

# Tor House Newsletter



Winter 2019

## *A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT*

Dear Members and Friends of the Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation,

We passed the Century anniversary in grand style. The Garden Party (May 5), organized by docent Dan Jansen, was well attended and, as usual, introduced several “first time” visitors to Tor House. The garden is beautiful; our 100-year-old buildings, which require considerable on-going preservation work, are in good repair and we are marching forward into the next 100 years.

Fall Festival (Oct 4-6) was highlighted by an innovative Sunset Celebration. Docent/Admin Assistant Erin Carey performed an aerial ballet just outside the sea gate accompanied by music on the Steinway by Melinda Coffey Armstead and Jeffers poetry recited by Taelen Thomas. Thunderous applause! Erin and Taelen also performed at Saturday forums.

Melinda has introduced a new tour option: The Musical Tour of Tor House. A short tour of Tor House is followed by a concert on the Steinway. These tours are very popular and sell-out quickly.

In May the National Trust for Historic Preservation conducted a site visit and we were commended for husbanding the property. On the horizon, Trustee Gere diZerega and Emily Williams continue the quest for National Historic Landmark status. This is a laborious process and we thank Gere and Emily for their un-tiring work.

Two long-serving volunteers, Jo Rogers and Al Giovanni have retired. Jo, our longest serving volunteer, has been with us for 34 years and has worked as a tour docent, office assistant, garden party organizer and, most noteworthy, hospitality chairman for Sunset Celebrations and special events. Well Done, Jo, and Thank Yvou!

Al Giovanni has served for twenty years. Al’s accomplishments include: Trustee, Docent, masonry and stonework projects to include: garage floor, brick and stone walkways, Gargoyle replacement and most notably Unicorn replacement above Una’s room in the Tower. Well Done Al and Thank you!

Aaron Yoshinobu, Professor of Geosciences at Texas Tech University, is joining the Foundation Board of Trustees. Aaron, originally from Pacific Grove, completed his studies at the University of Southern California and has been, for many years, researching the geology of Tor House. Welcome aboard.

Thank you as well to Docents completing service milestones: Five years: Dan Jensen, Jennie Hendrickson, Jean Widaman; Ten Years: Lynn Yaghoubian; Fifteen Years: Elise Rotchford, Stuart Crymes; Twenty Years: Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts. Elliot also continues to manage the Poetry Prize.

As has been our custom at this time of year, we ask for your continued financial support. Tour admissions and book sales do not meet the budget. We NEED your continued Foundation Membership, and an extra gift is appreciated beyond measure. We have maintenance/preservation tasks outside the budget that include: water heater replacement, upgrading administrative office and replacing carpets in library and docent office. Anything you can do to assist will be greatly appreciated!

This is my last Newsletter. I am resigning as President of the Tor House Foundation effective December 31. Thank you for your friendship and encouragement and your support of Tor House these past ten years. It has been an honor and privilege to serve you.

Holiday Greetings from myself and Erin. Your questions, comments and visits are always welcome.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Vince Huth, President.

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Yes, I would like to support the work of the Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation. Please find enclosed my tax-deductible contribution of \_\_\_\_\_.

My gift is in honor of [optional] \_\_\_\_\_.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

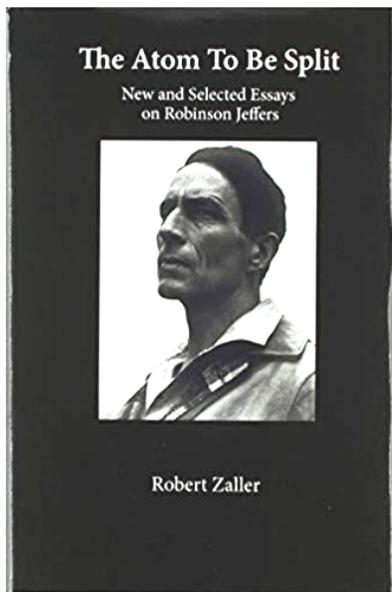
## Tor House Press

The Tor House Press will be familiar to many *Newsletter* readers as an imprint sometimes used by the Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation for occasional publishing. Robert Zaller's new book—*The Atom To Be Split: New and Selected Essays on Robinson Jeffers*—is the latest book to bear this imprint, thus marking the renewal of its use.

