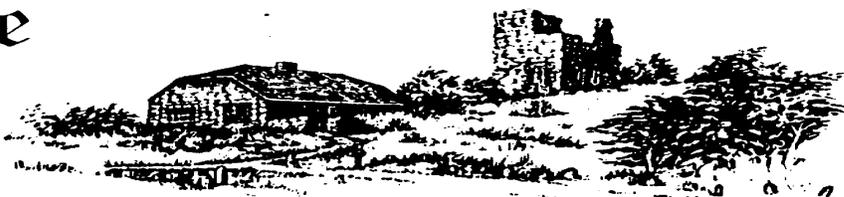


# Tor House Newsletter



Spring 2019

ROBINSON  
JEFFERS

CENTENNIAL

TOR HOUSE  
GARDEN  
PARTY  
SUNDAY  
MAY 5, 2019 2-5 PM



DESIGN & ILLUSTRATION BY  
DEBORAH M. RUSSELL

## MUSIC & REFRESHMENTS

EXPLORE & PHOTOGRAPH  
JEFFERS' HAND-BUILT HOME,  
HAWK TOWER & GARDENS  
26304 OCEAN VIEW AVE  
CARMEL CA 831.624.1813  
ADMISSION \$15  
PURCHASE TICKETS IN ADVANCE  
AT [WWW.TORHOUSE.ORG](http://WWW.TORHOUSE.ORG)  
OR AT EVENT  
PHOTOGRAPHY PERMITTED  
PLEASE NO CHILDREN UNDER 10

**The Tor House Spring Garden Party 2019**  
**Sunday, May 5th 2-5 PM at Tor House**  
**26304 Ocean View Ave, Carmel, CA 93923, 831-624-1813**

Purchase tickets in advance at [www.torhouse.org](http://www.torhouse.org) "[Buy Tickets](#)" or pay at the party, cash or credit.

This year is the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the completion of Jeffers' cottage built by MJ Murphy, with the assistance of Jeffers as apprentice "Stone Mason." The family, Robinson Jeffers and his wife, Una, and their three-year-old twin sons, left their first Carmel residence at 4<sup>th</sup> and Monte Verde and moved in. In the year that followed, Jeffers, using his new skills of making stone love stone, added a garage and a stone wall. For four years he, and his sons, worked on Hawk Tower. The poet also wrote and published his first major volume of poetry, *Tamar*, followed a year later by *Roan Stallion*. From 1926 to 1930, Jeffers added the Dining Room to his compound, and, while working on his home, he also wrote *Women at Point Sur*, *Cawdor* and *Dear Judas*. Except for trips to Ireland and New Mexico, the poet would seldom stray from the home he was fashioning. Other volumes of poetry followed. And so did other building improvements. In 1938 Jeffers began work on the "ballroom." Completed over the years by Jeffers' son, Donnan, this would grow to become the "East Wing" and a new garage. In 1941 a phone was installed in the house and in 1949 electricity was added. And in 1954, after Una's death, the kitchen was moved. Like a living entity, the house grew. Immediately after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, Jeffers' sons, and their wives and their growing families came home for a while. Robin's wife died in 1954 and Robin in 1962. Donnan and his wife, Lee, continued to live at Tor House for the rest of their lives. Thanks to the conservation efforts of, first, Jeffers son and daughter-in-law, and later the Tor House Foundation, the house, the tower, and the property changed over the years, and yet it remained basically the same. The tower and the original cottage and dining room are as they were when the family lived there in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The furniture and the furnishings are the original, all of them, from the "bed by the window," to the melodeons that Una collected, to the silver service that was a retirement gift to Jeffers' father. Enter Tor House and you enter a house of treasures, not least being the knowledge that here was the poet's home as it was in his lifetime.

The annual Tor House Garden Party is the perfect time to experience the property, its permanence, as solid as granite, and its dynamism, as changing as sea foam. Docents will be available to answer questions. Spinning, on the spinning wheel Una's grandmother brought to America will be demonstrated. Photography is permitted only on this one day in the year. There will be live music. There will be poetry, and a country garden in full springtime bloom. And, not least, there will be tea and punch, sweets and savories.

