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# Bray Arts Journal

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Issue 4

December 2006

Volume 12



## EDITORIAL

One year ago shortly after publishing our December 2005 edition of the Bray Arts Journal we heard of the tragic death of Pat O'Loughlin, a quiet man and great supporter of Bray Arts. As so often happens it was only after his passing did many of us learn about the profound influence this man had on so many people and how utterly shocked and devastated they were at his untimely death. We would like to remember Pat this Christmas and wish his family what comfort and solace they can find in the memory of a life lived with great dignity and generosity of spirit.

We dedicate, in fond memory of Pat, the following couple of verses from perhaps the finest Nativity poem ever written in the English language.

### ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY

This is the month and this the happy morn  
Wherin the son of Heaven's eternal King,  
Of wedded maid and virgin mother born,  
Our great redemption from above did bring,  
For so the holy sages once did sing  
That he our deadly forfeit should release  
And with his Father work us a perpetual peace.



No war or battle's sound  
Was heard the world around,  
The idle spear and shield were high up-hung  
The hooked chariot stood  
Unstained by blood,  
The trumpet spake not to the armed throng,  
And kings sat still with awful eye,  
As if they surely knew their sovereign Lord was by.

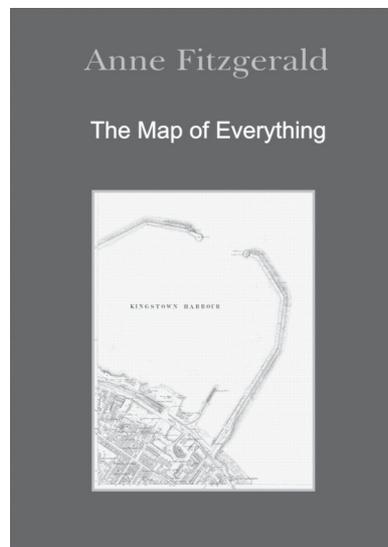
John Milton 1629

Front Cover : Water Lilies by Frankie Gallagher. See Pg 7 for details of joint exhibition at Signal Arts.

## The Map of Everything

by Anne Fitzgerald

Congratulations to Anne Fitzgerald on the publication of her latest book of poetry called *The Map of Everything*. Anne is the creative writing editor of this journal. This latest book of poetry has received very high praise from the playwright Frank McGuinness.



*"The Map of Everything" he says "is an ambitious and accomplished book. Fitzgerald is a writer going from strength to strength. These are poems as exquisitely made as the sturdiest boots. They pay rethreading as they go on their journeys, strange even scary, leaving clues to their verbal and visual meaning.*

*They have about them a rapid tumbling beauty as if Fitzgerald is trying to do with words what Jackson Pollack at his shattering best did with paint. That artistic deference is especially embodied in the excellent prose poem, Welcome to Seligman Birthplace of Historic Route 66, which sits at the heart of the collection.*

*The Map of Everything is superb."*

This collection is published by



Forty Foot Press  
Box 10715, Glenageary  
Co. Dublin  
Ireland  
[www.fortyfootpress.com](http://www.fortyfootpress.com)

See page 4 for the title poem. You can also listen to the poet reading selected verses from the poems *United States of Mind* and *Soldiering On* on the Forty Foot Press website.

You can order a copy of *The Map of Everything* from the above address at a cost of 13 Euro plus postage of 3 Euro for Ireland and 3.75Euro for Europe and America. Irish cheque or international money order made payable to

**Forty Foot Press**

## Correction

Last month we published an excellent short story called **Morning Bell** from a young writer called **Tim Smyth**. We said he was a pupil of St. Kierans College, Kilkenny. In fact he is a pupil of the **C.B.S. Secondary School**. Thanks to Mrs L. Ryan, Guidance Counsellor at C.B.S. Kilkenny for setting the record straight and the best of luck to Tim for the future.

