## The Latreat Tidepool

## TALES OF PACIFIC GROVE, CALIFORNIA

by local award-winning author, Brad Herzog



## **SHARED STORIES**

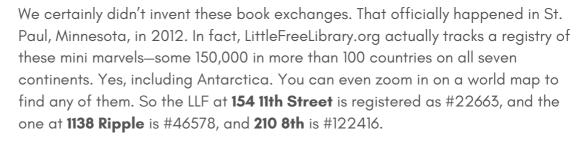
Little Free Monet.

What best represents neighborly collaboration and a creative community with a storied history? I'd answer this: Little Free Libraries. Pacific Grove is positively brimming with them—at least 44, by my count. Stroll along Sinex Avenue, for instance, and you'll spot tiny "leave a book, take a book" creations at four addresses—420, 847, 895 and 1117. Nearly every neighborhood in town offers a literary walking tour, whether you're passing 330 Gibson or 507 Beaumont or 833 Maple or 999 Benito Court.



Certainly, any visitor to the intersection of Short and Granite has been bowled over by book exchanges on all four corners. There's a magazine box shaped like a British phone booth at **227 Granite**, a lighthouse-themed LFL at **231 Granite**, another at **232 Granite**, and lots of looney lending libraries among the whimsy at **226 Granite**—cookbooks in a toy plastic pizza oven, nonfiction in a little red schoolhouse, and young adult books in a replica wooden clocktower. Indeed, many Pagrovians try to make their little libraries distinctive. Some have been given names. At **1042 Jewell**: Cookie's Library. At **631 Laurel**: Bella's Book Bungalow. At **1217 Lawton**: Lawton Lego Library, with the decorations to prove it. The little libraries at **109 Forest** and **1207 Funston** are covered in seashells. At **402 2nd Street**, the door handles are tiny pewter mermaids. Dr. Seuss stickers are affixed to the LFL at **271 Spruce**. And **310 Locust** is a work of art, looking like a







These LFLs aren't offering merely throwaway reads. I found Catch-22 **Spruce** and Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* at **440 Beaumont**, Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* at **1232 Surf** and John Grisham's

A Time to Killat 234 Bentley, Amy Tan's The Joy Luck Club at 616 Lobos and Liane Moriarty's Big Little Lies at 430 Gibson. The latter, of course, became a TV series filmed in PG. Waiting for a bus on Montecito Avenue? There's an LFL at the stop. Picking up your child at Forest Grove Elementary or PG Middle School? Pick up a free book, too. Sometimes you'll have to sleuth them out. The one at 706 Sunset is semi-hidden behind a chest-high orange wall, and the LFLs at 1327 Miles and 1335 David are located at the end of dead-end streets. Not much foot traffic. But sometimes if you're lucky, you'll spot the process in action. As I stared into the selection at 277 Grove Acre, a woman behind me said, "Excuse me, I just want to leave a book." She held a dog leash in one hand and White Tiger in the other.

Indeed, the wonderful thing about these little libraries is that the books travel. Next week, John Cheever's short story collection at **715 17th Street** might find its way to the little library at **511 9th Street**... or **218 Crocker**... or **161 Del Monte**. The three Clive Cussler novels at **725 Pine** might someday migrate to **231 Lobos**... or **514 Park**... or **1105 Seaview**. So, we're sharing stories the way a community should—only in this case, it's literal.