Admission to the event is \$15. No children under age 10, please. No pets of any age – though be sure to ask about the ghosts of the Jeffers' family dogs. You'll want to explore every nook and cranny of the house and tower. Wear sensible shoes and be prepared for the changeable weather of the California Central Coast – sun screen and jackets are recommended.



The poet at work, with hawk



Garth and Donnan at Tor House



Garth and Donnan on the stairs.

## DARK WATCHERS

A MUSICAL EVENT AT TOR HOUSE ON APRIL 20 AND APRIL 21.

The Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation is honored to collaborate with the Big Sur Land Trust to host premier live performances of an exciting new work inspired by Tor House and the Big Sur Coast.

Of the album on which the performance is based, Kevin Healey writes:

*Dark Watchers* is a full-length ambient collaboration between experimental musician Jonas Bonnetta and virtuoso violinist Edwin Huizinga, written and recorded in situ during the pair's seclusion at Big Sur.

Working among the coves and meadows that furrow the coast, Huizinga and Bonnetta fashion an album in which composition and field sounds dissolve into something like transcription. Crackling fire fades into a thicket of electronics, glassy piano blooms into the dawn chorus of the rare yellow-breasted chat, each delicate note plucked out and ramified into melody. Bass tones are braided into the patter of brook and tidal eddy, the harmony of light on the water decanted into the sound of Huizinga's violin.

In *Dark Watchers*, the pair bend to their task like scribes, as if the intricate arrangements of wind and surf and the convoked ghosts of the Santa Lucia mountains were notes which could be transposed, if only one might learn the tuning. Cut off from the outside world, away from the smog of social media and centrifugal mania of digital life, Bonnetta and Huizinga look for the music of tangible things.

The album is a reckoning of spaces in transition – the coast, the dusk, the final eclipse of life – and its two sides preserve the same formal tension. Side A draws on the haunted solitudes of Big Sur in the fading light, études of color rendered in circuits and strings; Side B invokes an oceanic darkness, bottomless and familiar. There, fragmentary voices rise in a murmur of half-remembered poems, rumors of speech like shapes seen through the surface of the sea.

The poetry of Robinson Jeffers in particular hovers over the record, his work a faithful companion during its creation. Jeffers lived his life on the coast, building a home called Tor House with his own hands in Carmel-by-the-Sea. The environmental music of that house, recorded there on the anniversary of the poet's death, is woven through the album like a soft tattoo, the composers seeking, as Jeffers put it, "the wind-struck / music man's bones were moulded to be the harp for."

In the legends of the Santa Lucia mountains, the Dark Watchers are shadowy figures, half-glimpsed and penumbral, that stand among the high peaks that slope into the sea. They must never be looked at directly. In the instant they are seen, they disappear into the landscape of which they are a manifestation. *Dark Watchers* is a record of the composers' attempt to surrender completely to the same landscape, if only fleetingly. For in that moment one might see the filaments, wavering at some hidden pitch, by which each thing is fastened to every other.

The *Dark Watchers* premier event is Saturday, April 20th, 5-7 pm, in the East Wing Library of Tor House, preceded by a garden reception and informal pre-concert music performed by Huizinga and Bonnetta in the Tor House parlor. Tickets for the April 20th reception and concert are \$75.

The Sunday event, on April 21<sup>st</sup>, 6-7 pm, does not include the reception. Tickets are \$50.

Tickets can be purchased through the "Buy Tickets" button on the homepage of the TH website.

Queries welcome.

**NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERSHIPS (December 2018 – March 2019)**

**PATRON MEMBERSHIPS (\$250)**

John E Brown/Nancy L Johnson  
Cindy Noyes  
Peter Noyes

**SPONSOR MEMBERSHIPS (\$100)**

George Galakatos	Carolyn Kleefeld
Ruth Hartmann	Robert & Diane Reid
Tim & Susan Hunt	Peter Serchuk
Richard P. Keeton	

**COUPLE, INDIVIDUAL, DOCENT AND SENIOR MEMBERSHIPS**

Barbara Babcock	Jerry Huling	David Rutgers
Eric Bolt/Georgia Hughes	Lindsay & Myoung Jeffers	Ray & Amy Sims
Bruce & Laurie Bosley	Frank & Barbara Keith	James B. Snyder
Michael & Patricia Busk	Suzanne LaHaye	Florence Snyder-Speck
Nancy Collins	Michael & Camille Liscinsky	Richard Stanley
John & Barbara Comer	Mick McAllister	Barbara Stout
Ed Detrixhe	Thomas McGovern	Frank Takacs/Amy Essick
Dale Ditsler	Paule Missud	Peter & Donna Thomas
Cynthia Folkmann	Francis Olson	Bradley J. Vogel
Albert & Barbara Gelpi	James & Linda Paul	Ingrid Wekerle
Charles Greifenstein/Alison Hicks	Margaret Purchase	Debra Wincott
Julius & Peggy Guccione	Boyd & Lois Repsher	Carol Young
Bernice N. Hearn	David Rothman	William & Jan Zeigler

**CONTRIBUTIONS (December 2018 – March 2019)**

**Contribution (\$7,500)**

Anonymous gift in support of the Tor House Gardens

**Contribution (\$1,000 to 2,000)**

Giusi Living Trust in memory of Valerio and Nadya Giusi  
Vince Huth  
James & Paula Karman  
Dan & Laura Newmark  
Alice Phelan

**Contributions (\$500 to \$999)**

Cynthia Noyes

**Contributions (\$100-\$499)**

Melinda Coffey Armstead	Carolyn Kleefeld	Flo Snyder-Speck
Amy Essick	Elliot Ruchowitz Roberts	Fran Vardamis in memory of Alex Vardamis
Karen Gault	Tim & Jane Sanders	
Bernice Hearn	Peter Serchuk	

**Contributions (to \$99)**

Ruth Hartmann	Suzanne La Haye
Vince Huth in memory of Tax Ngo	Francis Olson

[Please note: listings reflect only those Lifetime memberships received since the last issue of the *Newsletter*, as well as new and renewed memberships for the same period. Generally, the Spring Issue lists memberships, and contributions, for December, January, February, and March. The Fall Issue contains memberships that fall between April and August of any given year and the Winter Issue lists September through November memberships.]

## The Stone Mason's Rosary

By DA Borer

I never understood the rosary, those beads,  
those foreign folk and their thick leather shoes  
gnarled knuckles turned inward and outward  
like twists of bitterroot and garlic

the soundless clicks of bead on bead on bead on bead  
just below the murmured mumblings,  
the granite-hair-netted-nods,  
and the whispers for hope and redemption

those rites are not me

I always understood the tower, those stones,  
that gaunt specter and his wide collared shirt  
gnarled knuckles and the Roman nose splitting distant-seeking  
orbs of an ethereal hawk

the soundless clicks of stone upon stone upon stone upon stone  
as if the mason's ghost keeps working,  
long after the gate is locked and the docent ponders  
if the Lord or his Lady ever hear my epistle

those rites are me

I understand little why I do it  
but know that the stone mason's rosary:  
The tower, his muse,  
Hawk Tower

is a pew that suits my urge  
to kneel  
to whisper for hope  
and redemption

**Douglas A Borer** is a tour docent and Tor House Lifetime Member. He lives in Pacific Grove.

The rosary and cross referenced in the poem can be seen in the West Sitting Room of Tor House, to the left of Una's desk. According to an inventory, "This ornate crucifix is a copy of one found in the tomb of Junipero Serra when it was opened for inspection in 1943."



## News and Notes

Observant Tor House Trustee, **Gere diZeraga** points out that Jeffers' name shows up in unexpected places.

