

## **Robinson Jeffers (1887-1962)**

### **Shine, Perishing Republic**

While this America settles in the mould of its vulgarity, heavily thickening to empire  
And protest, only a bubble in the molten mass, pops and sighs out, and the mass hardens,

I sadly smiling remember that the flower fades to make fruit, the fruit rots to make earth.  
Out of the mother; and through the spring exultances, ripeness and decadence; and home to the  
mother.

You making haste haste on decay: not blameworthy; life is good, be it stubbornly long or suddenly  
A mortal splendor: meteors are not needed less than mountains: shine, perishing republic.

But for my children, I would have them keep their distance from the thickening center; corruption  
Never has been compulsory, when the cities lie at the monster's feet there are left the mountains.

And boys, be in nothing so moderate as in love of man, a clever servant, insufferable master.  
There is the trap that catches noblest spirits, that caught – they say – God, when he walked on earth.

(1925)

### **Carmel Point**

The extraordinary patience of things!  
This beautiful place defaced with a crop of suburban houses—  
How beautiful when we first beheld it,  
Unbroken field of poppy and lupin walled with clean cliffs;  
No intrusion but two or three horses pasturing,  
Or a few milch cows rubbing their flanks on the outcrop rockheads—  
Now the spoiler has come: does it care?  
Not faintly. It has all time. It knows the people are a tide  
That swells and in time will ebb, and all  
Their works dissolve. Meanwhile the image of the pristine beauty  
Lives in the very grain of the granite,  
Safe as the endless ocean that climbs our cliff.—As for us:  
We must uncenter our minds from ourselves;  
We must unhumanize our views a little, and become confident  
As the rock and ocean that we were made from.

(1951)