



## Ruth F Harrison

August 23, 1930 - August 4, 2021

Ruth Harrison's life seems to span a couple of centuries or so—from her early years on the square mile of land her grandmother had homesteaded in Colorado, through her growing up on a farm without electricity or indoor plumbing, her teaching at a one-room schoolhouse, her raising three children in the shadow of a cold war while getting a doctorate in medieval literature, to a quasi-retirement on the Oregon coast, where she wrote poetry, helped edit a small literary journal, and took part in the Tuesday literary group.

Ruth was born on a hot August day in 1930 at the old family house in Kansas; her parents were Vincent Herman Feuerborn and Mary Jane (Weaver) Feuerborn. Ruth was the second child and the first daughter born to them; ultimately she would have six sisters and brothers—Marvin (1929), Robert (1932), Alan (1939), Marilyn (1941), Theresa (1947), and Daniel (1949). The family spent the next few years at her grandmother's homestead in Colorado, before taking up residence on the farm where she would grow up, attending school in Grand Junction.

As a child, when she heard the phrase "poetic license" she was determined to get hers someday. A poem she wrote for school on the topic of the civil war so impressed her teacher that she kept it—to Ruth's disappointment; she had not kept a copy of it for herself. As she passed through the phases of her life—student, wife, mother, teacher, grandmother, advisor, keeper of the flame—she

wrote. Poems, essays, short stories, sketches came from her pen (or keyboard)-sometimes formally, sometimes disguised as letters, notes, or cards. While she piled up her share of rejection-slips, the acceptances came, and her work appeared in newspapers and magazines, won awards, and more important, was read and enjoyed.

Ruth's education was interrupted at the end of community college when she met and married Bryce Howard, an aspiring radio engineer. They had three children who had to be shepherded through bouts of measles, chickenpox, mumps, and flu as well as through safety patrol, science fairs, cub scouts, homework, and the travails of keeping cats, dogs, rabbits, iguanas, and other assorted pets. In addition to being their mother, Ruth served as room-mother, den-mother, Sunday-school teacher, and sometimes mentor and confidante to her children's friends and associates. Whether her children were recording the mayhem of an orchestra made of tin cans and rubber bands, blowing up the kitchen counter with homemade gunpowder, or installing a private telephone system upstairs, she was always there to support them, and sometimes pick up the pieces afterwards. Despite all that was going on around her she somehow managed to return to college, get her bachelor's degree, her master's, and finally her doctorate in medieval literature.

Ruth had actually begun her teaching career at the age of nineteen, in a one-room schoolhouse in Glade Park, Colorado, and she never really stopped. At various points in her life she gave informal extracurricular instruction to her children and their friends, graded papers, and even wrote textbooks. Ultimately she taught college courses in topics as varied as Writing 101, Provencal poetry, and the Literature of the Wanderer.

After her marriage with Bryce ran its course, Ruth was married to Fred C. Harrison, an English literature professor, and the two of them remained together until Fred's death in 2007. They shared a love of literature, jazz, and

the Oregon coast, for a time owning a house in Yachats while renting an apartment in Portland.

As her mother got older and became less capable of taking care of herself or the farm, Ruth returned to her childhood home, where she and Fred helped other family members look after her and keep the farm afloat. During that time Ruth worked for a company involved with hazardous waste cleanup, making sure that paperwork was in order and the necessary reports were clear and in something resembling English.

After the death of her mother Ruth joined Fred on the Oregon coast, where they eventually purchased a home in Waldport. In 1990 she founded the Tuesday writing group-so named because they met on Tuesdays to share their work in progress. Starting in 1996 with the publication of Bone Flute, anthologies of her poems came out every few years, including West of 101 and Among the Cat Tales.

Ruth F. Harrison spent her final days at Sea Aire in Yachats, Oregon. She died there 4 August 2021. She is survived by her brothers Bob and Danny Feuerborn, her sister Marilyn McLaughlin, her children Sam, Bryan, and Greg Howard, her grandchildren, her greatgrandchildren, and her many friends and associates.

Not Entirely Done

-being a study of [John Donne's] Holy Sonnet 13

What if this present were the world's last night...

Tomorrow the tsunami sweeping in

And in, and in until it whelms us down

And there were never more of morning light?

What if our stars have said their last goodnight,

Our galaxy forsake this speck we're on

And opt for larger worlds, and finer than

Our little earth, its oceans blue and white?

What comfort may we take of our brief spin?

We've breathed, been conscious, looked, loved-then our spark,

The lovely grass, bright poppies, quail-are gone

Where all will go into the endless dark.

Then nothing will be left to love or curse,

Or hear an answer from our universe.

Ruth F. Harrison, from Namesong

# Tribute Wall



“ 2 files added to the album Marie



Bateman Newport LLC - June 29, 2023 at 12:28 PM



“ Ruth always seemed to love flowers and foliage of any sort. My favorite memory of (aunt) Ruth was in Washington state up by Lake Quinault when we trudged through 3 foot high ferns and she fought her way along to the Monster Tree so she could use her newly acquired CANE as a SWORD to conquer the attacking tree. Great times. She was always smiling.



Marie - September 01, 2021 at 12:00 AM



“ Ruth F Harrison

August 29, 2021 at 12:00 AM