

JEFFERS' GHOST

Written by

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EXT. CARMEL POINT, CALIFORNIA - DUSK

An approaching storm pushes white-crested waves against the rocky coastline of Carmel Point, a granite and lava tongue of land jutting into the Pacific Ocean. Before the storm's edge pours over the land, the last shreds of sunset silhouettes a forty-foot tower of granite boulders. A light flickers in one window in the second story, all else is dark stone. Snow begins to fall in big wet flakes.

EXT. TOP OF HAWK TOWER - DUSK

From the top of the tower, the view encompasses a wide-expanse of the Pacific Ocean and swirls of wind-driven snow. Below the tower is a small, sturdy stone house. Smoke rises from the chimney as snow begins to coat the slate rooftop.

SUPER: January 20, 1962, Carmel, California

INT. TOR HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS BEDROOM - DUSK

On a bed covered in old quilts lies ROBINSON JEFFERS (Jeffers) (75) gaunt with thinning black and gray hair, a face like the sea-worn granite of his tower. He stares out the window at the gathering storm with sea-grey eyes, breathing in short, painful gasps -- the last stage of emphysema.

LEE JEFFERS (28) enters the bedroom with a bowl of water and some cloths. She sits by the bed, soaks one of the cloths in the cool water and dabs Jeffers' forehead.

JEFFERS

Ahhh, Una, your hands are cool.

LEE

It's Lee, Robin. Do you want a drink of water?

JEFFERS

(labored)

I made this bed to die in you know. When my dear Una and I built this house, this room, it was meant to be a death bed. Una died here. But we made love here too. Now I am finally going to see her again.

Jeffers chuckles dryly. The laughter turns to a fitful cough. It takes a moment for his breathing to recover. Lee holds his hand.

LEE

You rest now.

JEFFERS

I need to go to the tower, to Una's room.

LEE

(appalled at the idea)

Robinson Jeffers! It's too late for that tonight. There is ice all over the tower. Perhaps Donnan can take you up in the morning.

JEFFERS

Too late. Too late.

He breathes painfully again and falls into a fitful sleep. Lee watches over him, dabbing his forehead with the cool cloth. The storm pastes flakes of snow against the window. She shivers and draws a shawl closer around her.

DONNAN JEFFERS (28) enters the room carrying firewood, shaking off snow from the logs.

DONNAN

What a strange night! I bet the golfers at the Crosby won't be playing tomorrow.

He gets the fire going strongly. Stands up to gaze at his sleeping father.

DONNAN (CONT'D)

You think he'll make through the night?

LEE

Oh Donnan, I don't know. I didn't think he would make it through the last several nights. It's as if he is waiting for something.

DONNAN

You go to bed. I'll sit up with Father.

As Lee gets up to go, her hand leaves Jeffers' hand.

JEFFERS

Una!

LEE

No, Robin dear. It's Lee.

She turns away from the old man and hugs Donnan, crying silently into his shoulder.

LEE (CONT'D)

He misses her so. I almost think it will be better when they are together again.

DONNAN

It's been a sad twelve years for him.

Lee leaves the room wiping tears away. Donnan sits down by the bed and takes his Father's hand. The wind howls around the house. A clap of thunder vibrates the small room. Donnan turns down the one lamp next to the bed, leaving only the flames of the fireplace illuminating the bed and Jeffers' pale face.

JEFFERS (V.O.)

(in a weak voice)

I chose the bed downstairs by the sea window for a good deathbed when we built the house; it is ready waiting, unused unless by some guest in a twelvemonth, who hardly suspects its latter purpose. I often regard it, with neither dislike or desire: rather with both, so equalled that they kill each other and a crystalline interest alone remains.

Jeffers breathes painfully, shallowly. Slower. His breathing stops....

EXT. HAWK TOWER - NIGHT

A tall figure stands on the top of Hawk tower, overlooking the little stone house below. The wind and snow whip around the tower.

JEFFERS' GHOST (V.O.)

(In a much stronger voice.)

We are safe to finish what we have to finish; and then it will sound rather like music, when the patient daemon behind the screen of sea-rock and sky

thumps with his staff, and calls thrice: "Come Jeffers."

A second crack of thunder sounds. The figure turns from the parapet and the little house below. It is Robinson Jeffers, but much younger (38) than the man in the bed.

He strokes the cold granite stonework of the tower with his hands, stops at a corner of the turret wall, touches an inlaid tile from the Great Wall of China.

JEFFERS' GHOST (V.O.)

My fingers had the art of making
stone love stone. I remember
placing every boulder, every piece
of this tower -- all for the love
of my dear Una, my wife, my muse.
This tower will be here for
thousands of years. But what of me?

Jeffers' Ghost turns and surveys his domain: roiling ocean, twisted cypress trees, a stormy sky.

JEFFERS' GHOST (V.O.)

It was not that long ago that I was
an unshaped boy, a vessel that my
father was eager to fill with
Greek, German, and Latin words. A
boy sailing the ocean on the way to
Europe.

EXT. PASSENGER SHIP DECK - DAY

SUPER: Mid-Atlantic, 1892

A young Robinson Jeffers (5) leans on the deck railing, observing the dark ocean flow by the passenger ship.

Dr. Jeffers (65) dressed in black minister's clothes, moves slowly to stand beside the young boy. He is tall and thin, but walks with a stoop, as if he is guarding himself against the potential injuries of the world. The young Jeffers looks up at his father.

DR. JEFFERS

Have you finished your studies for
the day?

YOUNG JEFFERS

Almost, Father. I finished the
geometry and Greek lessons you gave
me this morning.

DR. JEFFERS

Do not dally too long here, the
cold air is bad for your health.

Dr. Jeffers turns to go. Jeffers stops him with a question.

YOUNG JEFFERS
How deep is the ocean here Father?

Dr. Jeffers screws up his face against the wind and peers over the side. He calls out in German to a nearby sailor who stows gear nearby.

DR. JEFFERS
(In German, with English subtitles.)
How deep is the sea here?

The sailor peers over into the dark water. He throws a broken pulley overboard.

SAILOR
(uses a regional word for "never")
It will never reach the bottom.

YOUNG JEFFERS
(picking up on the specific German dialect)
Nimmer?
(To the sailor, in German)
Why do use "nimmer" instead of "nie"? Are you from Munich?

SAILOR
Where are you from that you know German so well?

YOUNG JEFFERS
Philadelphia, Mein Herr. But I studied in Zurich last year.
(To his Father)
It's just as in Moby Dick, isn't it Father? After Ahab's ship goes down, Melville describes it: "And the sea rolled over the spot, as it had rolled five thousand years before and would roll five thousand years hence."

DR. JEFFERS
Exactly my son. The sea takes it all down if God wills it. Now how would you say Melville's ending in German?

Young Jeffers repeats the Melville lines in perfect German.

DR. JEFFERS (CONT'D)
Now give us Melville in Latin.

Young Jeffers makes a mistake in his Latin translation.

Dr. Jeffers cuffs Jeffers across the back of his head. Not hard, but enough to get the boy's attention.

DR. JEFFERS (CONT'D)
No! Your Latin is incorrect. What did they teach you in Zurich? Have you forgotten my lessons already? Enough daydreaming and gazing into the sea, go below and study.

The boy hangs his head, ashamed that he disappointed his Father.

YOUNG JEFFERS
Yes sir.

Young Jeffers takes a long look over the dark waters and then leaves Dr. Jeffers and the sailor at the railing.

SAILOR
You must be proud of your son.

DR. JEFFERS
Yes, he may make something of himself one day. God willing.

The ship recedes into a fog bank, on its way to Europe.

JEFFERS GHOST (V.O.)
My father was a stern teacher. Perhaps his habit of slapping Latin into my head was his way of preparing me for a long life of learning.

INT. DR. JEFFERS' HOUSE - DINING ROOM - EVENING

Super: Pennsylvania, 1903

Jeffers (16), his mother ANNIE (32), and Dr. Jeffers (76) eat a formal dinner in their modest but well-appointed home. The meal setting looks very formal. All three are concentrating on their food.

JEFFERS GHOST (V.O.)
Father was a respected Presbyterian minister and professor of theology.
(MORE)

JEFFERS GHOST (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Yet despite his strict methods of teaching and his dour outlook on life, he taught me much about the world through the lens of science and poetry. Without his strangely open thinking, I would not be the poet that I am. Though I never shared his taste in food...

Dr. Jeffers pushes away his plate with a look of distaste. He rings a table bell. Jeffers and Annie continue to eat.

DR. JEFFERS

I don't know how you two can eat this poisonous food. Fruit, butter, eggs, all are bad for you.

The SERVANT enters bringing a plate for Dr. Jeffers.

THE FAMILY SERVANT

Your dry toast sir. Hot water. And, your walnuts.

DR. JEFFERS

See? He knows what is good for me.

The servant leaves. Dr. Jeffers bites into his dry toast, sips his hot water.

ANNE

He "knows" because that is all that you will eat dear. And there is nothing wrong with fruit or vegetables. If you would give them a chance, perhaps you would not have so much indigestion.

DR. JEFFERS

Nonsense. I've been eating this way for years.

ANNE

Exactly, and you still feel poorly all the time.

DR. JEFFERS

Phht!

JEFFERS

So, I've been thinking about next year's classes.

(MORE)

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

I don't feel that the University of Western Pennsylvania has much more to offer me.

ANNE

And what is it you want to study next?

JEFFERS

Well --

DR. JEFFERS

-- I've enrolled you at Occidental College. The Seminary highly recommends it. I've been thinking we should all move out west. I've had enough of cold, damp Pennsylvania winters. It's bad for my health. California would be much better for me. For all of us.

ANNE

California? My dear, what has got into you?

DR. JEFFERS

It's time for change. I'm 72. We've been here in Pennsylvania, or in Europe, all our lives. Cold places, both sides of the Atlantic. I think Pasadena would give us all an opportunity to dry out.

Looking at Robin.

DR. JEFFERS (CONT'D)

And grow up. Don't you Robin?

JEFFERS

Well...

DR. JEFFERS

Good, I knew you'd approve.

ANNE

But dear, all my family is here.

DR. JEFFERS

We're your family. I've made up my mind. In fact I've already sold this house and bought some land in Highland Park. We'll build a new home there.

(MORE)

DR. JEFFERS (CONT'D)

We move this summer and be there in time for Robin to start his Junior year at Occidental. Well Robin, what do you say?

Both Jeffers and Annie stare at the Doctor, caught off guard by this sudden -- and final -- pronouncement.

JEFFERS

Thank you?

ANNE

Well, I suppose it will be an adventure for all of us.

DR. JEFFERS

Good, it is settled. Now, I have something for you Robin.

Dr. Jeffers gets up from the table and hobbles over to a sideboard to retrieve a small package. He walks over to Jeffers, lays a hand on his son's shoulder and, with solemn fanfare, hands the package to him.

DR. JEFFERS (CONT'D)

Because I sense a path before you my son, I believe that these volumes will help you choose the way.

Jeffers carefully tears open the package. There are two books inside.

JEFFERS

Poetry. By Campbell and Rossetti?

DR. JEFFERS

Campbell you may find interesting, he is very much in the classical vein. I think you will enjoy his work. However, the other book is unusual.

JEFFERS

How so?

Jeffers begins to leaf through the book by Rossetti.

DR. JEFFERS

Tragedy is a great driver of poetry. The poems in this book were written by Rossetti right before his young wife committed suicide.

(MORE)

DR. JEFFERS (CONT'D)

In grief, he buried the manuscript with her. After seven years, he had two friends dig up her grave and retrieve the poems. So they are literally taken back from the underworld.

Dr. Jeffers goes back to his toast and hot water, as Jeffers leafs through the book.

JEFFERS

(reading)

From the fixed place of Heaven she saw time like a pulse shake fierce through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove Within the gulf to pierce its path; and now she spoke as when the stars sang in their spheres. The sun was gone now; the curled moon was like a little feather Fluttering far down the gulf....

DR. JEFFERS

Rossetti was only 18 when he wrote "The Blessed Damozel". You have a couple of years to catch up.

JEFFERS

I.... I can't write poetry like this.

DR. JEFFERS

Nonsense. You've had the finest education I could arrange. You're fluent in four languages. Five if you tried harder. You have read all the classics. And -- you are a dreamer. So you have all the makings of a poet. You just need more of life's experiences: pain, sorrow, suffering. Believe me, they will all come.

Jeffers reads a few more passages from the book in silence as the Doctor crunches his dry toast.

ANNE

Well Robin, not only are we moving to the continent's end, but your Father has given you a new profession as well.

JEFFERS

Do you feel that I can be a poet,
Mother?

ANNE

Despite your father's gloomy
prescription for poetry, I think
you will find your voice when you
are ready. And the best way to find
that is to find the love of your
life. She is out there. Time will
reveal all, dear.

Silence falls in the dining room as Jeffers contemplates the
book of poems, Annie delicately eats her salad, and the
Doctor munches walnuts.

JEFFERS' GHOST (V.O.)

The book by Rossetti that Father
gave me changed my perspective on
what it was to be a poet. In fact,
it changed my life. By the time I
was sixteen, the volume had fallen
to pieces from use. By then I had
found Swinburne, Shelley, Milton,
and Marlowe. There was always more
to read. But writing was becoming
my passion. I wanted to be a poet,
but I was afraid of failure, or
even worse, just copying the works
of great men before me. I had yet
to find my true voice as my Mother
had predicted. I had yet to find a
love.

INT. USC LECTURE HALL - DAY

Super: University of Southern California, 1906

Jeffers' (19) long frame lounges in a classroom seat,
casually listening to the professor lecture on Faust in
German. A study in contrasts, petite UNA (22) sits next to
Jeffers in intense attention, her long braids wrapped around
her head.

UNA

(speaking in German,
subtitled)

Professor, Faust rejects
scholarship in favor of life
experiences, but does Goethe
himself have the same view?

PROFESSOR

Since Goethe wrote Faust as the hero, one would assume that may be true.

JEFFERS

But Mephistopheles, who is both truthful and wise, warns Faust against his enthusiasm for just raw experience.

PROFESSOR

True as well. Goethe was a scholar and bureaucrat. So which character best represents Goethe?

JEFFERS

They represent the different sides to his personality. For all of us.

Una glares at Jeffers.

UNA

Perhaps you would like to give the lecture today?

Jeffers smiles shyly.

ROBIN

My apologies. I asked the same question when I was in school in Zurich. And the way they explain it to you there, well, you never forget.

UNA

You learned German in Zurich?

ROBIN

Among other schools in Europe.

UNA

Oh, so you grew up in Europe?

The professor taps her book on the podium.

PROFESSOR

May we continue please?

EXT. USC CAMPUS - DAY

Jeffers and Una walk across campus.

UNA

How long did you study in Europe?

JEFFERS

Until I was 14, when I entered the University of Western Pennsylvania.

UNA

You went to college at 14? What made you do that?

JEFFERS

My Father. He decided it was best for me.

UNA

And do you always follow your Father's wishes?

JEFFERS

In those days, yes. I found it was better to go to the schools he recommended than to have him slap lessons into my head all day.

UNA

He was strict?

JEFFERS

To a point. Sometimes I think that he has a grand plan for me, but won't tell me what it is. He lets me pretty much do what I want now, as long as I do well in my studies.

UNA

It must be nice to have a plan like that. My Father's plan was to get me married as soon as possible.

JEFFERS

Married? You are?

UNA

Yes, of course.

She flashes her wedding ring.

UNA (CONT'D)

You don't notice these little things?

Jeffers scrutinizes the ring.

JEFFERS

Not so little. I guess I was
admiring something else.

UNA

Oh. I didn't realize I was being
admired.

JEFFERS

I meant your skill in German.

UNA

I see. So other than taking
advanced German classes, how else
do you spend your time?

JEFFERS

I write.

UNA

In German?

JEFFERS

No, just some poems.

UNA

A poet! I was just reading an
analysis by Arthur Symons on
Wordsworth and Shelley. Have you
read it?

JEFFERS

"Art begins when a man wishes to
immortalize the most vivid moment
he has ever lived." So says Symons,
a madman in his own right, I
believe.

Una stops and pulls the volume out of her bag. Thrusts it on
Jeffers. They stand together amid a stream of students,
focused on each other and the book.

UNA

Yes! Exactly. You are one of the
few people that I have met who
understands.

Jeffers takes the book from Una.

JEFFERS

Pain. Sorrow. Suffering...

UNA

I beg your pardon?

JEFFERS

Sorry. I was remembering something my Father said.

UNA

I need to get to my next class. Do you like Irish music?

JEFFERS

I don't really know. Music wasn't a big part of my education.

UNA

Oh, so there is something you don't know? A friend and I play together. Mostly Irish ballads. Would you like to come and listen?

JEFFERS

I would be delighted. Will I meet your husband?

UNA

No. Teddy's a lawyer, so he'll be working. Again. So, come by tomorrow evening. Here is the address.

She writes a note on a bookmark in the Rossetti book, places it back in the book and hands it to Jeffers.

UNA (CONT'D)

o'clock.

JEFFERS

I look forward to seeing you. Again.

Una holds out her hand expecting a handshake. Jeffers takes her hand, holds it.

UNA

I really must be going.

JEFFERS

Yes.

UNA

My hand?

Jeffers looks at her hand in his. Drops it.

JEFFERS

Sorry, I was thinking.

UNA
About something your Father said?

JEFFERS
No, my Mother.

Una turns and walks away to her class. Jeffers stares after her.

ANNIE (V.O.)
The best way to find your poet's
voice is to find the love of your
life. She is out there.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT

Una and her friend HAZEL (22) are playing Irish tunes on a small harmonium and violin respectively. The Irish ballad music is simple but lively. Jeffers sits on the sofa, admiring Una. The song ends.

JEFFERS
Marvelous. Most concert music
sounds like noise to me, but yours
is delightful.

HAZEL
I do believe your classmate knows
how to flatter the ladies.

JEFFERS
I am being sincere.

UNA
Yes, Hazel, I believe that Mr.
Jeffers does not have an insincere
bone in his body.

Hazel puts down her violin and gets up to pour more tea for Jeffers.

HAZEL
Una tells me that you are working
on a book of poems.

JEFFERS
A book? Well, I have a collection
that I have been working on. But
not a book. I have no publisher.

HAZEL

Well then you need one. I have a friend here who publishes some very fine books. I'll give you his name and address. I am sure he would be interested in giving you advice.

UNA

Yes, that would be wonderful. Robin, when will you have them ready?

JEFFERS

Wait, they are not ready at all. They are not that good, really.

HAZEL

Nonsense. Una tells me that you are very gifted. A true modern thinker. Educated all over Europe too. Your poetry must be very interesting.

Jeffers is taken aback by all this interest in his poems.

JEFFERS

Really, they are drivel.

UNA

Well, then you must make them better.

Jeffers looks helplessly at Una.

JEFFERS

I suppose I will.

Jeffers stands and grabs his coat.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

Thank you for the delightful music. And tea. And the company. And advice.

Jeffers fairly flees the room.

UNA

Hazel, you are wicked. I never said he had a book of poems ready.

HAZEL

No? Well, I was testing him. He does not seem to be up to your standards Una. I don't think it is wise for you to lead him on.

(MORE)

HAZEL (CONT'D)

He seems to be quite smitten with you. What would Teddie say?

UNA

I am not leading him on. I just think he is interesting. He is moody, young, and inexperienced. His poems are immature, but intriguing. There is something in his eyes that tell me he could be a great poet. Grey-green, like the ocean. And he's quite handsome don't you think?

HAZEL

Una! You are asking for trouble.

UNA

Nonsense. I know exactly what I am doing.

Hazel walks over to her friend and gives her a hug.

HAZEL

I hope you do, dear. Be careful. The gossips love an affair. Teddie will find out sooner or later.

INT. BEACH RESTAURANT - NIGHT

SUPER: Autumn, 1910

Jeffers (23) and Una (26) pick at their food at a secluded table in a restaurant.

UNA

I'm sorry Robin. Teddie is getting suspicious. A few of our friends have been insinuating that he better pay more attention to me. So he is planning more and more parties and events for us together. He's no fool.

JEFFERS

Then just tell him you love me. Get it out in the open.

UNA

I can't. I'm not ready.

JEFFERS

Not ready for me?

UNA

Not ready to leave him.

JEFFERS

So you still love him?

UNA

Well, yes. He is my husband. We've been married for eight years.

JEFFERS

Then you don't love me.

UNA

Robin! You know I care deeply for you. About you. It's just very.... complicated.

JEFFERS

Yes, being married to a lawyer does make it complicated. Are you afraid?

UNA

No. Teddie would be mad, but he would treat me fairly. I just need more time to figure this out.

JEFFERS

But I love you. You are the most dear person in my life. I need you.

UNA

Dear Robin. I don't want to hurt you. I want you to be happy.

JEFFERS

With you I can be. Without you there is no hope.

Jeffers pushes his plate away. Una looks at her food and sits back. Jeffers drinks from his glass of wine. Pours more for Una.

