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THE GREAT SHEET

A ROSETTA STONE OF POETICS,
STONEMASORY, AND THE SEEDS OF
ROBINSON JEFFERS'S MATURE VOICE

With the publication of *Tamar and Other Poems* in 1924, Robinson Jeffers set forth a thematic discourse that would span nearly four decades and arguably spark more adulation, controversy, disdain, and ultimately enigma than any other twentieth-century American poet. By embracing a philosophy of eternal recurrence as manifested in the cyclicity of nature, and utilizing a newly discovered tidal-cadence in his poetics, *Tamar* represents the crystallization of Jeffers's mature poetic voice. During the eight years between publication of the pastoral and emulative *Californians* in 1916 and the transformative, controversial and incendiary *Tamar*, Jeffers's work underwent a gradual yet startling change in poetics. The ultimate result of this transformation was the development of his unique tidal rhythm and, with few exceptions, the recurrence of themes and settings in twelve subsequent books of poetry he published before his death in 1962.

The transformation to the poetics of *Tamar* coincided with Jeffers's initiation into stonemasonry, his apprenticeship in the construction of Tor House, and his eventual design and construction of Hawk Tower. In an oft-quoted letter to Lawrence Clark Powell, Jeffers's first biographer, Una Jeffers stated how the construction of Tor House in the summer of 1919 engendered a sort of "kinship" between granite and poet. "Thus at the age of thirty-one there came to him a kind of awakening such as adolescents and religions converts are said to experience" (SL 213).¹

Much has been written on this transformative period, although little direct evidence in the form of dated manuscripts or letters exists in which to contextualize the evolution of Jeffers's poetics during this pivotal period.² Jeffers made a habit of reusing the versos of poems for other subsequent poems and stated in a letter that he had burned the *Tamar* manuscript soon after it was published (SL 52). In this brief

article, I wish to focus on a single manuscript that contains the seeds of Jeffers's future voice, design sketches of the eventual Hawk Tower, and even a few lines about the projected rhythm and cadence of *Tamar*, all from the poet's own hand. I include facsimile copies of the manuscript as well as my transcriptions and a map of the relative chronology of the different workings. This manuscript remains the Rosetta stone for deciphering Jeffers's poetic maturation.

THE GREAT SHEET

In a letter dated 25 November 1925 to his Boni Liveright editor, Donald Friede, Jeffers refers to a "great sheet" that contains "[t]he first germ of the Tamar story, dramatis personae (several of whom were lost or changed in the telling), incidents, metrical indications . . . [t]he first, and final, draft of 'Continent's End' . . . [f]ragments of two other short poems that were never finished. . . . [and] [p]lans for the stairway of a granite tower that I have built with my hands beside the house here" (SL 52).³ In fact, the Great Sheet is a bank ledger detailing the holdings of Jeffers's younger brother Hamilton, from the Los Angeles Trust and Savings Bank, covering the period from 17 January to 17 February 1922. The document measures 13.5 inches by 23 inches and contains on the verso the numerous verse fragments and sketches mentioned above as well as much more. One sketch of a plan view of the stairwell to Hawk Tower measuring 1.75 inches by 1 inch is included on the front side of the ledger. Curiously, this small sketch represents the only fragment on that side even though abundant space exists on the front side for drafting verses or sketches. A full-size facsimile of the Great Sheet is included in this issue.

The artistic and historical significance of the Great Sheet was recognized and succinctly stated by William Everson in his Introduction to *Brides of the South Wind and Other Poems*:

there exists an extraordinary document, perhaps the most significant (certainly the most unique) of all the surviving oddments to escape Jeffers' bemused disinterest—a document long accounted for, indeed, but the relevance of its positive date heretofore going unnoticed. . . . On its reverse side the poet has set down the first, and final, draft of "Continent's End" and beside it, wonder of wonders, he gives terse, suggestively fertile notations to himself for the incipient narrative "Tamar." Among preliminary sketches of Hawk Tower and its interior stairway we see, brought into focus from the confusion of the scribble page, the poet's emergent destiny. Here, early in 1922, Ode, Tower and Narrative float in tremulous suspension, quickening in the cloudy alchemy of creative truth. It is a document almost too naked to touch. A poet's torturous evolution coils on its break-over moment. In its depths we gaze on an astounding birth. (xxxii–xxxiii)

STRUCTURE AND CHRONOLOGY OF WORKINGS
ON THE GREAT SHEET

Transcribing Jeffers's longhand is subjective and in many cases impossible. I have utilized Adobe Photoshop to enhance and magnify the original high-resolution scan and then compared letter and word shape against manuscripts at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at UT Austin and other scholars' transcriptions of Jeffers's autograph manuscripts (e.g., Hunt, *CP* 1–5; Rob Kafka, unpublished transcriptions). For alternative transcriptions of portions, but not all, of the Great Sheet manuscript, consult *CP* 5 (326–38), *Selected Letters* (52–53), and *Brides of the South Wind and Other Poems* (126–27).