This publishing project arose from a discussion within a group of Tor House trustees in response to Robert Zaller's worries about finding an appropriate home for his new collection of Jeffers essays. These worries were not without some basis in the increasing difficulties faced by scholarly publishers in the humanities and especially by university presses—difficulties produced by market changes and by increasing pressures on subsidy support and library budgets. (The latter has encouraged many academic libraries to shift their emphasis away from collection development toward facilitating interlibrary loans and online access.)

New digital printing technologies, however, have opened up new possibilities—one of which, printing on demand, has enabled the Tor House Press to undertake this latest project, its most substantial to date. Printing on demand solves a leading problem long experienced by scholarly publishers: the impossibility of accurately predicting sales. It also solves the related problem of tying up substantial capital in book inventory that might not ever sell, a common result of succumbing to the temptation of taking advantage of low run-on costs during an initial printing. With print-on-demand publishing, warehousing costs are eliminated; and no printing or binding costs are incurred until a book is actually ordered by a customer—at which point the unit manufacturing costs are simply deducted from the sales revenue.

This is not a way to make lots of money in publishing, thanks to very narrow margins; and it's unattractive for major commercial publishers who count on multiple large print runs to meet demand. But it supplies a comparatively risk-free way to undertake intellectually and culturally valuable publishing for relatively specialized audiences—a description that aptly fulfills Tor House's mission. This kind of publishing works especially well when the start-up costs can be covered or greatly diminished (primarily the costs of copyediting, design, typesetting, and proofreading). In the case of this book by Robert Zaller, the author's son designed the cover and dustjacket; the author was largely responsible for proofreading and entirely responsible for providing a text that did not require professional copyediting; and the interior design and conversion of the text files into typeset pages were undertaken by a volunteer. Finally, a kind donation by a trustee covered the costs of paying for review and gratis copies, along with the time spent at Tor House handling various details required by the print-on-demand company.

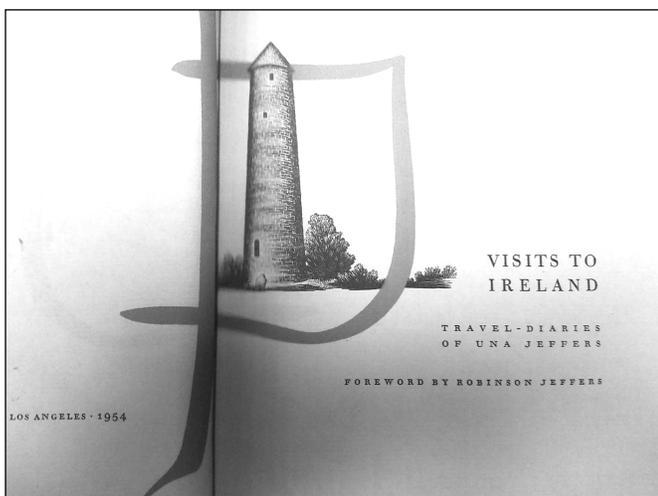


*The Atom To Be Split* runs to 562 pages including front-matter and index. It is available from Amazon and can be purchased by visitors at the Tor House giftshop. The clothbound list price is \$60, and the paperback list price \$25—with a 10-percent discount offered to members for purchases at Tor House. The next Tor House Press book is likely to be an edition of Una’s lively travel diaries written when she and Robinson were visiting Great Britain.

Apart from broadsides, Tor House publications include:

- Alfred E. Smith, *The Flight of the Hawk: An Introduction to Robinson Jeffers*. Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation, 1979. 32 pages.
- Anon., *The Wings Still: Responses to the Poetry of Robinson Jeffers by His Neighbors on the Monterey Peninsula*. Tor House Publications, 1982. 12 unnumbered leaves.
- Robert Zaller, ed., *The Tribute of His Peers: Elegies for Robinson Jeffers*. Tor House Press, 1989. 84 pages.
- Donnan Jeffers, *The Building of Tor House*. Tor House Press, 1993. 38 pages.
- Garth Jeffers, *Memories of Tor House*. Tor House Press, 1993. 34 pages.
- Anon., *Tea at Tor House*. Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation, 1993. 67 pages.
- Melba Berry Bennett, *The Stone Mason of Tor House: The Life and Work of Robinson Jeffers*. Second Edition. Tor House Foundation, 2007. 230 pages.
- Robert Zaller, *The Atom To Be Split: New and Selected Essays on Robinson Jeffers*. Tor House Press, 2018. 562 pages.