UNA

We need some time. I need some time. Apart.

JEFFERS

I hate the thought of that.

Jeffers takes her hand from across the table. Holds it.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

How will I write without you?

UNA

Remember what your Father said.
Pain, suffering...

JEFFERS

And sorrow. Yes. Those are the
ingredients for the making of a
poet. What will you do?

UNA

I need to go to Europe for a while.
It will be a good change. I have
friends there. In fact, Teddie has
rather demanded it. Made all the
plans. You should go ahead and go
to medical school in the Fall as
you planned. The studies will keep
your mind off of

JEFFERS

.... you. But can we at least write
to each other?

UNA

No. I think we need to see if a
separation changes our feelings for
each other.

JEFFERS

Never. Never for me. I will always
need you. Always love you.

UNA

Robin. Stop. This is painful for me
too.

JEFFERS

So be it. I will be in agony until
you return.

UNA

No! Live your life. Write poetry
every day. Keep learning. You have
so much ahead of you. You must do
this. For me. Please.

JEFFERS

Then this is goodbye?

Una stands, embraces Jeffers, and gives him a lasting kiss. She turns quickly, her face a mask, and quickly leaves the restaurant.

JEFFERS GHOST (V.O.)

So Una left for England. I drifted into an idleness, writing poems -- poems of little worth I thought. I lived a life of ease. But without Una, there was no love.

EXT. LONDON CROQUET COURT - DAY

Una and her friend PERCY (30) play a game of croquet on the beautiful manicured lawn of Percy's home. Una smacks a croquet ball across the court and through two hoops.

PERCY

Bloody good shot Una!

UNA

Thank you, Percy. But I believe those were the wrong hoops.

PERCY

Hmm, do you want to take the shot over?

UNA

No, it doesn't matter.

PERCY

You seem out of sorts today.

UNA

Well, I just this morning received a most disturbing letter from my friend Hazel. It seems that Teddie has taken charge of a young girl from Bakersfield. He's putting her through dance school. He has said nothing of this in his letters to me.

PERCY

I'm sure it is innocent enough.

UNA

Innocent? My dear Percy, here I am practically in exile trying the best I can to forget Robin so I can save my marriage.

(MORE)

UNA (CONT'D)

And all of a sudden Teddie is "innocently" running around with a 17-year-old girl all the way from Bakersfield? How innocent can that be.

PERCY

Well I didn't mean to imply...

UNA

And why would he keep it a secret from his wife if it's so innocent?

Una stalks over to her croquet ball and gives it another smack, sending it bouncing off Percy's ball.

PERCY

Well I'm sure that...

UNA

Well I'm not about to keep my end of the bargain up if he thinks he can philander around while I'm in exile.

Una stomps over to her ball again and gives it another hearty smack, sending Percy's ball out of court.

PERCY

Una.

UNA

What?

PERCY

I believe it's my turn.

UNA

Oh, sorry.

Percy walks over to Una and puts his hand on her shoulder.

PERCY

Una, dearest. I know this news is upsetting to you. But don't do anything rash. Maybe your friend is wrong about Teddie's intentions?

UNA

Unfortunately, I'm afraid that Hazel is very perceptive. She knew that Robin and I were in love almost before I did. Oh, these affairs of the heart are so messy.

PERCY

Give it a bit more time. Come with me to Paris for a week. Paris will take your mind off of Robin and Teddie. Put yourself in my hands and we'll have a jolly time.

Una pats Percy on the hand.

UNA

Dear Percy. Thank you for taking care of me these past few months. You've been a dear. But I've made up my mind to go home and straighten this out with Teddie. I can't just stay here while so much is unresolved.

PERCY

Promise me you will find out the facts about Teddie before you even think of seeing Robin.

UNA

I'll go straight home. I won't even tell Robin I am coming back.

PERCY

Good. I am sure that when you see Teddie, your path will become clear to you.

UNA

I'm not sure that the path of love is ever clear -- or straight. All I can do is let fate decide the right path for me.

INT. CAR - DAY

Una, driving a sporty 1915 roadster, speeds through LA. Hazel is in the passenger seat.

HAZEL

Una, I am not saying he is having an affair. All I really know is that he came back from a business trip in Bakersfield a few months ago with this young dancer who he is now paying to go to school here. But they have been seen out together quite often.

UNA

I bet he has. Who does he think he is trying to get me out of the way while he has his dalliances?

HAZEL

Now Una, I picked you up from the train station not to get you riled up, but to calm you down. While I won't make excuses for Teddie's behavior, you need to work it out with him.

Una tears around a corner, nearly clipping some PEDESTRIANS.

HAZEL (CONT'D)

Not on pedestrians!

UNA

I'll work it out with Teddie alright. I've had three weeks aboard ships and trains to think about this. I'm calm. I'm not jumping to conclusions.

Una jams on the brakes at a busy intersection, bringing the car to an abrupt halt. They wait for a crowd of Pedestrians to cross the street.

HAZEL

Yes, I can see you are quite calm. Are you sure that you didn't hurry back here to see "him"?

UNA

I don't even know where "he" is. I didn't write to him for four months, just as Teddie requested. I kept my part of the bargain. He's the one who is changing the rules.

Una stomps on the gas as the last Pedestrian crosses in front of her car, and they take off down the street. Hazel nervously grabs the door handle.

HAZEL

Yes, you are handling this very well. For an Irish mad woman. Pull over here please, I need to get some things. I think you need to be alone.

Una pulls the car abruptly to the curb.

UNA

I'll be fine. I'll go see Teddie.
I'll be calm. We'll talk calmly.
Yes, we will.

HAZEL

You do that. I'll see you tomorrow.

Hazel leans over and gives Una a peck on the cheek.

HAZEL (CONT'D)

I'm sure this will all work out
soon. You'll see.

Hazel opens the car door and gets out. As she pauses to straighten her dress she moves aside to reveal a tall figure standing on the curb, smoking a cigarette, looking around at the traffic. It is Jeffers.

UNA

Oh my!

Hazel looks at Una questioningly, then turns in the direction of her stare.

HAZEL

Oh dear.

Jeffers looks at Hazel, recognizes her, smiles. He can't see into the car from his angle on the sidewalk.

HAZEL (CONT'D)

Hello Robin. What brings you here?

JEFFERS

Hello Hazel. Just walking.

HAZEL

What a coincidence.

UNA

Robin?

Jeffers hears her voice. Hazel steps aside and nods towards the car. Jeffers leans down to get a look at the driver. His face says it all.

INT. JEFFERS HOUSE - PARLOR - NIGHT

Annie Jeffers stands, reading the Los Angeles Times. She shakes her head. She sighs and puts the newspaper on the parlor table in front of Robin and Una who are sitting together, like nervous kids.

INSERT: Headline: "Two points of the eternal triangle."
 Pictures of Robin and Una. "Parents wash hands of it" Wider
 view of front page of newspaper on the table.

Anne stands over the paper, facing Jeffers and Una.

ANNIE

Well, I suppose I should have seen
 this coming. But reporters never
 get the quotes right, do they? I
 certainly did not tell them that we
 were "washing our hands of you".
 Dear me, where do they get these
 ideas? What Mother would do that?

She sits down next to Una and takes her hand.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Dear Una, welcome to the family.
 Robin has told me how much in love
 you are with each other. And that
 is a precious treasure to have. Use
 it wisely.

She turns to Jeffers.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

But you have not told your Father
 about this yet, have you? It is
 fortunate that he does not read the
 papers. You will need to get his
 blessing. Both of you.

Jeffers clears his throat. He looks nervous. Una takes his
 hand.

UNA

I have never met Dr. Jeffers. But
 if he is Robin's father, and your
 husband, I am sure we will get
 along.

JEFFERS

I had better speak to him first. He
 has his own way of --
 communicating.

INT. DR. JEFFER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Dr. Jeffers works in his dark study, pouring over texts. He
 writes meticulously in a notebook. There is a soft KNOCK on
 the door.

DR. JEFFERS

Enter!

The Doctor continues writing. Jeffers opens the door and quickly closes it behind him. He moves through the gloom towards his father's desk, takes a seat like a pupil in front of a teacher. Jeffers waits. The Doctor looks up finally and peers at his son.

DR. JEFFERS (CONT'D)

So my boy, you have returned. How are classes? Still writing poetry? I liked the book you sent me. But why did you use the title "Flavons and Apples"?

He taps the book on his desk.

JEFFERS

(Flabbergasted)

You read it?

DR. JEFFERS

Of course, my boy. Some good rhymes in there too. But I think you still need more suffering. Pain brings out the best in a real poet.

JEFFERS

And love. That's what I wanted to talk with you about.

DR. JEFFERS

Love? You are in love?

JEFFERS

Yes Sir. Deeply.

Dr. Jeffers thinks about this for a moment.

DR. JEFFERS

She loves you?

JEFFERS

Of course! We've been seeing each other for a while.

DR. JEFFERS

How long? These summer romances are fickle affairs.

JEFFERS

Seven years.

Dr. Jeffers sits back in his chair, taken aback by this revelation.

DR. JEFFERS

Why have you never brought her home to meet us?

JEFFERS

Well, sir, there was a slight complication.

DR. JEFFERS

A long distance affair, eh?

JEFFERS

Well, no she has been here in Los Angeles most of the time. The fact is sir, she was...

DR. JEFFERS

Married?

JEFFERS

How did you know?

DR. JEFFERS

Ha! Just because I look half-dead doesn't mean I don't know the ways of the world. Your two previous statements left that the only logical conclusion.

JEFFERS

Yes sir. She was, actually still is married. Until August, when the decree is finalized. We plan on getting married soon after. I guess if you want all the details, you can ... read today's paper.

Jeffers winces at this, waiting for the explosion. Instead Dr. Jeffers gives a hearty laugh.

DR. JEFFERS

In the papers? What do I care what those rags have to say about my family or their affairs? I only have one question for you. Are you happy?

JEFFERS

Sir, I -- we -- are very happy.

DR. JEFFERS
When do I get to meet her?

JEFFERS
She's in the parlor with Mother.

INT. JEFFERS' PARLOR - NIGHT

The door to the Doctor's study bursts open as the Doctor hobbles out into the parlor with Jeffers close on his heels.

JEFFERS
Father, may I introduce...

The Doctor stops, straightens himself out to the best of his ability, and walks carefully over to Una, who rises quickly from her chair to meet him, hands grasped together defensively. Annie stands by her side. The Doctor stops a few inches from Una. Pauses. Looks her over.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)
Una. Una Call. Soon to be Una Call
Jeffers.

DR. JEFFERS
My hearty congratulations to you
both. Best wishes for prosperity
and happiness for many years!

The Doctor gives Una a gentle but truly warm hug. He turns to Jeffers.

DR. JEFFERS (CONT'D)
I feel that you have brought us a
daughter whom we can welcome into
our home. May she and you prove
worthy of each other.

UNA
Thank you Dr. Jeffers. I don't know
quite what to say.

JEFFERS
Neither do I Father. Thank you for
being so accepting.

DR. JEFFERS
When is the wedding? What are your
plans? Where will you live?

UNA

Now that we have your blessing, we plan on setting a date in early August.

DR. JEFFERS

After your divorce is finalized. Yes, Robin told me. And then what?

UNA

We were thinking of spending some time in England. Near Dorset.

DR. JEFFERS

Ugh. Cold there. You should stay here in California.

JEFFERS

News from Europe is not promising. War is stirring. I fear that England will be caught up in the Kaiser's war. It won't be safe there for us. And who knows if America will become involved? We want to find a place near the sea -- a home we can afford.

UNA

An old friend of mine, Timmie Clapp, was telling me about a small village called Carmel-by-the-Sea, where artists and writers visit from San Francisco, Berkeley, and Stanford. George Sterling lives there part time, and I hear that Jack London and Mary Austin have done some of their best work there. Timmie said it is a lot like Dorset in geography and climate.

Dr. Jeffers takes Una's arm and steers her toward the parlor seating.

DR. JEFFERS

Well, bring back the grandchildren when you have them. So, my dear, how many languages do you know? I hope your Latin is better than Robin's. I never could teach him how to speak Latin properly.

EXT. HAWK TOWER - NIGHT

The snow swirls around Jeffers' Ghost and Hawk Tower. He turns and descends the steep stone stairs to the next level, completely at ease even in the dark and icy night.

JEFFERS' GHOST (V.O.)

When we arrived in Carmel-by-the-Sea, there was open land, pine forests, and a pounding sea as far as we could see. For the first time in my life I could see people living amid magnificent unspoiled scenery, as they did in the ancient sagas.

EXT. SANTA LUCIA MOUNTAINS - DAY

From a hawk's eye view flying over the green, fog-stroked hills: Men ride horses over the hill side, herding cattle; a lone farmer struggles with a horse-drawn plow as gulls plunge down to pick at the overturned earth.

JEFFERS' GHOST (V.O.)

Men were riding after cattle, or plowing the headlands, hovered by white seagulls, as they have done for thousands of years.

EXT. CARMEL HILL - DAY.

SUPER: Carmel-by-the-Sea, 1914.

A horse-drawn coach creeps up a dirt road on a tree-covered hill rising to the east of Carmel Bay. As the stage makes the last turn over the top of the hill, a dramatic view reveals itself through the forest that leads down to the Pacific Ocean and the brilliant white-sand beach.

JEFFERS GHOST (V.O.)

When we came over the hill from Monterey, and looked down through pines and sea fog on Carmel Bay, it was evident that we had come, without knowing it, to our inevitable place.

An unpaved Ocean Avenue leads down to the white sand beach. A few homes poke out of the trees with wood smoke curling from the chimneys. Sand dunes, pines, cypress trees, and the ocean dominate the view.

The stage lets the passengers off with their few belongings. Jeffers and Una step down and view their surroundings.

UNA

Robin, this is it. Can you feel it?
If we can't go to England, this is
the next best place in the world.

Jeffers surveys the landscape. Takes it all in. A hawk screams overhead and dives down after prey.

Una picks up several pieces of luggage that together weigh almost as much as she does, and sets off down the hill to the sea.

UNA (CONT'D)

Let's find a house.

Jeffers shoulders the rest of the luggage and hurries to keep up with her.

EXT. CARMEL CABIN - DAY

Jeffers and Una stand in front of a rustic log cabin, a bit run down, but with pine trees and coastal oaks surrounding it -- certainly romantic for a young couple. The LANDLORD stands behind them, at a discreet distance.

UNA

(To JEFFERS)

This is perfect. I'll take care of
the house. You can write. We'll
live off the land and the sea. What
do you think?

Jeffers surveys the rustic cabin, a far cry from the houses he grew up in, but if this is what his dear Una wants...

JEFFERS

My dear Una, with you, any place
will be enchanting.

Turning to the landlord.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

We'd like to rent your cabin. It's
a bit run down, but we can fix it
up for you. What are you asking?

LANDLORD

\$15 a month, and you can keep the
furnishings.

UNA

\$10

LANDLORD

\$12

UNA

Deal. Who are the neighbors?

LANDLORD

There are a couple of writers nearby. Sterling was just here, George Sterling. Crazy man. Used to shoot every animal in sight. Suppose to be a good poet. Held some wild parties down on the beach. Mary Austin is just down the hill from here. You'll meet the neighbors that want to meet you. People like their privacy here. Don't go sticking your nose in other people's business and they won't stick theirs in yours.

JEFFERS

Just the way we like it too. Any other words of wisdom?

LANDLORD

You'll pick up what you need soon enough. People say this is the best place in the world to live. But those same people leave. Strange things happen to people who live here a long time. You'll hear stories if you take the time to listen. Some say the place is haunted by the ghosts of the Ohlone Indians who used to live here. The Spanish either enslaved them, infected them with smallpox, or drove them away. Left a lot of bad spirits lingering in the hills, I think. When the sun is out and the bay is blue, you don't think much about it. When the fog rolls in and the moon is out, the trees are thick with spirits. It's a wild place. We're just here as guests.

UNA

(laughing a little
nervously)

(MORE)

UNA (CONT'D)

Those are indeed words of wisdom.
And what do you do here? Mr....

LANDLORD

Mendez. Well, I own a little
property. I paint a little. And I
look after my tenants.

JEFFERS

You said that George Sterling has
left?

LANDLORD

Back to New York. His wife killed
herself a few months ago. Cyanide.
Guess she had her fill of his
philandering. Like I said, if you
live here long enough, the land
enters your mind. You change. Some
for the better. Some for the worse.
You two look strong. You might last
quite a while.

UNA

And how long have you been here Mr.
Mendez?

LANDLORD

Can't really remember. Quite a
while I guess. Well, you two have
some house making to do. I gotta
see to my business. You have a good
life here.

The landlord walks off, disappearing down the crooked, tree-lined street.

JEFFERS

I have a feeling we'll fit right in
here.

UNA

I'll see that we do.

They turn together and walk up the stairs into the log cabin.
The door shuts behind them. Una GIGGLES.

UNA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Let's at least clean the place up
first Robin. Really!

EXT. CARMEL BEACH - NIGHT

Jeffers and Una walk the Carmel beach at sunset.

UNA

Robin, look at those rocks above,
like the Tors in Ireland. Can you
imagine building our home there on
those strong shoulders of the land?

JEFFERS

If we could afford to buy that
land, yes. But your poet has barely
enough money to pay our rent. It's
but a dream to wish for that kind
of property.

UNA

But dreams are what brought our
lives together. Surely we can dream
up a little stone house on this
point of land?

JEFFERS

Then we will dream a little longer
and see what life delivers to us.

EXT. HAWK TOWER TURRET - NIGHT

Jeffers' Ghost paces the turret. Snow is still falling, but
lighter. A moon shines dimly through a few rifts in the storm
clouds.

JEFFERS GHOST (V.O.)

Our first years in Carmel were
dedicated to exploring the coast as
well as ourselves. I was deeply in
love with Una. She was my eyes and
ears to the world of people who
made their living on the coast. Una
could pry stories from the locals.
She could get anyone to tell her
about their deepest secrets, no
matter how sordid or obscure. These
stories made up the still, small
music of humanity. Of my poetry.

EXT. ROAD TO BIG SUR - DAY

A two-horse mail stage makes its way down the old Coast Road,
south of Carmel. Jeffers and Una ride on top, behind the
DRIVER.

JEFFERS GHOST (V.O.)

One time, right before the world began its violent change for the great war, we journeyed down the coast on the mail-stage, stopping as the driver delivered packages to people who farmed or ranched the land, or those that hid away in the canyons.

The stage turns a dramatic corner of the coast road, revealing a deep gorge, a beach below, and a house and barn perched on the headland. A thick rusted cable connects the old lime kilns in the hills to an old skip imbedded on the beach far below.

UNA

What is that ahead? That cable stretched out over the gorge?

DRIVER

Part of the old lime kilns. They used that cable to carry the lime down the hill to the ships in the bay. All the old kilns are up in the hills, lost in the trees now.

UNA

Robin, imagine how it used to be here. A bustle of activity. Ships coming from San Francisco and Los Angeles. Chinese miners and kiln workers. It must have been very different then. Now it looks lonely and abandoned with the forest reclaiming the buildings.

JEFFERS

Our failures can be as beautiful as our triumphs, but the return of nature is even more precious.

DRIVER

We'll be at Big Sur, the end of my route, in a few more stops. We'll stay at a farm tonight and head back to Carmel in the morning. They have a guest house for you two to stay in.

The Driver snaps the reins and the stage moves on. They travel down the road under the thickening redwoods and the beginning dusk.

INT. BIG SUR GUEST HOUSE - NIGHT

Jeffers and Una get ready for bed. Una sits on the bed looking out the window, lost in thought.

JEFFERS

That was a long trip today. Are you tired?

UNA

We saw so many wonderful sights today. This is truly a beautiful and magical country. There are many stories here too. After dinner, the owner of the ranch was telling me about the previous owner.

Una combs her long hair while telling the story.

UNA (CONT'D)

He said that the man had won a marvelous roan stallion in a poker game. He thought he was very lucky and was going to charge his neighbors to have their mares breed with the stallion and make lots of money. But one night he went drunk into the stallion's corral. Something about him must have spooked the horse, because the stallion trampled the man to death. Isn't that a terrible -- yet fascinating -- story?

Jeffers moves to the open doorway that looks out over the courtyard and corral. It is just starting to rain. Across the yard, the main ranch house appears illusory in the dusk and rain. A light glows from the front door under a deep porch, casting shadows across the corral. A woman stands in the doorway in silhouette. From around the hill the sounds of a horse and cart approach, the wheels grating on the wet rock. The cart pulls around a bend in the road, pulling up to the corral. The wind picks up as gusts of rain start pouring off the Pacific. Jeffers takes it all in. In his mind's eye, Jeffers sees a poem form from the elements before him and Una's tale.

JEFFERS

There is a rich vision to be woven out of that tale.

INSIDE JEFFERS' MIND: EXT. BIG SUR RANCH - NIGHT

The scene before him freezes and then morphs slightly into the opening of the poem "Roan Stallion".