For the sake of discussion I have divided the document into three sections, A, B, and C (see facsimile) that follow the folds of the document. These three sections are then divided into ten groups in a plausible relative chronology. Each group is denoted by a number, with 1 representing my conjecture of the earliest fragment and 9 the latest; 10 cannot be placed in the chronology. Note, however, that groups 6 through 9 do not cross the fold that separates section B from section C. Therefore, it is plausible that groups 6 through 9 (and group 10) might precede fragments in sections A and B. However, I follow Hunt's argument that the workings that eventually became "Continent's End" were written before *Tamar* (*CP* 5: 61). Therefore, as I discuss below, Section C likely represents the last set of fragments written on the Great Sheet. Also shown are three sketches of Hawk Tower, two of which may be placed with some accuracy into the numerical relative chronology. I utilize symbols from geologic maps to indicate the relative age difference between two fragments: "Y" = younger, "O" = older. Therefore, a fragment that contains "Y" is interpreted to have been written after the fragment that contains "O." A legend is provided to explain various transcription symbols. The table on the next page outlines a relative chronology of fragments on the Great Sheet.

In observing the manuscript in total, it is reasonable to infer the chronology of and relationship between sections A and B. Section A begins with fragments that link Jeffers's ambivalence about not serving in World War I, the motivations for the war, and construction of the house (Figure 1). Below that, he wrote "The Niobe," perhaps the title of an imagined narrative based on elements of the myth of Niobe, the daughter of Tantalus, whose children were slain and who was turned to stone by Apollo and Artemis for boasting that she was greater than their mother, Leto. This is followed by scratched-out fragmental meditations on the acceptance of war and death.

Table 1. Relative chronology of fragments on the Great Sheet.

Chronology (oldest to youngest)	Group	Comments
1	1, Section A	"Ah miserable ghosts . . ."
2	2, Section A	"The Niobe"
3	3, Section B	Scratched-out fragment; linked to group 2 thematically.
4	4, Section B	"Humanity in a moral sense . . ."
5	5a, Section B	"At the equinox . . ."; this section was written before section 5b, based on the flow of the text as well as the placement of group 5a between group 4 and group 5b.
6	5b, Section B	"The Ocean—the Sea, tentative title for "Continent's End." Section 5b was revised in section 5c.
7	5c, Section A	"The tides are in our veins . . ." Final stanzas of what was to become "Continent's End."
<p>The next sections can be placed in relative chronology with respect to each other, but it cannot be stated with certainty when groups 6–8 were written with respect to the other groups on the sheet because none of the text crosses the fold separating Section B from Section C. Following Hunt (<i>CP</i> 5), I accept that the "Continent's End" workings ("The Ocean—the Sea") were written before <i>Tamar</i>.</p>		
8	6, Section C	"The [] that is not seen . . ."; "The trees of my planting . . ."
9	7, Section C	<i>Tamar</i> plot workings.
10	8, Section C	"Tamar and Lee's rape . . ."; because group 8 appears to be squeezed between groups 6 and 7, I conclude that this plot detail was the last group added to Section C.
>8	9, Section B, dungeon profile	It is not possible to place this sketch of the north side of the dungeon of Hawk Tower into the chronology with any certainty.
?	10, Section C, stairwell sketch	This sketch comes after group 6, otherwise Jeffers would have likely deflected his text around the sketch.

In section B, group 3 represents a telling fragment that seems to link “The Niobe” with themes that are central to *Tamar*. While mostly illegible, the fragment seems to link the “fear” mentioned in groups 1 and 2 with a story about “another girl in a further canyon, the [incestuous] one,” referring to Tamar (Figure 1). This fragment was scratched out by Jeffers but likely predates group 4 and certainly predates groups 5a–c because the latter wrap around the pre-existing group 3 (compare Figures 1, 2, and the fold-out facsimile).

