **Mick McAllister**, Independent Scholar

*Joining the Panel Discussion* | **Debra Freas**, Occidental College

**3:30 pm Refreshments | Braun Room**

**4:00 pm Inspired by Jeffers | Jeffers Room**

*My Name is Una* | **Lili Bitá**, Poet and Actress

"Together we hope to build up a Jeffers library of note:" *How the Robinson Jeffers Collection at Oxy Came to Be*

**Helena de Lemos**, Occidental College

*Jeffers the Poet and Printers* | **Jocelyn Webb Pedersen**, Occidental College

*Keepsake Presentation* | **Studio Arts Letterpress Printing Students**, Occidental College

### Sunday February 26, 2017

**8:30 am RJA Annual Business Meeting | El Alisal/Lummis House**

*Continental Breakfast*

**9:45 am Influencing Jeffers | El Alisal/Lummis House**

*Charles Lummis and Arroyo Seco Arts Culture* | **Jeremiah Axelrod**, Occidental College

Tour | **Christian Rodriguez**

**11:45 am Closing Remarks**

**Dale Ann Stieber**, Executive Director, Robinson Jeffers Association



### Schedule of Events

#### Friday, February 24

##### 3:30 pm **Blackness and Nature: Artists in Conversation | Johnson Student Center, Morrison Lounge**

Keynote speaker poet **Camille T. Dungy** and writers **Zinzi Clemmons** and **Douglas Kearney** treat Blackness as an entry-way to rethinking nature and its relationship to poetry. By treating Blackness as a mode aesthetic and practical experimentation, this panel evokes a wide range of poets concerned with nature, even if they are not labeled “nature poets.” *Panel is open to the public, no registration necessary.*

##### 4:30–7pm **Registration | Braun Room**

##### 5:00 pm **Opening Reception | Braun Room**

Held in the Braun Fine Books Room of Occidental College Library, the evening features the opening of the exhibition “Preserving Jeffers’ Legacy” in the adjacent Gallery and the opportunity for a guided tour of Occidental’s Jeffers Collection.

#### Saturday, February 25

##### 8:30am *Continental Breakfast* | **Braun Room**

##### **Registration | Braun Room**

##### 9:00am **RJA President’s Welcome and Opening Remarks | Jeffers Room**

**Geneva Gano**, Texas State University, San Marcos

##### 9:15 am **Session I: The Terrible Arrogant Cities | Jeffers Room**

*The Terrible Arrogant Cities: The Origins of Robinson Jeffers’ Anti-Urbanism*

**Whitney Hoth**, Fanshawe College, London, Ontario

Robinson Jeffers is a key figure in the intellectual history of anti-urbanism. In its early-modern phase, in the decades immediately preceding and after World War I, anti-urbanism was a dominant and broadly shared orientation of artists and intellectuals, and understanding Jeffers’ position in this tradition provides important context for understanding his unique achievement as a critic of expanding urbanism.

*Robinson Jeffers and Italian Futurism: ‘Nature’ vs. ‘City’ as Contrasting Symbols of Cultural Decadence and Renewal*

**Brett Colasacco**, University of Chicago

This paper investigates how “nature” and “city” figure as symbols of cultural decadence and renewal in the writings of Robinson Jeffers and F. T. Marinetti, founder and leader of Italian Futurism—an aesthetic movement roughly contemporaneous with Jeffers’ career and arguably the earliest significant example of what would eventually come to be known as “modernism” in early-to-mid-20th-century Anglo-American and continental European literature. More generally, the paper proposes a reconsideration of the relationship between Jeffers’ work and that of his modernist/avant-garde peers.

## Schedule of Events

### Saturday, February 25 (continued)

#### 10:15am Session II: "What Are Cities For?": Reflections on a Theme | Jeffers Room

Our goal in this session is to examine Jeffers' ideas concerning city life through an open discussion of five poems: *The Broken Balance*, *The Coast Road*, *Now Returned Home*, *The Purse-Seine*, and *What Are Cities For?*

Panelists: **Geneva Gano**, **Rob Kafka**, **James Karman**. The selected poems are linked to and can be read at online poetry sites. These Jeffers poems can be read online at: <https://www.poemhunter.com/>

#### 11:15am Keynote: *The View From Hawk Tower Today: A Contemporary Environmental Poet Reflects on What Robinson Jeffers Has Meant to Her* | Choi Auditorium

**Camille T. Dungy**, author of four collections of poetry, most recently *Trophic Cascade*, and editor of *Black Nature: Four Centuries of African American Nature Poetry*, will read from her own work and speak to some of the ways that the legacy of Robinson Jeffers has influenced her environmental world view. *This talk is open to the public, no registration necessary.*

#### 12:15pm Box Lunch | Sycamore Glen

Participants may order a box lunch (\$15, reserve in advance) and gather on campus at Sycamore Glen, one of Oxy's outdoor picnic and event areas. Folks may relax and talk, organize a poetry reading or walk Oxy's beautiful campus, designed by Myron Hunt.