A dog barks and the woman, CALIFORNIA, in the doorway moves out to the wagon, greeting the driver. Behind the wagon is tethered a large roan stallion. The man, JOHNNY, on the wagon is drunk, nearly teetering off the buckboard. The woman grabs the reins of the mare to steady it while the man climbs down.

CALIFORNIA

What have you got Johnny? Did you buy something for our daughter? Christmas is tomorrow.

JOHNNY

Mine now. I won him last night. I had very good luck. They bring their mares up here now. I keep this fellow. I got money besides but I will not show you.

CALIFORNIA

I shared your luck when you lost; you lost me once, Johnny, remember? Tom Dell had me two nights here in the house, other times we've gone hungry. Now that you have won, our daughter will have her Christmas. I'll go to Monterey tomorrow. Buy presents for Christine.

He flips her some coins.

JOHNNY

You have a wet ride! Here money. Five dollar, ten dollar. You buy whiskey for Johnny.

Johnny unties the stallion with difficulty and forces the huge animal into the corral. California struggles with the docile mare's harness in the rain.

EXT. BIG SUR RANCH - NIGHT

The woman exits the house across from the corral, crosses the courtyard and stares at the big stallion. The moon is up and very bright, making the scene appear like a silvery-day. She wears a thin shift, through which the moonlight shines and silhouettes her body. She studies the stallion moving restlessly in the corral under the moonlight.

With a decisive move she opens the gate wide, stands in front of the massive stallion. But the animal does not rear, does not charge -- instead it drops its head, bowing to her. She steps forward and strokes his great mane, grabs a handful of the mane and springs up onto the stallion's back. The stallion bolts out of the corral, charges up the hill, the woman clinging low to his back, outlined in the moonlight.

EXT. BIG SUR RANCH - NIGHT

The woman exits the house running. The man is close behind her, stumbling from drink. A child comes and stands in the doorway, silhouetted in the lamp light. The woman reaches the corral, squeezes between the horizontal rails and is inside with the stallion. The man stops at the fence, he yells at her but the rain and wind drown the speech. She taunts him. A dog rushes out from the house, into the corral, barking and harassing the horse.

The man drunkenly climbs over the railing, comes for California. She maneuvers the stallion between herself and the man. The man curses, strikes out at the stallion, waving him away.

The horse rears and deals him a devastating blow with a forehoof. The man falls. The girl in the doorway screams and runs back into the house.

In a dance of death in the corral, the woman circles the stallion as the dog harries the horse and the man tries to crawl back to the safety of the fence.

The girl runs out into the rain with a rifle. The woman calls to her. They meet at the gate and she takes the rifle, watches as the dog continues to snap at the stallion. She raises the rifle, aims, fires. The dog twists through the air, dead.

The horse turns its attention back to the man on the ground. The stallion finishes him off in a brutal flashing of hooves and teeth.

The child screams, pulling on the woman's dress, pointing at the horse. The woman aims the rifle again, pauses, then fires three times, bringing the stallion down with the third echoing shot. The girl and woman stand in the rain: two lives, three deaths. She turns to the girl, her face a terrible mask. After the final gunshot, it is suddenly very quiet. The only sounds come from the falling rain and wind in the trees.

INT. GUEST HOUSE CABIN - NIGHT

Jeffers stands in the doorway listening to the rain and wind, staring out into the empty courtyard. Only the light from the main house illuminates the empty corral.

UNA (O.S)
Robin? Robin, dear? Are you
alright?

Jeffers turns back to her from the doorway. His face filled with wonder, revelation, fulfillment.

JEFFERS
I need to write.

EXT. HAWK TOWER TURRET - NIGHT

Jeffers' Ghost turns from the turret overlooking the ocean and pulls open the wooden door that leads inside the tower. He steps inside.

INT. HAWK TOWER - NIGHT

Jeffers' Ghost pauses to peer through two ship portholes set into the stonework as the wind howls around the tower.

JEFFERS GHOST (V.O.)
The vision I had that evening in Big Sur was the first of many that had its roots in the stories Una would retell to me. She was my eyes and ears in the real world. In some strange way the lessons my Father taught me, my education in history, literature, mythology, and medicine, and the strange, small music of life on the coast, all combined in my mind to give me the raw material from which I could weave my poems. But I still had to find my own style. Something that would match the rhythm of the ocean, the passing of the stars -- not just a rhyming of words.

INT. LOG CABIN - NIGHT.

Jeffers sits at a crude table, lit by a candle, writing. There is a bottle of wine and a half full glass. He writes.

Takes a sip. Writes more. Drinks a little more. The bottle empties. He picks it up and examines it.

JEFFERS

Not half full, not half empty. Just empty. What's a writer to do?

He looks around the small cabin. Una is asleep in the corner bed. Jeffers looks at what he has written. Pencils in a few more words. Absently picks up his wine glass, remembers that it is empty. Reads what he has written aloud, softly so as to not wake Una.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

(reads)

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, wild
loves that leap over the walls of
nature, the wild fence-vaulter
science, useless intelligence of
far stars, dim knowledge of the
spinning demons that make an atom,
these break, these pierce, these
deify....

He stops reading. Crosses out some words, writes a few more. Reaches for his glass. Realizes again that it is empty.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

Damn it! How can a poet work with
so little sustenance?

He gets up carefully, trying to be quiet and not disturb Una, gets his coat, raids a jar for money, heads toward the door. Pauses to look at his sleeping wife. Blows her a kiss, then quickly exits the cabin.

EXT. LOG CABIN - NIGHT

Jeffers sets off up the dark street, heading for town. His purposeful long stride takes him quickly away from the little cabin. As he disappears into the night he continues to recite the poem he was working on, his voice rising and falling among the trees.

JEFFERS

.... These break, these pierce,
 these deify, praising their God
 shrilly with fierce voices: not in
 man's shape he approves the praise,
 he that walks lightening-naked on
 the Pacific, that laces the suns
 with planets, the heart of the atom
 with electrons: What is humanity in
 this cosmos? For Him, the last
 least trace in the dregs of the
 solution; for itself, the mould to
 break away from, the coal to break
 into fire, the atom to be split.
 (beat) Not bad. Definitely needs
 more sustenance....

INT. LOG CABIN - DAY

Una wakes, stretching, searching the bed for Jeffers's warmth. Nothing there. She sits up, looks around the small cabin. No Jeffers. His writing table is littered with papers and an empty wine bottle and glass. The candle is just guttering out. She gets up, tidies her hair and nightgown, moves to the writing table and examines the papers. Blows the remnants of the candle out.

UNA

Tsk, such a waste of wax. Where is
 that man? Up all night again.

She goes out the front door.

EXT. LOG CABIN PORCH - DAY

Una surveys the forest around the cabin.

UNA

Robin!

EXT. OUTHOUSE - DAY

Una walks around the porch to the outhouse and knocks on the door.

UNA

Robin are you finishing up in
 there?

No answer. She opens the door, goes in.

UNA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Writes all night. Drinks up all the wine. Goes out wandering around the town without so much as a note to me. Might as well live by myself.

Una exits the outhouse. Looks around some more. Furrows her brow.

UNA (CONT'D)

Robin! Well, I'll just fix breakfast for myself if that's the way he's going to be. The poet can eat his own words.

EXT. PORCH - DAY

She stalks back into the house and slams the door behind her. Pans and dishes rattle inside the cabin. A crow calls overhead.

From down the street a rattling, humming noise approaches, growing louder. Una pokes her head out the door, a bowl of oatmeal in her hand, just in time to see Jeffers driving down the street in a Model T car.

Una comes out onto the porch, open mouthed, at a loss for words. Jeffers pulls up to the street outside the cabin, throws the car into neutral, and lounges back in the seat. He smiles up at Una.

JEFFERS

I found a car.

UNA

Where on earth have you been and how did you ever afford to buy a car?

JEFFERS

It's a long story.

UNA

I'm listening!

Jeffers shuts the car off and gets out to stretch. He yawns hugely.

JEFFERS

I walked to Monterey last night. I was in need of some sustenance.

UNA

You mean you ran out of wine?

JEFFERS

Yes. So I walked to Monterey to find some.

Jeffers walks up the stairs to the cabin.

UNA

You walked all the way to Monterey in the dark. To get some wine?

JEFFERS

Whiskey actually. Irish whiskey, because I know you like it. That was all I could find at that hour. Anyway I was walking back and I was tired. That was, oh, 5 or so. There was a gentleman passed out in his car. This car in fact.

UNA

You stole his car?

JEFFERS

What do you take me for? He woke up and asked me to drive him to his home. Over in Del Monte. So I did. Because my feet hurt.

UNA

But how did you get the car?

JEFFERS

I traded the whiskey for it.

UNA

A bottle of whiskey for a car?

JEFFERS

Well, half a bottle. He seemed desperate at the time. So I acquiesced to his request. He gave me the car for the whiskey. Sorry, I would have kept the whiskey for you, but I thought this was a pretty good deal. And now, if you don't mind, I am going to bed. Good night, or good morning, whichever you prefer.

Jeffers gives her a kiss and a hug and walks inside the house. Una stares at the car.

UNA

Shall I kill him or thank him? Is it nobler to exact retribution for worrying me to death, or to be able to drive a car again? That is the question.

EXT. CABIN PORCH - DAY

Jeffers and Una sit on the front porch of the cabin. He writes. She reads. The late afternoon sun illuminates the porch. It's an idyllic scene.

UNA

We should take a walk to the beach. My eyes are tired from reading.

Jeffers looks up from his notebook.

JEFFERS

We could haul up more driftwood for a fire tonight.

Down the street a man walks with an official purposeful stride. He wears half a postal uniform. The rest is of his outfit is Carmel casual. He stops at their stairway.

POSTMAN

You Jeffers?

JEFFERS

Yes.

POSTMAN

Telegram. I came all the way from Monterey. It's marked urgent.

Jeffers sprints down the porch stairs to take the telegram.

POSTMAN (CONT'D)

Sign here please.

Jeffers signs the form, unfolds the telegram.

POSTMAN (CONT'D)

I wish I didn't have to deliver this type of news.

Jeffers reads the telegram as Una comes down the stairs to join him.

UNA

What is it? News from Belle Mere?

Jeffers hands her the telegram. He is clearly upset.

JEFFERS

Father.

She scans the terse telegram.

UNA

Oh my. Robin I'm so sorry.

She hugs him. He sags against her, Una's tiny frame supports her tall husband.

UNA (CONT'D)

Oh Robin, I know this is a grievous loss for you. Do be strong. Think of Belle Mere. She must be devastated. We'll have to go to see her. Thank goodness you got that car. I'll start packing.

She runs up the stairs, stops, runs back down and gives the mailman a coin from her pocket.

UNA (CONT'D)

Thank you, sir, for being so prompt.

She turns and runs back up the stairs and into the cabin -- a determined whirlwind of action. The messenger tips his hat and turns to walk back up the street, looks back at the stricken Jeffers.

POSTMAN

My apologies for the bad news Mr. Jeffers. Life is full of pain and suffering, I'm afraid. But it looks like you have a bit of love, too. Lucky man.

Jeffers watches the bearer of bad news go. As the Postman walks down the tree-lined street filled with afternoon shadows, he turns into Dr. Jeffers, hobbling along with a cane, dressed in black.

JEFFERS

(To himself.)

He planted in my soul

Grave words of elder wisdom, and winged lines of deathless verse, the seeds of living fire....

Una calls from the cabin.

UNA (O.S.)

Robin, do you want to pack your notebooks yourself? I have your clothes packed up already.

Jeffers watches his father's ghost fade into the tree shadows.

JEFFERS

Christ was your lord and captain all your life. He led you through all forms of grief and strife intact. I can hardly anticipate that reverend stage of life, the snow-wreathed honor of extreme age.

UNA (O.S.)

Robin? Are you all right? Do you want me to pack for you?

Jeffers turns from the street, strides up the stairs to the cabin, walks through the door and fades into the cabin.

JEFFERS GHOST (V.O.)

That was the year that I lost much of my guidance in life. Even though my Father had ceased to give advice or demand obedience since I married Una, his spiritual presence was a rudder that steadied me through the buffeting of life's tides. A cloud settled over me that winter. Even though my love for Una was undiminished, the loss of my father was a heavy burden. I still had not written poems of true worth. But Una's strong spirit kept us together, busy, and expectant for what the future held.

EXT. CARMEL VALLEY ROAD - DAY

SUPER: Spring 1915

Una drives the Ford up Carmel Valley. Jeffers is a willing passenger, taking notes as they go.

JEFFERS

Madrone. Tan-oak. Sycamore. Lupin. Iris.

UNA

Blue Jay. Red-wing blackbird.
Turkey Vulture. Golden finches.

JEFFERS

Eucalyptus, redwood, wild lilac,
yucca.

UNA

Crow. Woodpecker. Geese. I'm
pregnant.

JEFFERS

More lilac. Yarrow. What?

UNA

Pregnant. Two months at least.

JEFFERS

Who's the father?

Una punches him in the arm. Goes back to steering.

UNA

You better be.

JEFFERS

I'm speechless. So that puts the
birth... in November? How are you
feeling? Do you want me to drive?
Are you hungry?

UNA

Calm down Robin. I'm barely feeling
it yet. Him. Her.

JEFFERS

We're going to need a bigger house.

Una pulls over to the side of the road, next to a meadow with
the Carmel River meandering through it. In February, the flow
is strong from the rains and the ducks and geese are feeding.

UNA

With the money your Father left us
and the inheritance from your
Uncle, we can afford to buy that
property on the point. We can build
on it after the baby arrives. Let's
buy it now so we can start planning
the house. We can build an English
Cottage of stone and anchor it to
the big Tor on the hilltop.

JEFFERS

The Tor House on Carmel Point. I assume that you have already inquired as to the cost of the lot?

UNA

Two-hundred dollars.

JEFFERS

For one lot?

UNA

Yes, but just think. We should buy several to ensure your privacy. You don't want people building right next door to you do you?

JEFFERS

Several?

UNA

Think of it as an investment. After the war, people will be moving here to raise their families. Land will be more valuable. Maybe \$500 a lot.

JEFFERS

It is a beautiful spot. A stone house you say?

UNA

Yes. At first I thought we might use the local sandstone, like the Mission is made of -- from the Santa Lucia hills. But it wouldn't last long so close to the ocean. However, there are lots of granite boulders on the beach and on the hill. We could build a house of granite. It would last forever.

JEFFERS

A fitting tribute to your determination.

UNA

And to your poetry. Our house will last as long as your poems.

JEFFERS

Oh, if I could be so skillful with my words. Fitting words together as a mason sets stones in mortar.

UNA

Come now, Robin. Your latest work is by far the best you have ever done. You are creating something very new. And, to many people, frightening. When are you going to submit some of your work to be published?

Jeffers sits back and stares at the geese in the river.

JEFFERS

I've been asked to contribute to a collection called "Continent's End". It's an anthology of poets on the west coast. I'm not sure I am ready.

UNA

Nonsense! You are ready. I am certain of it. What is the worse that can happen? They reject them? Then you go on to write more. It is your voice you are finding, not theirs. Besides, you must start trying to get published someday. If you have been invited, that must mean they know and respect your work already. Who is putting it together?

JEFFERS

George Sterling contacted me. He has apparently heard of my work. Wants to see more.

UNA

George Sterling? Really? He's practically the poet laureate of San Francisco. That is wonderful. Why didn't you tell me?

JEFFERS

Why didn't you tell me your were pregnant?

UNA

I wanted to be sure.

JEFFERS

Exactly. I wanted to be sure too.

They sit in silence, watching the wildlife on the river.

UNA

So, are you going to submit your poems?

JEFFERS

Are you going to give birth?

INT. DR. JEFFERS HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Jeffers approaches a closed bedroom door at his Mother's home. He stops at the door, one hand on the knob.

He takes a deep breath, turns the knob, opens the door a crack and peers in.

INT. JEFFERS'S HOUSE, UNA'S ROOM - DAY

Jeffers quietly enters the room, walks slowly to the bed. Peers down at Una laying peacefully in bed next to two bundles: his twin boys!

Annie comes into the room carrying blankets. She comes up behind Jeffers and takes his hand.

ANNIE

Do not worry, Robin. These two are healthy. They were born to be in this world with you -- with Una. I dare say that you will have your hands full with them, but cherish every moment.

JEFFERS

As soon as I am sure they are all well, I will go back to Carmel and find a bigger house while we build our home. That is my mission now. To build a home for them all.

ANNIE

I will make sure they are well taken care of. You can go when you are ready. I imagine a little time alone will give you time to write -- before the responsibilities of being a "father" fall fully on your shoulders.

JEFFERS

In a fortnight perhaps. I'm not sure the Ford will make it up the coast in the mid-winter storms. I'll wait for a clear week.

The twins stir and gurgle. Una turns in her deep sleep.

EXT. THE OLD COAST ROAD SOUTH OF CARMEL - LATE DAY

Jeffers drives alone as the Ford chugs up the coast road. He revs the motor, trying to make a grade on the rough road. The car makes it to the top of the hill and he pauses to survey his progress. Up ahead is a narrow bridge crossing Mal Paso Creek.

JEFFERS

(addressing the car)

OK Emily, a bit further to go and you can rest for the night. We are almost home.

Jeffers pats the car's dashboard. He gives it some gas and Emily chugs on over the small bridge. Just past the other side, she makes a disconcerting sound -- and dies. Jeffers gets out and cranks the starter in front of the car a few vigorous times. Nothing. He cranks the starter a few more time. It starts to rain.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

Great. What next?

The sound of falling rocks comes from underneath the bridge. Jeffers startles, reaches under the front seat and extracts his pistol. He looks around cautiously.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

Cougars? Coyotes? Just what I need.

Jeffers steps cautiously around the anchor of the bridge, cocks the pistol, peers down into the gloom.

In the darkness under the bridge, a woman stands, sheltering from the night and rain. She looks up at Jeffers, fearful of him and his pistol. She is a beautiful Spanish-Indian woman, wrapped in a heavy blanket against the chill of the winter day.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

Oh! Pardon me.

He lowers the pistol, uncocks it, and stuffs it into his coat pocket.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

I didn't mean to frighten you.
Emily, that's my car, doesn't seem
to want to take me home tonight. It
looks like it will be a wet one.
Can I share the bridge with you?

The woman nods and steps back into the shadows. Leaning down, she uncovers the beginnings of a fire she had just started. She fans it with her hands and a few flames flicker up. Keeping one eye on Jeffers as he climbs down under the bridge, she adds more sticks to the fire. The wind starts to blow harder and the rain grows heavier.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

Are you all alone here?

Still eyeing him cautiously, she nods slightly, not sure how safe she is. She takes out a large knife and begins hacking some dry branches up into kindling. Jeffers eyes the woman and the knife.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

I see you know what you are doing.
Have no fear of me. I have some
food in the car, I'll bring it down
if I can share your fire.

Again, she nods in agreement.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

Do you understand English?

Again, she nods.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

Hmm. I sense a language barrier. I
doubt my German or Latin will be of
much use. I'll be right back.

Jeffers scrambles back up the river bank.

He returns with a pack and a blanket. The short excursion has left his coat soaked by the storm. He takes it off, hangs it on a dead tree branch to dry.

From the pack he takes some food, hands some to the woman, who is carefully keeping the fire between them. Jeffers squats on the other side, warming himself and munching on some cheese and bread. He gazes at the woman.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

Usually I am the one with few
words, but you have me beat.

He spreads his blanket out on the ground and relaxes on it. The wind blows, the creek flows and begins to rise, the fire crackles.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

Do you know of the white redwood tree a few miles from here?

The woman returns his gaze, straight into his eyes -- deep, dark brown boring into sea-grey blue.

MAL PASO WOMAN

It is sacred.

JEFFERS

Ah, so we do have a common language.

MAL PASO WOMAN

That which is born from fire must be respected.

JEFFERS

Much is born of fire. The granite of the mountains. The quartz sands of the beach. Spring flowers after an autumn wildfire. Is all that sacred too?

MAL PASO WOMAN

All of the world is sacred. But people do not believe it. They look beyond the world for salvation, not to the world around them.

JEFFERS

Perhaps it is because death haunts them. Children die at birth. Fathers pass on before their time. Disease and famine stalk the lands. War is surging through the world. Tragedy is all around us.

The woman adds wood to the fire. It blazes up under the dark bridge. Shadows play above and around them -- dancers in the dark.

MAL PASO WOMAN

There is no tragedy. The world does not care about you or I.

JEFFERS

But men of my age do not know what
bed they will lie in tomorrow. A
birth in a ship heading to Europe.
A bullet-ridden tent in France. A
hospital in Brittany. A pine box.

MAL PASO WOMAN

Then you are afraid of the war you create?

JEFFERS

I am afraid of the fools who
believe they are in power. They are
killing the future.

MAL PASO WOMAN

They cannot do the world any harm.

JEFFERS

But they will rain down horror on
millions of people.

MAL PASO WOMAN

On you? On your family?

