The Beauty of Thing
The World's Wonder
The Old Stonemason
Joy
Final Speech; The Cr
Cassandra: Tower Be
SIDE II

TOWER BEYOND TRAGEDY by Robinson Jeffers

TIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

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SIDE II

Final Speech; Tower Beyond Tragedy / Electra and Ore

Poet's Theatre Series No. 2

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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

TOWER BEYOND TRAGEDY

by Robinson Jeffers

read by Marian Seldes
Poet's Theatre Series No. 2
Producer Scotti D'Arcy

Side !

The Beauty Of Things
The Worlds Wonders
The Old Stonemason
Joy
Final Speech: Cretan Women/Aphrodite
Cassandra/Tower Beyond Tragedy

Side II

Final Scene: Tower Beyond Tragedy/Electra and Orestes

SIDE I

The Beauty Of Things

To feel and speak the astonishing beauty of things -- earth stone and water.

Beast, man and woman, sun, moon and stars -The blood-shot beauty of human nature, its thoughts,
frenzies and passions,

And unhuman nature its towering reality --For man's half dream; man, you might say, is nature dreaming, but rock

And water and sky are constant -- to feel Greatly, and understand greatly, and express greatly, the natural

Beauty, is the sole business of poetry.

The rest's diversion: those holy or noble sentiments, the intricate ideas,

The love, lust, longing: reasons, but not the reason.

The World's Wonders

Being now three or four years more than sixty,
I have seen strange things in my time. I have seen
a merman standing waist-deep in the ocean
off my rock shore.

Unmistakably human and unmistakably a sea-beast:
he submerged and never came up again,
While we stood watching. I do not know what he was,
and I have no theory: but this was the least
of wonders.

I have seen the United States grow up the strongest and wealthiest of nations, and swim in the wind over bankruptcy.

I have seen Europe, the twenty-five hundred years the crown of the world, become its beggar and cripple.

I have seen people, fooled by ambitious men and a froth of sentiment, waste themselves on three wars.

None was required, all futile, all grandly victorious.

A fourth is forming:

I have seen the invention of human fight; a chief desire of man's dreaming heart for ten thousand years;

And men have made it the chief of the means of massacre.

I have seen the far stars weighed and their distance measured, and the powers that make the atom put into service --

For what? -- To kill. To kill half a million flies -- men I should say -- at one slap.

I have also seen doom. You can stand up and struggle or lie down and sleep -- you are doomed as Oedipus.

A man and a civilization grow old, grow fatally -- as we say -- ill: courage and the will are bystanders.

It is easy to know the beauty of inhuman things, sea, storm and mountain; it is their soul and their meaning.

Humanity has its lesser beauty, impure and painful, we have to harden our hearts to bear it.

I have hardened my heart only a little: I have learned that happiness is important, but pain gives importance.

The use of tragedy: Lear becomes as tall as the storm he crawls in; and a tortured Jew became God.

The Old Stonemason

Stones that rolled in the sea for a thousand years Have climbed the cliff and stand stiff-ranked in the house-walls;

Hurricane may spit his lungs out they'll not be moved.

They have become conservative; they remember the endless

Treacheries of ever-sliding water and slimy ambushes

Along the shore; they'll never again give themselves To the tides and the dreams, the popular drift, The whirlpool progress, but stand steady on their hill -- At bay? -- Yes; but unbroken.

I have much in common with these old rockheads.

Old comrades, I too have escaped and stand. I have shared in my time the human illusions, the muddy foolishness

And craving passions, but something thirty years ago pulled me

Out of the tide-wash; I must not even pretend To be one of the people. I must stand here Alone with open eyes in the clear air growing old, Watching with interest and only a little nausea The cheating shepherds, this time of the demagogues

and the docile people, the shifts of power, And the pitiless general wars that prepare the fall; But also the enormous unhuman beauty of things;

rock, sea and stars, fool-proof and permanent, The birds like yachts in the air, or beating like

hearts

Along the water; the flares of sunset, the peaks of Point Lobos:

And hear at night the huge waves, my drunken quarrymen

Climbing the cliff, hewing out more stones for me To make my house. The old granite stones, those are my people:

Hard heads and still wits but faithful, not fools, not chatterers;

And the place where they stand today they will stand also tomorrow.