## PREVIEW OF NEXT ARTS EVENING

Monday 4th Dec at 8:00pm  
Heather House, Strand Rd., Bray

A full and exciting programme has been prepared for this Christmas Arts Evening. **Gladys Sheehan** will start off the evening with a special surprise performance from some of her talented young protegees. After that we can relax and listen to **Carmen Cullen** poet, short, story writer and novelist reading some work specially prepared for the occasion.

Then it's music with **Alex Mathias**, saxophonist, composer, arranger and songwriter. We have heard Alex before at Bray Arts when he was still a teenager and it was crystal clear even then that this young man was special. Still only twenty he has completed his BMus at the prestigious Berklee College of Music. It is a great pleasure to welcome him back to Bray Arts. If you want to know more about Alex's career to date, visit his website at [www.alexmathias.com](http://www.alexmathias.com).



When we are all in a good mood after listening to Alex the complaining and bemoaning this, that and everything will start. Yes it's the incorrigible **Old Codgers** (Frank O'Keefe and Justin Aylmer). They could not be with us last month as planned due to an illness but they are back and refuse to go away until they vent their curmudgeonly opinions on a captive audience. You'll love them.

Just in case you have not had a surfeit of entertainment another Bray man of exceptional ability has kindly agreed to come along. **Redmond O'Toole** a very good friend and supporter of Bray Arts will play his Brahms Guitar ( see his website [www.redmondotoole.com](http://www.redmondotoole.com) ) We sometimes forget how priveleged we are to have artistes like Redmond who is so generous with his talent and time. When you look at the line up, all local people, for this December Arts Evening you begin to realise the sheer abundance of the talent of the very highest calibre within our community.



Mary Forde will present the evening's entertainment with her usual charm and poise.

## REVIEW OF LAST MONTHS ARTS EVENING

Coilin Rush opened the proceedings with a most interesting overview of how he experimented and developed his painting techniques and ideas. A great deal of his inspiration comes from iconic images or frames from film and television drama. Colin showed his experimentations with images directly photographed from the tv screen and the ultimate limitations of this technique. It was an interesting and thought provoking insight into the artist's world.



O.R. Melling, the noveleist, followed with some very interesting observations on the artist and how we should cherish the work of the artist.

She talked about her own work and how she has re-written some of her earlier novels. One memorable observation she made was that all artistic endeavour should be given respect as long as the work was not shoddy. Reading from her current work O. R. Melling demonstrated very clearly that she believes in high quality and well made art. It was a pleasure to have her at Bray Arts along with her highly artistic siblings and mother who entered into the spirit of the evening with enthusiasm.



*O.R. Mellins standing, sister Pat Burns left and mother right.*

And who better to induce enthusiasm than Ger Doyle and his talented nephew Joe. This pair literally played up a storm and within seconds had heads nodding, feet tapping, hands clapping and bodies swaying.



*Joe Doyle, Zan O'Loughlin, Ger Doyle*

They were just 'deadly' and the longer they played the 'deadlier' they got. One got the impression that Ger could do or play anything on that fiddle and Joe strapped himself in for the ride and provided brilliant high energy guitar accompaniment. The lads also threw in a bit of singing for good measure. Its not really possible to do justice to these highly talented performers in words; we will simply have to get them back and you will have to come along and hear for yourself; TOP CLASS!!!

## The Map of Everything

for Mike

by  
Anne Fitzgerald

Right from the start a little satchel is placed on the small of your back  
carrying the weight of knowledge between your fine shoulder blades.

The world is folded in coloured pages, cut from equatorial rain  
forests. A leg of lamb and a boot bound n numbered in a Collins edition.