JEFFERS

Why should we be spared?

MAL PASO WOMAN

By imagining the horrors that are happening to others, you
can keep them away from yourself and your family.

JEFFERS

From my family -- perhaps. From
myself, I do not know. I live those
horrors in my mind. I see them by
day and night. It is if one eye
sees the beauty of the world, while
the other sees the demons that man
has unleashed. If it is an
illusion, it is a very real one.

The wind shifts and blows under the bridge, pelting Jeffers with a gust of rain. The fire gutters in the wind and sparks fly toward the woman. They both shift their positions around the fire: she towards him -- he towards her. Jeffers grabs the blanket he was laying on and throws it around them both, shielding them from the rain and wind. It is a sudden and protective move, without thought to the consequences.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

It is cold. You let me share your
bridge and your fire, you can share
my blanket and wine.

Jeffers drags his pack over and pulls out a flask of wine. Opens it, offers her a drink. She takes the flask and sips. Hands it back to Jeffers. Another gust of wind and rain blow under the bridge.

MAL PASO WOMAN

It will take more than that to keep us warm tonight. The west wind turns colder.

JEFFERS

Then let us share what warmth we
have.

Jeffers and the woman embrace under the blanket as the storm rages outside.

JEFFERS' GHOST (V.O.)

Through that stormy night I tested
the bounds of my morals. That
strange woman taught me the one
thing that Una had not, could not.
That I was free to live my life any
way I wanted. But by morning, after
the storms of winter and of passion
had passed, what I found was that I
was still the same person. Free
yes, but bound to my poems, to my
family, and to this land that had
changed me forever.

EXT. TRETAWAY HOUSE - DAY

Jeffers's hand is on the door knob to their new house in Carmel. He is not going in, he is holding it shut from the outside. There is a sound of pottery shattering against the door, coming from the inside.

UNA (O.S.)

I won't have it! Who do you think you are? You're supposed to be a poet, not a Don Juan!

Another crash comes from the other side of the door.

JEFFERS

Una dear. It was only one time. We were freezing.

The door shakes and rattles from Una trying to open the door from the inside. Jeffers continues to hold it closed.

UNA (O.S.)

I don't care if the coyotes were eating you! You were in the arms of another woman while I was nursing your two sons. Didn't you think that would bother me?

JEFFERS

I did not think. I acted.

INT. TRETAWAY HOUSE - DAY

Una is on the other side of the door, furious, her Irish temper in full display. She twists and pushes on the door knob again, trying to get at her husband.

UNA

You acted? Acted like a fool!

She grabs another dish from the table. Flings it at the door. Watches in satisfaction as it smashes with a resounding crash.

A wailing of babies comes from the back of the house. She turns and instinctively goes to her children. The two twins are in their matching cribs, side by side. Una coos to them. Picks up DONNAN who is crying the most. Nudges GARTH'S crib with her hip to set it rocking.

UNA (CONT'D)

Sorry, so sorry by dears. Mommy made too much noise. Silly Mommy.

Una looks back at the front door, which cracks open enough so that Jeffers can peer in at the sudden silence. Una turns back and gives her full attention to comforting the twins.

Jeffers opens the door and comes in quietly. Walks up warily behind Una. Stands behind her, gently holds her shoulders.

JEFFERS

I will never, ever betray you. You and the boys are the most important people in the world to me.

Una continues to rock the children. She looks peaceful compared to her rage a few moments ago.

UNA

You are fortunate that the children are here.

JEFFERS

Yes, we are fortunate. I doubly so for you.

Una turns to Jeffers and gives Donnan to him to hold. She picks up Garth and walks out to the porch to the afternoon sun.

EXT. TRETAWAY HOUSE PORCH - DAY

Una and Jeffers hold their children as they gaze out towards the ocean and the western sun.

UNA

You are writing?

JEFFERS

I have a new idea. It's about a family living on the edge of the world. Some of them are mad already, some will be mad before the story ends. It is about how humanity's inward focus drives people to destruction.

UNA

What is it called?

JEFFERS

Tamar. After the main character. A woman of great power. And madness. Cursed by her family's past, doomed to repeat her father's sins of incest. Haunted by the ghost of her mother.

UNA

A comedy then? That should sell well.

JEFFERS

I am sure the critics will be amused.

Una sits down on a rocker, cooing to Donnan. Jeffers stands and rocks back and forth with Garth.

UNA

I want to start building Tor House. I have a contractor in mind, but I can't be watching over them every minute with the twins to take care of.

JEFFERS

What if I help build the house? I can work with them, learn how to set stone. Then if we want to build any additions, I can do it myself.

UNA

When will you write?

JEFFERS

I'll get up early and write. By the time the workman arrive on the site I'll have written what I can for the day, and then I can go to help. I can always write at night.

UNA

Stonework is hard. Do you think you will have the energy for both?

JEFFERS

If you can manage to take care of these two, I can do double duty as well. Besides, the sooner the house is finished, the sooner we'll have our privacy. And the more writing I can accomplish.

UNA

And by the end of the day I can be assured that you will be too tired to dally with any other woman.

JEFFERS

Una. Never again. I promise.

UNA

I expect you to keep it.

EXT. TOR HOUSE POINT - DAY

A wagon comes along the road that leads from town to the point. Several MEN ride in it with their tools of their trade, buckets, wheelbarrows, bags of cement -- ready for the day's work.

Appearing out of the morning fog Jeffers strides with a steady walk, carrying a very large boulder of granite. He tosses it down on a pile of equally large stones.

MR. MURPHY, the stonemason, calls down to Jeffers from atop the wagon.

MR. MURPHY

'Morning Mr. Jeffers. You're up early. Can't wait to haul those rocks today?

JEFFERS

Mr. Murphy! Good morning to you, too. I was up early anyway, thought I'd get a head start so you'd have some material to work with.

Jeffers nods to the pile of granite boulders next to the tor.

MR. MURPHY

I'm impressed, Mr. Jeffers. I guess you're anxious to finish the house.

JEFFERS

Una is very anxious.

MR. MURPHY

Well then we best not disappoint her. C'mon boys, we got a house to build for Mrs. Jeffers.

SERIES OF SHOTS: THE BUILDING OF TOR HOUSE

Jeffers carries more boulders up from the beach below the house.

The crew lays foundation stones.

Jeffers rolls larger stones up a wooden ramp.

The fireplace hearth is laid.

Jeffers carries an impressive boulder up the hill, while a couple of the stone masons look on in wonder.

The walls of the house grow higher -- the chimney rises in the middle.

A hawk perches on the top of the chimney.

Jeffers sits on the tor, writing in a notebook as the sun sets.

Jeffers struggles up the bank with two large stones, one nestled in each arm.

Una directs the workman as they start the second level.

Jeffers mixes mortar in a wheelbarrow.

Jeffers looks out over the ocean, writes in a notebook. He looks up from his perch and sees Una running a big cow off the property, the house behind her.

Jeffers sets stones in mortar, under the direction of Mr. Murphy.

EXT. TOR HOUSE - DAY

Una drives a wagon up to the building site with a baby grand piano in the back of the wagon, the twins strapped in next to her. Jeffers and the workmen come up to see her prize.

UNA

Well? What do you think?

JEFFERS

A piano? Where did you find that?

UNA

The Klapps were getting rid of it. Getting a bigger one. They were kind enough to give it to us. Now all we have to do is get it in the house.

Jeffers looks at the doorway to the house, looks at the piano, looks at the doorway.

JEFFERS

It won't fit.

UNA

Sure it will. The roof and second floor aren't on yet. We'll hoist it up over the wall and into the living room.

Mr. Murphy looks at the piano and whistles.

MR. MURPHY

Wow.

UNA

It's perfect. Just think, I can play the piano for us in the evenings. We'll teach the children an appreciation of Irish music. Maybe even you Robin.

JEFFERS

Would have been a lot easier a week ago -- before we finished the west wall.

UNA

We will make it work.

INT. TOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Una plays an Irish tune at the baby grand piano, just like she did for Jeffers many years ago when they first met. Jeffers sits entranced next to her on a rough bench. A small fire glows in the fireplace. The twins are asleep in a little box covered with blankets.

EXT. TOR HOUSE - EVENING

A hawk flies over the point in the evening sky.

From above, the hawk sees the family inside Tor House. There is no second floor and no roof.

JEFFERS' GHOST (V.O.)

As I built our house of stone, my hands and mind became familiar with the long slow life of the granite, the quick flight of the hawks, and the surge of the sea.

The hawk sees faint fires bloom around the house and the old familiar Indian spirits feast and dance in time with the unlikely Irish music accompaniment.

JEFFERS' GHOST (V.O.)

Around our home, the soil is thick with shells. At night we saw the tide-rock feasts of a dead people.

(MORE)

JEFFERS' GHOST (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Here the granite flanks are scarred
with ancient fire, the ghosts of
the tribe crouch in the night
beside the ghosts of fires. Amid
all this history, we were making a
happy life for ourselves.

EXT. HAWK TOWER - NIGHT

The hand of Jeffers' Ghost turns the latch on the door to Una's Room in the tower. The door opens inward and he steps inside.

INT. UNA'S ROOM - NIGHT

As Jeffers' Ghost enters the room, a fire ignites in the fireplace. The candles light in their sconces. The room is infused with a warm glow. The mournful sounds of an Irish ballad emanate from the harmonium. Jeffers' Ghost looks around the wood-paneled room. A shape takes form at the harmonium -- it is Una playing her favorite Irish ballad.

JEFFERS' GHOST

My dear Una, you were more
beautiful than a hawk flying; you
were faithful and a lion heart. Now
you are earth and air.

Una turns from the harmonium and smiles knowingly at her husband.

UNA'S GHOST

Did you write that after I left?

JEFFERS' GHOST

Yes. It was at the beginning of my
last work. About a man named
Hungerfield who fought with death
and won, only to see his victory
turn to loss and horror.

UNA'S GHOST

Another comedy....

Una goes back to playing the harmonium.

JEFFERS' GHOST

You know me so well. What is it
like? After this, I mean.

UNA'S GHOST

You will find out soon.

JEFFERS' GHOST

Did you go on like this?

UNA'S GHOST

We all do -- for a time -- as we remember who we really are. Then it is like you wrote: "When you are dead you become part of peace, let no man dream more of death -- there is neither sight, nor hearing, nor any wonder; You become part of peace, part of the sacred beauty, but having no part; as if a flute player should make beauty but hear none, being deaf and senseless." How did you know that?

Jeffers shrugs and sits on the daybed, his tall frame still young, but hunched from exhaustion.

JEFFERS' GHOST

From my father. From the stones I handled to make this tower. From this land. From you. There are many sources, but how they all came together is a mystery. Una, are you really here?

Una gets up from the harmonium and sits next to Jeffers, strokes his hair, his cheek.

UNA'S GHOST

No dearest. I am but a memory.

Una starts to fade, blending with the firelight and shadows.

JEFFERS' GHOST

No! Please don't go. I need you. Of all times, I need you now!

UNA'S GHOST

But I already told you. I am only a memory. So I am always with you. Forever. Just as you will be always be with those who you leave behind. That's the way it is.

JEFFERS' GHOST

But I miss you so.

UNA'S GHOST

You can't miss someone who is always with you.

(MORE)

UNA'S GHOST (CONT'D)

Before this night is through you
will understand. Dawn is coming.

Jeffers looks down in despair. Una reaches out and tips his
head up to look at her.

UNA'S GHOST (CONT'D)

Look to the dawn. You will see. I
promise you my love. You will not
be a man apart from the world for
much longer. But you still have
much to remember. Be patient.

She fades even more.

UNA'S GHOST (CONT'D)

And remember that I am with you.

Una is gone. The candles and fire flicker and slowly dim out.
Jeffers sits alone in the near darkness.

JEFFERS' GHOST

I built this tower for you, Una. I
built this room because you wanted
it. I thought you would be here
long after I died. Now you are gone
again -- and I am alone. What hell
is this? You said I have much to
remember. Very well then, let me
remember building this tower stone
by stone. Let me remember writing
Tamar, and Roan Stallion, and
Cawdor -- all while I worked with
these stones and you brought me
visions and raised our children.
Let me remember.

EXT. TOR HOUSE - DAY

Hawk Tower rises up from the point. Jeffers gathers stones
for the third tier. The twins (9) work around the yard,
chasing chickens and adding smaller stones to their Dad's
pile of building granite. Una comes out of the house and
tosses scraps to some chickens pecking in the garden. She has
a letter in her hand.

UNA

Robin! Did you see this letter from
George Sterling?

Jeffers sets another stone in the pile.

JEFFERS

What does he have to say?

UNA

Well it's quite extraordinary. He's given "Tamar" and "Tower Beyond Tragedy" to several east coast critics and they appear to love it. One review is being published in next month's New York Herald and then one in The Nation.

JEFFERS

Really?

Jeffers sets another stone.

UNA

Robin, don't you see the significance of this? You are going to be famous.

Jeffers pauses in his rock setting. Stretches and looks at his wife. He holds up a rough cube of granite.

JEFFERS

You see this? I will fit this stone into your tower soon. It will be there for hundreds of years. Perhaps a thousand if I build it right. But what of my poetry? Will anyone remember it in ten years? In 50? What will people know of my work in the next century? Perhaps they will walk by this point and the ocean and see this tower and say, "What an odd house. Who do you suppose built it? Who lived there?" And they will walk on, littering the beach with their papers and filth, heedless to what I wrote or built. We will be long gone. Who will care about my words?

UNA

Then why do you write? Why do you build?

JEFFERS

For you dear. Only for you.

UNA

Robinson Jeffers! I am your wife and the mother of your children.

(MORE)

UNA (CONT'D)

But I am not your only audience.
There are many people in the world
who will read your work and be
touched by it. Changed by it. You
must not limit your universe to me.

JEFFERS

But you and our children are the
only people I care about.

UNA

That may be true today. But your
children will grow up and leave
home. And I may not outlive you,
seeing how cantankerous you are
becoming. So you had better
cultivate your audience. They will
outlive all of us, and make you
more than a mere stone mason of Tor
House.

JEFFERS

I would be happy to be a mere stone
mason.

UNA

Well you won't be able to support
us all that way. Thank god that
someone is promoting your work,
because it appears you have no
interest in doing so. I have not
abandoned all hope of having a
successful husband, and I will damn
sure see to it that you don't
either!

Jeffers sits down at the side of the tower. Weighs the
granite in his hands, takes strength from its solidness.

JEFFERS

My dear Una, success will not make
us happy. It will only bring
attention to our little family here
in Carmel. Our gate will be lined
with busybodies. I know you have
given up your old friends to be
with me here and support my work,
but if God has been good enough to
create a poet then people should
listen to him, but also, for God's
sake, let him alone until he is
dead; no prizes, no ceremonies.
Those kill the man.

(MORE)

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

A poet is one who listens to nature and his own heart; and if the noise of the world grows up around him, and if he is tough enough, he can shake off his enemies, but not his friends.

UNA

Don't be selfish. If you can sell your poetry, if people are willing to buy your books, stage your poems, you need to take advantage of that for your family's sake. You must be open to earning more, if God sees fit to make your words resonate with the people of America. I will shield you from those you deplore, but you must give me a purpose in order to be your protector as well as your muse.

JEFFERS

Very well. What more do you want me to do? Shout my poetry from the top of Hawk Tower, as if it was a stage?

UNA

Nonsense. I will take care of all the correspondence with the publishers. You need to edit your manuscripts for publication. No one else can do that. And write! I will take care of the rest.

Una turns to go back into the house.

UNA (CONT'D)

I'll start by writing a letter to Mr. Sterling to thank him for helping you. I'll tell him about your next work.... What are you calling it again?

JEFFERS

"The Women of Point Sur." But how can you tell him about it when I have not even written it yet?

UNA

I'll just say that if he liked Tamar, he will be amazed by your next work.

(MORE)

UNA (CONT'D)

I'll make it sound great. Not to worry. You are in good hands.

Una strides into the house, leaving Jeffers outside with his stone work.

He tosses the granite stone he was holding back into the pile.

The fog is drifting in quickly off the ocean, billowing over the hill and the tor, absorbing the sunlight.

From the west a human shape approaches from the sea. It is a YOUNG WOMAN (20), Tamar, with very white skin, and hair like burnished metal. She stops a few feet from Jeffers.

TAMAR

I have had my desire fulfilled -- and destroyed -- by you.

JEFFERS

Tamar, you still haunt me, as is your right. I accept your pain because it was my invention.

The fog flows around and through Tamar, making her body alternately distinct and spectral.

TAMAR

You made me love my own brother. Lose his baby to the wild ghosts of the coast. Destroy my entire family in fire. And for what?

JEFFERS

As an example -- a lesson of what happens when people dwell too deeply on themselves. Had you looked outward, away from yourself, your brother, your incestuous past, you would have been a different heroine.

TAMAR

You mean, had you made me live a nobler life? It was your will, not mine that made my life a tragedy. You created the terror of Tamar.

JEFFERS

Your suffering is mine to bare.

TAMAR

How much longer can you weave these spells? How many more spirits can you create and torture for your lessons?

JEFFERS

Until all my strength is used up.
Until my own ghost haunts this granite hill. Then perhaps I will be quits with you and all the rest I create.

The fog-spirit of Tamar hangs her head. The wind blows the shape of Tamar past Jeffers, her fog image shredding. Her last words blend with the wind.

TAMAR

Our suffering is upon your head.
Someday your ghost will know this pain you have created.

Jeffers stands up from the tor, the sea-fog swirling around him, and goes into the back door of Tor House.

Seen through the windows, Jeffers lights the lamps in the house, keeping the night away. Outside, the fog continues to swirl and thicken around the stone house.

EXT. TOR HOUSE - DAY

Jeffers stands on the scaffolding surrounding the tower, cementing in a carved hawk's head into the third story of the tower.

Una comes out of the house waving a bunch of letters. She calls up to Jeffers to get his attention. He is 20 feet above her on the tower.

UNA

Robin, I just picked up these letters from the post office. Listen to these reviews of your book! From the Denver News. "Jeffers is that rarest of finds, a real poet, a man with something to say and with his own instrument."

Jeffers continues to work on the hawk's head. Una starts climbing the stairs to the tower.

UNA (CONT'D)

And Time Magazine! "Now Jeffers is heard, unmistakably powerful, individual, a true racial poet chanting on his high Pacific headland."

JEFFERS

A racial poet! What does that mean? Chanting? Please, no more!

Una continues climbing the stairs of the tower as she reads.

UNA

Oh yes, there's more. The American Monthly: "Tamar is an amazing book, full of strange passion and extraordinary daring."

Una reaches the level that Jeffers is working on. She comes up next to him -- her on the tower, he on the scaffolding -- as he continues to mortar pieces of tile and stone into the wall around the hawk's head.

UNA (CONT'D)

And here -- perhaps the best for last -- from the Los Angeles Times: "The poetry of Robinson Jeffers is written with so much fire and intensity, is so new and daring and so unmistakably a spark struck from the flint of genius, that no one but a poet can hope to do justice to it. But it is fitting that some notice be taken here, for Robinson Jeffers is certainly a major poet, and one of the greatest America has yet produced." -- Oh Robin I am so proud!

Una hugs Jeffers, ignoring his mortar-muddied hands. He clasps her to keep his balance on the scaffolding, leaving big muddy hand prints on the back of her dress. She is so ecstatic that she does not even notice.

UNA (CONT'D)

Do you know what this means? These papers cover the whole country. With reviews like these, people will certainly buy your book.

JEFFERS

But will they read it?

Jeffers turns to set another stone around the hawk. Una whacks him with the sheaf of letters.

UNA

Always the pessimist! Robin, these experts, these critics, they respect -- no they love your work. Can't you take that for what it is worth? Build on it. Use it to raise more poems, just as you use the granite to raise this tower. These people are the building stones of your career. And they are giving them to you freely. Use them well. Do not scorn them.

Jeffers points to the hawk's head he has been working on.

JEFFERS

This hawk, this symbol of freedom, will look out over our house for years to come. It will not care about our fame and fortune, only that we live a life well and fairly.

UNA

Damn-it Robin, I did not ask you to build an ivory tower. You are not creating a fortress in which you can hide from the world. You are building a home to give us an anchor hold to return to, so we can take risks, and explore the world.

JEFFERS

You are asking me to expose myself to the world. I will do that -- for you. But do not expect me to revel in it.

Jeffers turns back to his stonework, intent on securing the hawk into the tower.

UNA

That is all I can ask.

Una walks back down the stairs to the tower.

UNA (CONT'D)

Don't forget, we are having dinner at the Clapps tonight.

(MORE)

UNA (CONT'D)

Jimmy Hopper will be there, he just came back from Europe and should have interesting news about the war. You should finish your stonework early and get dressed for dinner. I can't wait to show them your reviews. They will be so excited for you.

Una goes into the house.

Above the tower, a red-tailed hawk circles, lets out a high scree! Jeffers tracks the hawk's passage, then looks back to the hawk captured in stone before him -- contemplates its visage looking back at him, carefully smooths the mortar around the stonework with his fingers.