Joy

Though joy is better than sorrow joy is not great; Peace is great, strength is great. Not for joy the stars burn, not for joy the vulture Spreads her gray sails on the air Over the mountains; not for joy the worn mountain Stands, while years like water Trench his long sides. "I am neither mountain nor bird Nor star; and I seek joy."

The weakness of your breed: yet at length quietness Will cover those wistful eyes.

Final Speech: Cretan Woman

Aphrodite

(laughing) We are not extremely sorry for the woes of men.

We laugh to heaven. We that walk on Olympus and the steep sky, And under our feet the lighting barks like a dog: What we desire, we do (she smiles) I am the power of Love

(she stands smiling and considering) In future days men will become so powerful That they seem to control the heavens and the earth, They seem to understand the stars and all science --Let them beware. Something is lurking hidden. There is always a knife in the flowers. There is always a lion just beyond the firelight. (her light dims out and she vanishes. The Scene is all dark.)

Excerpts from Tower Beyond Tragedy

Cassandra:

If anywhere in the world Were a tower with foundations, or a treasurechamber

With a firm vault, or a walled fortress That stood on the years, not staggering, not

As the mortar were mixed with wine for water And poppy for lime; they reel, they are all drunkards,

The piled strengths of the world: no pyramid In bitter Egypt in the desert But skips at moonrise; no mountain Over the Black Sea in awful Caucassus

But whirls like a young kid, like a bud of the herd, Under the hundredth star: I am sick after steadfastness

Watching the world cataractlike Pour screaming onto steep ruins: for the wings of prophecy

God once my lover give me stone sandals Planted on stone: he hates me, the God, he will never

Take home the gift of the bridleless horse The stallion, the unbitted stallion: the bed Naked to the sky on Mount Ida, The soft clear grass there, Be blackened forever, may vipers and Greeks In that glen breed Twisting together, where the God Come golden from the sun Gave me for a bride - gift prophecy and I took it for a treasure:

I a fool, I a maiden, I would not let him touch me though love of him maddened me

Till he feed me that posion, till he planted that fire in me, The girdle flew loose then.

The queen considered this rock, she gazed on the

great stone blocks of Mycenae's acropolis; Monstrous they seemed to her, solid they appeared to her, safe rootage for monstrous deeds: Ah fierce one

Who knows who laid them for a snare? What people in the world's dawn breathed on chill air and the vapor

Of their breath seemed stone and has stood and you dream it is established? These also are a foam on the stream

Of the falling of the world: there is nothing to lay hold on:

No crime is a crime, the slaying of the King was a meeting of two bubbles on the lip of the cataract,

One winked ... and the killing of your children would be nothing: I tell you for a marvel that the earth is a dancer,

The grave dark earth is less quiet than a fool's

That old one, spinning in the emptiness, blown by no wind in vain circles, light - witted and a dancer.

O fair roads north where the land narrows

Over the mountains between the great gulf,
O that I too with the King's children
Might wander northward hand in hand.
Mine are worse wanderings:
They will shelter on Mount Parnassus,
For me there is no mountain firm enough,
The storms of light beating on the headlands,
The storms of music undermine the mountains,
they stumble and fall inward,
Such music the stars

Make in their courses, the vast vibration Plucks the iron heart of the earth like a harp-string. Iron and stone core, O stubborn axle of the earth,

you also
Dissolving in a little time like salt in water,
What does it matter that I have seen Macedon

What does it matter that I have seen Macedon
Roll all the Greek cities into one billow and strand
in Asia
The anthers and bracts of the flower of the world?

That I have seen Egypt and Nineveh
Crumble, and a Latian village
Plant the earth with Javelins? It made laws for all

men, it disolved like a cloud.