The top of Section B begins with a fragment and a preliminary sketch of the dungeon of Hawk Tower as seen from the north (Figure 2). The fragment that begins “Humanity in a moral sense an exception in the universe” portends lines and themes from *Roan Stallion*, written in 1924. The primary element of section B, however, is the “first and final draft” of what was to become “Continent’s End,” here titled “The Ocean—the Sea” (group 5a and 5b). The verse order is curious in that the autograph text beneath the title (group 5b) is the middle third of the published poem; the bottom portion of Section B, group 5a, is essentially the first third. I have divided group 5 into 3 sub-groups that are lettered based on my interpretation of the chronology of each verse. It is plausible that Jeffers began the verse at 5a, then wrote 5b, and finally the horizontal verse, group 5c, on Section A (Figure 3). This postulation fits the order of the verses in the published poem (*CP* 1: 16–17). Furthermore, group 5b contains a number of the lines from the last four verses of the published poem, but in a less-developed form. Group 5c contains the final three verses of the published poem and includes revised lines from group 5b. Therefore, although the three groups represent all of the verses of the published “Continent’s End,” the poem did undergo some revision between the writing of groups 5b and 5c. Additionally, the lines in group 5b are somewhat anomalous in that they were written in a near-prose form, with no capitalization at the beginning of each line. It is plausible but speculative that Jeffers wrote group 5a in a few minutes, conceptualized the ideas for the latter half of the poem and quickly wrote them down in group 5b, and then re-wrote them in the verse and cadence structure that he began in group 5a. This would suggest an iterative method to his versecraft, at least for this poem, where he would mix prose with poetry to quickly assemble his ideas and themes, and then place them in a cadence and verse structure that fit the poem.

Section C contains three distinct workings that reflect the cornerstone of the document, as they intertwine stone masonry, poetics, and the plot workings for *Tamar* (Figures 4 and 5). The first, group 6, includes the fragment “The trees of my planting . . .” which mentions a great storm that came during the winter solstice and lifted waves over the Tor, ravaged the new trees that Jeffers planted, and left only the

house and the sea wall standing (Figure 4). This verse is separated with a penciled line from a libidinal sequence of verse fragments that involve Jeffers and a female in the dungeon of the yet-to-be-completed Hawk Tower. The next verse begins "The foot of my tower is sunken under ground, it is walled . . . with thick granite. . . ." Following this verse, Jeffers then penciled another line and re-wrote this sequence using six numbered lines. Two more penciled line breaks occur separating two more verses that relate to the same dungeon-captive sequence and end in the lines "I have no jealousy, I have only desire / And a wolf's caution."

The last material to be written in Section C concerns the plot workings, themes, character profiles, and title of *Tamar* (group 7; Figure 5). In addition, notes regarding the verse rhythm are included at the bottom of the *Tamar* workings. There, Jeffers writes "5 beats to the line doubled in a few passages to iambic 10s quickened to anapests, bring in anapests and $\smile \smile \smile$. . . lyrical passages, sometimes broadened to 8s." These brief notes represent a rare glimpse into the poet's methodology and design regarding the rhythm of the long narrative and defy criticisms that Jeffers's verse was undisciplined and prosaic. I conclude that group 7 was written after group 6 because the former appears to fill the space that was constrained by the margins of group 6. Specifically, near the bottom of the group 7 workings, Jeffers penciled in a curving "divide" that separated the lines "Indians, missionaries, old Spanish families and / bandits, Vasquez and [], work in the picture" in group 7 from the previously written lines of group 6.

Group 7 was followed by plot workings in group 8 which include notes regarding the incestuous relationship between Tamar and Lee Cauldwell. The slant of the fragment in group 8 indicates that it was written in the small space between the *Tamar* workings of group 7 and the sequence of racy dungeon fragments that form group 6. Based on this argument, I suggest that the *Tamar* workings are the latest additions to Section C, and for reasons described below, possibly the last written fragments on the Great Sheet.