JEFFERS

This gray rock, standing tall on the headland, where the sea wind lets no trees grow, earthquake proved, and signatored by ages of storms: on its peak a falcon has perched.

Jeffers finishes the mortar around the hawk, catches hold of a rope attached to the tower and repels down to the ground. He dusts off his hands and heads to the house.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

An ivory tower? Humph! Finish early? Why not? Dress for dinner? What to wear?

Jeffers goes into the house still muttering. The hawk flies over the tower again, letting out a long "screeee". Jeffers pokes his head out of the door to follow the hawk as it plunges down to snare a ground squirrel.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

Dinner time! What are you wearing tonight?

INT. TOR HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Una works at the kitchen stove, preparing the morning oatmeal and cereal. Jeffers wrangles the 10-year-old twins into their seats at the table. Breakfast is set, coffee poured, a minute of silence falls as the family breaks their fast. Then Una begins the day.

UNA

I am taking the boys into Monterey to buy groceries, get them a haircut, and on the way back stop at the post office to pick up the mail. I should be back in a few hours. You don't need the car today do you? Make sure you write down what you want me to tell your publisher about your next book. They are expecting a reply this week. I will write the letter for you and mail it tomorrow. You are going to finish on time aren't you? The publisher will be so disappointed if you are late. They said there is already a demand for the book and it is not even printed yet. Can you imagine that?

JEFFERS

No I cannot. And yes it will be done, I suppose, "on-time".

UNA

How is it coming? The Women at Point Sur?

JEFFERS

It is a difficult and treacherous work. I have almost given up on it several times, but on each occasion, they return to help me.

UNA

They?

Jeffers looks up from his breakfast.

JEFFERS

The ones I write about. The women of Point Sur.

UNA

They help you write?

JEFFERS

They insist on being heard. It is as if, once I create them, they demand to be finished -- no matter how horrible an end they may meet, they hate a life in limbo even worse.

GARTH
Father sees them. Don't you Father?

DONNAN
He talks with them in the tower.

GARTH
And by the sea.

JEFFERS
You two miss nothing.

UNA
Apparently I do.

Testily, Una gets up and clears the breakfast dishes.

UNA (CONT'D)
Off to work you go Robin. Writing
time. Let the women have their way
with you.

JEFFERS
Una, it's all in my head you know.

UNA
I certainly hope so.

She finishes with the dishes as Jeffers heads upstairs to the
bedroom/study.

UNA (CONT'D)
Robin.

JEFFERS
Yes my falcon?

UNA
Write well. Write true.

JEFFERS
For you, I will do my best.

He continues up the small stairway.

Una hears his chair scrape on the floor above as Jeffers
settles into his writing desk. Una gets the twins ready for
the day's errands.

UNA
My dears, do you really hear your
Father speaking to ghosts?

The twins look at each other, hesitant now that they may have let out a secret.

GARTH

Sometimes.

DONNAN

He speaks with the shadows in the tower.

GARTH

And the mists on the beach. And they talk back!

DONNAN

Sometimes they seem very angry. Why are they angry with Father?

Una twists her long braided hair around her head, looking worried.

UNA

I can only imagine. Come on now, we have much to do. Wash up and we'll be on our way.

INT. TOR HOUSE - WRITING DESK - DAY

Jeffers sits at his writing desk watching through the window as Una motors away.

He turns back to the paper in front of him. He scratches out a line, makes a notation in the margin, gets up and paces the room, looks out the other window to the ocean below, goes back to his desk, sits down, ponders his pencil. Pulls out a pen knife and works at the tip of the pencil until it is sharp. Reads what he has written.

IN JEFFERS' MIND: EXT. TOR HOUSE - DAY

JEFFERS (V.O.)

My friend from Asia has powers and magic....

Dissolve to: An EAST INDIAN MYSTIC (40) examines a young eucalyptus leaf. The curled blue leaf morphs into a blue wave rolling towards the shore, breaking upon the rocks.

JEFFERS (V.O.)

.... he plucks a blue leaf from the young blue gum and gazing upon it, gathering and quieting the God in his mind, creates an ocean more real than the ocean, the salt, the actual appalling presence, the power of the waters. He believes that nothing is real except as we make it.

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN SHORELINE - DAY

A pelican flies over the boundary between land and ocean. Cliffs plunge to meet the sea; rocks jut up among the waves; sun sparkles off the ocean surface like bright jewels.

JEFFERS (V.O.)

I, humbler, have found in my blood bred west of the Caucasus, a harder mysticism. I think that the ocean in the bone vault is only the bone vault's ocean: out there is the ocean; the water is water, the cliff is the rock, come shocks and flashes of reality.

In the distance, coming closer with the Pelican's flight, Jeffers stands on a cliff looking west. Close up, his eyes reflects the ocean's beauty. His eyes close.

RETURN TO SCENE. INT. TOR HOUSE - DAY

Jeffers slowly scribes words on the paper before him.

JEFFERS (V.O.)

The mind passes, the eye closes, the spirit is a passage; the beauty of things was born before eyes and sufficient to itself; the heart-breaking beauty will remain when there is no heart to break for it.

Jeffers looks up from the paper. His face looks suddenly older. He rubs his eyes, runs his hands through his hair. He takes out a pouch and rolls a cigarette, lights it. Looks out the window as Una drives back into the yard and starts unloading the car.

INT. TOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Una sits at her desk reading the pile of correspondence and the reviews of Jeffers's new books. She sorts, "tsks", sorts some more. Jeffers comes down the stairs from their bedroom.

UNA

Well, the reviews are coming in and it seems some of your former admirers have mixed feelings for your new works.

Jeffers sits down in the living room next to the fire and waits patiently for Una's selected reading. He rolls and lights a cigarette while she is talking. She reads from her notes and letters on her desk.

UNA (CONT'D)

"...his work has a queer dragging monotony that suggests muttering in the corner rather than speaking right out. Moreover, his form is so loose that it is difficult to recognize it as poetry. Nevertheless, he has a real quality that would reward those who have the patience to read him through. He has the power of investing ordinary emotions and events with significance. The work may not be poetry, but there is no doubt of its significance."

Una looks at Jeffers who sits and smokes, contentedly looking out the window at the sea.

UNA (CONT'D)

"...the previous work of Jeffers has worn savagery like an angry brand on its forehead. In this most recent book, the fierceness is still present, but self-contained and exalted. It is as if he set out to kill whatever was mean, sapless, and ugly in its stupid ease, and then retreated to a cave for a season, to emerge armed with peace. The man has not changed, except to grow in wisdom...his fiery energies have not diminished, rather they burn with a less petulant flame."

Jeffers gets up and pokes the fire, adds another log. He stares into the flames as Una picks up another review.

A slow, powerful, rhythmic knocking at the front door interrupts Una. Una straightens her hair and then the papers on her desk.

Jeffers gets up from the fire and opens the front door. A large, male American Indian, TONY LUHAN (45) fills the doorway. The long black braids of his hair hang down to his waist. A high western-style hat shades his eyes. He stands silently.

A small woman, MABEL DODGE LUHAN (49), peers through the doorway around Tony and pushes him aside.

MABEL DODGE LUHAN

Tony, you are taking up the entire doorway! Let me by, they'll think we're invaders or somebody dreadful.

Mabel pushes past her American Indian husband.

Una comes to the door to see who dares to interrupt their morning.

MABEL

Hello! I'm Mabel Dodge Luhan. And this is Tony Luhan my husband. We're staying just around the corner in the Beckwith House. The Steffens said they would introduce us, but how time flies, and I was afraid we would leave and never meet you, so I thought we'd come over and introduce ourselves. I have so longed to meet you both. I am a great admirer of Mr. Jeffers work. Why just last month I was talking with D.H. Lawrence about your Tamar. He thought it was one of the best works he's read in ages.

Mabel crosses the threshold and steps into the house.

Una backs up a little, tries to frame her thoughts amidst the torrent of words.

Tony stands at the doorway, guarding it for a quick escape if they are not welcome.

MABEL (CONT'D)

And I said I simply must go to Carmel to meet you. We live in Taos. You know, in New Mexico, it's a wonderful place, full of natural beauty, like here but different. Very different. Well, after Lorenzo left -- that's what I call D.H. -- I decided that I just must take the bull by the horns and come all the way to the west coast and meet with you. I would so like you to come to my home so you could see the land yourself. You've never been there have you? I didn't think so. Well, I thought that someone who writes so beautifully about the coast could absolutely do wonders for my home. It really needs a voice to speak for it. Although it speaks volumes to me, and to the natives, like Tony, the land needs an artist to give it a voice. I've had Ansel Adams photograph it and Georgia O'Keefe paint it, and I thought Lorenzo could reveal the true soul of the land in verse, but he couldn't, so that's why I thought of you Robinson Jeffers. You must come. Say you will.

Jeffers stands frozen, at a complete loss for words.

MABEL (CONT'D)

Oh, I almost forgot, here are some gifts I brought, to make up for my uninvited visit. Here, I've brought a first edition of Yates for you Una - I know you love Yates. And Robin, a bottle of Scotch. For inspiration. I do hope you will forgive me, I'm afraid I'm very much use to getting my own way. I know, I'm terrible, everyone tells me so, but they still remain my friends.

Tony's facial expression says it all.

Mabel smiles warmly. Una takes the book. Opens it tenderly. It is just the right gift for her. Jeffers cradles the bottle of Scotch.

UNA

I don't know what to say.

MABEL

Why, say you'll come visit me of course.

Tony steps forward into the room. Mabel turns to him.

MABEL (CONT'D)

Oh, and Tony has something for you Robin.

Tony opens a leather pouch and extracts a long brown and black feather.

TONY

From one chief to another chief.

MABEL

An eagle feather. From the Taos desert. Very powerful.

Jeffers takes the feather. He cradles it carefully along with the bottle.

JEFFERS

We will treasure these gifts.

UNA

Please come in and sit by the fire. Let's discuss your proposal a little more. I am afraid you have caught us quite off guard.

They all sit by the fire. Tony tries to squeeze into a chair that is too small for him, gives up and sits cross-legged on the rug. Mabel settles into the most comfortable chair.

UNA (CONT'D)

And I am afraid the desert is really not, how should I say it, Robin's environment.

MABEL

Yes, I know it is very different from your cold and damp coast here, but there are still many marvelous natural wonders to see and write about. And my house is busy with interesting guests, whom I am sure you would enjoy the company of, Una. You are rather isolated here.

(MORE)

MABEL (CONT'D)

Don't you ever miss the social life of Los Angeles?

UNA

Sometimes. But Robin's writing is the center of our lives. Without that, well...

MABEL

Indeed, but everyone needs a change of scenery. Of people.

UNA

We love it here on the coast -- even though it seems cold to you, we're not use to the heat. Even when I was in LA, it was often too hot. Here is always seems right. Even in the fog.

JEFFERS

Traveling can be inspiring, but here is where I write. I have much to do this year. And I need to finish building the dining room.

MABEL

Of course, I understand. This is your home. But come summer, you should treat yourself to a break. A vacation, if you will. Come to my ranch. You will have your own private house. Maids. Cooks. Parties for you to enjoy Una. I have fascinating guests from all over the world. Artists. Politicians. Actors. And privacy for you Robin, so you can write. Tony can take the boys riding, show them the mountains, the desert. They will thrive there. In Taos, there is something for each of you, I promise.

UNA

Well that does sound ideal. Robin, perhaps we can think about it?

MABEL

Now, now, don't say yes or no now. The offer stands. But I am sure you will not regret coming. Let's say June? Here is my secretary's contact information.

(MORE)

MABEL (CONT'D)

You call him when you are ready and he will make all the arrangements.

Mabel hands Una a card as she gets up to go. Tony stands beside her.

TONY

Mabel is right. You should see my country. It is very beautiful. As beautiful as your coast. You would honor us by being our guests.

MABEL

See, even Tony implores you. You must come. But enough, I am sure you want to discuss it alone. We are here through the month. I am sure we will be seeing you again. Enjoy the book and the Scotch. Come Tony, we've bothered them enough for one day.

Mabel and Tony head towards the door.

UNA

We will think about it.

JEFFERS

Thank you.

MABEL

(over her shoulder)

Oh, believe me, it is my pleasure to be able to entertain and support real artists. See you soon.

Mabel and Tony exit the house and close the door behind them. Una and Jeffers stare at the closed door.

UNA

Well, that was....unexpected.

JEFFERS

Yes. Thank goodness she wasn't very persistent.

Una laughs.

UNA

Good thing she was so quiet and understated.

JEFFERS

The gifts were a nice touch.

UNA

But I don't feel obligated to visit her do you?

JEFFERS

No. Not at all. I'm sure that is the last we'll hear about Taos.

UNA

I'm sure you're right. Who would want to go there?

JEFFERS

Not me.

Silence falls in the little room. The fire crackles. Una gives Jeffers a wistful look.

EXT. TAOS ROAD - DAY

SUPER: June 1930.

Una, Robin, Garth (14), and Donnan (14) drive along a desert road in their Ford, heading towards Taos. The desert scenery is dramatically different than Carmel. Una drives while Jeffers gazes somberly at the passing dry gullies and cactus. Garth and Donnan point out interesting features of the landscape.

UNA

I am sure you will find inspiration here Robin. Please don't be so gloomy.

JEFFERS

I didn't get to finish the dining room. And the summer fogs are just starting to come in.

UNA

We'll only be here for a month. You'll have plenty of time to work on the house when we get back in July. And the fog will be there waiting for you. Really, Robin, think of the boys. Look at how excited they are.

Jeffers gazes at their two sons in the back seat as they look around the desert landscape with obvious delight. He sighs.

JEFFERS

I will try to enjoy myself.

UNA

Well good, then maybe I can too.

EXT. MABEL'S RANCH, DAY

They drive through a large adobe gate to Mabel's rambling adobe home. Una parks the car. The boys scramble out.

A rhythmic drumming comes from under the deep, shaded porch. Crows hop about the courtyard, eyeing the visitors. Across the compound, horses trot in the corral. The boys run over to see the horses, which look wild and unbroken. The drumming stops and Mabel comes quickly out of the house to greet her guests. Tony follows with the drum he was playing.

MABEL

Oh, I just knew you'd be here today. I felt your presence coming closer. Welcome to Taos.

Mabel rushes down to the car and hugs Una as she gets out of the car. Jeffers extracts himself stiffly from the car, weary from the journey. Tony greets him with a big hug.

TONY

I am honored to have you here. Your sons are already enjoying the sights.

Garth and Donnan straddle the corral as the wild horses nuzzle them looking for food. They laugh. Jeffers surveys the scene, the boys, the country, as Mabel takes a smiling Una by the hand.

JEFFERS

Thank you, Tony. I must admit it was a long and hot journey.

TONY

Tomorrow, after you are rested, I will take you to a sacred place where you will feel more at home.

Tony takes Jeffers by the shoulder and leads him to the house, following Mabel and Una.

INT. MABEL'S RANCH - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Dinner is almost over and the guests are engaged in polite conversation around the table. Una laughs with another guest.

The boys watch Tony as he shows them how to tie a serape. Jeffers sits and watches Una. Mabel comes over to him and puts her hand on his shoulder.

MABEL

Did you enjoy your day at Tony's Pueblo?

JEFFERS

It was interesting. It certainly demonstrated the contrast between the people who built the Pueblos and their descendants.

MABEL

You see the degradation of their world too?

JEFFERS

Perhaps they are a more obvious example of what ails our whole civilization. We are caught up in a vortex of our own destruction.

MABEL

Pleasant thoughts. Come, walk with me. The night air will do you good.

Mabel guides Jeffers out through the doors of the dining room into the garden courtyard. They walk through the desert garden as they talk.

JEFFERS

It is seldom this clear on the coast. The stars are truly amazing.

MABEL

The clarity of the high-desert reveals much about the universe, as well as ourselves. Tell me Robinson Jeffers, what is it that you see and hear when you look upon this land? Does it speak to you?

JEFFERS

It has a very different voice than my home. I have not yet learned its language.

MABEL

But you could. I have read your poems.

(MORE)

MABEL (CONT'D)

You use the imagery of the land to isolate your characters' actions and magnify their insignificance. There is much here that you could use in your poems as well. Like you, I believe that western civilization has reached its peak and the long decline has begun. Look at what the war did to Europe - - it is in ruins and yet the politicians will soon be at each other's throats again, squabbling over the spoils of war. Here the land is still pure, untouched by the masses. The Indians know how to live with the land, not rip it apart. They are the very antithesis of your coastal characters. You can learn from them.

JEFFERS

And yet they too are in decline. The young are already poisoned with western ways. They feel ashamed to dance and drum with their elders. The natives here may well have once known the secret to living lightly with the land, but I fear they are forgetting it. They will join our decline. The decline of the west sucks all of us into the abyss of decadence.

MABEL

Strong words from such a gentle man.

JEFFERS

What I mean is that there are no spirits here for me to hear. My home is thick with the ghosts of the natives. They are angry, yet they tell many stories. Here the sky and land are so big, the spirits do not linger. They wander off -- satisfied to roam the vast desert, which is still their home.

MABEL

I think a poet of your talent can weave a story any where. Here is my prophesy. Return to your home. Listen to your coastal spirits.

(MORE)

MABEL (CONT'D)

They will tell you stories that you will turn into more great poetry. You will be very famous. But your home will become crowded. People will surround you, invade your privacy. Your spirits will fade away. So every summer you will return here with your family to be renewed. As the years pass, you will learn to understand the spirits of my land too. You will become the poet of Taos. This I foretell.

JEFFERS

Una and the boys will enjoy your hospitality, but you should not count on me becoming the voice for your land.

MABEL

We shall see. I am sure that one way or another I will be able to help you.

Mabel takes Jeffers's arm and they turn and walk back towards the ranch. A drum beats in the desert night. The rhythmic drumming becomes denser, the individual beats merging to become the sound of waves crashing on rocks.

INT. UNA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jeffers' Ghost rises from the daybed and angles into the narrow vestibule with a westward window. He sits a small wooden chair in the corner, contemplating the window's view onto the night.

JEFFERS' GHOST (V.O.)

Mabel's offer of a summer haven seemed absurd to me. But her prediction about my fame was true. During those years in the early 30s, before the wars in Europe started again, I wrote as if I was possessed. Every day the poems poured out of me.

Thru the black windows, Jeffers' Ghost sees shapes from his poems drifting by against the snow-blown sky. Children playing in the courtyard. A woman riding a stallion. Spinning galaxies. Boats in the fog. A burning house. Hand prints on a cave wall. A dead hawk pinned to a fence.

JEFFERS' GHOST (V.O.)

I felt that the poetry I wrote gathered and expressed the whole of things as prose never can. The business of poetry is to contain a whole world at once, the physical and the sensuous, the intellectual, the imaginative, all in one passionate solution.

INT. TOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jeffers stands in his living room looking down at something on a table. He smokes one of his hand-rolled cigarettes while contemplating the object. He circles it warily as if it is dangerous.

JEFFERS' GHOST (V.O.)

So my fame grew as Mabel had predicted. Even my quail-tracked manuscripts become valuable. Una reveled in my notoriety, while I tried to hide from it, lest it distract me from the things I loved: my family, building with stone, nurturing my trees, and writing the tragedies that might keep evil away from our lives.

Una enters the room from the kitchen, wiping her hands on a towel. She comes to Jeffers's side.

UNA

Now really Robin, it's really quite nice. You shouldn't be afraid of it.

JEFFERS

I can't imagine seeing it on the street corners.

UNA

Well, you'll just have to get use to it. It's the recognition you deserve. They said you are the first poet to be so honored.

JEFFERS

I still don't like it.

Una bends over and picks up the object on the table. Holds it up at arms length.

INSERT: ISSUE OF TIME MAGAZINE WITH JEFFERS'S PORTRAIT ON THE COVER.

UNA

You look wonderful. America's greatest poet, on the cover of Time Magazine. Edward Weston's photograph does you justice. I'll have it framed!

JEFFERS

No! I could not stand seeing that everyday. Put it away. It's just like reading the reviews of my work. I don't pay attention to them, why would I want to look at that every day.

Una sighs and carefully takes the magazine away. Puts it on her desk with the other correspondence.

UNA

You can't hide from your fame. You should be doing more to promote yourself. People are asking to buy your handwritten manuscripts. But you've been burning them all this time! Well no more of that. We need that money. And they want you to write articles on your poetry. They'll pay you for them. Look at this.

She holds up a letter.

UNA (CONT'D)

The San Francisco Chronicle says "name your price" for an article on Thurso's Landing -- your "best work to date". And here, a request to be on the Board of the National Institute of Arts and Letters -- a paid position for just reading and judging other people's poems.

JEFFERS

I have no time for those things. You wanted a poet for a husband, not a writer of prose and reviews. I cannot even answer the personal letters people write to me. How could I possibly find time to be on an arts board?