Here at LAX, the United Terminal between Concourse 70 and 80, note carefully the volume on the far left in a collection of Books about California.



This is a view of the set for a U2 Concert at the Olympic Stadium in Berlin, June 2017. It is just one stop on the U2 World Tour that played to an audience of 2.5 million. "Juan Higera Creek" is an early Jeffers poem. See Hunt, Vol IV.



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**Marina Romani**, Tor House docent, announced the 2018 publication of *Chiaroscuro Eye*, a volume of verse ranging from "Leningrad Day in St. Petersburg" to the Central Coast of California in poetry that reflects her remarkable life.

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**Christopher Anderson-Bazzoli** announced a new recording of his classical song cycle CONTINENT'S END based on Jeffers poems and featuring Buffy Baggott, mezzo-soprano and Kevin North, pianist. The recording is available for purchase from Delos Music and Amazon, as well a being available for streaming from Apple Music and Spotify. Several items in this Newsletter suggest that Tor House is becoming a place of music as well as poetry and design. The new recording of Anderson-Bazzoli's Jeffers song cycle and the concerts described on page 3 are examples. The final Jeffers poem, on the following page, presents the poet's concept of the music of Tor House.

The Foundation has also begun a new way to visit Tor House. "Music at Tor House Tours," led by Melinda Coffey Armstead and lasting 2 hours, will take place April 26, May 10 & 31, and June 28 (with probable tours to be scheduled later). The price of this special tour is \$20 and includes live performances of poetry, music and song. For details see the Website at [Torhouse.org](http://Torhouse.org).

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*[The Tor House Newsletter welcomes, for publication consideration, letters to the editor, comments, and poetry and short prose pieces dealing with Jeffers or Jeffers Country]*

## FOOTPRINTS

**This winter the Tor House Foundation and the World of Poetry lost several good friends. They all lived long lives, and yet they passed all too soon. We pay our tribute, humbly, and in alphabetical order.**

**Howard Brunn**, decorated B-25 pilot during WW II, environmentalist, businessman, Carmel Councilman, author, and a veteran member of the Foundation, died on December 10, 2018. He was 95 years old. His poems have appeared in these pages, including, in the Winter 2014 issue, “By the Window,” – “Jeffers / Took the stars/ One by one/ Then by the Hand-ful / Threw them Beyond the sky / Into the universe.”

**Jitka Elton**, born in Czechoslovakia in 1922, language instructor at DLI, teacher of Spanish and Latin at North Salinas High, was one of the Foundation’s earliest docents and a close friend of Lee Jeffers. Together the two travelled behind the Iron Curtain, conferred with Jeffers’ Czech translator, and brought back a wealth of anecdotes and several stained-glass panels that have found their way into the Tor House East Wing library. Jitka was 96 at the time of her passing.

**W.S. Merwin**, former Poet Laureate of the United States and one of the most honored poets of his generation, died at his home at Haiku, Hawai’i on March 15, at the age of 91. An admirer of Jeffers and a kind and good friend who visited Tor House in 2004 to seek advice on establishing, on Maui, the Merwin Conservancy, a center for poetry and a reserve for the hundreds of species of palm he planted there. “On the last day of the world,” said Merwin, “I would want to plant a tree.” Merwin is pictured here during his keynote address at the 2007 Robinson Jeffers Association Conference at the University of Hawai’i.



**Carol Sharon**, who lived her last years in Mill Valley, was a 1949 graduate of the University of California and a high school English teacher who, when she returned to Cal for her PhD, wrote her dissertation on Jeffers. She was one of the early ones, serving as Tor House Foundation Trustee from 1990 to 1995.

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### *The Last Word from Jeffers on the Music of Tor House*

#### 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.

*Such Counsels You Gave to Me (1938) [Hunt, Vol.2, p. 548],*



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

**Officers: 2018**

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Vice President: *Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts*  
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<i>Lindsay Jeffers</i>		

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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

**Spring 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/FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

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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

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