Norris Pope



A hint at things to come: Title Page from *Visits to Ireland*, one of the privately printed travel diaries of Una Jeffers

**NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERSHIPS (September 2019 - November 2019)**

**LIFETIME (\$1000)**

Carol Courtney  
Elyse Kaiser

**PATRON MEMBERS (\$250 for Individual or Couple)**

Gere DiZerega Eric & Alison Jager

**SPONSOR MEMBERS (\$100 for Individual or Couple)**

John & June Armstrong Mark & Sarah Morrison  
Inge Kessler

**MEMBERS**

Stephen & Linda Bailey	Kevin & Judith Jones	John Poet/Anna Ramirez
C. Boyer	Lance Lee	Sara Rubin
Nancy Carlson	Audrey Lynch	Tom & Patricia A. Sanders
Alan & Sherry Cosseboom	Julie Maher	George & Jeamme Scarmon
Deborah Fleming	Phyllis Mazzocchi	Alec Sutherland
Cathleen Gable	Deanna McKinstry-Edwards	Jo Van Dam
Susan Hinde	Lisa Meckel	T. Ladson Webb
Belinda Holliday	Reb Monaco	
James H. Johnson	Crystal Ockenfuss	

\* \* \* \* \*

**CONTRIBUTIONS (September 2019 – November 2019)**

**Contributions - \$100 to \$499**

Gere diZerega  
T. Ladson Webb in memory of Ripple Huth

**Contributions – under \$100**

Sara Rubin

[Please note, listings reflect only new and renewed memberships and contributions since the Fall Issue of the Newsletter. If your contribution is not listed, please look for it in the Spring Newsletter. Generally, the Spring Issue lists memberships and contributions for December, January, February, and March. There are no listings in the Summer Issue because of space constraints (Poetry Prize winners are published in the Summer Issue). The Fall Issue contains memberships and contributions from April through August of any given year, and the Winter Issue lists September through November memberships and contributions.]

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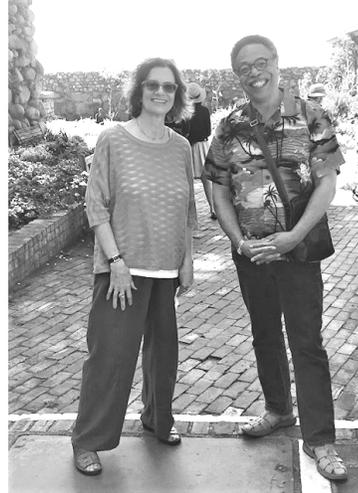
**November Surf does not always sweep the beach clean**

### A Visitor to Tor House

On August 30th George Elliott Clarke, Poet Laureate of Canada 2016-17, visited Tor House. Dr. Clarke is E.J. Pratt Professor of Canadian Literature at the University of Toronto. His writing includes seventeen collections of poetry, two novels, and four works of drama and opera, and he is known for collecting and promoting stories of African-Canadian writers and poets.

As a young man, Clarke wrote the following poem titled "For Robinson Jeffers," which appears in his first book, *Saltwater Spirituals and Deeper Blues* (1983).

Jeffers's coastline, jagged  
from weathering history,  
founded rock towers taut upon tense  
stone and sand shuddering  
to sudden cliffs, falls,  
farms, forced itself into his verse.  
now, eyes navigate the craggy  
outcropping of his lines,  
ears explore his metre's sea-sounds,  
and one voyages to exquisite  
understanding, circling his dark,  
stark, breath-swept poems  
islanded in white water.



George Elliott Clarke with Docent Elizabeth Stacey

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### *The Last Word in Prose from Jeffers*

[Joan Hendrickson, retired Tor House docent and archivist, shares a Jeffers essay found among the Tor House papers. This article from the Vol 1, No. 7, November 1926 issue of *Lights and Shadows* from the *Lantern* published by the Friends of Gelber, Lilienthal, Inc. at their Book Shop, 336 Sutter Street, San Francisco.]

