

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.**

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