

Tor House Newsletter



Winter 2023

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members of the Tor House Community:

Thanks in major part to your generosity last year through the Monterey County Gives! fundraising program, we were able to expand our corps of tour docents and the number of public tours, hold a successful Fall Festival focused on the theme of “The Poet in a Democracy,” establish a program with Youth Music Monterey, host classes from Monterey Peninsula College, CSU Monterey Bay, and All Saint’s Day School, and continue our Fellow and “Not At Home Before 4 P.M.” music programs.

Having those funds for our programs was a blessing since we had major expenses for maintenance of Tor House and Hawk Tower. We replaced all the drains, gutters and flashing, sealed cracks in the mortar of Tor House, cleaned and sealed the tile floors on the Tower’s third-floor landing and the turret, and eliminated the thick efflorescence in the Tower’s “dungeon” that had been accumulating for decades.

Tor House Foundation is honored to have been selected again this year as one of the 206 participating nonprofits for the 2023 MCGives! fundraising initiative.

As we continue to rebuild our programs, our Big Idea is to continue and to add to the important work we started this year, especially to go beyond the poetry and life of Robinson Jeffers—the focus of our tours—to the influence Jeffers’s poetry has had in the arts and in ecology, and to his sensitivity to social justice issues.

With an \$18,750 Challenge Grant from the Foundation’s Trustees, we have a great start to this year’s fund-raising. All donations to MCGives! go directly to the Tor House Foundation and all donations will receive a partial match.

To donate online by credit card, go to <https://www.montereycountygives.com/nonprofit/tor-house/>

To donate by check, make out your check to Community Foundation for Monterey County. In the memo line, write “Tor House” so the donation will be credited to our account. Mail to: CFMC, 2354 Garden Road, Monterey, 93940, Attn: MCGives!.

Gifts of stock or IRA Qualified Charitable Distributions are also accepted. Please email [Christine Dawson](mailto:ChristineDawson@cfmc.org) or [Cecilia Romero](mailto:CeciliaRomero@cfmc.org) or call 831.375.9712 for information.

On-line donations can be made until midnight on December 31, 2023; donations sent by mail must be postmarked by December 31, 2023.

Thank you in advance for your support. It will allow us to fulfill our three-fold mission: to maintain Tor House, Hawk Tower and their collections, to promote the literary and philosophical legacy of Robinson Jeffers, and to be a cultural resource to the community.

~Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, President, Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation

MCGives! is a partnership of the CFMC, Monterey County Weekly and the Monterey Peninsula Foundation with support from the Gunde and Ernie Posey Family Foundation, Neumeier Poma Investment Counsel, Colburn and Alana Jones Foundation of the CFMC, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Cannery Row Company.

Poetry by Special Members of the Tor House Family

View from Hawk Tower

Who can speak the future
here we are in it
sitting on the stone mason's bench
he is long gone
she is long gone
the stones still whisper

Nobody can speak the future
even the winds do not know
but if we live to see another moon
Perhaps a happy day
this sad day will become

The sea is rising
he spoke of it
in *Tor House*, a good poem

He knew despair
is eternal
The sundial still reads
life is but a shadow

You must return
to where courage was lost
to find it

Douglas Borer, of Pacific Grove, California, is a poet and a Tor House Docent.



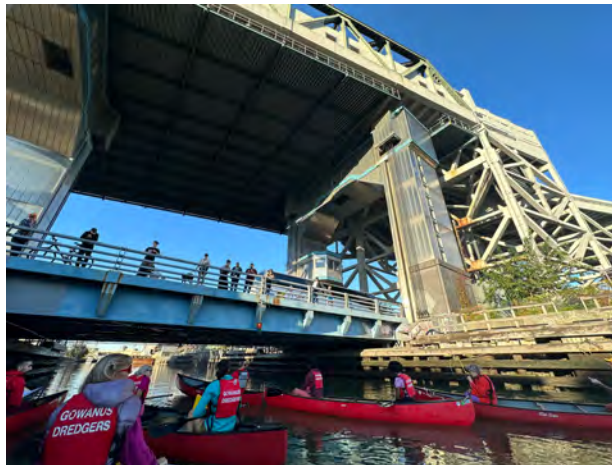
A MONTEREY CYPRESS

A native of the coastal slopes,
the cypress — tall and evergreen —
stands out on autumn afternoons
against a backdrop of shining sea.