I have also stood watching a storm of wild swans

Rise from one river-mouth ... O force of the earth rising,

O fallings of the earth: forever no rest, not forever From the wave and the trough, from the stream and the slack, from growth and decay: O vulture --

Pinioned, my spirit, one flight yet, last, longest, unguided,

Try into the gulf,

Over Greece, over Rome, you have space O my spirit for the years

II

Are not few of captivity: how many have I stood here Among the great stones, while the Queen's people Go in and out of the gate, wearing light linen For summer and the wet spoils of wild beasts In the season of storms: and the stars have changed, I have watched

The grievous and unprayed-to constellations
Pile steaming spring and patient autumn
Over the enduring walls: but you over the walls of
the world,

Over the unquieted centuries, over the darknesshearted

Millenniums wailing thinly to be born, O vulture - pinioned

Try into the dark,

Watch the north spawn white bodies and red-gold hair,

Race after race of beastlike warriors; and the cities Burn, and the cities build, and new lands be uncovered In the way of the sun to his setting ... go on farther, what what profit

In the wars and the toils? but I say

Where are prosperous people my enemies are, as you pass them

O my spirit

Curse Athens for the joy and the marble, curse Corinth

For the wine and the purple, and Syracuse For the gold and the ships; but Rome, Rome, With many destructions for the corn and the laws and the Javelins, the insolence, the threefold
Abominable power: pass the humble
And the lordships of darkness, but far down
Smite Spain for the blood on the sunset gold, curse
France

For the fields abounding and the running rivers, the lights in the cities, the laughter, curse England

For the meat on the tables and the terrible gray ships, for old laws, far dominions, there remains

A mightier to be cursed and a higher for malediction When America has eaten Europe and takes tribute of Asia, when the ends of the world grow aware of each other

And are dogs in one kennel, they will tear
The master of the hunt with the mouths of the pack:
 new fallings, new risings, O Winged one
No end of the fallings and risings? An end shall
 be surely,

Though unnatural things are accomplished, they breathe in the sea's depth,

They swim in the air, they bridle the cloud - leaper lightning to carry their messages:

Though the eagles of the east and the west and the falcons of the north were not quieted, you have seen a white cloth

Cover the lands from the north and the eyes of the lands and the claws of the hunters,

The mouths of the hungry with snow

Were filled, and their claws

Took hold upon ice in the pasture, a morsel of ice was their catch in the rivers,

That pure white quietness

Waits on the heads of the mountains, not sleep but death, will the fire

Of burnt cities and ships in that year warm you my enemies?

The Frost, the old frost,

Like a cat with a broken - winged bird it will play with you,

It will nip and let go; and will say it is gone, but the next

Season it increases: O clean, clean,

White and most clean, colorless quietness.

Without trace, without trail, without stain in the garment, drawn down

From the poles to the girdle ... I have known one Godhead

To my sore hurt: I am growing to come to another:
O Grave and kindly

Last of the lords of the earth, I pray you lead n y substance

Speedily into another shape, make me grass, Death, make me stone,

Make me air to wander free between the stars and the peaks; but cut humanity

Out of my being, that is the wound that festers in me, Not captivity, not my enemies: you will heal the earth also,

Death, in your time; but speedily Cassandra.

SIDE II

Final Scene: Electra and Orestes

Electra (at the door) Oh! You are safe, you are

well! Did you think I could be sleeping?
But it is true,

I have slept soundly. Come, come.

Orestes A fellow in the forest
Told me you'd had the stone scrubbed . . . I mean,
that you'd entered the house, received as
Agamemnon's daughter

In the honor of the city. So I free to go traveling have come with

--what's the word, Electra?--Farewell. Have come to bid you farewell.

Electra It means -- you are going somewhere? Come into the house, Orestes, tell me ...

Orestes
The cape's rounded. I have not shipwrecked.

Electra Around the rock
we have passed safely in the hall of this
house.

The throne in the hall, the shining lordship of Mycenae.

Orestes

the open world, the sea and its wonders.

You thought the oars raked the headland in the great storm -what, for Mycenae?

Electra Not meanest of the Greek cities:

Whose king captained the world into Asia. Have you suddenly become ... a God, brother, to over-vault

Agememon's royalty? O come in, come in. I am cold, cold.

I pray you.

Orestes Fetch a cloak, porter.

If I have outgrown the city a little - I have earned it. Did you notice, Electra, she caught at the sword.

As the point entered: the palm of her right hand was slashed to the bone before the mercy of the point

Slept in her breast: the laid-open palm it was that undermined me... Oh, the cloak. It's a blond night.

