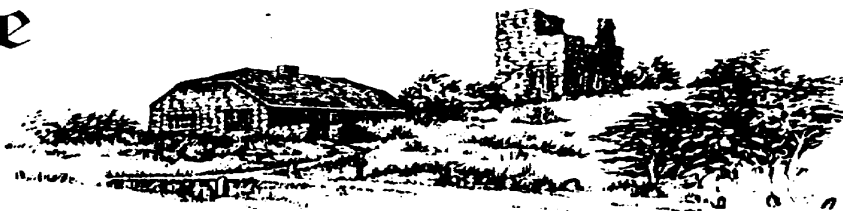


Tor House Newsletter



Winter 2020

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

During this time of COVID-19 restrictions, when one of the Foundation's main sources of income, indoor tours, has been suspended, when we can no longer hold some of the events that generate income, like the annual Garden Party, I am heartened by the continual flow of new and renewed memberships—from \$15 for student/docent memberships to \$1,000 for life memberships. And I am a little overwhelmed and delighted by the geographical representation, not just from the cities on the Peninsula, but from cities, towns and villages throughout California and the United States.

We have received membership renewals from Californians from Pacific Palisades to McKinleyville; nationwide, membership, from Oxford, MS, Lexington, MA, Yakima, WA and so many places in between.

Despite the pandemic, life at Tor House remains vibrant and exciting. Following protocols prescribed by the California Department of Public Health, we have been holding limited outdoor tours: currently, just four tours every Saturday instead of the six indoor tours of normal weekends. A third of our tour docents remain active. Half travel from afar: from Napa, from San Jose, from Los Gatos, from Santa Cruz. Our two piano docents weekly play the piano, and on warm days, when the door to Tor House is open, I open my window to listen. Every second Wednesday evening of each month, a number of the docents gather via Zoom, maintaining a sense of community during this difficult time. Docents are currently developing online tours, an online tour source book, and a series of pamphlets on Tor House treasures. Work on the Jeffers Plaza Project continues, and a new Artist in Residence Program has been established.

The elements Jeffers so admired—"rock, wind and sea"—remain constant, unaffected by the crisis and as beautiful and compelling as ever. There is much to be said for Jeffers's philosophy of inhumanism: "a shifting of emphasis from man to not man; the rejection of human solipsism and recognition of the transhuman magnificence. ... It offers a reasonable detachment as a rule of conduct, instead of love, hate, and envy."

Yet Jeffers could not maintain "a reasonable detachment," "a crystalline interest," even if he recognized its value. Giving outdoor tours, I read aloud "The House-Dog's Grave," a poem generally reviled by academics because of its sentimentality, a feeling I shared for many years. But now I see this poem as an expression of the deep feelings that Jeffers tried so hard in his life to suppress. What was it photographer Edward Weston said of Jeffers supposed misanthropy: "his was a despair over a humanity he really loved"?

So many non-profit organizations have suffered significant losses of income during this pandemic, but we need also to acknowledge the suffering in our greater community. When I drive to town on Carmel Valley Road Friday mornings, there at a local church, from 9 to 10 a.m., food is distributed to those who no longer have the resources to buy flour, cereal, fresh fruit and produce. The line of cars stretches out onto the roadway.

I am grateful for the support the Foundation receives from your membership renewals; I am grateful for the fact that, despite the significant loss of income, because of the stewardship of the Trustees, the Foundation is, at this moment in time, still able to preserve and maintain Tor House, Hawk Tower and their collections; I am grateful for the volunteers, our wonderful docents, who are the constant spirit of this place; for the Foundation Members and Trustees who support the Foundation's mission in so many ways.

Yes, any additional donations you are able to make during this time of COVID-19 will be greatly appreciated. That and your continued membership renewals—from wherever in this country and world of ours—will allow us to maintain the property and our collections which we so love but also to preserve the spirit of the place, a spirit which, during this time of COVID-19, is both solace and inspiration to carry on.

Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, President.

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 Artist in Residence

The Foundation is pleased to announce the establishment of an Artist in Residence Program, and the appointment of Enrique Martinez Celaya as the first Tor House Artist in Residence.