Sketched on top of verses in group 6 is a detailed plan view of the stairwell of Hawk Tower as well as a more skeletal plan view of the stairwell with a circular (?) turret on top (Figure 4). On the annotated facsimile I have noted the cardinal directions to help orient the reader to the sketch. I interpret the sketch to post-date the verses for the following reason. When Jeffers wrote a line that continued to the edge of available space, he might bend the line into open space, or carry it over to the next line below. Examples of this can be seen throughout the document. Because he did not do this, I contend that the sketch came after the dungeon-captive verses.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE ABSOLUTE CHRONOLOGY
OF POEMS AND SKETCHES ON THE GREAT SHEET

For an extensive account of the absolute chronology of poems written during the 1916–1924 period, the reader should consult volume 5 of the *Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*. My inferences and interpretations about the chronology of poems and sketches presented here are restricted to what can be gleaned from the Great Sheet; therefore, during the interval between 22 February 1922 and April 1924, when *Tamar and Other Poems* was published. In the following discussion I evaluate the known constraints for the initiation of *Tamar*. I then present two hypotheses that attempt to explain the initiation and evolution of *Tamar* and other important workings on the Great Sheet in the context of the relative chronology developed above.

In August of 1923, Jeffers wrote a “Preface” that was intended for a volume titled *Tamar* (CP 4: 379–81; Alberts 17–19). Therefore, the critical period of development must have been after 22 February 1922, and before August of 1923. In a fragmental “Preface” written in June of 1922 for a projected volume of poems, Jeffers wrote

The greatest dramatic poetry in English is not rhymed, the greatest narrative poetry is not rhymed. . . . until quite lately I was unable to discover any rhymeless measure but blank verse that could tell a story flexibly, without excess of monotony. Blank verse I could not use, because it has been so much used by such masters; it carries their impress and inflections. I think I am at length discovering rhymeless narrative measures of my own; but the poems are not finished . . . (CP 4: 376)

In 1933, Jeffers’s first bibliographer, Sidney Alberts, noted the date of the fragmental “Preface” quoted above, and suggested that Jeffers was referring to the yet-to-be-completed *Tamar*. It is probable that the “rhymeless narrative measures” that Jeffers referred to include *Tamar* and/or the early workings of *The Women at Point Sur*, titled *Point Alma Venus* (CP 5: 59). What is known is that *Tamar* was written after 22 February 1922, the end of the period covered by the bank ledger, and prior to the August 1923 “Preface” (CP 5: 59). Tim Hunt suggests that *Tamar* was likely completed by late winter-early spring of 1923 after considering the chronology of other poems contained within *Tamar and Other Poems* (CP 5: 61). In the next sections I explore two possibilities on the initiation of *Tamar*, neither of which can be discarded at this time.

HYPOTHESIS I: *TAMAR* CONCEIVED AND WRITTEN
BETWEEN DECEMBER 1922 AND SUMMER 1923

An intriguing reference in Section C might complicate our understanding of the initiation of the *Tamar* workings. In Section C, group 6, the following verse describes a severe storm that affected the headland at the winter solstice:

The trees of my planting are russet and yellow, they have perished in the wind,
A great wave came at the winter solstice and has taken my garden
From the [brow] of the cliff in the rains of Orion and left bare rock.
Only my stone cliff, only the stone of the house and the stone of the sea-walls
Remain after the storm, delight is escaped, only strength is strong.

In "The Building of Tor House," Donnan Jeffers recounts a Christmas Day storm in 1922 or 1923 that bulged the windows of Tor House and lifted the roof off of the garage and sent it flying "some hundreds of yards into the field below the tor" (115). In perusing the historical weather records of Carmel, California, I have found no mention of a severe storm during the Solstice-Christmas interval for the period between 1920 and 1924. However, it is not implausible that the effects of such a storm were much less destructive in the Carmel Village center, where the Del Monte forest provides a natural wind barrier. Thus, if Donnan's account can be uniquely placed in either 1922 or 1923, and if it is indeed the same storm to which Jeffers refers in the fragment, then it is likely that the winter storm occurred in December of 1922. It is reasonably clear from the line positioning of the fragments in group 7 (the *dramatis personae* for "Tamar") that they were written *after* the fragments in group 6 (containing "the trees of my planting"). Hence, the relative age of different fragments in group 6 are interpreted to indicate that the *Tamar* workings are younger than the description of the solstice storm (as well as the dungeon sequence). Thus it can be inferred that the *Tamar* workings were written in early 1923, after the winter solstice storm of 1922.

