
Bray Arts Journal

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"The man and the hour have met"

So said an American, William Yancey, about Jefferson Davis, President-elect of the Confederacy in 1861. The same thought and wish was in the hearts and minds of people all over the world when Barak Obama became president elect. One can't help wonder if the burden of expectation that has been laid on Barak Obama's shoulders is far too onerous for any single man to bear. However, there are indications that Barak is choosing his future cabinet solely on the basis of their abilities and this does bode well for the future.

His success had special significance for Bray Arts Chairperson, Zan O'Loughlin who is of course American and very proud of it. Zan got an email from an obviously jubilant Jim Hennessey:

From : Jim Hennessey
To : Zan O'Loughlin

Hi Guys...

We're beside ourselves over here. Barack Obama has been elected

President of the United States!!!

We feel as if a great burden has been lifted, we have a great sense of relief, we believe the country is definitely going in a new and better direction. Hope and optimism combined, we look forward to a better and more homogeneous country.

Here's how we saw it:

150,000 People waited 3 1/2 hours in Grant Park, Chicago to hear Barack.

Humility, honesty, integrity, intelligence.



Like Jim Hennessey, we also look forward to a better and more homogeneous USA because, as has so starkly been demonstrated in the current global recession, the whole world is affected by America. If America sneezes we get pneumonia and if America gets pneumonia we've had our chips.

Front Cover : Drawing by Pat Conroy. We are planning to have Pat come to Bray Arts in the new year to show us more of his beautiful drawings.

Nov Bray Arts Evening Review

The Racker, Peter Donnelly, opened the session with a provocative rendition of an Irishman's life in London.



Remarking his delight at finding "Waiting for Botticelli" featured on the cover of the latest Bray Arts Journal, the Racker introduced its creator, Niamh Harding Miller, painter and art teacher. Niamh showed slides of her work and techniques applied during 37 years of teaching and many more years working in oils, with brushes and palette knife, water colours and acrylics.



With an impressionistic rendering of a horse looking over its shoulder, jockeys and horses running along the beach, Niamh showed how she likes to feature these elegant animals.

Conveying a sense of past and present and how to paint what you cannot see, Niamh showed an abstract rendering of two horses heads fading into ancient cave paintings. The movement of time was illustrated in a watercolour study of a single poppy from initial opening of the bud to full bloom in a single day.

Closing her wonderful presentation of many ideas and techniques, Niamh invited her enthusiastic audience to see her work at various forthcoming exhibitions and group shows.

The Racker welcomed the renowned author and poet, Mairíde Woods, born in Cushendall and winner of two Hennessy Awards and the Francis MacManus Award from RTE, now living in Sutton, Co. Dublin.



From within her own “interior darkness” she drew her listeners into the world “in my fridge” where she “illuminated plenty of illusion”.

With meditations on home and “Homelessness”, Mairíde revealed her thoughts on dreams of home torn up by the need to move house when all that you have left is a favourite table cloth.

Despite her assertion of being a pessimist, Mairíde impressed her audience with her indomitable spirit, coming into mature years with flying colours. With careful and well-crafted imagery she created an impression of being quite reserved and yet, in her language, she is pioneering and vocal about her own vitality.

Closing with the seasonal theme of Autumn and an image of Maple trees in “Fires in the Fall” Mairíde ended with an exhilarating “as in a dying fire I cry ègood on you girl!”

The Racker introduced the North Wicklow Singing Circle of enthusiasts for all forms of unaccompanied singing who come together on the third Saturday of every month in the Bray Head



Hotel for a night of song. Four leading Circle singers: George Henderson, Pat Burke, Roisin Connell and Alan Stout gave a sample of the wide range of impromptu singing from Sean NÙs to Sinatra.

Pat sang about “How I got barred”; Roisín sang a beautiful piece in Irish on Gola island in Donegal; Alan sang a humorous song on “I kissed my love last Christmas”. George then moved the song into the room and various members of audience joined in with “When Irish Eyes are Laughing”, “an American” and “Mrs. Otis Regrets”.

With songs from Ireland, Geordie songs and old and modern songs from anywhere at all the evening sang to a close. All vowed to support the North Wicklow Song Circle at its next get together.

The Racker racked the evening to a close with one of his powerful renditions and the enthusiastic audience showed their warm appreciation of a great evening’s entertainment all round.

Cearbhail E. O’Méadra

(The photographs were taken by Peter Gowney)

A few other photographs of the evening, courtesy of Peter Gowney



Maggie Donnelly



Zan
O'Loughlin



Dermot
McCabe
&
Peter Donnelly

In The Empty Park

By Debasish Sen

In the clear breeze,
the lonely soul of this empty
park looms shadows silhouetted,
rising like silent prayer.