#### 1:30 pm Session III: Jeffers and the Anthropocene | Jeffers Room

*Jeffers and the Anthropocene*

**Robert Zaller**, Drexel University

This presentation will examine Jeffers' evolving conception of humanity, with specific reference to social interaction, the relation of humanity to the natural and cosmic order, and the question of its ultimate ecological impact on the planet.

#### 2:30 pm Session IV: Jeffers' At the Fall of an Age | Jeffers Room

*Jeffers as Mythmaker*

**Kevin Batton**, Independent Scholar

While several of Jeffers' dramas and narratives adapt Greek myths, *At the Fall of an Age* is his only such poem not adapted from a classical literary model; it therefore stands as the purest example of Jeffers' own tragic sensibility. This paper will pick at the knot of sources and references Jeffers has combined to compose this story of the death of Helen.

*Spurning the Polis: A Braid for Helen*

**Mick McAllister**, Independent Scholar

*At the Fall of an Age* is a tapestry of Jeffers' themes: a story woven with threads of two primary colors, the red of Helen of Sparta and the blue of democratic Athens. Understanding it requires examining Jeffers' rejection of the polis and drawing together the scattered skein of his references in his work to Helen, "halo'ed in spears."

Joining the panel discussion will be Greek classics scholar **Debra Freas**, Associate Professor of Comparative Studies of Literature and Culture, Occidental College.

*At the Fall of An Age* can be read online at [AllPoetry.com](http://AllPoetry.com)

#### 3:30 pm Refreshments | Announcements

## Schedule of Events

### Saturday, February 25 (continued)

#### 4:00 pm Session V: Inspired by Jeffers | Jeffers Room

*My Name is Una*

**Lili Bita**, Poet and Actress

*My Name is Una* will feature a reading of selected correspondence from different periods of Una's life with Robinson Jeffers, with an emphasis on the major aspects of their long relationship and of Jeffers' career. Lili Bita, author, actress, and musician, has enjoyed a distinguished career as a representative of Hellenism on stage and in print; as a fighter for peace, justice, and women's rights; and as one of the finest lyric poets of her generation. She is an elected member of Greece's most prestigious literary organization, the Hellenic Authors Society, and her work, widely anthologized, has been translated into several languages. She has given many presentations to the Robinson Jeffers Association, with special reference to Jeffers' own engagement with Hellenism. Her most recent publication is *Fleshfire: Love Poems*, which collects the erotic poetry from her many collections.

*"Together we hope to build up a Jeffers library of note:" How the Robinson Jeffers Collection at Oxy Came to Be*

**Helena de Lemos**, Special Collections Instruction & Research Librarian, Occidental College

Serendipity led Ward Ritchie '28 to discover the poetry of Robinson Jeffers; his enthusiasm was shared with his classmates and best friends, Lawrence Clark Powell and Gordon Newell. This talk will reveal how this spark led to the creation of the Jeffers Collection at Occidental College.

*Jeffers, the Poet and Printers*

**Jocelyn Webb Pedersen**, Book Artist and Assistant Professor Letterpress Printing, Occidental College

Professor Pedersen and her students of the Spring 2017 Letterpress Printing class are designing and producing a keepsake book for the conference which they will present as part of a talk about Jeffers-inspired fine press printing.

*Keepsake Presentation*

**Studio Arts Letterpress Printing Students**, Occidental College

### Sunday, February 26

#### 8:30 am RJA Annual Business Meeting | El Alisal/Lummis Home

RJA members are invited to participate in the annual business meeting. | Continental Breakfast

#### 9:45 am Influencing Jeffers: Charles Lummis and Arroyo Seco Arts Culture | El Alisal/Lummis Home

According to Ward Ritchie's *A Southland Bohemia: the Arroyo Seco Colony as the Century Begins*, when Jeffers and his family arrived in 1903, Northeast Los Angeles was a thriving cultural community led by Charles Fletcher Lummis whose historic home El Alisal was being built with rocks from the Los Angeles River. This special event will include a talk by **Jeremiah Axelrod**, history professor and director of the Institute for the Study of Los Angeles at Occidental College, and a historical tour of El Alisal with **Christian Rodriguez**.

#### 11:45 am Closing Remarks

**Dale Ann Stieber**, Executive Director, Robinson Jeffers Association



*El Alisal, Lummis Home*

## Acknowledgements

### Acknowledgements

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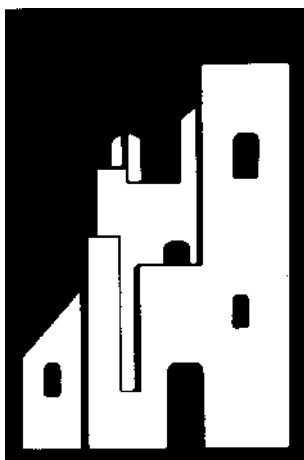
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Jeffers poem *Natural Music* is used with permission of Lindsey Jeffers and Jeffers Literary Properties

**Program design:** Laura Longoria

### Robinson Jeffers Association



President: Geneva Gano  
Executive Director: Dale Ann Stieber  
Treasurer: Charles Rodewald

**Advisory Board:**

James Karman (2016)  
John Cusatis (2017)  
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**Ex Officio:**

James Baird Jeffers Studies  
Ron Olowin, President, RJA (2012-14)  
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OXY

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