

The Bloody Sire

By Robinson Jeffers

It is not bad. Let them play.
Let the guns bark and the bombing-plane
Speak his prodigious blasphemies.
It is not bad, it is high time,
Stark violence is still the sire of all the world's values.

What but the wolf's tooth whittled so fine
The fleet limbs of the antelope?
What but fear winged the birds, and hunger
Jewelled with such eyes the great goshawk's head?
Violence has been the sire of all the world's values.

Who would remember Helen's face
Lacking the terrible halo of spears?
Who formed Christ but Herod and Caesar,
The cruel and bloody victories of Caesar?
Violence, the bloody sire of all the world's values.

Never weep, let them play,
Old violence is not too old to beget new values.

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Source: *The Selected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers* (Stanford University Press, 2001)



Although closely associated with the California coast, Jeffers was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and spent much of his boyhood at boarding schools in Europe. His father, a stern Presbyterian minister and professor of the Old Testament, trained Robinson in Greek and Latin. Once shunned for his unpopular political views and harsh critiques of mankind's egotism, Robinson Jeffers has regained popularity in recent years as environmentalism's most forceful poet-advocate. His uncompromising work celebrates the enduring beauty of sea, sky and stone and the freedom and ferocity of wild animals in contrast to human pettiness, meddling and greed.