From motherís baking drawer you nick a sheet of grease-proof  
usually kept to house the rising of her baking Alaskas. Down

on your hands and knees, you run a lead pencil over borders,  
finger purple mountain ranges, tan river beds and yellow meadows,

mark cities out with red dots as if paintings bought. Window  
-peeking through slits n ovals, you see silks sail straits to bellow

oceanic trade winds. Nutmeg and peppercorn fill cargo-holds.  
Mint tea is served with roasted almonds before the scent of musk

controls the thrust of movement beneath the Bedouin flow  
as the shape of the Ottoman Empire shifts under your hands;

tracing the Byzantium Empire from: Istanbul, Greece and the Balkans,  
across Asia Minor, Egypt, and North Africa, and onwards towards Spain.

And like Suleiman the Magnificent you walk over mosaics and towns,  
ride aqueducts as if merry-go-rounds to touch livelihoods hoodwinked

by traders as fluently as speech drifts past frescoes in Christian monasteries,  
where castles on hilltops are lighthouses running light over battlefields

in the wake of action. You colour the rivers blue or try to, for a touch of crimson  
seeps through the Nile, the Volga and the Danube as if the consecration, do this in

memory of me bit. You see Christendom under threat. Triangular flags at half-mast  
stake new territory like learning by rote. Twelve twelveís are one hundred and forty

four. It is like flicking through an Encyclopaedia Britannica; you are catapulted by  
the repetition of historys geography, as if watching distant houses burn in snow.

(from the collection *The Map of Everything*. see page 2)

### DECEMBER

by J. W. Donlon

Piebalds stand dumb against the cold  
In mean-grassed December fields  
That swing above the huddle of the town  
In constant bluster, wind lashed  
In an icy sun.

Etching its fear of coming famine days  
Accross the startling bright bleached air  
A crow flounders through the rising stir  
Of wind surge and swell  
In frantic flight.

It's here above the squatting town  
I embrace the rain and wind  
Untill these mean December fields  
Become my Bethlehem.

## Swans in Bray Harbour

By Rosie Wilson

Swans are resting in Bray Harbour  
as if they ve settled all those messages  
wayward deities used send them on.  
They re weary of the symbolism

of poetry, don t even want to swim  
in couples to support the claim  
monogamy is right for birds and women.  
This bunch of ragged swans are lame

ducks compared with Yeats nine and fifty  
wild ones counted on a Coole Park Lake.  
They re not wheeling in great broken rings  
they ve fallen from grace, lack ambition,

beaks pecking wings, necks curved down  
not mysterious, beautiful, in no way living up  
to their image, making you wonder  
with their off-white feathers,

washed-out wings, how gods and artists  
ever chose this species that lacks  
a skylarkís flight, a thrushís song, colours  
of robins, blue tits or goldfinches.

I shift my seat on rocks above the harbour  
stretch veined legs, brush sea-dust from trousers  
call to the birds in praise of ruffling feathers  
unstringing nets of legend, pulling together.

(from the collection *Under the Sugarloaf* see  
page 6)

## Crackers Christmas

by O. Oyston

It was 38 degrees  
on the beach.  
We gritted our teeth  
And ate the turkey.  
In the open air,  
Christmas crackers sounded  
Like distant fireworks.  
The roasted potatoes  
Looked as if they'd been  
Sprinkled with salt-  
But you couldn't tell-  
Windy day.  
A wave almost dished  
The plum pudding.  
Somebody had forgotten  
The bread sauce.  
Somebody had remembered  
The cranberry sauce.  
Somebody had remembered.

## LETTERS

by Marine Piranian

Dear Natacha,

I'm writing to you tonight because my heart is full. Actually I would like to tell you with honesty that I still love you very much but the truth is, I'm not sure anymore that is the case. Without knowing it we have drifted apart. Our lives together are no longer synchronised. We are in love with what we were, but not what we are. We have become strangers who no longer remember the name of our favourite flowers anymore. Perhaps you love lilies? But I'm not sure now. The rare moments which are ours together, are moments heavy with words of frustration, insinuations and misunderstandings. And



I'm tired of that.

I feel that you are dissatisfied with me, that I am not good enough for you, but I don't know why this is the case, you never tell me.