A thin fallen leaf sighs, resembling
the turned leaf of a book
of life browned by neglect.
Immutably lost, as if in a sea.

A breathless smoke of blue ascends
somewhere. Stirring those stray
souls in this inexorable sad corner.

But inside the empty park
there is not a breath stirring.
Children are all gone, abandoning
their coy games to finish tomorrow,
as are the those old men who daily huddle
in their dulled reminiscences, incongruous
words trying to piece together a living past,
carrying no relevance like useless disused dreams,
its the purple sun who takes their remaining
burden.

Missing Alice

by Berni Alexander

Alice is missing today

The rain came in the night and took away her white,
And something in her spark was snuffed out in the dark,
Now sheís sitting with her back to us all,
Hoping that more snow will come to call.

She's wearing Alice ribbons, answering to her name
But thereís a whisper in her voice, somethingís not the
same,
Even Bones the dog abandoned the crusade,
To restore the smile we hope is just mislaid.

Alice hasnít anything to say

She's looking through the rain at frosted doilies on the
lawn,
Remnants of a sheet of snow that stole away at dawn,
And the snowman she so lovingly designed,
Ran off and left his hat and scarf behind.

She's taking off her snow boots putting them away
Colouring in her pictures like every other day
But making sure her crayons stay between the lines
Her little head is hung the snow has got her tongue

Alice is missing today

Trouble in Paradise

After a painting by James Barry, National Gallery, Dublin

By Shirley Jane Farrar

Was it the brooding mood, the dark distraction,
two Rubenesque lovers that caught my eye
passing by, below the overpowering temptation
in Paradise? Was it their stunningly sculpted bodies,
shouldered up against each other, solidly, inclined to dine
weighing up some desperate reasons why they should
take just a bite, in that deep forest?

I could smell the monstrous scent,
autumn undergrowth dying back,
that rocky glade where Adam faces away, forlorn,
let his gaze fall towards the ground,
dark-wooded shade, where at his feet
the serpent grasps an apple in its mouth,
unfurls itself before the background of foreboding sky.

Even the written warning words- *Do Not Touch*
scream from the lion-legged console table.
Such a weighty painting bearing down,
bearing witness to the ambivalent ambition.
I could feel the movement, Adam's powerful leg
about to step out of the picture. The other, the right,
foreshortened as if to hold back from, to balance.

Or was it James Barry, breathtakingly
holding back on his decision; listen Adam to the soft
sweet breath of Eve, a sideways glance,
her human touch, breast leaning warmly on his arm,
capturing the moment when her gentle words
tempt him to clasp the apple, now the golden sphere
of his world, wrapped up between their bitter future.

I want to shout and tell them- *No*,
as in the distance under a reddening sky, the lion,
King of beasts, no deafening roar,
disappears with just a backward glance.

Marching Men

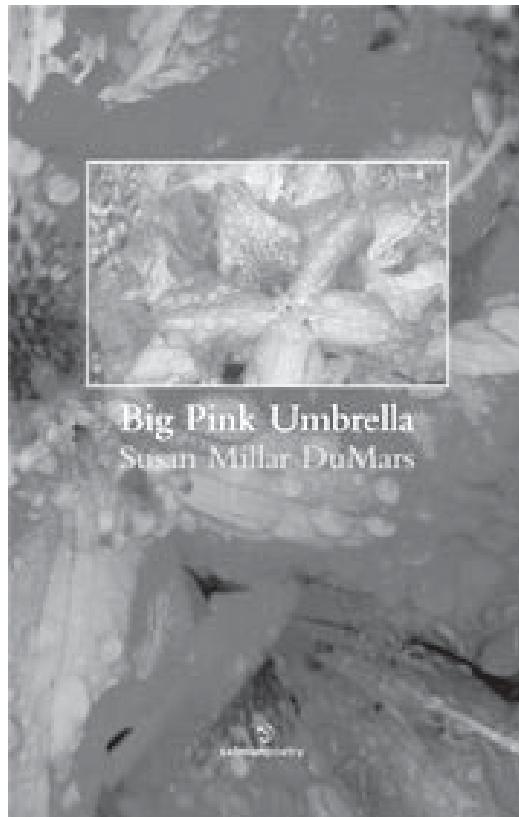
by Majorie Pickthall (1883 - 1922)

Under the level winter sky
I saw a thousand Christs go by
They sang an idle song and free
As they went up to Calvary.

Careless of eye and course of lip,
They marched in holiest fellowship.
That heaven might heal the world, they gave
Their earth-born dreams to deck the grave.