Laura Newmark, of Carmel, California, is a poet and Lifetime member of Tor House.

News and Notes from Coast to Coast

Black Bart Quarterly Review of Books, Volume 1 Number 4, in an extensive review, describes *Voice to Voice In the Dark* [Broadstone Press, 2022], by preeminent Jeffers scholar, **Tim Hunt** as a new selection of Hunt's poems that "presents the American parade in snapshots, panoramas, of bunting'd balconies, hot rod fetishes, and dashboard radios blaring rock. Hunt, also the author of two definitive books on Kerouac's work, *Kerouac's Crooked Road* and *The Textuality of Soul Work*, has an eye and an ear for Americana, for the soundtrack of a particular time and history. The poems in *Voice to Voice In the Dark* offer a steady determined pace, the measure of speech, or a speech, meaning precise in its recitation. They are the fine speculations of a somber mind, mindful of the weight and intent of words, and their specific gravity. Some read like photographs sepia'd with nostalgia, others are dashed off with the lyric intensity of the moment, but all are reflections on what "In 1918 Van Wyck Brooks suggested. . . Americans were searching for . . . 'a usable past.'" And as Hunt observes, "We are now, a century later, searching more, it seems, for 'a usable present.'" The review, which can be found in its entirety on the web at the New Black Bart Poetry Society's site, concludes that "Hunt's poems are a meditation on passing time, an ubi sunt couched in a late century vernacular of growing up in Northern California and revisiting it as vivid memories vividly recounted. There's poetry in them thar hills.?"



For the great Western Nature Poet in another setting, we share a note received from Jeffers enthusiast, and TH member, **Brad Vogel**, who greets us from Brooklyn. Yes, that Brooklyn, one of the boroughs of New York City, home of the Dodgers, before, in 1957, they deserted their fans and went West (Oakland is not the only baseball team that ever demonstrated a deficiency in loyalty). Mr. Vogel wrote us in September: "Just wanted to let you and the Tor House crew know that I've whipped up a public event where we'll be shouting Jeffers' poetry from canoes on the not-yet-fully-remediated Gowanus Canal to people on a bridge at dawn this coming Friday." He notes that "Many of the reader crew did not know of him [Jeffers] or his poetry before this - and they are clearly finding something in some of the poems I've selected." Details at:

<https://brooklynbookfestival.org/event/gowanus-dawn-reading-7th-annual-poetry-in-canoes-on-the-gowanus-canal-in-person/> The public is invited to watch performers, in canoes, "plumb the depths of Robinson Jeffers poetry." Bklyner.com suggests this might be a Brooklyn Book Festival "tradition worth checking out at least once is the Gowanus Dawn Reading which takes place in canoes on the Gowanus Canal. This year it will be on Friday, September 29, at 7:45 a.m. . . . watch the performers and listen to Robinson Jeffers' poetry from the 9th Street Bridge over the Gowanus Canal and the parking lot northeast of the bridge."

Jeffers enthusiasts from Brooklyn, of which, believe it or not, there have been more than a few over the years, will appreciate how unusual, even bizarre, a setting this is for Jeffers' poetry. And if Californians still do not understand, a Google search of the history of the Gowanus Canal in NYC might be enlightening.

NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERSHIPS (September 2023 - November 2023)

LIFETIME MEMBERSHIPS (((\$1,000))

Danny Bernstein -In Honor of Tom Rusert
David & Susan Hafleigh

SPONSOR MEMBERS (\$150 for Individual or Couple)

Bruce & Laurie Bosley
Michael Caddell
Mark & Sarah Morrison
Russell Miller/Kirk Pessner
George Scarmon/Jeanne Clark
Robert M. Zaller