The truth is Natacha, the truth is, I feel trapped by my love for you, I feel sad that I am not able to fill your life and unhappy that although I do love you in my own way, I am not able to fill my life with that love..

I wish I were stronger, I wish that I could be responsible for your heart, but I cannot, I have trouble enough being responsible for my own.

So I will be a coward, I will leave everything, I will leave you, and I will put down my head because I'm not proud of my *self*.

This will be my last letter to you Natacha, it will join the many others, some perhaps unread. The weekends at our park, Mr's Quinlans hotel, the old Bistro these will now be things of the past for you and I and I am sad about that.

But I'm not complaining because it was the life that we dreamed to have: to never live together, just walking, talking (if possible), touching, sometimes kissing, sometimes sleeping together, in a hotel bed, never our own bed. Our home was our love.

Our dream was of a life of letters, letters of love, full of feeling, full of revelations, words of happiness, words of support, words to make us live.

And we had it, this epistolary relationship. Your letters made me feel as good as a night spent with you, nights sometimes even filled with pain. sometime takes back my appetite during days, and crying during nights. During nights I was writing to you, I bring paper with me everywhere, in cafes, in my office, even in my bed to telling you my worst acts, my worst desire. Natacha have I given everything to you even the *breeze* on my face. maybe we get tired of all these revelations, all these excitement. Maybe we think it's disgusting, we don't want these anymore and

we want to throw it all up.

But I respect you, I don't want to hurt you and I regret if I did, I regret but this letter is the last one, because I must leave you and I hope that you will leave my *thoughts* soon. I might look the worst coward of all but I am really sorry. I *had wanted* never to wake up from this dream with you. Our love is maybe too old now even if I know that I will never love as I loved you, that is the saddest part of my letter.

Dear Sylvain,

During the past week, I have re-read your letter many times and I can't stop thinking about it. About the past! About the future!

I cannot think straight any more. I cannot think about today. I don't have a today anymore. I think about our happy days, about our letters so soft so full of sense and attention. You have always found the exact word, I fell in love with your words long before falling in love with your *body*. Your careful body that I will forget during one day of carnivals or one lonely night. Your picture will be erased and another will soon take its place. I am not writing this because I want to be nasty to you, even if you are intent on being nasty to me, but I just want to be sincere and telling you that this is going to be my last letter to you, I am not waiting for any answer. But believe that I hardly imagine a future without your letters, without your way of describing to me your life. Your letters are art, they make me laugh, they are a meeting place, a sharing place.

I was just watching your life, never acting. You said that you're trapped by your love, that it's too much for you, that you couldn't stand the fact that we were dependant on each other and you want to flee from this dependence. You don't want to belong to anybody, but I never owned you. You always slipped from my grasp *and here you're doing it again*.

But that's okay, I am used to it. Like I got used to these fleeting moments in the park or in the station. No one wants to live these moments, but that is what we wanted. Actually, I'm not sure that this practice of neutrality worked because you were always with me, without being mine. You were always there.

Even though I never saw you in my bed, or having a shower in my bathroom, you were there, as you were everywhere.

Your words echoed in each place I was. I had a secret pleasure, a pleasure that I never told you about. (So this means there are still some things you don't know about me.) I used to read your letters the same way that I read Baudelaire's poems, murmuring your words in my bathroom because the echo makes the sounds come from everywhere and *went into*



me. They have never left and will never be forgotten.

Your words are immortal, and will stay in me for eternity. I may not remember, how you look in a few years, but your letters will stay intact.

I can throw them away, or burn them, but they will still resonate as they did in my bathroom.

Of course our lives are not synchronised, our moments together are full of insinuations and misunderstandings, because even with this original relationship, we reached an *unsupported level* that we didn't want. We didn't want this, we wanted to understand each other. We wanted to stand each other. And forever.

But sometimes, it's impossible. We loved so much that of course we ended up hating, at least as much as we loved - each other.