With souls unpurged and steadfast breath
They supped the sacrament of death.
And each one, far off, apart
Seven swords have rent a womanís heart

Two Poems by
Susan Millar DuMar
from
Big Pink Umbrella
(Co. Clare, Salmon Poetry, 2008)



Susan Millar DuMars was born in Philadelphia in 1966. She holds an MA in Writing from the University of San Francisco. Her poems and short stories have been published widely in the US, UK and Ireland. Her poetry was included in the 2004 Anthology I, published by Ainnir; in 2005, Lapwing published a pamphlet of her poems, the well reviewed Everyone Loves Me. Susan's stories have been short-listed for many awards, and in 2005 she received an Irish Arts Council Bursary for her fiction. American Girls, a volume of her short stories, was published by Lapwing in 2007. Susan lives in Galway, Ireland. Since 2003, Susan and her husband Kevin Higgins have organised the successful Over the Edge reading series, showcasing new writers. Big Pink Umbrella is the first full collection of her poetry.

Millar DuMars' sense of language, ingrained in the poet's attitude toward her poems, is why they can move such extraordinary distances in tone, language and theme, building to conclusions of breath-taking clarity and directness. **Patricia Prime, New Hope International Review**

Susan Millar DuMars will not rush sadness, but instead makes language do its poignant job of revealing and evoking strong feelings... Her style of retelling is unique; she doesn't mince her words, she spares them and makes them work. **Rita Ann Higgins**

To Sylvia Plath

I mistook your
open graves
for cathedrals.

Paid my pennies
and lit candles inside.
I thought you were
very brave.

At twenty-nine I tried to die.
Shredded by my need
for work that mattered, clothes that fit.
a face glad to see me.

This need had no dignity -
lay naked,
legs spread,
howled and stank.

Maybe I did die,
to be wombed in the cabin of a jet.
its landing screech and jolt
my birth cry.

Learning to walk the second time
is harder.
I can't forget how it hurts
to fall.

I've come back to myself,
someone else.
I think I am
very brave.

Salthill

Thin bands of cloud
measure the moon ó
hands on a great gold clock.

Like the tide
we retreated
and returned.

Your fingers curl
around mine, and press;
sand and water
in darkness, embrace.

Poem for Christmas

By Sean Breathnach

†

The tiny animals march across the years,
the cows, the donkeys and the sheep;
their masters too, their presents bear
to the Christ child all asleep.

†

Precious and humble our presents then,
each small, and yet so dear
but joy glowed bright at our fire that night
for father, mother and me.

†

The simplest story told was gay,
a child's heart asked no more;
all hurt, all harm for another day
without wind chills to the core.

†

The beasts return, we make our way,
wish our gifts were gold,
the Child smiles bright, as if to say
your gifts are paid a hundredfold.

Me Lovely Melons

Several melons burst.

'Ah Wayne, would you ever mind what you are doing; are you blind or whah? That's me profit for today gone.' Maisie rolled her eyes skyward and shook her head.

'Sure it's not his fault Maisie. I told you yesterday that that pram is on its last legs.' Judy winked at the forlorn Wayne who was trying to scoop the broken melons from the cobbles.

'There's nothing wrong with that pram's legs, Judy. It's carried all fourteen of mine and never needed more than a knob of butter on the axle to keep it running like a Rolls Royce.'

'Rolls Royce, haven't you grand ideas, all the same. That aul pram is always out of action. Your Malachy has put more new wheels on that thing Ö'

'Anyway, no matter whah, that little waster should be more careful of me melons. He's always up to mischief. Last week he bruised me pears, and he had the cheek to ask me for pocket money.' (contd. ---->)

Video Voyeur

- Harold Chassen

Kingdom of the Crystal Skull is the latest in the Indiana Jones stable. It is a typical adventure film trying to revive those American films of the '50s. Jones travels to South America where he searches for Indian artifacts. Harrison Ford is a bit old for the part but he plays up that fact often saying he is getting too old for this. It follows the typical format of the previous films though it is somewhat lacking in substance. Although it wasn't that good I enjoyed it all the same. If you liked the previous films of the series you should enjoy this one also.

Preview of Bray Arts Evening for Dec 1st

Heather House Hotel, Bray Sea Front 8:00pm

Everyone is welcome. Adm €5 & €4 conc.

Seeing as it's December the committee decided that there is nothing like music to arouse the Christmas spirits. So we are delighted to announce that we have **Serenedipity** the barbershop choir plus some Quartet singing. These ladies are a knockout in more ways than one.

The other musical event of the evening is **The Queen of Peace Church Choir** directed by the wonderful **Joe Bolland**. One thing you can be sure of with Joe Bolland is quality and entertainment. This is a really good four part harmony choir with a wide repertoire of sacred and secular songs.

One can't have Christmas without a Christmas story and to mark this Christmas, Bray Arts asked writer **Hugh Rafferty** to write and read a new story for this Christmas of 2008. Despite the short deadline Hugh immediately accepted the challenge. Bray Arts audiences have heard Hugh read his work before and praised him highly.