We'll walk on the stones: no chill, the stars are mellow. If I dare remember

Yesterday ... because I have conquered, the soft fiber's burnt out.

Electra You have conquered: possess: enter the house,
Take up the royalty.

Orestes You were in my vision to-night in the forest, Electra, I thought I embraced you More than brotherwise ... possessed you call it ... entered the fountain --

Electra Oh, hush. Therefore you would not kill her!

Orestes

I killed. It is foolish to darken things with words.

I was here, she there, screaming. Who

if not I?

Electra

The hidden reason: the bitter kernel of your mind that has made you mad: I that learned strength
Yesterday, I have no fear.

Orestes Fear? The city is friendly and took
You home with honor, they'll pay
Phocis his wage, you will be quiet.

Electra Are you resolved to understand nothing, Orestes?

I am not Agamemnon, only his daughter. You are Agamemnon.

Beggars and the sons of beggars
May wander at will over the world, but Agamemon
has his honor and high Mycenae
It is not to be cast.

Orestes Mycanae for a ship: who will buy kingdom
And sell me a ship with oars?

Electra Dear: listen. Come to the parapet
where it hanges over the night:
The ears at the door hinder me. Now, let the
arrow-eyes stars hear, the night, not men,

as for the Gods

No one can know them, whether they be angry or pleased, tall and terrible, standing apart,

When they make signs out of the darkness ... I cannot tell you.
... You will stay here, brother?

Orestes

I'll go

To the edge and over it. Sweet sister, if you've
got a message for them, the dark ones?

Electra You do not mean
Death: but a wandering; what does it matter what
you mean?

I know two ways and one will quiet you. You shall choose either.

Orestes But I am quiet. It is more regular than a sleeping child's: be untroubled, Yours burns, it is you trembling.

Electra Should I not tremble? It is only a little to offer.
But all that I have.

Orestes Offer?

Electra It is accomplished: My father is avenged: the fates and the body of Electra

Are nothing. But for Agamemnon to rule in Mycenae: that is not nothing. O my brother

You are Agamemnon: rule: take all you will: nothing is denied you. The Gods have redressed evil And clamped the balance.

Orestes No doubt they have done what they desired.

yours? I will not suffer her

Justly punished to dog you over the end of the world. Your desire? Speak it openly, Orestes.

She is to be conquered: if her ghost were present on the stones

-let it hear you. I will make war on her With my life, or with my body.

Orestes What strange martyrdom, Electra, what madness for sacrifice

Makes your eyes burn like two fires on a watchtower, though the night darkens?

What you want you shall have: Electra And rule in Mycenae. Nothing, nothing is denied you. If I knew which of the two choices

Would quiet you, I would do and not speak, not ask you. Tell me, tell me. Must I bear all the burden.

I weaker, and a woman? You and I were two hawks quartering the field for living flesh Orestes,

Under the storm of memory

Of Agamemnon: we struck: we tore the prey, that dog and that woman. Suddenly since vesterday

You have shot up over me and left me. You are Agamemnon, you are the storm of the living presence, the very King, and I, lost wings

Under the storm, would die for you ... You do not speak yet? ... Mine to say it all? ... You know me a maiden, Orestes,

You have always been with me, no man has even touched my cheek.

It is not easy for one unmarried And chaste, to name both choices. The first is easy. That terrible dream in the forest:

if fear of desire Drives you away: it is easy for me not to be. I never have known

Sweetness in life: all my young days were given--

I thought to be silent was better, And understand you: Afterwards I'll speak.

Electra - to the noise of blood crying for blood, a crime to be punished,

A house to be emptied: these things are done: and now I am lonely, and what becomes of me is not important.

There's water, and there are points and edges, pain's only a moment: I'd do it and not speak, but nobody knows

Whether it would give you peace or madden you again, I'd not be leagued with that bad woman against you,

And these great walls sit by the crater, terrible desires blow through them. O brother I'll never blame you,

I share the motherhood and the fatherhood, I can conceive the madness, if you desire to near

The fountain: tell me: I also love you: not that way, but enough to suffer. What needs to be done

To make peace for you, tell me. I shall so gladly die to make it for you: or so gladly yield you

What you know is maiden. You are the King; have all your will: only remain in steep Mycenae,

In the honor of our father. Not yet: do not speak yet. You have said it not

Remorse drives you away: monsters require monsters, to have let her live a moment longer

Would have been the crime: therefore it cannot be but desire drives you: or the fear of desire: dearest,

It is known horror unlocks the heart, a shower of things hidden: if that which happened yesterday unmasked

A beautiful brother's love and showed more awful eyes in it: all that our Gods require is courage.