And now I know that you hate me. And me, now, I don't know what it is to think about the present anymore. But I reflect now nevertheless. I reread in my head all the sentences that you wrote to me. Your words haunt me and I don't know what to do. I know that we will never write each other again. And so, what will we become? Will you think about me sometimes? Will you be there if I may need you? Will you be there if I realise that I only have you? I know that I only have you. Even if you were never my own.

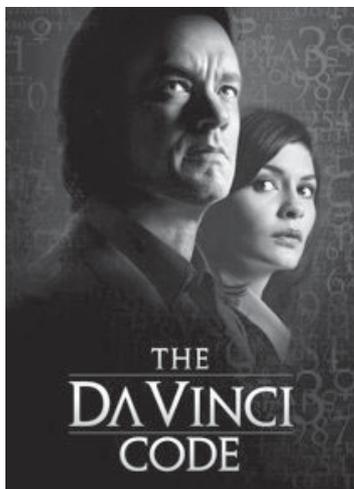
The future makes me scared, Sylvain. A future without letters, without stamps, without addresses. I may keep writing, but without disturbing your life. You can be sure that I will never send them to you. We can even say that we are friends, because we are not anymore. There are a lot of things that we won't be anymore, and there is no more 'we', anymore.

Just thank you for the past that we had. And fuck the future. And between the past and the future, remember that my favourite flowers are weeds.

**Marine Piranian** is from Marseille and is currently completing her final year at secondary school.

## VIDEO VOYEUR

Harold Chassen



The mention of The Da Vinci Code brings groans to most people when it is mentioned. I think you have to have read the book to get the most from the film. Due to time constraints it cannot go into the depths the book does and shows the characters as flat and two-dimensional. It doesn't explore any of the side stories and threads as in the book. Tom Hanks and Audrey Tautou had no chemistry between them. Having said all that I still think the film is worth a

look especially for those who have and enjoyed the book.

## Under the Sugarloaf

by Rosy Wilson

**Under the Sugarloaf** is a new collection of poetry by Rosy Wilson to be launched on 7th Dec. The collection explores friendships and family, from birth to death, from a unique viewpoint under the Great Sugarloaf in County Wicklow.

Throughout the book, her poems are scattered with images of Bray, Greystones and the surrounding countryside, where she uses her gift of insight to redraw local images for residents and visitors alike.

Rosy's love of imagery and metaphor shine through her tales of togetherness and separation and, as a long term member of Amnesty International, she uses her sharp eye to unlock sensitive issues of resolution in her poems, *Good Friday Agreement* and *The Colditz Story*. The role of women past and present is also tackled with sensitivity and imagination in her well-honed lines.

A very attractive feature of the collection is the inclusion of six etchings by Paul Haydock-Wilson inspired by his mother's



poems. Paul is an artist and printmaker working in London and County Wicklow. This year he was invited to exhibit his work in the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition, 2006.

**Under the Sugarloaf** will be launched at a reception in

Signal Arts Centre  
1 Albert Avenue, Bray  
Thurs 7th Dec '06  
7pm -9pm

Copies will be available from Dubray Books, Bray and Kilmartin Arts Gallery in Wicklow Town or direct from the author at Mertle Cottage, Rocky Valley Drive, Kilmacanogue, Co. Wicklow.

## ANOTHER SELL-OUT EXHIBITION

It was a practical sell-out for Conall McCabe, the Bray based figurative artist, on a packed-out opening night of his exhibition of paintings at Dalkey Castle and Heritage Centre. Liz McManus TD and Deputy Leader of the Labour Party opened



*Olivier Cornet (Art Agent) with Conall (right)*

the exhibition and emphasised how important it was to provide an environment of support for artists that would give them more than the rudimentary resources for simple survival. The arts are not simply a 'nice to have' feature of community life, they are essential to the spiritual wellbeing of a civil society. Liz was presented with a portrait of herself at the launch. A friend and contemporary of Conall, Redmond O'Toole lent his support in a very practical way. He provided a fitting and beautiful prelude to the evening on his Brahms guitar. A very large crowd from Bray were there to support Conall. See photos below:-