(MORE)

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

Why should I spend time explaining
in prose what I write in verse?
When I finish a poem I am done with
it. I leave explaining it to the
critics -- who seem to have plenty
of time on their hands.

Jeffers turns from Una and heads out the front door.

UNA

And where are you off to?

JEFFERS (O.S.)

Watering my trees! Watching the
waves! Counting pelicans!

Jeffers stalks off across the yard, toward the tower.

Una steps outside the front door.

UNA

You can't hide from your admirers!
Or me!

EXT. TOR HOUSE - DAY

A car pulls up next to the front gate of Tor House, followed by a truck full of equipment: lights, tripods, cameras. A REPORTER gets out of the car and surveys the stone house and tower while a CAMERA MAN and a SOUND MAN start unpacking the truck.

REPORTER

This must be the place boys.
Robinson Jeffers' Tor House, home
of America's reclusive poet. We
only have an hour of his time,
according to his wife, so I want
those lights set up quickly. Be
careful of where you step and for
god's sake, don't break anything.
This may be a once in a lifetime
opportunity, so we have to get it
right. Make sure there is a fresh
roll of film in the camera.
Alright, let's go.

The three men walk up to the gate with the "No visitors until after 4 o'clock" sign. The Reporter checks his watch, then opens the gate. Una comes out of the front door of the house to greet them.

UNA

Welcome! You are all from the news station?

REPORTER

Yes ma'am. I was told you were expecting us. We're not too early are we?

UNA

Right on time. Now I just want to make sure you know you only have an hour with Robin. He's been writing all morning and laying stones all afternoon, so he's a little tired now, so you will have to be patient with him.

REPORTER

I have a list of questions all prepared, so as soon as we set up, I can get right to the interview.

Una leads them into the house. Jeffers is sitting stiffly in the corner, on the window seat facing west, smoking, and with a look of dread on his face.

UNA

Robin, the reporter is here to interview you.

REPORTER

Thank you Mr. Jeffers for allowing us into your home. We'll try to take up a minimum of your time, once we get the camera set up.

The other two men are busy setting up the tripods, lights, and camera. Jeffers looks amused as he watches them work. One of the men setting up the lights whispers to the Reporter. The Reporter looks around the room.

REPORTER (CONT'D)

Umm, where are your electrical outlets? We need to plug in the lights.

JEFFERS

We don't have electricity.

REPORTER

No electricity?

JEFFERS

Never saw the need for it. No telephone either.

UNA

I'm sorry, I didn't think that would be important for your interview. You'll have to make due with your questions.

REPORTER

Ah, sure, I guess we can just...record your answers. Umm, wait, we need electricity for that too. Well...then I'll just have to...write down your answers.

The Reporter, befuddled by the lack of a camera or recorder, takes out his notebook, pats his coat looking for his pen. Jeffers hands him a stubby pencil from his pocket. The reporter takes the pencil, stares at it.

REPORTER (CONT'D)

Uh, thanks. Now, let's see... Why do you write?

JEFFERS

That is a subject for an analytical autobiography -- you don't have the time.

REPORTER

Ah, I see. Do you write for yourself or an audience?

JEFFERS

For both. An indeterminate audience. One hopes for intelligence.

REPORTER

Do you regard our contemporary American culture as decadent?

JEFFERS

Not yet. What is to come? Centuries of increasing decadence.

REPORTER

Does the machine age mean the death of culture or the birth of a new culture?

JEFFERS

The advent of the machine age changes art and culture less than people imagine. The artist should adapt himself to it without ignorance, but without excitement. It provides, at most, some shift of scenery for the old actors.

REPORTER

How would you describe your life?

JEFFERS

According to a friend of mine, the only things of consequence a man can do is to plant a tree, get a child, build a house, and write a book. I have just finished a book, and built a house, and gotten two children, and planted 2000 trees. But none of that is really biographical material.

REPORTER

What do you hope for your future?

Jeffers thinks about this for a moment as he looks out the seaward window.

JEFFERS

I should be very glad to live like this for several centuries, but good and evil are very cunningly balanced even in the most favored lives, and I should not consider myself ill-used if I was to die tomorrow -- though it would be very annoying.

The Reporter pauses, looks around him at the low-ceilinged room, at the stonework this man has built along with his poems.

REPORTER

Your poems seem to be against organized religion. Do you believe in God?

JEFFERS

I believe that the Universe is one being.

(MORE)

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

All its parts are different expressions of the same energy, and they are all in communication with each other -- and therefore parts of one organic whole. This whole is so beautiful, and is felt by me so intensely, that I am compelled to love it and to think of it as divine. It seems to me that this whole is worthy of a deeper sort of love. There is peace, freedom, I might say a kind of salvation, in turning one's affections outward toward this whole, rather than inwards on one's self, or on humanity, or on human imaginations and abstractions, such as the world of spirits and churches.

The Reporter looks at Jeffers in awe.

REPORTER

I ... I don't think I got all that.
But it was beautifully said.

Jeffers leans forward, takes the notebook and the pencil from the reporter, and writes down what he just said, as the reporter and his crew fidget. Jeffers hands the notebook back the reporter along with the pencil.

JEFFERS

You can keep the pencil. Goodbye.

The reporter and his crew gather up their belongings.

REPORTER

Thank you Mr. Jeffers. I must say you are not at all what I expected.

JEFFERS

I hope that is a good thing.

Una ushers them out of the room, closes the front door behind them, turns back to Jeffers who still sits on the window seat smoking. She puts her hands on her hips and glares at Jeffers.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

What?

EXT. TOR HOUSE - COURTYARD - DAY

The reporter stands outside the front door of Tor House, his notebook and the pencil in his hands. The other two men walk off with the equipment muttering about the crazy poet. The reporter stands looking at his notebook, at what Jeffers wrote in his own handwriting.

REPORTER

(Quoting from the notes)

"There is peace, freedom, I might say a kind of salvation, in turning one's affections outward toward this one God, rather than inwards on one's self."

He watches a "V" of pelicans fly overhead. The sun glints off a window high in Hawk Tower.

REPORTER (CONT'D)

(To himself.)

I'm going to have to read his poems.

INT. HAWK TOWER - UNA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jeffers' Ghost continues to watch the dance of his life on the blackness outside the tower window.

JEFFERS' GHOST (V.O.)

Interviews, articles, speaking engagements, honors and awards. I tried to deny their existence. But as I had implored Una before, fame kills a poet by killing his ability to create. I was 50 years old. As my fame grew, my writing trickled to a stop. After 30 years of writing, my well was dry. I began to hate my verses, every line, every word. My brittle pencils could not even describe one grass-blade's curve, or the throat of one bird that clings to a twig. Even worse, I began to blame Una for the dry days that stretched into months and then a year. So I spent my time organizing a collection for re-publication -- a sure sign to me that my writing was over. A collection. That is what you do when you are empty. When you are dying inside.

Outside the window, a new scene unfolds in the falling snow. An open doorway reveals a room in a western-ranch setting. Una moves through the doorway in slow motion, wiping tears from her face, and the wooden-plank door slowly closes behind her. There is a sound of thunder.

JEFFERS' GHOST (V.O.)

Then Mabel drew us back to Taos.
1938. A black time for me. For us
all.

INT. MABEL'S RANCH DINING ROOM. EVENING.

A dinner party is underway. People eat, laugh, and drink at a long table. Una is the center of attention as she tells stories about her famous husband. In silence, Jeffers regards her from across the table.

Mabel enters into the room whispering to a young woman, HILDEGARDE (25). Mabel discreetly points out Jeffers and Una. Both woman join the table, Mabel at the head, seated next to Una, the young woman takes an empty seat next to Jeffers. He does not notice her.

UNA

(Una is telling a funny
story, mid-conversation)
...so there's Robin, at night,
staggering along the beach carrying
this enormous rock for the tower
wall. It's really heavy, so he's
staggering under it's weight,
trying to get it up to the road.
The next week there is a story in
our local newspaper, The Carmel
Pinecone, that Robinson Jeffers was
seen drunk on the beach at night.
Staggering drunk! Well that's the
last time I let him go collecting
stones at night!

The crowd at the table laughs. Una beams in the spotlight. She nods to Jeffers who excuses himself from the crowd to go outside for a smoke.

After a moments, Hildegard follows him outside. Una notices and watches with a raised eyebrow. She starts to get up from the table, but Mabel grasps her arm and leans over to talk with Una.

MABEL

Una dear, how is Robin doing? You have not sent me anything new of his all year.

UNA

He is fine. Random House wants to publish his selected works, so he has been busy editing.

MABEL

But no new poems? Nothing?

UNA

No. In fact I am not sure when he will start again. He is, well, you might say depressed, although with Robin it's hard to tell. He has been getting quieter and quieter the last few years. His writing is his life. That and our home. He really doesn't like coming here. He does it for the boys, and for me. I do so enjoy your company.

MABEL

And that is why I insist you come visit, my dear. Robin is a grown man, he can stand a little travelling. In fact, I think that may be the cause of his depression, as you call it. Or his lack of creativity. I think he needs fresh inspiration, a change of pace, of people.

UNA

Well, you don't know Robin very well, then. You would not say that if you could hear him complain about leaving Tor House. Goodness, it's hard just to get him to San Francisco to meet with publishers. He really is best in Carmel. And there is still much to inspire him there.

MABEL

But he needs new people too. New inspirations. Perhaps new motivations.

UNA

What do you mean? His family, his boys are what he needs. Stability. Solitude.

MABEL

You mean you think he needs you. And only you.

UNA

Mabel, what are you implying? I've devoted the last 30 years to protecting him, making him the poet that he is today.

MABEL

A poet at the end of his creativity?

UNA

No! At the peak of his career. He's the best known poet in America! His books outsell Ezra Pound or T.S. Eliot. People come from all over the world to see him.

MABEL

But you just said he is depressed. That he is not writing. Don't you think that you have controlled him too tightly? Let him go, Una. Let him experience life outside of your enclave of safety. Let him taste the new and exciting again.

Una is clearly distressed at Mabel's suggestion. She looks outside into the night, searching for Jeffers.

UNA

Mabel. What have you done?

MABEL

Only what is best for Robin. And ultimately for you.

Una stands abruptly, stumbles over the chair. Mabel catches her arm again, holding her back.

MABEL (CONT'D)

Give the hawk his freedom.

Una pulls away from Mabel, barely holding back tears. She rushes towards the door Jeffers and Hildegarde took into the night.

EXT. MABEL'S RANCH - NIGHT

Una bursts through the dining room doors, into the night. She looks around for Jeffers.

UNA

Robin! Robin, come back. Robin!

She looks around the courtyard but Jeffers is nowhere in sight. Nor the young woman. Una stomps her foot in frustration, wrings her hands. She sees a pot of cactus on the railing, picks it up and hurls it across the porch. It smashes with a satisfying crash.

UNA (CONT'D)

Robin!

EXT. DESERT GARDEN - NIGHT

Jeffers walks the paths of Mabel's desert garden. The moon is out and the stars are vivid. He smokes and gazes at the stars as he walks -- going nowhere.

Hildegarde approaches to his right along an intersecting path, her pale-white dress glowing in the moonlight. They pretend not to notice each other but the paths converge, bringing them face to face. The young woman (Hildegarde) suddenly seems to notice Jeffers.

HILDEGARDE

Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't know anyone else was out here.

JEFFERS

The night belongs to us all. You have as much right here as I.

HILDEGARDE

Still, you looked lost in thought. I guess I was too. You're Robinson Jeffers? The poet.

JEFFERS

Yes. I'm sorry, have we been introduced? There are so many guest here, I'm afraid I lose track.

HILDEGARDE

I know what you mean. Mabel's house is almost too busy for me. My name is Hildegarde. You, of course, need no introduction.

(MORE)

HILDEGARDE (CONT'D)

I saw you on the cover of Time Magazine a few years ago. That was such a wonderful photograph of you. I snatched up a copy as soon as I saw it. And your poetry is so intriguing.

JEFFERS

You've read my poems?

HILDEGARDE

Oh yes. I admire your writing immensely. I quite stumbled across Tamar and Roan Stallion a few years back and have kept up with your publications ever since. I have not read Thurso's Landing yet. It seems to be difficult to find. It was sold out at my local bookstore in New York.

JEFFERS

Really? Sold out? Extraordinary.

HILDEGARDE

It's true. Even in New York City, the hub of eastern snobbish publications, you are quite sought after. You should come and give a reading. Or a lecture. It would be quite grand.

JEFFERS

I don't give readings. Or lectures.

HILDEGARDE

But you would be so good at it. Your voice is soft and hypnotic. People would come from all over to here you read your poems. And to hear you speak about the stories behind them. You could come stay with me in New York. I would show you a grand time. There are so many interesting people in New York. The theatre. Concerts. Authors of fiction and history. I'm quite sure you would find it inspiring.

JEFFERS

I am very content at home in Carmel, thank you. I do not need the concerts and noise of the city.

They walk together down a path leading to a view of the mountains at night. Hildegarde shivers in the night air.

HILDEGARDE

I should have brought my shawl.
It's getting chilly.

Jeffers removes his jacket and puts it around Hildegarde's shoulders, covering part of the glowing dress.

HILDEGARDE (CONT'D)

How kind of you, Mr. Jeffers. It's always nice to be around a gentleman. Una is a very lucky woman. How long have you been married?

JEFFERS

Twenty-five years.

HILDEGARDE

Good years, too, I am sure.

JEFFERS

Many of them. Every couple has their trials.

HILDEGARDE

And in those years, you've written hundreds of poems, published books, built a stone house and tower, and planted thousands of trees. That is quite a life for one man.

JEFFERS

And I have two wonderful sons.

HILDEGARDE

Ah, the crowning touch. I wish I had children. I think it completes a woman's life. Alas, my husband is not the fatherly type.

JEFFERS

No? But you love him?

HILDEGARDE

I did. Then one day he came home and wanted me to be part of a menage a trois. Seems he took a liking to pretty young thing and thought we could all live happily together. So I left him.

(MORE)

HILDEGARDE (CONT'D)

Oh my, I didn't mean to spill my personal problems to you. You are just so easy to talk to.

Hildegarde stops to wipe some tears, making sure Jeffers notices.

JEFFERS

I'm sorry your husband treated you that way.

HILDEGARDE

Oh, well, that's men. Never happy with what they have.

JEFFERS

That is human nature. Always striving for more than we have, more than we need.

HILDEGARDE

And you, Mr. Jeffers, do you strive to have more than you do? What do you yearn for?

JEFFERS

I? Yearn? I would like to be able to write again.

HILDEGARDE

You've stopped writing? That must be like a hawk that can't fly. Why did you stop?

JEFFERS

I wish I knew. I thought this day might come, but I did not think it would be so soon. But what does it matter?

HILDEGARDE

Nonsense. You are young still. You have much to say I am sure. You need the will to work.

JEFFERS

No man can make an invention of a poem by willing it. They come or they do not come. We can only prepare the way a little. Neither do I think that a man can make himself a new man by willing it or desiring it.

HILDEGARDE

Perhaps someone else can give you
the will then? As a gift?

JEFFERS

Una has been my muse for 30 years.

HILDEGARDE

Maybe you need a new one?

Jeffers looks at Hildegard with his sidelong, sea-gray gaze
as they continue to walk along the path.

JEFFERS

Many years ago, I met a woman under
a bridge at Mal Paso Creek. It was
a stormy night in more ways than
one. She taught me a few things
about myself that set me free.
Showed me a view of the world that
I had not considered. Are you
saying you could do the same? Set
me free to write again?

HILDEGARDE

It would be an honor to try.

JEFFERS

And how would you be a muse to me?
What do you have to offer?

As they walk, they approach a small cabin on the outskirts of
the garden.

HILDEGARDE

All that I have is yours.

A light is on in the cabin. A fire glows through the window.
Jeffers takes it in and nods.

JEFFERS

I see you and Mabel have been busy.

They walk into the cabin and the door swings shut behind
them.

INT. TAOS RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

Una returns to the dining room, looks around hopefully for
Jeffers. She's frazzled, upset -- and angry.

Mabel eyes her from her seat at the head of the table. The polite conversation among the guests dies down as people see Una's state.

MABEL

Una dear, you are missing a fabulous dessert.

UNA

(Hissing at Mabel)
Where is he? Where did you tell that tramp to take him? What have you done with Robin?

MABEL

Una, let's discuss this in the other room. I'm sure you don't want my guests to hear your marital troubles.

UNA

To hell with them and to hell with you! We didn't have any marital problems until we came here. How dare you plot to take my Robin away from me. How could you after all this time? You know he is my life!

Mabel gets up from the table and crosses to Una. She takes her arm gently. Una twists her arm out of Mabel's grasp.

MABEL

Come dear, I'll get you a drink and we can discuss this in a civil manner.

The guests watch with held breath. The room is suddenly silent.

UNA

Where ... is... Robin!

MABEL

In good hands.

UNA

How could you?

Una turns and exits the dining room. Not quite running, not quite walking.

Mabel smiles chillingly at her guests.

MABEL

Cognac and cigars in the library
everyone!

INT. TAOS HOUSE, HALLWAY - NIGHT

As in Jeffers' Ghost's dream, Una flees into her bedroom in the Taos House. In slow motion, the door closes behind her and a moment later, the sound of a gunshot reverberates like distant desert thunder.

INT. TAOS HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

A maid scrubs a bathtub. Red stains run down the drain as the brush scrubs the tiles.

INT. TAOS HOUSE, UNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Una lies in a bed unconscious while a DOCTOR (50) finished bandaging her upper torso and a NURSE (30) attends to an IV drip.

DOCTOR

Remarkable. Really remarkable. A clean shot through the chest, bullet bounces off a rib and out the back. No internal organs touched. Bleeding, rather minimal. I would say this is a miracle, if it was not so obviously a suicide attempt.

NURSE

Miracle? Do you think she'll think it's a miracle when she wakes up? Folks that do this are usually disappointed they messed it up.

DOCTOR

I think she'll live and be grateful for it. She's a strong woman. Must be the Irish blood.

NURSE

And there's plenty of it going down the drain. She better be careful with what she has left. Wonder what made her go crazy like that?

DOCTOR

Love. It's always about love.

NURSE

Aren't you philosophical tonight.

The Doctor gets up from the bedside, finished with his task.

DOCTOR

It's a Doctor's right. We brought her back from Hell. I can be philosophical if I want to be.

Jeffers comes in the room, looking older, guilt written on his face. The Doctor turns to Jeffers, gives him a once over.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

You look like hell, too.

JEFFERS

I've been there recently.

DOCTOR

You're Jeffers, the poet?

JEFFERS

Used to be.

DOCTOR

Well, you need not write an elegy for your wife yet. She will live. It's up to you to make sure her life is worth living.

Jeffers looks at Una, her face pale from loss of blood. Bandages all around her upper torso.

JEFFERS

Such a strong woman. Yet so fragile.

DOCTOR

Well, time heals. She'll have some interesting scars. Physically and mentally. I can fix the physical ones. You'll have to work on the mental ones.

JEFFERS

I'll take her home. We'll start over again. It's been a long time, but we'll start over.

He goes to the bedside, takes up Una's hand. Caresses it.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

We'll start over. I promise.

INT. TOR HOUSE BEDROOM - DAY

Una lays in the "bed by the window", looking out at the ocean under a cloudless sky. A hummingbird feasts on the flowers in the garden.

Jeffers comes through the bedroom doorway bringing a vase of blue irises. Una beams and sits up.

JEFFERS

Your favorite flowers are in bloom.

He sets the vase down on the bedside table.

UNA

Lovely! I wish I was out there picking them myself. It's a glorious day.

Jeffers sits on the seat by the window.

JEFFERS

You should be able to get up soon. It's been two weeks since....

UNA

My accident. Yes, I am counting the days.

She sits up stiffly. Pulls down the shoulder of her nightgown, and touches the bright-red scar carefully. Jeffers looks away, pained at the sight.

UNA (CONT'D)

Well, that will take a long time to go away.

Una notices Jeffers look away.

UNA (CONT'D)

Does it bother you?

JEFFERS

Yes.

UNA

Because of what I did -- or what you did?

JEFFERS

Both. We were both selfish.

UNA

Selfish? That's an odd way of putting it.

JEFFERS

I thought only of my writing. You thought only of yourself. You might have thought about our own peace. Of the boys.

UNA

Quite a pair then, aren't we?

JEFFERS

Our love is different from the love of people that live in cities. We have built a unique life together. You have given me everything that I wanted, everything that I needed to be the poet that you wanted me to be. I wrote tragedies to keep the evils of life away from our home and family. I created people to sacrifice in pain and death in order to protect us. And in the end, the evil still found us.

UNA

Evil? Robin, look at me. I am alive. You are alive. The boys are thriving. That is not evil. That is life. Continue to write your tragedies if you must, but do not think they will keep tragedy away from us forever. Someday I will die. You will die. The boys will marry and carry on the family. Tor House will stand for centuries, marking the place where America's greatest poet lived and worked. It will be enough for me.