### **ALL THE CORN IN ONE BARN by Robinson Jeffers, Author of "The Roan Stallion"**

I promised a few words for this page. When I considered what to write about many subjects offered: but each wanted to be said in verse, or had been said in verse already, or being too trivial for verse was too trivial for use. Yet others write poetry and prose, too, both brilliantly. It is an age of specialists, except in writing. Here, since the workman would not specialize, the work tended to. Edgar Poe lived ahead of his time and formulated the tendency, saying in effect that there is no poetry but lyrical poetry. The belief became orthodox. Arthur Symons announced it as beautifully as possible; no one nowadays can put his world into a poem as Dante did; he may put it into a series of novels, like Balzac, but poetry in a too complex world can deal only with essences; it has withdrawn to an ivory tower, "where it sings, ignoring the many voices of the street."

Obviously a man has more to say than can be sung in a tower of ivory, and while this conception endures the poet will be seeking other vessels for his mind. The thoughts that might have fed the poem will flow into prose stories, criticism, philosophy. Perhaps they will be more at home there; but the drain might leave poetry only a lean imitation of music. There is something to be said for storing all the corn in one barn, and it seems to me that this is my unique and final appearance as a prose-writer.

*Signed:* Robinson Jeffers

***The Robinson Jeffers Tor House  
2020 Prize for Poetry***

***The annual Tor House Prize for Poetry is a living memorial  
to American poet Robinson Jeffers (1887-1962)***

**\$1,000 for an original, unpublished poem not to exceed three pages in length.  
\$200 for Honorable Mention.**

**Final Judge: Marie Howe**

Open to well-crafted poetry in all styles, ranging from experimental work to traditional forms, including short narrative poems. Each poem should be typed on 8 1/2" by 11" paper, and no longer than three pages. On a cover sheet only, include: name, mailing address, telephone number and email; titles of poems; bio optional. Multiple and simultaneous submissions welcome. There is a reading fee of \$10 for the first three poems; \$15 for up to six poems; and \$2.50 for each additional poem. Checks and money orders should be made out to Tor House Foundation.

**Postmark deadline for submissions: March 14, 2020**

The Prize winner will be announced by May 15. Include an SASE for announcement of the Prize winner.

Poems will not be returned.

For more information, visit our web site or contact us by email.

**Mail poems, check or money order, and SASE to:  
Poetry Prize Coordinator, Tor House Foundation  
Box 223240, Carmel, CA 93922**

**The Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation  
P.O. Box 2713, Carmel, California 93921  
Telephone: (831) 624-1813**

**www.torhouse.org      Email: thf@torhouse.org**

**The Atom To Be Split and other publications**

Many of the publications listed on page 3 of this Newsletter are on sale through the Book Store at Tor House: Among the volumes available are the account of life at TH by Garth and Donnan Jeffers, Robert Zaller's *The Atom to be Split*, and the boxed limited edition of *The Stone Mason of Tor House* by Melba Berry Bennett, friend of the Jeffers family and editor of *The Beginning and the End*, Jeffers' last published poems.

**Scenes from the 2019 Centennial Fall Festival**



Sunset, Poetry & Erin Carey  
soaring above the Headland



A clandestine canine fan



Vince Huth, Tim Hunt and Aaron  
Yoshinobu, RJA President Elect &  
new THF Trustee.

## News and Notes

Are you the Jeffers fan who has not yet become fully involved in the life of the Foundation? Join up. We need your experience, and your wisdom for the future. The Tor House family is a fun group with varied interests - some go for the poetry, some the music, some the art and architecture, some the gardens – we embrace a wide diversity of interests. We have docents in their teens and in their eighties. All that's required is enthusiasm. Stop in for a chat at the office. Or corner us at the Garden Party or the Fall Festival. The Foundation depends on volunteers to carry out its activities. Tour Docents are the folks who greet you when you visit Tor House. Though not necessarily Jeffers scholars, they are well-versed in Jeffers writing and in the history of the property. Training begins with Jeffers' poetry and a biography or two. Then come the free tours, as many as you, the prospective docents feel they need. Before you're thrust upon strangers, you enjoy a run-through with your peers. Finally, you're out there on your own, though always supported by fellow docents. You are the face of Tor House, a unique individual willing to enjoy the fun and assume the responsibility of sharing your love of Jeffers' poetry and representing the Foundation to the community and to visitors from all over the world – including, as you might note on page 5, poets laureate, and other celebrities from the Academy to Hollywood.

