

Conversations With William Everson

~ poet and printer ~

at Kingfisher Flats near Swanton, California

Recorded, transcribed, compiled and edited by Frances Tompkins.

“I Found My Master”

(Robinson Jeffers)

FRANCES: Was your poetry as strong from the very beginning?

EVERSON: No. I found Jeffers, and that's what made the difference. There's kind of a shift in the center of gravity within the self when you find your master. Everything that happened before ... you're rubbing your head ... and suddenly you find out what it's supposed to sound like.

FRANCES: Did you ever meet him?

EVERSON: Best thing I ever did was not to meet Jeffers. It wouldn't have worked. He hated disciples and I couldn't go as anything less. [Pause.] When you meet your master, you bring too much to bear. You have him on a pedestal and he can never ... they become impatient with you. He doesn't want to bother with ... you're too naive. When these young college kids come to me, for instance, make a master out of me, I find myself kind of brushing them off.

FRANCES: You never brushed me off.

EVERSON: Yeah but you didn't come to me as a master. So that's the difference.

FRANCES: I don't do that with anybody. But I recognized you.

EVERSON: We recognized each other.