

## Point Arena light, [by] James Johnson.

### Point Arena Light

In retrospect I recall Point Arena Light for its salt sea winds and rolling cumulus above, for its command of the Pacific and the landward stretch of the Garcia valley. Here the wild iris and wild strawberry blooms, a quiet ecstasy intensified surely by the glinting color of gold-finch flitting among the thistles. Beyond, over by the surf, wheeling gulls add countenance to the contentment of the scene. I recall too the cosy shelter of the keeper's house, a cribbage game before a blazing fire with the winds blustering outside, while from the kitchen came promise of savory things as Mrs. Jordan, the keeper's wife, busied herself. Of all quiet pleasures of life, give me but this and I am content. This is comfort, but by one of those unfortunate conjunction of events when assistants are away and sickness has stepped in, I saw the sterner side. In the emergency the keeper's wife and I ascended the circular stairs to light up. She knew the routine and directed me to clear the rime off the windows on the outside. High above the surf, dizzyingly near the clouds, I thought tenure on life was merely a matter of contest between the wind and myself. But the lights did go on precisely at sunset, and we knew that at the same moment up and down the coast, north of us Cabrillo, and south at the Farallones where Berg had just trimmed his lights, we knew then that the day was ended and the nightwatch begun.

—*James Johnson* LC

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