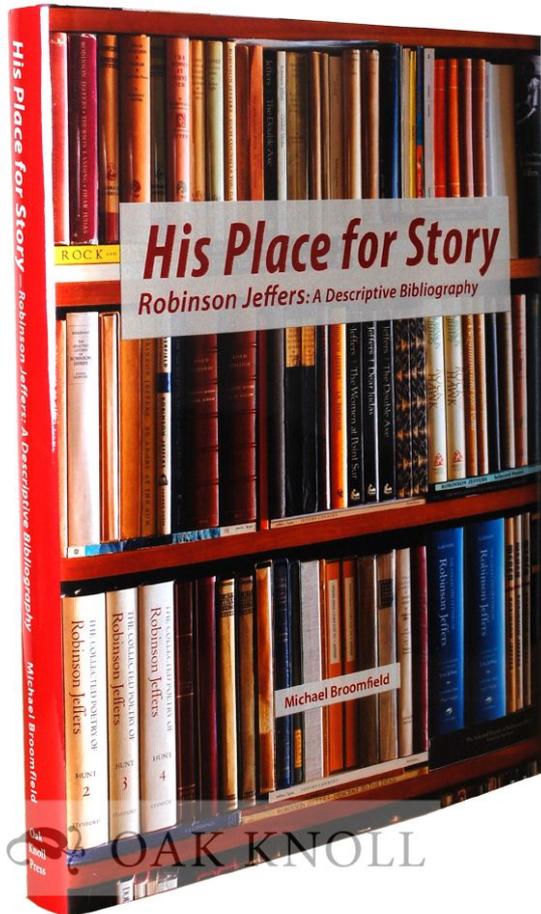


Michael Broomfield. *His Place for Story: Robinson Jeffers: A Descriptive Bibliography*



Michael Broomfield. *His Place for Story: Robinson Jeffers: A Descriptive Bibliography*. New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2015. xxvi, 318p., ill. ISBN 9781584563389. US\$ 75.00.

The bleak poetry of Robinson Jeffers (1887-1962) is an acquired taste. At its best, it attains a stoic lucidity in its lyrical evocations of the coastline of central California – an elemental landscape of rock, wave, wind, and cypress – yet the long narrative poems, violent and tragic, are too often prolix and strained. Jeffers’ readers have been served exceptionally well during the last 30 years by Stanford University Press, which has gradually published spectacular critical editions of his poems and correspondence: Tim Hunt edited the *Collected Poetry* (five volumes, 1988-2001) and a generous volume of *Selected Poetry* (2001), and James Karman edited the *Collected Letters* (three volumes, 2009-15). In addition, *The Wild God of the World* (2003), a judicious selection by Albert Gelpi, makes Jeffers’ verse



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accessible, and perhaps even enjoyable, to non-specialists. The Stanford editions are complemented by the appearance of several recent studies of Jeffers and his works, including *Robinson Jeffers and the American Sublime* by Robert Zaller (Stanford, 2012); *Inventing the Language to Tell It: Robinson Jeffers and the Biology of Consciousness* by George Hart (Fordham University Press, 2013); *Robinson Jeffers: Poet and Prophet* by Karman (Stanford, 2015); and *The Wild That Attracts Us: New Critical Essays on Robinson Jeffers* edited by ShaunAnne Tangney (University of New Mexico Press, 2015). Although Jeffers is not typically considered the equal of the pre-eminent American poets of his time – Eliot, Frost, Moore, Pound, Stevens, Williams – his writing has been expertly tended by faithful editors and commentators.

His Place for Story, Michael Broomfield's bibliography, is a boon to students of Jeffers and the history of literary publishing in California. S. S. Alberts' *A Bibliography of the Works of Robinson Jeffers* (1933) has been out of date for some 80 years, and although in the meantime other information has been provided in various editions and studies, Broomfield's book is the most comprehensive bibliography to date, as well as the most current. It contains detailed bibliographical descriptions of nearly 140 works by Jeffers, including posthumous volumes, and another almost 50 works to which Jeffers made contributions. The works – “published books, pamphlets, broadsides, and other printed materials” (xvii) – span the period from 1912, when *Flagons and Apples* was printed at the author's expense by the Grafton Publishing Company of Los Angeles, to 2015, when the final volume of the *Collected Letters* appeared. *His Place for Story* also includes a preface by Dana Gioia, who calls Jeffers “the greatest poet ... of the American West” (xv); a short introduction by Broomfield; an afterword by Tim Hunt; extensive bibliographical information, compiled by Robert Brophy, concerning Jeffers' individual poems and works in prose; hundreds of images, primarily of covers; and an index of titles and first lines. The compendium is not wholly free of typographical errors, but a preliminary reading suggests that the crucial information is reliable. A disparaging notice in the *Times Literary Supplement* (16 December 2016) failed to observe, I believe, the genuine merits of the book, which every serious reader of Jeffers' verse now requires. Those who admire the power and relevance of Jeffers' austere environmental vision will remain indebted to Broomfield's scholarship, which will guide new assessments of the poet's achievement.



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Nicholas Bradley
University of Victoria