Let me see the face, let the eyes pierce me. What, dearest? Here

In the stiff cloth of the sacred darkness Fold over fold hidden, above the sleeping city, By the great stones of the door, under the little golden falcons that swarm before dawn up yonder.

In the silence ... must I dare to woo you, I whom man never wooed? to let my hand glide under the cloak.

... O you will stay! these arms Making so soft and white a bond around you...I also begin to love - that way, Orestes,

Feeling the hot hard flesh move under the loose cloth, shudder against me...Ah, your mouth, ah,

The burning - kiss me --

We shall never ascend this mountain. Orestes So it might come true: we have to be tough against them,

Our dreams and visions, or they true themselves into flesh, It is sweet: I faint for it: the old stones here

Have seen more and not moved. A custom of the house. To accept you, little Electra, and go my journey

To-morrow: you'd call cheating. Therefore: we shall not go up this mountain dearest, dearest,

Tonight nor ever. It's Clytemnestra in you. But the dead are a weak tribe. If I had

Agamemnon's We'd live happy sister and lord it in Mycenae -- be a king like the others -- royalty and incest

Run both in the stream of the blood. Who scrubbed the stones there?

Electra Slaves. O fire burn me! Enter and lay waste.

Deflower, trample, break down, pillage the little city,

Make what breach you will, with flesh or a spear, give it to the spoiler. See, as I tear the garment.

What if I called it cheating? Be cruel and treacerous.

I'll run my chances On the bitter mercies of to-morrow.

Bitter they would be. No.

Electra It's clear

that for this reason You'd sneak out of Mycenae and be lost outward.

Taste first bite the apple, once dared and tried

Desire will be not terrible. It's doglike to run off whining. Remember it was I that urged

Yesterday's triumph. You: life was enough: let them live. I drove

on, burning, your mind, reluctant metal, I dipped it in fire and forged it sharp, day after day I beat and burned against you, and forged

A sword: I the arm. Are you sorry it's done? Now again with hammer and burning hear I beat against you,

You will not be sorry. We two of all the world, we

Are fit for each other, we have so wrought ... O eyes scorning the world, storm-feathered hawk my hands

Caught out of the air and made you a king over this rock. O are with the gold helve, O star

Alone over the storm, beacon to men over blown seas, you will not flee fate, you will take

What the Gods give. What is a man not ruling? An ant in the hill: ruler or slave the choice is,

--Or a runaway slave, your pilgrim portion, buffeted over the borders of the lands, publicly

Whipped in the cities. But you, you will bind the north-star on your forehead, you will stand up in Mycenae

Stone and a king.

Orestes I am stone enough, not to be changed by words, nor by the sweet and burning flame of

Beautiful Electra.

Well then: we've wasted our night. See, there's the morning star I might have draggled into a metaphor of you. A

fool: a boy: no king.

Orestes It would have been better To have parted kindlier, for it is likely We shall have no future meeting.

You will let this crime (the God commanded) that dirtied the old stones here

Make division forever?

Not the crime, the wakening. That deed is past, it is finished, things past Make no division afterward, they have no power,

they have become nothing at all: this much I have learned at a crime's knees.

Electra Yet we are divided.

Orestes Because I have suddenly awakened, I will not waste inward

Upon humanity, having found a fairer object.

Electra Some nymph of the field? I knew this coldness Had a sick root: a girl in the north told me about

the hill - shepherds who living in solitude

Turn beast with the ewes, their oreads baa to them through the matted fleece and they run mad, what madness Met you in the night and sticks to you?

I left the madness of the house, to-night in the dark, with you it walks yet.

How shall I tell you what I have learned? Your mind is like a hawk's or like a lion's this knowledge

Is out of the order of your mind, stranger language. To wild beasts and the blood of kings A verse blind in the book.

At least my eyes can see dawn graying; tell and not mock me, our moment Dies in a moment.