The program was created after a request from Celaya—who expressed a keen interest in Robinson Jeffers—to spend time at Tor House. “Jeffers's life and work have been important to me,” he wrote, “so this experience would mean a great deal to me personally, but I also hope that by bringing the work, discoveries, and documentation to a broader audience, the project can go beyond myself.”

After extensive discussions between him and Tor House Trustee and Vice President Amy Essick, a fine art appraiser, curator and consultant who has been working in the arts full time for 40 years, Essick recommended that the Foundation move ahead with the project. She wrote: “We have an opportunity with an artist whose serious interests in science, poetry and literature, art, nature, current social issues, family, and ethics are an appropriate match for Robinson Jeffers and Tor House. His visual response and conversation offer a new view of aliveness in serving the mission for Tor House, all the more meaningful at this time in history.”

During his residency, Celaya will spend time in Tor House and Hawk Tower and “will write and make small paintings in response” to what he finds there. Drawings, photography and film will also be part of his response. Celaya will report on his residency, either in a webinar open to Tor House Foundation Trustees, docents, members and the general public and/or will present a video of the residency for showing on the Foundation website.

Celaya is an artist, author, and former scientist whose work has been exhibited and collected by major institutions around the world, and he is the author of books and papers in art, poetry, philosophy, and physics.

Work by the artist is held in over fifty public collections internationally, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Museum der Bildenden Künste, Leipzig, and the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford. He is the author of several books including, *Collected Writings and Interviews 2010-2017*, *Collected Writings and Interviews 1990-2010*, and *The Nebraska Lectures*, all published by the University of Nebraska Press (Lincoln).

Celaya is the first person to hold the position of Provost Professor of Humanities and Arts at the University of Southern California.

Previous Tor House Residencies have been held by John Dotson, Poet in Residence, and James Karman, Scholar in Residence. Karman, now a Trustee, noted how valuable the stillness in Tor House and Hawk Tower was for contemplation of Jeffers writing and his life.” This,” according to Essick, “is the experience Enrique is hoping for....”

Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts



***The Robinson Jeffers Tor House
2021 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: Kim Stafford

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, 2021

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

Jeffers Plaza Project Update

Here the most recent news on the Jeffers Plaza Project. The final report will follow in the next issue.

Excellent progress continues with the three bronze sculptural objects destined for installation at the Monterey Conference Center's Jeffers Plaza in early 2021. The hand sculpted clay originals were successfully translated to the wax stage in preparation for bronze casting and the final patination. Both artists working on the project, **Will Pettee** and **Carol Courtney**, were inspired by a series of photographic portraits of Robinson Jeffers made by Edward Weston at Tor House in 1929. Jeffers posed in front of his rock hewn Hawk Tower, wearing a leather jacket and his customary white shirt handmade by Una. His expression is calm and pensive. Pettee chose a profile version of Jeffers for his large bas-relief wall object with a background depicting a rock wall of Hawk Tower. He sculpted the elegant Jeffers signature in a raised relief for a smaller bronze plaque to hang below the profile. Courtney's Garden location plaque contains a bas-relief portrait of Jeffers in a three-quarter view. Her detailed bronze red-tailed hawk clasps the top of the plaque, as if reading the excerpt from Jeffers' 1937 poem "The Answer":

Organic wholeness, the wholeness of life and things, the divine beauty of the universe. Love that, not
man
Apart from that...

Tor House February

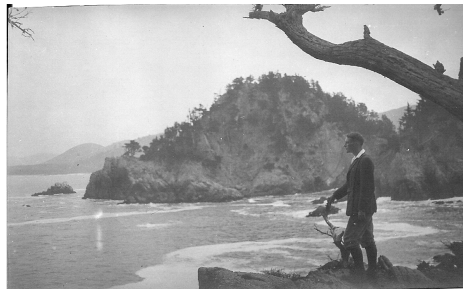
In my 59th year I find an attraction
to stones in all their manifestations
perhaps it is their stubborn immortality –
I look forward to spending time with
Jeffers' rip-rap at placid *Tor House*
then walking out to my favorite
boulders awaiting me a *Point Lobos*
they anchor me in rough winds

My Asilomar hearth a limpid gold
of flame encased in ragged umber granite
light sunrise wash caught in crystals
big as rock salt embedded in each block
to the west a full moon presides
like an open white mouth over the tide
moving ashore row and row of curled
aquamarine veined and crowned white

