

The Answer *

by Robinson Jeffers

Then what is the answer?- Not to be deluded by dreams.

To know that great civilizations have broken down into violence,

and their tyrants come, many times before.

When open violence appears, to avoid it with honor or choose

the least ugly faction; these evils are essential.

To keep one's own integrity, be merciful and uncorrupted

and not wish for evil; and not be duped

By dreams of universal justice or happiness. These dreams will

not be fulfilled.

To know this, and know that however ugly the parts appear

the whole remains beautiful. A severed hand

Is an ugly thing and man dissevered from the earth and stars

and his history... for contemplation or in fact...

Often appears atrociously ugly. Integrity is wholeness,

the greatest beauty is

Organic wholeness, the wholeness of life and things, the divine beauty

of the universe. Love that, not man

Apart from that, or else you will share man's pitiful confusions,

or drown in despair when his days darken.