MEMBERS

Zachary Abramovitz	Carlin & Pattee Jardine	Larry & Connie Pettinger
Robert & Melinda Armstead	Carol Johnson	David Parish
Molly Attell	Susie Joyce	John Poet
Robin C. Bonner	Carol Kaplan	Norris & Janet Pope
Lorna Claerbout	Inge Kessler	Fred & Cynthia Riebe
Craig & Leslie Cozad	Gregory Krisilas	Charlie Rodewald/Jeanne Howerton
Carole Dawson	Shavon Lanphear	Blain Ross-Hager
Eric & Teresa Del Piero	Ami Suzanne Lawless	Suzanne Roth
Dale Dubrin	Mary Ann Leffel	Taelen & Charlotte Thomas
Cynthia Folkmann	Sherry Long	Lenore Thornton
Gary Girard	Valeria Lyles	Jane Wilson
Donald & Esther Goodhue	Audry Lynch	Alice & Gary Wimmer
Dan Gotch	Ellen Maupin	Jeanne Yonsouri
Robert Hass	Barbara McEnerney	Carol Young
Elizabeth Hook	Jpeu McKinney / Jena Collins	Robert Zaller
Jonathan Horton	Katie Mitchell Mehle	
Chris & Jane Jackson	Reb Monaco	

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CONTRIBUTIONS (September 2023 – November 2023)

\$2,000 Contribution

The Robert J. Brophy Living Trust. In Memory of Robert J. Brophy.

\$500 Contribution

Alice Phelan Sullivan Corporation

Fall Contributions to \$100

Ben Boychuk
Mack Arthur Gunter'
Meredith Mullins
Rip Rense / Annie Chuck. In Memory of Rob Kafka
Charles Rodewald/Jeanne Howerton. In Memory of Rob Kafka
Suzanne Roth

[Please note, listings reflect only new and renewed memberships and contributions since the Fall Issue of the Newsletter. If your contribution is not listed or if you have given an advanced membership or contributed through the Monterey County Gives! Challenge, 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.]

The Robinson Jeffers Tor House 2024 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: Sun Yung Shin

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 15, 2024

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**

AN INVITATION FOR TOR HOUSE MEMBERS:

The Robinson Jeffers Association (the RJA) invites Tor House Members, interested in keeping track of and participating in RJA electronic programming on the web and on Zoom, to subscribe to the RJA's newly configured "News & Notes." published on Substack. To subscribe use this link: <https://substack.com/profile/168873967-robinson-jeffers-association> and enter your email address.

The Robinson Jeffers Association (RJA) supports the discussion, study, and teaching of Robinson Jeffers (1887-1962), a major American poet whose work is particularly associated with the West and California.

THE TOR HOUSE FOUNDATION HAWK AWARD

*At the Fall Festival in October, it was announced that the Tor House Trustees had chosen **Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts** to receive the Foundation's most prestigious award, the Hawk Award.*

*Trustee and Jeffers scholar, **James Karman**, delivered the following presentation:*

Soon after the Tor House Foundation was founded (more than forty years ago), the trustees established an award—called the Hawk Award—to honor individuals who did something extraordinary in support of the foundation's mission, which was to preserve Tor House and to promote the life and legacy of Robinson Jeffers.

The award has been granted only a few times over the years, but today it will be given again—to our esteemed president Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts.

For all the years Elliot has been involved with the Tor House Foundation, he has worked tirelessly in support of our cause—as a docent, as the director of our annual Poetry Award, as a trustee for twenty-five years, as a very active vice president, and now, as president. His exceptional gifts as a leader are an inspiration to us all. In unanimously voting to give Elliot the Hawk Award, trustees spoke of his “incredible dedication and passionate caring for all things Jeffers and Tor House,” his “masterful job maintaining the stability of the foundation as well as moving us forward while being fiscally sound,” his energy, wisdom, diplomacy, and vision. As one trustee put it, Elliot is “an altogether wonderful man.”

To commemorate the award, the trustees have commissioned Carol Courtney to make a reduced-size replica of the hawk she created for Jeffers Plaza in Monterey. That project is now underway, and a beautiful bronze hawk mounted on a base of black marble will be ready soon. Until then, we have this certificate for Elliot, designed for the occasion by trustee Alan Stacy and his wife Deborah—which says, as you can see, “The Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation – by direction of its Board of Trustees – honors Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts with the Hawk Award for Distinguished Service and Exceptional Leadership – October 14, 2023.”