Orestes Here is the last labor To spend on humanity. I saw a vision of us move in the dark: all that we did or dreamed of Regarded each other, the man pursued the woman,

the woman clung to the man, warriors and kings

Strained at each other in the darkness, all loved or fought inward, each one of the lost people Sought the eyes of another that another should

praise him; sought never his own but another's; the net of desire

Had every nerve drawn to the center, so that they writhed like a full draught of fishes, all matted In the one mesh; when they look backward they see only a man standing at the beginning,

Or forward, a man at the end; or if upward, men in the shining bitter sky striding and feasting, Whom you call Gods ...

It is all turned inward, all your desires incestuous, the woman the serpent, the man the rose-red cavern,

Both human, worship forever ...

Electra You have dreamed wretchedly.

Orestes I have seen the dreams of the people and not dreamed

As for me, I have slain my mother.

Electra No more?

Orestes And the gate's open, the gray boils over the mountains, I have greater

Kindred then dwell under a roof, didn't I say this would be dark to you? I have cut the meshes

And fly like a freed falcon. To-night, lying on the hillside, sick with those visions, I remembered

The knife in the stalk of my humanity; I drew and it broke;

I entered the life the brown forest And the great life of the ancient peaks, the patience of stone,

I felt the changes in the veins

In the throat of the mountain, a grain in many centuries, we have our own time, not yours; and I was the stream

Draining the mountain wood; and I the stag drinking; and I was the stars,

Boiling with light, wandering alone, each one the lord of his own summit; and I was the darkness

Outside the stars, I included them, they were part of me. I was mankind also, a moving lichen On the check of the round stone ... they have not

made words for it, to go behind things, beyond hours and ages,

And be all things in all time, in their returns and passages, in the motionless and timeless center,

In the white of the fire ... how can I express excellence

I have found, that has no color but clearness; No honey but ecstasy; nothing wrought nor remembered; no undertone nor silver second murmur

That rings in love's voice, I and my loved are one; no desire but fulfilled; no passion but peace,

The pure flame and the white, fierier than any passion; no time but spheral eternity, Electra, Was that your name before this life dawned -

Here is mere death. Electra Death like a triumph I'd have paid to keep you A king in high Mycenae; but here is shameful death, to die because I have lost you. They'll say Having done justice Agamemnon's son ran mad and was lost in the mountain; but Agamemnon's daughter

Hanged herself from a beam of the house: O beautiful hands of justice! This horror draws upon me

Like stone walking.

What fills men's mouths is nothing; and Orestes your threat is nothing, I have fallen in love outward.

If I believe you -- it is I then am like a stone walking.

I can endure Electra

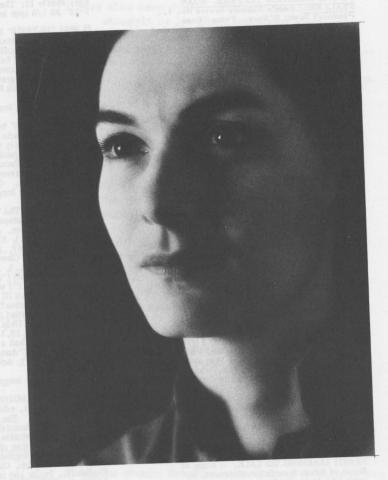
even to hate you, But that's no matter. Strength's good. You are lost. I here remember the honor of the house, and Agamemnon's.

She turned and entered the ancient house. Orestes walked in the clear dawn; men say that a serpent

Killed him in high Arcadia. But young or old, few years or many, signified less than nothing To him who had climbed the tower beyond time, consciously, and cast humanity, entered the earlier fountain.

Marian Seldes

Marian Seldes has appeared with Judith Anderson in Robinson Jeffers' "Medea", "The Tower Beyond Tragedy," and "Come Of Age." She has acted with Katharine Cornell in "That Lady" and Sir John Gielgud in "Crime and Punishment." She played opposite George C. Scott in "The Wall" and with Henry Fonda in "A Gift Of Time." She is a graduate of the Neighborhood Playhouse of the Theatre. This is her second album for the Poet's Theatre Series for Folkways, the first being Robinson Jeffers' "Roan Stallion."



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