*Lorcan Byrne & Zan O'Loughlin*



*Redmond O'Toole*



*Liz McManus*



*Iris and Simon Keogh*

## GAIA

(Mother of Life)

From Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December to Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2006, Signal Arts Centre presents GAIA, a joint exhibition featuring new work by painters Frankie Gallagher and Cabrini Lynch. Together their work embraces Nature in its different aspects hence the title which can also be interpreted as 'Earth Mother'.

Frankie has been painting for the past 25 years. Her particular passion lies in nature and this new body of work explores plants in an aquatic environment and their seasonal varia-



tions. Her work focuses mainly on water lilies and the effect of light variations during the day on these aquatic plants. Her observations and studies of these delicate plants was facilitated by the wide variety housed by the Botanical Gardens at Glasnevin in North Dublin.

Cabrini has been exhibiting her work widely since 1992. She has exhibited previously in the Signal Arts centre in 2003 and in the same year showed her work at the RHA Annual Exhibition. 2004 saw her at the Royal Ulster academy of art and in 2006 she exhibited at Dungarvan Arts Centre in Dublin.



The sea has always captivated Cabrini. It is 'at times threatening, other times a source of comfort and contemplation'. Her work evolved from this fascination and interest in the energy and force of the wide open seascape, the ebb and flow, the patterns, textures and wrack left on the shore by outgoing tides.

Opening Reception: Friday December 8<sup>th</sup> 2006; 7pm - 9pm  
To be opened by Journalist and Writer, **Jim Cusack**  
Gallery Opening Hours: Tuesday to Friday 10pm - 5pm  
Open Saturday and Sunday 12pm to 5pm Lunch 1pm - 2pm

PS

Do you want to write? If the answer is yes, it is well worth checking out Inkwell Writers.



**Vanessa O'Loughlin** Inkwell Writers' Workshops organises one day intensive fiction writing workshops facilitated by best selling authors at the Killiney Castle Hotel. The next one is on 9th Dec 'Crime Pays' featuring **Paul Carson** and **Alex Barclay** best selling author of *Darkhouse*. Alex will be focusing on character and dialogue as well as the opening chapter, pace and plot.

To see the many impressive workshops Vanessa has lined up for 2007 go to the website [www.inkwellwriters.ie](http://www.inkwellwriters.ie).

## Submission Guidelines

Editor : Dermot McCabe : [bacj@eircom.net](mailto:bacj@eircom.net)

Creative Writing Prose/Fiction Editor : Anne Fitzgerald : [afitzgerald3@ireland.com](mailto:afitzgerald3@ireland.com)

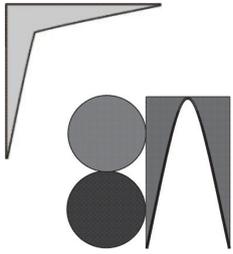
Poetry Editor : Eugene Hearne : [poetrybray@yahoo.ie](mailto:poetrybray@yahoo.ie)

Email submissions to any of the above or post typed submissions to

The Editor BAJ 'Casino',  
Killarney Rd. Bray,  
Co. Wicklow

Visual material: Photographs by Post. Digital Images by Email or CD in JPEG format.

Deadline 15th of each month.



## **Bray Arts evening Mon 4th Nov Heather House Hotel Seafront : Doors open 8:00pm Everyone welcome Adm : 5 Euro / 4 Euro Concession**

A special entertainment from the *Gladys Sheehan's* school of Drama and Music.

A reading from *Carmen Cullen* novelist, poet and short story writer. The *Old Codgers* have something to say and they are going to say it no matter what. They are a hoot!

**Music, Music, Music** : Two exceptional local musical talents

**Redmond O'Toole & Alex Mathias**

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