But our docent corps is not only Tour Docents. There are volunteers involved in every aspect of life at Tor House, from digitizing the archives, to arranging flowers, to exercising the Steinway, to writing and editing publications, to lending helping hands at special events. Suggest a role you might want to assume: we're listening.

This season we bid a fond, but, hopefully, not final, cheerio to two of our veteran docents. Pauline Allen came to us from Australia and for many years brought with her a remarkable dedication to the House, and to the Gardens. And Jo... what can one say about Jo Rogers? Post World War II she came to California from England and brought with her an enduring love of all things British. During her 34 years at Tor House, she filled every possible job, from guide to office assistant. But most of all, we think of her as the one individual who established the annual Tor House Garden Party and taught us all how to serve tea the proper English way. She invented a Carmel and California institution, one that is the most beloved, and enduring event of the Tor House calendar. Tor House will not be the same without Jo. She is retiring. We hope she is not staying away. We need her experience, her wisdom and, yes, her occasional discipline.

Perhaps you have an idea as apt as Jo's was when she founded Garden Party? If it's a valid idea, and it flies, we'll be there to help you carry out your dreams. Isn't that what a family is about!

\* \* \* \* \*

## THE LAST WORD FROM JEFFERS

### RETURN

A little too abstract, a little too wise,  
It is time for us to kiss the earth again,  
It is time to let the leaves rain from the skies,  
Let the rich life run to the roots again.  
I will go down to the lovely Sur Rivers  
And dip my arms in them up to the shoulders.  
I will find my accounting where the alder leaf quivers  
In the ocean wind over the river boulders.  
I will touch things and things and no more thoughts,  
That breed like mouthless May-flies darkening the sky,  
The insect clouds that blind our passionate hawks  
So that they cannot strike, hardly can fly.  
Things are the hawk's food and noble is the mountain, Oh noble  
Pico Blanco, steep sea-wave of marble.

From *Solstice* (1935) [Hunt II, 409]



**Robinson Jeffers  
Tor House Foundation**  
P.O. Box 2713 • CARMEL, CA 93921

**Officers: 2019**

*President: Vince Huth*  
*Vice President: Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts*  
*2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: Simon Hunt*  
*Secretary: Laura Courtney Headley*  
*Treasurer: Arthur Pasquinelli*  
*Legal Counsel: Aengus Jeffers*

**Board Members:**

<i>Lacy Williams Buck</i>	<i>Rob Kafka</i>	<i>Lynn Stralem</i>
<i>Stuart Crymes</i>	<i>James Karman</i>	<i>John Varady</i>
<i>Gere diZerega</i>	<i>Jean O'Brien</i>	<i>Fran Vardamis</i>
<i>Amy Essick</i>	<i>Norris Pope</i>	<i>Aaron Yoshinobu</i>
<i>Lindsay Jeffers</i>	<i>Deborah Sharp</i>	<i>Christopher Williams</i>
	<i>Alan Stacy</i>	

Administrative Assistant: Erin Carey  
Newsletter Editor: Fran Vardamis

*Tor House Office (831) 624-1813*  
*e-mail: thf@torhouse.org*  
*website: www.torhouse.org*  
*Office Open Mon.-Thurs. 9-1*

**Winter 2019**

**MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Please check one:

- Full-time student/TH Docent \$15.00
- Senior 25.00
- Individual 40.00
- Couple 50.00
- Sponsor 100.00
- Patron 250.00
- Lifetime 1000.00

My payment for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to:  
TOR HOUSE FOUNDATION  
Mail to: PO Box 2713, Carmel, CA 93921  
Consult Website for on-line payment

Your contribution assists in the preservation of the unique home of the poet, Robinson Jeffers, and in community outreach programs.

**Membership benefits include:**

- ◆ Free tours of Tor House
- ◆ 10% discount on merchandise
- ◆ Advance invitations to coming events
- ◆ Quarterly newsletter

**ROBINSON JEFFERS  
TOR HOUSE FOUNDATION**

Tel: (831)624-1813

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