

Jeffers's Inevitable Place
Robinson Jeffers Association Annual Meeting

February 15-17, 2019
Carmel Woman's Club, Carmel, CA

One hundred years ago, in 1919, Robinson Jeffers completed the building of Tor House, then began working on Hawk Tower. The buildings constitute a monument to his "inevitable place," Carmel and the Big Sur coast. For fifty years, his poetry and his labor shaped his commitment to the place he called home; perhaps no writer is more firmly rooted to a specific domain. Yet Jeffers was hardly a regionalist except in the most literal sense. His work encompassed fundamental cultural traditions of Western civilization – classical Greece, the Bible, and Teutonic myth – grounding broad streams of literary and cultural knowledge in the local realities of Big Sur.

This year's conference celebrates Jeffers's profound foundation in Carmel. Although papers will be welcome on all topics, we hope for an emphasis on papers that examine Jeffers and his landscapes of discovery. Topics might include examinations of the interplay of local and timeless, his transplanting of European themes to the Big Sur, or conversely, how his poems set outside Carmel reflect his commitment to his own domain. Papers might contrast Jeffers's invented Carmel with the historical reality: the former golf course where Jeffers placed Tor House and the forest he created, the dairy farms and abalone industry that existed on the imagined primeval ground of Point Lobos. Poems with a Carmel setting were informed by the historic realities of the locale, evidenced in the map of "actual locations" prepared by Lawrence Clark Powell and Una Jeffers. Jeffers's Carmel was a haven and solace during the soul-searching of World War I; he wrote frequently of the role the landscape and seascape played in his intellectual awakening.

The organizers of the conference solicit papers of twenty minutes in length treating all aspects of Jeffers and his uses of setting, and other topics of interest, including but not limited to:

- Tor House as a subject of poetry
- Jeffers's use of stone as material, image, and symbol
- The role of Carmel as a physical and intellectual milieu
- Themes of regionalism, including his Ireland/UK poems
- The dialectic of "inevitable place" as "actual" vs. "imagined place"
- Discussions of Jeffers and other poets with similar commitments to place
- Jeffers as regionalist; California regionalism
- Jeffers and environmental literature
- Cross-cultural themes in his work (place and identity; race and history)

Papers that address topics outside of this area will also be welcome. Proposals of 200-250 words, along with an abbreviated C.V., should be emailed to the program coordinator, Brett Colasacco, at program@robinsonjeffersassociation.org. First-time presenters are especially encouraged.

Deadline: November 12, 2018