JEFFERS

I guess it is true then. Every personal story ends more or less in tragedy. Comedy is just an unfinished story.

UNA

A flash of the old Robin! I missed you. Now, enough of this lying around. I can't stand doing nothing.

(MORE)

UNA (CONT'D)

Bring me the mail, there must be weeks of unanswered letters in there. Back to work for both of us. That will do you -- and me -- the most good. Go write! Prove them wrong. Prove that we only need each other to be truly happy.

Jeffers gets up, sits on the bed and gently hugs Una in a long embrace.

INT, HAWK TOWER - NIGHT

Jeffers and Una embracing on the bed appear as a image beyond the window of Hawk Tower. As the image fades, the face of Jeffers' Ghost appears as a reflection, older now, looking back at himself.

JEFFERS' GHOST

(speaking his poem aloud)

I built her a tower when I was young. I built it with my hands, I hung stones in the sky. Sometime she will die. Old but still strong I climb the steep rough steps alone. Tonight dear, let's forget all that, and the war, and enisle ourselves a little beyond time, you with Irish whiskey, I with red wine, while the stars go over the sleepless ocean, and sometime after midnight I'll pluck you a wreath of chosen ones; we'll talk about love and death, rock-solid themes, old and deep as the sea, admit nothing more timely, nothing less real while the stars go over the timeless ocean, and when they vanish we'll have spent the night well.

Jeffers' Ghost stands and turns from the window, looks at a small doll that sits in a niche in the wall. Takes it out from the niche and examines it. The doll looks like the Mal Paso Woman from many years ago, a dark Indian-Spanish muse.

JEFFERS' GHOST (V.O.) (CONT'D)

So Una and I made peace. Peace we had at Tor House, but war was spreading like fire through Europe. Germany invaded France. Italy sank into fascism.

(MORE)

JEFFERS' GHOST (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And my sons were old enough to be part of a war that did not concern us. I had to speak out. But speaking your mind, your conscience, especially about politics, does not win you admiration. It earns you enemies.

INT. PUBLISHER'S OFFICE - DAY

Una sits in a chair facing the desk of Jeffers' EDITOR (50) in San Francisco. She is struggling to compose herself.

EDITOR

I'm sure you must understand our position Mrs. Jeffers. Your husband's latest work is far outside the mainstream of our country's politics. People will be outraged at, well -- his outrage.

UNA

Are you saying that America's greatest poet should censor himself? Or are you suggesting that you will censor him if he doesn't do it himself?

EDITOR

Now Una, we've worked together for many years. You know that I would never consider censoring or editing a word of Robin's writing. But you have to understand the precariousness of publishing during a war. The government spends millions of dollars making the war heroic and popular, what do you think happens when we publish a book that speaks out against our government? It will get buried! It will be a waste of everyone's time. And damage Robin's reputation as well. Believe me, the pressure is very great on us to promote the war, not go against it.

UNA

I'm afraid that Robin will not change one word of it. He firmly believes that "Be Angry at the Sun" should be published as it is.

(MORE)

UNA (CONT'D)

If you and Random House do not want to publish it, then let us out of our contract. We'll find someone else with stronger morals who will publish it.

EDITOR

Una, please, be reasonable.

UNA

I am! You were the one that kept asking for his next book. I've pushed and cajoled him for the last year to finish it on your deadline and here it is as promised.

EDITOR

And then I read it. It's beyond the edge of what is politically acceptable.

UNA

Isn't that what poetry is for? Political poetry is best when it is extreme, explosive, and scornful. It must leap for the jugular, or we won't pay attention to it. Only when it shocks can it change the course of human action. Robin has always written on the edge. It is why people read his work, to go beyond what they think is fashionably right and wrong. Many people do not think America should be in this war.

EDITOR

But to call Hitler a genius? That's outrageous.

UNA

Did you read the entire poem? "...cored on a sick child's soul. A sick child wailing in Danzig; invoking destruction..." Robin is not for Hitler. He is against war.

The editor leafs through the manuscript on his desk.

EDITOR

I don't know.

UNA

Look, in February, Robin will be giving his first speaking tour. He's opening the Poetry Series at the Library of Congress. The Library of Congress! They are honoring him with a special exhibit on Tamar. Then he will speak at Harvard, Princeton, Columbia. Think of the exposure that will give his books. You need to publish this book now. You'll sell thousands.

EDITOR

Robin agreed to travel to Washington? To speak in public?

UNA

Yes. And I never would have convinced him to do it but the City of Carmel wants to tax us \$1600 to put in sewer lines to our properties. And you know we don't have that kind of money. Especially with you holding up this book!

EDITOR

All right, all right -- I'll do my best to get it out before his tour. But please try to get Robin to tone down his anti-war rhetoric, especially on his tour.

UNA

He is going to speak on democracy, not on war. But I am sure his speech will hold a few surprises to those who think of him as an isolated poet.

EDITOR

I wish I could be there. Robinson Jeffers on stage. What an occasion.

UNA

Once in a lifetime.

INT. THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS - BACKSTAGE - DAY

SUPER: Library of Congress, 1941

Jeffers paces behind the stage curtains listening to the crowd gather in the auditorium.

He is alone except for two STAGE HANDS doing their jobs preparing the curtain and lights. Jeffers looks nervous, as if he wants to be someplace else, anywhere else. He takes some pages of paper from his jacket pocket and checks some notes. The murmuring of the audience dies down.

AUDREY AUSLANDER (45) approaches Jeffers from the wing. She takes his arm and pats his hand holding the notes.

AUDREY

Ready Mr. Jeffers? I'll introduce you, then they are all yours.

Jeffers nods, straightens his jacket, folds the papers and puts them away.

Audrey smiles warmly.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

You'll be great. Everyone in the audience admires you. They are all your friends.

JEFFERS

How many?

AUDREY

More than the auditorium can hold. There is standing room only and they are filling the adjacent room. This is your night.

Audrey walks confidently to the curtain, parts it and disappears to the stage side to address the audience.

Jeffers sits in a chair at center stage behind the curtain as Audrey gives her introduction.

AUDREY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Welcome to the Library of Congress' opening of Poetry in America. It is my pleasure to introduce our first honored guest speaker. Author of Tamar, Roan Stallion, Women of Point Sur, Cawdor, and Be Angry at the Sun, as well as hundreds of shorter poems that portray the dramatic landscape of Central California. This is a particular honor for me, and all of us, as this is the first time Mr. Jeffers has consented to appear and discuss his poems.

(MORE)

AUDREY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 His theme tonight -- The Poet in
 Democracy -- is particularly
 relevant in this time of world war.
 Ladies and gentleman, Robinson
 Jeffers. Poet of California. Poet
 of America.

INT. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS THEATRE - NIGHT

The curtain parts, revealing Jeffers sitting on a chair on the stage. A spotlight hits him. He has a lit cigarette in one hand. The smoke curls up in the spotlight. Head bowed, Jeffers is silent for a few heavy seconds. He begins his speech in a low monotone.

JEFFERS

The quality of these trees, green
 height; of the sky, shining; of
 water, a clear flow; of the rock,
 hardness and reticence: each is
 noble in its quality. The love of
 freedom has been the quality of
 Western man.

Jeffers pauses, takes a brief look around the audience, seeking a familiar face.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

Our democracy has provided, and
 still provides, the greatest
 freedom for the greatest number of
 people. That is its special glory.
 Our government is particularly
 aimed at freedom. It is our
 national ideal, the basic principle
 on which this republic was founded.
 The word "democracy" means a system
 of government that is the surest
 means toward freedom. It also means
 an attitude of mind: tolerance,
 disregard of class distinction, a
 recognition that each person is
 equal to any other person. It means
 no snobbery, no flunkyism, no
 indecent humility.

There is a quiet murmur of agreement in the audience.

Jeffers looks off the side of the stage. Una stands half-hidden behind a curtain. She blows him a kiss.

Jeffers looks back at the audience, takes a deep breath.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

This is a great ideal for all men and women. Especially for those who write poetry, and indeed for all creative writers and artists. Democracy is congenial to poetry, but freedom is essential for it. Poetry flourishes in democracies from Athens to England. In contrast, Sparta, a totalitarian state, produced a formidable military machine, but nothing else - no poetry, no art. And in the end, the struggle between democracy and totalitarianism, between Athens and Sparta, between rule by many and rule by few, ruined all of Greece.

Jeffers stands, transforming the lone figure on the stage from a humble poet, to a tall, commanding presence, with a voice of authority.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

Just as now the war of ideologies in Europe will ruin her. I say this as a duty. Europe will be physically and morally exhausted after this second world war. Perhaps it will be America's destiny to carry the heritage of European culture, and what we have added to it, across a time of twilight to a new age. Therefore we must guard what we have, for it is precious. If we feel ourselves forced to intervene in foreign conflicts, we must consult the interests of our people first, and our generosity second, and our ideology last. But sentimentality, never.

INT. HARVARD UNIVERSITY AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

SUPER: Harvard University

Jeffers voice is more confident now.

JEFFERS

I know that many of you do not agree with my views.

(MORE)

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

And that is your right, just as it
 is my right to work these themes
 into my poems. This world war has
 obsessed my mind for several years.
 As I lay awake one night listening
 to a storm roar on the roof, I
 thought of rock slides and flooded
 streams in the mountain gorges, the
 air raid drills of Britain, and our
 presumed safety here in America, I
 wrote this poem, "Night Without
 Sleep":

Jeffers pauses and the audience stills.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

"The world's as the world is; the
 nations rearm and prepare to
 change; the age of tyrants returns.
 The greatest civilization that has
 ever existed builds itself higher
 towers on breaking foundations. I
 lie and hear dark rain beat the
 roof, and the blind wind.

In Jeffers' mind: He walks along a river bed in the storm,
 watching the waters rise, the trees thrash in the wind.
 Lighting flashes like bombs exploding. Images evolve in the
 darkness that follow the imagery of the poem.

JEFFERS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

In the Ventana country, darkness
 and rain and the roar of waters
 fill the deep mountain throats. The
 creek-side shelf of sand where we
 lay last August under a slit of
 stars, and firelight played on the
 leaning gorge walls, is drowned and
 lost. The deer of the country
 huddle on a ridge in a close herd
 under madrone trees; they tremble
 when a rock slide goes down, they
 open great darkness-drinking eyes
 and press closer. Cataracts of rock
 rain down the mountain from cliff
 to cliff and torment the stream-
 bed. The stream deals with them.
 The laurels are wounded. Redwoods
 go down with their earth and lie
 thwart the gorge. I hear the
 torrent of boulders battering each
 other, I feel the flesh of the
 mountain move on its bones in the
 wet darkness.

RETURN TO INT. HARVARD UNIVERSITY AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

JEFFERS

Is this more beautiful than man's disasters? These wounds will heal in their time; so will humanity's. This is more beautiful... at night..."

INT. THEATER, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

SUPER: Columbia University

Jeffers, on stage in Columbia, takes questions from the audience, his voice casual, more confident.

STUDENT 4

You have said that you are against America's involvement in Europe's wars. But surely the crimes of the Nazis makes it necessary for us to act.

JEFFERS

You say that I am against the war. I would give my right hand to prevent the agony; I would not give a flick of my little finger to help either side win. We are not an ignoble people, we are in fact rather generous; but having been tricked a step at a time, cajoled, scared, sneaked into war, a decent people betrayed by men whom it thought it could trust; our whole attitude smells of that ditch.

STUDENT 5

Your philosophy of inhumanism seems antisocial, hopeless, to say the least. Do you have any hope for the human race?

JEFFERS

A man whose mental processes continually distort and contradict each other, so that his energy is devoted to introversion and the civil wars of the mind, is an insane man, and we pity him for it. But the human race is similarly insane.

(MORE)

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

More than half its energy are devoted to self-interference, self-frustration, self-incitement, self-tickling, self-worship. The rest we discharge into each other -- in conflict and charity, love, jealousy, hatred, competition, government, vanity and cruelty, and the will to power. This is a tragic incest and I have presented it so in my poems. But we have all this excess energy: what should we do with it? We could take a walk, for instance and admire the landscape: that is better than killing one's brother in war, or trying to be superior to one's neighbor in time of peace. We could dig our gardens. We could give ourselves to science or art; not to impress somebody, but for the love of beauty that each discloses. We could even be quiet occasionally.

STUDENT 6

Do you think that this war will be the last great war?

JEFFERS

We have enjoyed fine dreams; we have dreamed of unifying the world; but we are unifying it against us. Two wars, and they will breed more. Now guard the beaches, watch the north, trust not the dawns. Probe every cloud. Build power. Fortress America may yet for a long time stand, between the east and the west, like Byzantium. As for me: laugh at me. I agree with you. It is a foolish business to see the future and screech at it. One should watch and not speak. Patriotism has run the world through so many blood-lakes: and yet we always fall in.

The audience is quiet.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

And with that, I thank you for your patience with me today.

A slow clapping begins in the audience, building quickly to a crescendo as Jeffers bows slightly and leaves the stage. Una is waiting for him in the wing. He leans on her and hugs her.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

Take me home.

EXT. POINT LOBOS - DAY

A vulture soars above the coastline.

Jeffers lies on his back on the side of a hill facing the sky over the ocean.

JEFFERS (V.O.)

I had walked since dawn and lay down to rest on a bare hillside above the ocean. I saw through half-shut eyelids a vulture wheeling high up in heaven, and presently it passed again, but lower and nearer, its orbit narrowing.

The shadow of the vulture passes over Jeffers. He does not move, only his eyes follow the flight of the vulture circling overhead as it gets closer and closer to him.

JEFFERS (V.O.)

I understood then that I was under inspection. I lay death-still and heard the flight-feathers whistle above me and make their circle and come nearer. I could see the naked red head between the great wings bear downward staring. I said "My dear bird we are wasting time here. These old bones will still work; they are not for you." But how beautiful he looked, gliding down on those great sails; how beautiful he looked, veering away in the sea-light over the precipice. I tell you solemnly that I was sorry to have disappointed him. To be eaten by that beak and become part of him, to share those wings and those eyes. What a sublime end of one's body, what an enskyment; what a life after death.

Jeffers stands up from the ground and the vulture veers off over the hill. Jeffers seems happy -- content.

INT. TOR HOUSE - DAY

Una and the actress JUDITH ANDERSON (40) are sipping tea by the fire. Jeffers enters the front door from his day hike.

UNA

Robin, look who's here. Judith Anderson.

JUDITH ANDERSON

Mr. Jeffers. How good to see you.

JEFFERS

Ms. Anderson. What brings you to Tor House?

UNA

Robin, dear, I've told you about Judith's interest in having you write a play for her. I've been corresponding with her about it for a year now.

Jeffers goes to a cupboard and gets a glass, pours water from a pitcher.

JEFFERS

Play? I haven't written a play.

JUDITH ANDERSON

I thought you'd have the time to discuss it more if I was here. I was hoping you would write a new version of Medea.

JEFFERS

Medea is a complex character. The tale is one of the bloodiest and most horrific in Greek tragedy. A mother killing her own sons for revenge against her husband. Why do you think I can write a better version for you?

JUDITH ANDERSON

Tamar? Women of Point Sur? Helen from Thurso's Landing? These women are kin to Medea. Who else in America understands their souls as you do?

Jeffers grunts appreciatively. Drinks the whole glass of water down. Gets out a basket-covered demijohn of wine from a cupboard and fills the drinking glass.

He sits facing Anderson, takes a long sip of the wine and gives her the stare.

JEFFERS

Have you thought how many of Shakespeare's heroes, from Hamlet down, are at war in themselves, in their own souls; whereas heroes of Greek tragedy struggle against fate or each other, but their souls remain simple and undivided?

JUDITH ANDERSON

Why, yes. That has occurred to me. After a certain period, people became much more complex. More introverted. As you say, more at war with their own souls.

JEFFERS

Why is that? What made that change?

JUDITH ANDERSON

I am not a philosopher Mr. Jeffers, only an actress.

JEFFERS

I think that because Christianity is Oriental and Near-Eastern in origin, and was imposed on the western races rather recently, that we have never really got used to it.

Jeffers takes out tobacco and papers and rolls a cigarette.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

We still hold two sets of ethics simultaneously: pagan and Christian. For instance, we say that we should love our enemies and not resist evil; yet at the same time we believe in justice, and that criminals ought to be punished, and that we should meet force with force, violence with violence. Or we believe in humility; but we also believe in masculine pride and self-assertion.

(MORE)

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

I think that this spiritual conflict creates a strain in our psychology and in the heart of our culture -- creating both good and evil, greatness and intensity, as well as self-contradiction, hypocrisy, and frustration.

JUDITH ANDERSON

And Medea?

JEFFERS

Ahh, that is the interesting question. She is pure pagan, not Christian. What causes a woman to kill her children in revenge against her lover's betrayal? What would cause a pagan woman to kill her "self"? If I could reveal that, it may be worth writing. It may reveal something about our society rather than being just a display of pagan madness and vengeance.

JUDITH ANDERSON

Then by all means, do so. Bring the Greeks into the present. Make Medea relevant.

UNA

It would be very exciting to have one of your works on Broadway Robin.

JEFFERS

Perhaps. Under one condition.

JUDITH ANDERSON

Anything in my power.

JEFFERS

I do not want to attend the performance.

JUDITH ANDERSON

(shocked)

But if we make it to Broadway, it will be a great achievement. You should revel in it. I promise I will make you proud of your work!

JEFFERS

I am sure you will be great as
Medea, but I simply do not want to
leave my home.

Jeffers sits back in his chair, stares into the fire in
silence. Una motions to Anderson to let him think. Gives her
a conspiratorial wink and a pat on the arm. Pours more tea.

In the flames of the fireplace an image forms: a proud woman
stands tall with her hands covered in blood. Beside her is a
bier with two small bodies laying on it. At her feet, a man
crouches down in grief.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BROADWAY THEATRE, NIGHT

Judith, as Medea, stands tall on the steps of her house on
the stage. Two pillars mark the doorway behind her, lit by
flaming lamps. Behind her in the doorway are two women
carrying the bier on which her two sons lay dead, wrapped in
blood-stained cloths. At her feet, Jason crouches in grief.

MEDEA

I have done it: because I loathed
you more than I loved them. Mine is
the triumph

JASON

Your triumph. No iron-fleshed demon
of those whom your father worships
in the blood-crusted temple -- did
you feel nothing? No pity, are you
pure evil? I should have killed you
the day I saw you.

MEDEA

I tore my own heart and laughed: I
was tearing yours.

JASON

Will you laugh while I strangle
you?

MEDEA

I would still laugh. I'd still be
joyful to know that every bone of
your life is broken; you are left
hopeless, friendless, mateless.
Avoided by gods and men, unclean
with awful excess of grief --
childless.

JASON

(Exhausted)

It is no matter now, who lives, who dies.

MEDEA

Go down to your ship Argo and weep beside it, that rotting hulk on the beach, never to be launched again -- even the weeds and barnacles are dead and stink -- that is your last companion.

JASON

Exult in evil, gloat your fill, have your glory.

MEDEA

My heart's blood bought it.

JASON

Enjoy it then, only give me the pitiful little bodies that I may bury them in some kind place.

MEDEA

No they are mine. They are going with me. You had love and betrayed it; now of all men you are utterly the most miserable. Against you and the might of Corinth, I have met you throat for throat, evil for evil. Now I go forth under the cold eyes of the weakness-despising stars -- not me they scorn.

Following the bier of her dead children, Medea exits the stage. Jason falls on the steps between the flickering lamps. The light in the house fades. A music of mixed triumph and lamentation diminishes in the distance of the stage. The lights dim to black.

INT. THEATER, VIEW FROM AUDIENCE - NIGHT

Applause erupts from the audience. The players return to the stage for their bows. Judith joins them to thunderous applause.

AUDIENCE

Author, author!

Judith grandly points to a balcony seat.

INT. THEATER - BALCONY - NIGHT

Jeffers and Una sit in a balcony applauding the actors.

Jeffers is enchanted by the performance but oblivious to the calls for "Author".

UNA

Robin, dear, they are cheering you!

Una pulls Jeffers to his feet. He finally gets it. He bows once, stiffly, waves to Judith. A slow and warm smile of respect spreads across his face.

INT. RECEPTION PARTY - NIGHT

Jeffers and Una walk with Judith into a room full of admirers. The actress graciously takes it all in, acknowledges her fans. Una beams in the glow of her husband's success. Jeffers stands, taking in the room of a hundred cheering people. Una notices his frozen face.

UNA

(whispers to Jeffers)
Smile dear! They like you.

JEFFERS

Time ... to ... go ... home.

UNA

Not now. This is your glory. You must endure it for a few more hours. Please. For me.

Jeffers forces a smile on his face. Not the sincere smile he gave to Anderson at the end of the play, but a stiff smile that should warn away any admirers seeking his comments.

JEFFERS

(Through clenched teeth)
For you, of course.

Several camera flashes go off for photos of the famous actress and author.