This hypothesis is apparently supported by the timing of the construction of Hawk Tower. From an assessment of the pictures of Hawk Tower under construction that are housed in the Tor House Archives, Carmel, California, and the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, at the University of Texas, Austin, it appears that the dungeon and the first floor of Hawk Tower were not completed until late 1922 or early 1923. I infer from "A room at my tower's root is buried in the bed-rock . . . / You can hear there the rumble of the waves but no murmur of the rushing of the wind" that the lines in group 6 were written after the

dungeon was completely walled and had a roof. The detail in this verse implies that the dungeon was completed, rather than open and prone to the roar of the “rushing wind.” This lends credence to the supposition that the plot workings of *Tamar* in group 7 must have been written in early 1923, since they were written *after* the winter solstice storm workings in group 6, and therefore, after the construction of the dungeon and the first floor of Hawk Tower.

HYPOTHESIS 2: TAMAR CONCEIVED AND WRITTEN
BETWEEN MARCH 1922 AND SUMMER 1923

An alternative hypothesis, and one that is implied by Hunt in the *Collected Poetry* (CP 5: 58–62) is that all of the workings on the Great Sheet were completed shortly after the spring equinox of 1922. Given that Donnan would have been between the ages of 5 and 7 when the winter solstice storm struck, it is not inconceivable that he misremembered the date of the winter solstice storm described in group 6. Therefore, the storm might have occurred on the winter solstice of December 1921. If this supposition is correct, then much of what is contained on the Great Sheet was likely written in the early spring of 1922. If “The Ocean—the Sea” was influenced by the spring equinox in March of 1922, as can be inferred from the opening lines (cf. Hunt, CP 5: 61), then it follows that Sections A and B were likely written in March or April of 1922 as well.⁴ Then, in one scenario, a short amount of time passed before Jeffers returned to the folded document, turned it over to expose Section C, and began to write groups 6–8, including the recollection of the winter solstice storm, followed by the *Tamar* workings. At some point later, perhaps as late as early 1923, Jeffers then drew the stairwell sketch.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

A number of questions arise upon considering the chronology and diversity of fragments that are preserved on the Great Sheet. Is it coincidence that the poet sketched the stairwell to the tower on top of the first verses to directly refer to the tower? Given Jeffers’s apparent disinterest in any systematic cataloging of autograph manuscripts, it seems unlikely that he searched out the Great Sheet to sketch the design of Hawk Tower on top of, or next to, a verse about Hawk Tower. Why Jeffers chose to sketch over existing text, rather than in the open space that was available elsewhere on the document or on the front side of the ledger, is open to speculation. It might have been that the ledger was folded along the crease that separates Section B from Section C, and

that the face of Section C was facing up on his desk when the need for a sketch of the stairwell came to mind. If so, this implies a certain hastiness in his thought process or perhaps an indifference to the requirement of a blank piece of paper with plenty of space. Alternatively, and very speculatively, Jeffers's muse might have been intertwining verses concerning the dungeon with the design and construction of the tower. I suggest there is a causal relationship between the verses in group 6 and the sketches of the stairwell. Perhaps Jeffers re-read the verses and was pausing to consider the imaginative sequence in the dungeon and was then struck by some sort of burst of subtle vision of the form and shape of the stairwell. The placement of this sketch on top of the dungeon-captive verses demonstrates the subtle idiosyncrasies of the poet's methods, akin to the intuitive placement of stones in the walls of Hawk Tower.

A group of related questions arise upon considering the chronology. Is there any justification for accepting or rejecting either of the hypotheses for the initiation and completion of *Tamar*? Does the chronology provide any new insights to our understanding of Jeffers's poetics? Following the line of reasoning that I have outlined for hypothesis 1, namely that Jeffers wrote *Tamar* in a brief span of time between about January and June of 1923, it follows that *Tamar* was written in a relatively rapid succession of weeks and months, and that the manuscript must have been completed by summer 1923. This interpretation is in contrast to the current notion that Jeffers wrote *Tamar* soon after the 22 February 1922 date on the bank ledger. However, previous researchers assumed the ledger was mailed to Robinson Jeffers. Because the ledger lists holdings in Hamilton's name, it is less clear when the document came into the possession of the Jeffers household and onto Jeffers's desk as scrap paper.

While it is quite likely that this new interpretation does not realign our understanding of the poetics of Robinson Jeffers, it does provide an intriguing alternative perspective on Jeffers's creative process and sequence. If correct, this chronology implies that at the beginning of 1923, with Hawk Tower well underway and taking coherent shape, Jeffers came into "the zone" of creativity that would spawn in quick succession *Tamar* (1922–23), *The Tower Beyond Tragedy* (1924–25), *Roan Stallion* (1925), the complex and emotionally draining workings that eventually became *The Women at Point Sur* (1920–26), *Cawdor* (1927–28), *Dear Judas* (1928), and *The Loving Shepherdess* (early 1929) (years represent estimates of the dates of composition from Hunt, CP 5). Seven long narratives were created in relatively rapid succession over six years, in addition to the more than 60 published lyrics and meditative shorter pieces that he wrote during this same interval (CP 1: 2).