The same winds that rag and tear at
cypress like hunched green old men
standing their ground across the dunes
rag and tear at me. I feel them in my bones
seabirds once at rest rise in flights
before the lolling tongues cruel teeth of
dogs released from master's leash
I too am time's ruffled bird scattering

Whether banked clouds sea-songs or call
of tide and wind I am not sure these things
and others make me extremely tired
someday a sleep will cause me to miss all this
my eyes finally closed on primal earth

Daniel Williams
Tor House Member



Fire and Lies

[This poem is inspired by a story Lindsay, Jeffers' grandson, told of the years after his grandmother died, when he and the Poet were living in the original part of Tor House.]

Grandfather slept in the bed by the window
the one he decreed to be his deathbed
and took great pleasure in so doing
as if it were a Russian sled
complete with fur wraps and
sleigh bells jingling
to carry him on his way
where ever the icy path might lead.

These days he slept alone
as Grandmother had deserted him
over a decade ago.
It wasn't her choice for a deathbed,
she desired only to have him near.
She peered into her silver-backed hand mirror,
saw the pathetic wasted face
as he whispered convincingly to her
(but with a knife in his heart)
"You are ever beautiful."

In my early teens I slept in the loft
above Grandfather who'd been deserted.
A place of honor, a tinge of protection,
but for me primarily a place of escape
to get away from the family.
Only Grandfather and I
in the little cottage
and him ever so silent,
like a monk.

One night I awoke to the smell of smoke,
rushed down those steep treacherous steps
on the treads from Great Grandfather's jail
and saw the sparks breaking into flames
upon the worn ornately patterned
carpet in front of the fireplace,
the fire screen so old and shabby
like Grandfather's threadbare clothes,
numerous holes here and there
amongst its weave.

I called out to Grandfather
while smothering the flames.
Spared us both a ride in that sleigh,
a ride along the path to where ever.
For myself, I was more alive
than I'd been for some time.
Life's precariousness and preciousness
confronted me like twins.
I had barely begun to live.

But as for Grandfather,
he was ready to go
ready to take that ride
had been for about a decade
ever since the other side of the bed
had been left empty and cold,
ever since he'd sat on the bed
beside Grandmother
and told her that lie.

Joan Meyers Hendrickson

Joan Meyers Hendrickson is a poet and retired Tor House Archivist and Docent



NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERSHIPS (September 15, 2020 - November 2020)

PATRON MEMBERS (\$250 for Individual or Couple)

Gere DiZerega
Eric & Alison Jager

Jerl Surratt

SPONSOR MEMBERS (\$100 for Individual or Couple)

John & June Armstrong
Inge Kessler
Valera W. Lyles

Timothy & Kristen McCarthy
Russell Miller/Kirk Pessner
Susan Shillinglaw

MEMBERS

C. Boyer	Audry Lynch	John Poet/Anna Ramirez
Alan & Sherry Cosseboom	Julie Maher	Sara Rubin
Mike Dillon	Phyllis Mazzocchi	Tom & Patricia A. Sanders
Karen Dunn-Haley	Deanna McKinstry-Edwards	George & Jeanne Scarmon
Deborah Fleming	Lisa Meckel	Alec Sutherland
Belinda Holliday	Reb Monaco	Jo Van Dam
Eric & Alison Jager	Douglas & Julie Moore	T. Ladson Webb
Lance Lee	David W. Parish	Peter Wilson

* * * * *

CONTRIBUTIONS (September 2020 – November 2020)

Contributions - \$10,000

Bennett Family Foundation Fund

Contributions - \$500 to \$1,500

Anonymous
Gere diZerega
Sam Farr in Memory of his father, Congressman Fred Farr
Allen K. Mears to support Poetry Prize

Contributions – \$100 to \$500

Anonymous

Contributions to \$100

Ben Boychuk
Susan Shillinglaw

[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 September of any given year, and the Winter Issue lists October through November memberships and contributions.]



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

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website: www.torhouse.org

Office Open Mon, Tue, Thurs: 9-2

Winter 2020

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: _____

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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**

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thf@torhouse.org www.torhouse.org