Professor Karman concludes “Elliot, we remember what you've done for Jeffers and Tor House, we acknowledge what you do every day, and we give you this award with our heartfelt gratitude.”



NEWS AND NOTES

It is with great sorrow that we note the passing of **Alice Englander** on September 8, 2023 at the age of 77. Alice, for many years and until 2017, worked tirelessly, volunteering her time and expertise as early Tor House Webmaster.

Tom Rusert, Program Outreach-Docent-Training Coordinator has been garnering publicity for the Foundation with interviews in the local press as well as participation in community activities. In addition, Rusert has increased our youth outreach with tours and activities involving both public and private schools in the area. Tom played a part in recruiting and training two new tour docents, **Anne Mitchell** and **Linda Laviolette**. **Debra Munson Smith** has now assumed the job of a Flower and Reception Docent. And **Elise Rotchford**, veteran docent and experienced archivist, now returns as Music Education docent. Professionally Music Librarian for the Monterey Pops, she will add her expertise to an already flourishing music program at Tor House. We continue to enjoy the splendid “Not at Home Before 4 PM” monthly concert series featuring performances by Trustee **Melinda Armstead**. With a grateful nod to Jeffers’ wife, Una, music is back at Tor House. Rumor has it that a new edition of her Irish Ballads might even be in the works.

The Tor House Bookstore, now managed by Trustee **Coral Amende**, offers a wide selection of Jeffers books and memorabilia – including elegantly boxed tuning keys from the Steinway, a creative gift idea for the hard-to-please lover of music and poetry.

Multilingual private tours are now available, on request, conducted by native speakers including **Inge Kessel**.

So much is happening. Check our website or phone the office for updates on the latest of our offerings.

And, in the meantime,

Happy Holidays everybody! Don’t forget to contribute to MCGives! and remember to enter the poetry contest

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**On a relatively happy note for the holiday season
and
Contemplating the music of Tor House, we leave --**

THE LAST WORD TO JEFFERS

OCTOBER WEEK-END

It is autumn still, but at three in the morning
All the magnificent wonders of midwinter midnight, blue dog-star,
Orion, red Aldebaran, the ermine-fur Pleiades,
Parading above the gable of the house. Their music is their shining,
And the house beats like a heart with dance-music
Because our boys have grown to the age when girls are their music.
There is wind in the trees, and the gray ocean's
Music on the rock. I am warming my blood with starlight, not with girls' eyes,
But really the night is quite mad with music.

From *Such Counsels You Gave To Me* (1935-1938) Hunt II, 548



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

Officers: 2023

*President: Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts
Vice President: Norris Pope
Vice President: Susan Shillinglaw
Treasurer: Arthur Pasquinelli
Secretary: Melinda Coffey Armstead*

Board Members:

<i>Coral Amende</i>	<i>Aengus Jeffers</i>	<i>John Varady</i>
<i>Lacy Williams Buck</i>	<i>Dan Jensen</i>	<i>Fran Vardamis</i>
<i>Gere diZerega</i>	<i>James Karman</i>	<i>Aaron Yoshinobu</i>
<i>Vince Huth</i>	<i>Alan Stacy</i>	

Jeff Baron: Representative, City of Carmel-by-the-Sea

Trustees Emeriti:

<i>Al Giovanni</i>	<i>Lynn Stralem</i>
<i>Lindsay Jeffers</i>	<i>Christopher Williams</i>

Administrative Assistants: Melinda Bowman/Susie Joyce
Newsletter Editor: Fran Vardamis
Program Coordinator/Docent-Training Coordinator: Tom Rusert

*Tor House Office (831) 624-1813
e-mail: thf@torhouse.org
website: www.torhouse.org
Office Open Mon thru Thurs: 9-2*

Winter 2023

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please check one:

- | | |
|--|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time student/TH Docent | \$25.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior | 30.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | 50.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Couple | 70.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor | 150.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron | 350.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime | 1000.00 |

My payment for \$_____ is enclosed.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Tel/FAX: _____

e-mail: _____

Please make check payable to:
TOR HOUSE FOUNDATION
Mail to: PO Box 2713, Carmel, CA 93921
Consult Website/Giving 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**
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thf@torhouse.org www.torhouse.org