The alternative hypothesis 2 states that Jeffers began *Tamar* soon after “Continent’s End,” around the spring solstice of 1922. This hypothesis has been suggested by a number of different authors, including Everson and Hunt. An interesting implication of this hypothesis is that the Great Sheet had a protracted history on Jeffers’s desk. The poet might have written the preliminary sketches of the *Tamar* narrative soon after writing the workings in Sections A and B. Then, the document lay fallow until he mailed it to Donald Friede in 1925. This introduces an interesting, minor conundrum. Because the group 6 fragments that concern the dungeon-captive sequence were written before the *Tamar* workings, the former verses must have been written soon after the March 1922 equinox that is described in “The Ocean-the Sea,” and which is interpreted to have been written soon after that date (*CP* 5: 61). Given that it is unlikely that Jeffers had completed the first floor of Hawk Tower by the spring solstice of 1922, I conjecture that the dungeon-captive sequence in group 6 refers to the dungeon as if it were already completed and is therefore a product of his imagination inspired by his ongoing work on the tower. It is exciting to conjecture that the act of placing the stones that made the walls of the dungeon might have directly influenced Jeffers’s imagination ca. 1922, and inspired the verses conceived in group 6.

Based on this chronology, it is not possible to discern how soon after the 1922 winter solstice storm Jeffers began the *Tamar* plot workings. Certainly by spring-summer 1923 the narrative was complete. It follows, then, that *Tamar* might have taken over a year to conceive, germinate, and complete.

Without additional dated manuscripts it is not possible to accept or reject either hypothesis. Both require certain inferences regarding the timing of the poem’s conception and the duration over which Jeffers wrote *Tamar*. What can be taken away from this analysis is a unique glimpse into the composition of foundational works in Jeffers’s career: the meditative themes and tidal rhythms of one of his most sublime lyrics, “Continent’s End,” the plot workings and themes of his most significant narrative, *Tamar*, and the design of Hawk Tower, all enmeshed on a single document.⁵

ENDNOTES

1. Rob Kafka informs me that this famous passage is taken verbatim from a draft written by Jeffers himself, which survives at the Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin. He adds that a number of passages in Una’s letters about Jeffers and his poetry have an identical genesis.

2. See *CP* 5: 244–311. William Everson wrote three extensive introductory essays on the 1916–1924 period in the republication of *Californians* in 1974 and the publication of *The Alpine Christ and Other Poems* in 1973 and of *Brides of the South Wind and Other Poems* in 1974. Tim Hunt’s “The Problematic Nature of *Tamar and Other Poems*” is also a central reference in my attempt to reconstruct the absolute chronology of the *Tamar* workings and the Great Sheet.

3. The document is currently housed in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University.

4. It is plausible that “The Ocean—the Sea” was written after the spring equinox of 1923. While this scenario cannot be ruled out based on the workings of the Great Sheet alone, the arguments based on the chronology of verses for this era outlined by Tim Hunt (*CP* 5: 61) seem to suggest that “The Ocean—the Sea” was written in the spring of 1922, soon after the bank ledger came into Jeffers’s possession.

5. I wish to express my debt and gratitude to Robert Brophy for the graceful way he has encouraged my understanding of Jeffers’s poetry and prose. I also wish to express my deepest gratitude to Rob Kafka for his patience and constant encouragement in continuing with my “night job” of studying and analyzing Jeffers’s manuscripts. The published work of William Everson and Tim Hunt has been my guide through deciphering the chronology of Jeffers’s poetry during the 1916–1924 period and I am indebted to them. I also wish to acknowledge Celeste Yoshinobu for her continued patience with my dual employment as a geoscientist and neophyte Jeffers scholar. This work was supported by a Texas Tech University Big XII Fellowship that allowed me to visit the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas, Austin. I wish to acknowledge the Beinecke Library at Yale University for supplying facsimile reproductions of the Great Sheet, and the Tor House Foundation, particularly Alex Vardamis and Joan Henrickson, for access to the autograph manuscript and photograph archives.

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