JUDITH ANDERSON

Friends! Thank you for attending opening night of Robinson Jeffers' Medea. It is my honor to have Mr. and Mrs. Jeffers here with us tonight.

JOURNALIST

Mr. Jeffers, did you really not want to come to the opening of your own play?

JEFFERS

Yes. I do not like to hear my own verses recited. However, Miss Anderson is as wonderful at persuasion as she is at acting. Or perhaps the abilities are one and same. At any rate, here I am and glad of it. Miss Anderson owns these verses to Medea now, for she has wrought them in fluid fire.

AUDIENCE MEMBER

When is your next book coming out Mr. Jeffers?

JEFFERS

As soon as my publisher decides if it is fit to print.

AUDIENCE MEMBER

Surely you jest.

JEFFERS

Never. They are concerned that "The Double Axe" is too political. Too incorrect for our times.

AUDIENCE MEMBER

After your successful debut on Broadway they will no doubt publish it immediately!

JEFFERS

You will have to ask my publisher. The World War may be over, and America victorious, but I believe that the true fight over the outcome of our involvement will last for years. I have stated my opinions in The Double Axe. You may have your own.

JUDITH ANDERSON

We should all write and demand that they let Robin's readers decide the book's fate. I know which side I will be on.

UNA
Thank you all for your support. It
means so much to us.

Cheers and applause from the party crowd. Una leans into
Jeffers, he bends lower so she can whisper in his ear.

UNA (CONT'D)
(whispering to JEFFERS)
Let's go back to the hotel.

JEFFERS
(surprised)
You want to go back now? So early?

UNA
My back is killing me. I have to
lie down. Too much travel I guess.

Jeffers looks at Una with concern. Takes her arm and gives a
short bow to Anderson. Jeffers and Una leave the party, Una
leaning heavily on Jeffers's arm.

INT. DOCTORS OFFICE - DAY

As Una buttons her dress, the DOCTOR (65) writes notes.

DOCTOR
I'll get the test results in a few
days. Until then...

UNA
I know, rest. But I don't want to
rest. I have much to do. I'm still
fighting with Robin's publisher
over his book. I'm going over there
now to knock some sense into their
heads.

DOCTOR
Una, you need to take care of
yourself. I don't think you realize
how serious this could be.

UNA
We've been through this together
before. We'll get through it again.

DOCTOR
Una, if it's spreading...

She gives him a steady, resigned gaze.

UNA

Don't say anything to Robin. Or the children. I'll... We'll fight it again.

DOCTOR

Una, you should tell Robin at least. I'm afraid this will be a much tougher battle than last time.

UNA

What good will it do to worry Robin? He can't cure it. He can't stop it. He'll just worry. He needs to write.

DOCTOR

Well, he is your husband.

UNA

He's my poet.

INT. EDITOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Una sits across from their Random House Editor. He looks even more perturbed than last time. Una is positively furious.

UNA

You're going to do what?

EDITOR

Una, the editorial board does not agree with Robin's political views. And frankly I am very concerned that his readers will not agree either. Do you want him to become an outcast? A publisher's pariah?

UNA

We had this conversation a few years ago and Robin and I feel the same way as we did then. You cannot censor Robin just because he takes a different view of American politics.

EDITOR

But "The Double Axe" is vile! Horrific. A nightmare. A dead soldier wills his soul back into his body in order to haunt his father and step-mother? It's worse than his last.

(MORE)

EDITOR (CONT'D)

It's a bucket of blood that's what it is. Americans fought and died in the war to save Europe and Asia. Robin cannot offend the veterans of the war like this.

UNA

Again you misunderstand. The poem does not ridicule veterans, it is against those who promote war instead of peace. He has a right to say how and what he wants in his own poetry.

EDITOR

Just as we have a right to not publish it.

UNA

Then I once again, I ask that you release us from our contract so we can get it published elsewhere. There are several publishers who are just waiting for the chance to have Robin's contract.

EDITOR

There may be another solution. Let us put an editorial note in the book explaining our views. That way our board will be satisfied and we can get the book printed. Whether or not Robin's readers will buy it will be up to them.

UNA

Believe me, with Medea still a hit on Broadway, people will buy his latest collection. Whether or not you like it. What type of disclaimer?

EDITOR

Simply stating that the publisher disagree's with the author's views.

UNA

People will laugh at you. It's unheard of. But I doubt that Robin will care. To him the poems are long finished and -- as he says -- he's quits with them.

(MORE)

UNA (CONT'D)

His main concern is to have the book published so people stop asking him for it.

EDITOR

Very well. I will send you a draft of our note so Robin can reply to it in his forward if he wishes. Then we can all "be quits with it".

Una stands wearily.

UNA

So be it.

The Editor helps her on with her coat.

EDITOR

Is he working on new poems?

UNA

I'm not sure. He's writing something. You know he doesn't let anyone, including me, read his poems until they are finished.

EDITOR

Hopefully they are not political.

Una stares out the window into the San Francisco fog, her reflection faint in the window.

UNA

I think they are about death.

EDITOR

His?

UNA

Mine.

INT. HAWK TOWER, UNA'S ROOM - DAY

In her tower room, Una dozes on her daybed, an open book across her lap. A fire glows in the small fireplace.

Jeffers enters the room through the door from the outside stairs. A breeze blows into the room, rustling the pages of her book. Una wakes up. Jeffers sits on the daybed next to Una. Takes her hand.

JEFFERS

Dreaming?

UNA

About Ireland. Our last trip there. I saw the road leading to that little house we stayed in. It was getting dark. I was standing in the front door, calling for you to come inside. But instead of you, I saw a priest walking down the road toward the house.

JEFFERS

A priest? How are you feeling?

UNA

Tired. My back hurts like hell. Damn sciatica.

JEFFERS

You know it's not sciatica.

UNA

And who made you a doctor?

JEFFERS

I studied medicine for two years, remember?

UNA

And that qualifies you to diagnose my back pain?

JEFFERS

This does.

He hands her an opened letter.

UNA

Ahh, from my "real" doctor. Opening my mail, I see.

JEFFERS

You think I didn't know already? Why are you trying to hide it?

UNA

What good would it do to have everyone know?

JEFFERS

Because everyone cares about you.

UNA

Exactly. I want everyone to go on with their lives.

(MORE)

UNA (CONT'D)

I want you to go on writing. Don't worry about what you can't control.

JEFFERS

Not worry about you? That's absurd. How can I not worry? You are my life. You have given me everything. All my poetry springs from you. You are my eyes and ears on the world.

He leans over and kisses her cheek.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

What will I do without you?

UNA

(energized)

Go on with life! Enjoy our children and their children. Donnan and Lee and Lindsay and little Una will be living here with you. Garth and Charlotte and Maeve will visit. Walk the hills! Collect stones from the ocean and continue to build our house -- and your poems. Yes I have given you much. Now you must continue on without me. That is my wish.

Jeffers bends lower, laying his head on her breast, still holding her hand. She strokes his hair.

JEFFERS

I do not want to go on without you.

UNA

You must. Remember our agreement. Do not give in to Despair. Go on until you have written all that you can. Until your strong body gives out. You must go on.

He kisses her gently, tenderly.

JEFFERS

What can I do for you? That will make me able to go on.

UNA

Don't let me be a burden on the family. Don't let me distract you from your writing.

JEFFERS

And after?

UNA

After I am gone?

JEFFERS

Yes. What are your wishes?

UNA

No big ceremony. No church. No burial. We agreed long ago on cremation for both of us. When I think of cremation it nearly cancels my fear of death. To rot in the earth is a loathsome end, but to roar in flame! Besides, I am used to it, I have flamed with love and fury so often in my life, no wonder my body is tired, no wonder it is dying. We had great joy of my body, didn't we? Scatter my ashes about our home by the sea. Let me lie there until you join me. Then we will be at peace together.

JEFFERS

Peace. I can only dream of peace. Perhaps I will hurry death along so we can be together sooner.

UNA

No! Do not think such thoughts. Your life is worth living for many years to come. Watch over our boys and their families. Do not follow me too quickly. You do not know what awaits us.

JEFFERS

Earth and air, the beauty of the ocean and the great streaming triumphs of sunsets. Perhaps we live on in the young grasses and flowers and rejoice together when soft rain falls all night.

UNA

You still have the power of words. Put them to good use. Write me well after I am gone.

Una shivers, pulls her shawl closer around her shoulders. Jeffers gets up from the bed and adds wood to the fire.

Taking a shovel from the fireplace tools, he scrapes some of the ashes from the fireplace into a metal bucket. The dust from the ashes floats upward in a shaft of sunlight.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TOR HOUSE GARDEN - DAY

Jeffers' hand dips into an urn, comes out with a handful of powdery gray ash. Jeffers carefully scatters the ash into the soil in the garden of Tor House. His hand rakes the ashes into the garden soil around some blue irises. He scoops out several more handfuls. Repeats the process. Stands up. A sea wind tousles his hair. He looks much older. He scoops a final small handful of dust from the urn, holds it up in front of him and lets the wind take it away to dance in the air.

JEFFERS

You were more beautiful than a hawk
flying; you were faithful, with a
lion's heart. But the ashes have
fallen and the flame has gone up;
nothing human remains.

INT. TOR HOUSE, DOWNSTAIRS BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jeffers sits alone by the window in the room with the "bed by the window" overlooking the sea. The bed next to him is empty. He holds a large glass of wine, drinks from it occasionally. Watches out the window. The sun sets. He sits at the window as the room grows dark.

INT. TOR HOUSE - DAY

Jeffers lies on the bed by the window, staring at the ceiling, still in his funeral clothes, unshaven, looking even older. Sunrise starts to lighten the room. Donnan Jeffers (34) enters the room.

DONNAN

Dad? Are you awake?

JEFFERS

Perhaps.

DONNAN

Can I get you some breakfast?
Coffee?

Jeffers doesn't answer right away. He stares at the ceiling. He lifts his arm and points to the inscription painted on the ceiling.

JEFFERS

You remember where these lines are from?

DONNAN

The ones you painted on the ceiling? From Spencers' The Faerie Queen.

JEFFERS

(reading the words)

"Sleepe after toyle, port after stormie seas, Ease after warre, death after life does greatly please." It's about the Redcrosse knight who, accompanied by the Lady Una, encounters the spirit of Despaire. The spirit almost convinces the knight to kill himself. But the Lady Una tells him that life is worth living. So the knight forgoes suicide and goes on with life.

DONNAN

Is that how you feel now?

JEFFERS

I promised your Mother that I would forgo the easy way out. To wait ten years more or less, before I crawl out on a ledge of rock and die snapping, like a wolf who has lost his mate? I am bound by my own pledge to her: he who drinks the wine should take the dregs; even in bitter lees and sediment new discovery may lie.

He gets up wearily from the bed. Looks out the window for a moment.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

This is the last sight that she gazed upon. She died in my arms, here in this bed, looking out to the sea. May I be so lucky to lay here where she lay, and pass peacefully.

DONNAN

That will be many years from now
Father. Come to breakfast. Look,
your grandson has picked some
flowers for you.

Jeffers smiles.

JEFFERS

Flowers for me?

Donnan turns towards the living room.

DONNAN

Lindsay? Grandpa's awake.

LINDSAY JEFFERS (5) comes in the room, holding a handful of
blue irises. He holds them out to his grandfather.

JEFFERS

Wild blue irises. Your
grandmother's favorite. And mine
too now. Thank you my dear.

LITTLE LINDSAY

Breakfast is ready grandfather. I'm
hungry.

JEFFERS

Well, I guess I am, too.

INT. TOR HOUSE - WRITING DESK - DAY

Jeffers sits at his desk leafing through a pile of papers. He
shakes his head. Sighs. Looks out the window.

JEFFERS

Damn it Una, how am I going to deal
with all these letters without you?

He reads another letter. Picks up another one. Now he has one
in each hand. Looks from one to the other. Shuffles them back
into the pile and throws the whole pile of letters into a box
on the floor.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

That works.

Donnan pokes his head up the stairway.

DONNAN

Dad? Mr. Clapp is here to see you.
He says it's important. Can you
come down?

INT. TOR HOUSE, LIVING ROOM. DAY.

Jeffers descends the stairs to greet TIMMIE CLAPP (50), who paces the small living room, looking worried.

JEFFERS

Timmie, what can I do for you?

TIMMIE CLAPP

Robin, sorry to drop by like this
but we must talk. Have you been
reading the reviews of "The Double
Axe"?

JEFFERS

You know I don't read reviews of my
work. Una use to keep me apprised
of what they were saying. But I
really couldn't care less.

TIMMIE CLAPP

Well, you should. They are
positively vilifying you. You must
respond. You can't let them rant
and rave about your work and not
defend yourself.

JEFFERS

My dear Timmie. The critics have
rarely understood my work, why
should they now? It does not
concern me.

TIMMIE CLAPP

It's not just the critics. Your
fellow poets are howling about your
demise.

JEFFERS

(chuckles)

Yes, they would take the
opportunity to snap at the old wolf
while he is down. But let them. It
means nothing to me.

TIMMIE CLAPP

Not even if they stop printing your
books?

JEFFERS

Random House? Why would they do that?

TIMMIE CLAPP

Business.

JEFFERS

Well, that would be an inconvenience.

TIMMIE CLAPP

Inconvenience? Robin that would be a tragedy. You must speak up.

JEFFERS

What would you have me say? That they are wrong and I am right? I have said it all in my poems. There is nothing else to say. Let them howl. Let them argue. Una would have argued with them, I do not have the strength. I am quits with it.

TIMMIE CLAPP

With writing?

JEFFERS

With what I have written. If there is anything left in me, I will save it for new poems. I will not spend my time or energy on the past.

TIMMIE CLAPP

I knew that would be your response. But I had to try. What can I do to help you Robin? Your friends are here to help.

JEFFERS

And for that I thank you. But there is nothing you can do. Una is gone. Donnan and Lee are taking care of me. I will continue writing and building this house as I have for the last three decades. If the world chooses to ignore me, let them. It hardly matters any more. Perhaps someday the tides will change and people will once again be more open to unpopular political opinions. But I doubt it. More likely it will get worse.

(MORE)

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

Politics is no friend to poetry, or
truth for that matter.

Jeffers and Timmie walk out the front door into the Autumn
sunshine of Carmel.

EXT. TOR HOUSE GARDEN - DAY

TIMMIE CLAPP

Well, you should know that several
of us are forming a group we're
calling Jeffers' Friends. We cannot
stand idly by and leave you
undefended.

JEFFERS

That is noble of you. Certainly if
you wish to pour your time into my
defense I am honored. But you
should know that my poems have
gained a new audience in Europe.
There are several people working on
translations in German, Italian,
and Czech. They are staging Tower
Beyond Tragedy in Berlin next
month. So, you see, while I may
fade away in my own country, there
is hope elsewhere.

TIMMIE

That is great news. Are you are
writing again?

JEFFERS

I'm writing a tribute to Una -- and
to Death. A poem called
Hungerfield, about a man who fights
with Death and wins, to his great
sorrow. Whatever comes of it, it
will likely be my last poem.

TIMMIE

Then I leave you to it. Call us if
you need anything. We are ready to
help in anyway we can.

JEFFERS

I need more stones. There are fewer
suitable stones on the shore below
Tor House for me to use. And my
strength is not what it used to be
to carry them from very far away.

TIMMIE

I will put out the word.

JEFFERS

Then maybe I can finish the house
before I die. A fitting monument to
a reclusive poet, don't you think?
A stone castle at the edge of the
world?

Jeffers slaps the stonework of the house. Timmie gazes up at
Hawk Tower.

JEFFERS (CONT'D)

Climb the tower with me.

TIMMIE

I'd be honored.

EXT. TOP OF HAWK TOWER - SUNSET

Robin and Timmie look out over the western ocean, the sun
beginning its descent.

TIMMIE

God it's beautiful here. I believe
that your home and poems will last
for many years. So write your best.
That will silence the critics.
Isn't Medea still doing well? Are
you not still the darling of
Broadway?

JEFFERS

Judith is. I am just the author.
People do not remember the author.
Only the actors. As it should be.
Too much attention ruins the poet
and the man.

TIMMIE

You are the most stoic,
frustrating, and interesting man I
have ever met. I envy you.

JEFFERS

Envy? Envy someone who has lost
all?

TIMMIE

Hardly "all" old man. Yes you lost
Una. We all lost her. A wonderful
woman.

(MORE)

TIMMIE (CONT'D)

I know how important she was to you -- personally and artistically. But yes, I envy your talent and ability to carry on.

JEFFERS

Una told me to continue on. To write. To finish the house. Her last wishes are the only reason I am still alive and working. It is for her, as it always has been, and always will be. But I cannot be part of the rest of the world now.

TIMMIE

But really, Robin, you cannot stand alone, apart from us, from people. Didn't you say so yourself? "A severed hand is an ugly thing, and man dissevered from the earth and stars, and his history often appears atrociously ugly. Integrity is wholeness, the wholeness of life, the divine beauty of the universe. Love that, not man apart from that."

JEFFERS

Yes I wrote that.

TIMMIE

Then do not abandon us. Do not give up on us.

JEFFERS

But I also wrote:

Turn outward, love things, not men, turn right away from humanity, let that doll lie. Consider 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 God; you will love God and not in vain, For what we love, we grow to it, we share its nature.

TIMMIE

Never argue with a poet.

The two men stand at the edge of the tower, at the edge of the world, watching the sun set.

JEFFERS' GHOST (V.O.)

The days, months, and years after Una's death passed by like fishing boats in the fog: you can hear them, sense them, but you cannot see or know their path. Months were lost to me. For a year I did not write. Instead of words I used stone to compose my life. Placing stone by stone filled my days and helped to focus my pain on something real, something hard. Not soft, like whiskey and wine, which were too often my crutch in those dark days.

INT. HAWK TOWER - UNA'S ROOM - DAWN

JEFFERS' GHOST(V.O.)

Finally, I began to write. But not about war or politics, but of becoming a part of the greater world. I started to take my own advice: that you cannot live as a man apart. All this time I had written about the incestuous nature of man, scorning it as a disease of the world. Yet I too had looked inward -- to my home and family. To seclusion. To poetry. Now I had to look outward from myself, from my own grief. The world is as the world is. I had finally learned from my own poems.

Jeffers' Ghost sets the doll back in its niche but it falls to the floor. He reaches down to pick it up but cannot grasp it. His hand passes through the doll. A look of understanding spreads across his face.

JEFFERS' GHOST

Let that doll lie indeed.

Jeffers' Ghost peers out the window as the frost crystals on the window melt and the pane clears. There is one memory left. One last poem to relive.

In the corner, near the fireplace, is a shadow, blacker than the darkened room. Jeffers eyes the corner with foreboding.

JEFFERS' GHOST (CONT'D)

So you have finally come for me?
 You have taken my Una these past 12
 years. I will not fight you. Take
 me to her. That is all I ask.

The shadow reaches out towards Jeffers. From his dark body comes a stream of spirits, some beautiful, some horrible: a fierce America followed by her mangled husband; Tamar in flames; Medea carrying a dead child. They reach out for Jeffers, fading into the air before him.

DEATH

You have given me so many. Perhaps
 I do not need you. Would you like
 to live forever?

JEFFERS' GHOST

No! I welcome you. Take me to Una.
 Take me where there is no thought,
 or feeling, or pain.

DEATH

That is the way with men. So weak
 at the end. So grateful for my
 gift. So here is my gift to you.

From the folds of his dark cloak floats Una's Ghost. A light unfolds from her and Death fades away. The third clap of thunder of the night rolls across the sky.

UNA'S GHOST

The daemon has struck thrice Robin.
 Now it is time. Come with me, we
 will be here together, forever.

The tower walls behind Jeffers dissolve into a gray fog. Beyond is the sea, the surf glowing turquoise as the sun rises in the east.

UNA'S GHOST (CONT'D)

Come, my poet.

EXT. HAWK TOWER - DAY

Jeffers and Una take hands and walk out onto the tower's stairs from her room, both are spectral in the morning light as they descend into the courtyard.

Above them, the granite gargoyle hawk on the side of the tower changes from stone to a living bird and launches into the air, circling high above the courtyard.

JEFFERS' GHOST (V.O.)

If you should look for this place
after a handful of lifetimes,
Perhaps of my planted forest a few
may stand yet, dark-leaved
Australians or the coast cypress,
haggard with storm-drift; but fire
and axe are devils. Look for
foundations of sea-worn granite, my
fingers had the art to make stone
love stone -- you will find some
remnant. Come in the morning, you
will see white gulls weaving a
dance over blue water, the wane of
the moon, their dance companion, a
ghost walking by daylight, but
wider and whiter than any bird in
the world. My ghost you needn't
look for; it is probably here, but
a dark one, deep in the granite,
not dancing on wind, with the mad
wings and the day moon.

As Jeffers and Una walk out together into the courtyard, they
fade into the morning light, blending into the stones.

The hawk is joined by another hawk and the two raptors dance
in the air in an upward spiral, higher and higher in the
morning light.

Fade to Morning.

THE END