

Jeffers was born in Australia, but he and his wife grew up in Belfast, where a portion of their families still live. As a child, Jeffers was more interested in "playing in the streets and getting dirty and climbing trees and digging holes" than books. But he always loved to draw. While the family was watching TV, "I was drawing pictures", he says.

He was one of four brothers, but the house wasn't noisy. His mother, who died 17 years ago, was bedridden with multiple sclerosis. "I think that changed the tone of the house. Not in ways that you would expect. There wasn't a sadness or anything like that. But her room became the centre, the hub. We didn't shy away from that, but I think we intuitively had a little more respect for the home setting." He drew in the kitchen, outside her room, always showing her the drawings.

While Jeffers and his family now live in New York, they keep a place in Belfast. To Harland, they refer to these as "his Brooklyn home and his Belfast home". At two, he has a Northern Irish accent. "But that'll change once he goes to school," Jeffers says. "And we don't want to become one of these Americans in years to come who says" - he adopts an American accent - "I'm from Ireland."

Retrieval

- 1) Where did Jeffers grow up ?
- 2) What did Jeffers always love as a child ?

Words in context

- 3) **Find and copy a word** which means 'forced to stay in bed by sickness or weakness'.

Inference

- 4) Why did his mother's room become the centre of the house ?
- 5) Why has Harland been told he has a Brooklyn home and a Belfast home ?