There will of course be a Christmas raffle with lots and lots of prizes. So come along and enjoy the evening.

'You never fucking stop givin' out,' shouted Wayne.

'Did you hear that, Judy? Did you hear it? And you defending him. he's not only a little waster; he's just as big a pup as his daddy.'

'Ah now, Wayne love, there's no need to talk to your mammy like that.'

'And you can fuck off as well.' Wayne flung the broken melons back on the ground and ran before Maisie could clatter him.

'Well the little bollix,' said Maisie, 'where in heavens did he pick up language like that?'

'From that big bollix of a father of his. Come on Maisie. We'll miss the early morning shoppers if we don't get a move on.'

Tom Conroy



SIGNAL ARTS CENTRE EXHIBITIONS

Re-Collected Impressions

An Exhibition of Paintings by Marianne Cullen

From Tuesday 9th December to Sunday 21st December 2008

Marianne is a native of Wexford and has exhibited her work in various solo and group exhibitions. Her work features in public and private collections.

The work for this exhibition is influenced by themes of childhood and memory and is drawn from the landscape that served as a backdrop to most of her childhood experiences. This landscape holds echoes of her past, echoes of farming activities that she would have witnessed growing up on a farm. She is using a series of photographs taken while on a short walk near her childhood home as a source for this work. These photographs capture objects and scenes, which suggest prior events. We see only the image that has been recorded but we can imagine the



history. She says, "I feel that translating these photographs into painting helps to delay the reading process and that it allows for more reflective visual attention."

Opening Reception: Friday 12th December 7 p.m. – 9 p.m.

Landscapes

An exhibition of paintings by Derek Fitzpatrick.

From Tuesday 25th November to Sunday 7th December 2008

Derek is a native of Dublin and has exhibited his work in various solo and group exhibitions. His work features in many public and private collections.

He is not engaging with the illustration of the landscape with paint because that is not what he is interested in. It is an interpretation of the landscape using his hand and gut feeling rather than an idea in his head. It is not about making a painting 'of' the landscape. He is more interested in painting *éaboutí* the landscape and the experience of being in it. A likeness is unnecessary.

Process is essential to the work as it affects his way of thinking. He says, "Painting for me is the interaction of accidents and my will as an artist, or the interaction of the unconscious and the conscious. Anything can happen on the surface. In a way it's accidental Ö,"

The element of surprise is important to him. To do something predicted doesn't seem worthwhile at all. Words cannot describe what a painting is about because it is a substance, it is not about words. The medium can portray feelings. Paint as a substance

has its own rules and language which is non-verbal. Painting



should not be explained as regards its own nature, but should be able to exist by itself, standing on its own.

Opening Reception: Thursday 27th November 7 p.m. – 9 p.m.

CHRISTMAS AT MERMAID

Sun 14th Dec - Sun 3rd Jan

The now annual exhibition '**A Christmas Gift**' offers an artistic alternative to the usual mayhem of Christmas shopping. Mermaid Arts Centre is located in an area that has an abundance of fabulous artists and craftspeople. We are delighted to offer a range of these artists, and others from further afield, a platform to exhibit and sell their work. Come along and get your loved ones something unique this Christmas.

This year's exhibition will feature knitwear and textiles by



Shuttleknit, which runs until Sun 21 December. The painting, print and drawing exhibition will continue into the new year and include the work of many local artists such as Stephen Blayds, Damien Flood, Joanna Kidney, Kate Minnock.



Dressing up the Christmas Tree will take place on Sat 13th Dec @ 2 - 4pm. Bring your home made decorations. Mulled wine for the parents and freshly baked mince pies for all. And it's free.

Welcome to Bray Nora

Bray Arts extends it's good wishes to the new artistic director of Mermaid. Nora Hickey.

Nora has worked predominantly within the realm of the visual arts and music.

She was a curator in the prestigious Lewis Glucksman Gallery at University College Cork and in the Hunt museum in Limerick.

Nora holds two Masters Degrees in International Studies and the History of Art and Design. She is on the Board of Directors of both the Granary Theatre in Cork and the Irish Museums Association and she is a founding Director of PACE, Partnership for the Arts through Creative Engagement. Nora has close ties with Wicklow : her father, Ted Hickey, left his home town of Wicklow in the late 1960s to become Keeper of Art in the Ulster Museum in Belfast, where Nora was born.

Submission Guidelines

Editor : Dermot McCabe : editor@brayarts.net

Creative Writing Editor : Anne Fitzgerald : afitzgerald3@ireland.com

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

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

Visual material: Contact editor
Deadline 15th of each month.

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*Arts Evening Monday 1st Dec
at the Heather House Hotel Strand Road 8:00 pm
5 Euro / 4 Euro Conc. Everyone is welcome.*

Serendipity : Ladies Barbershop choir plus Quartet.

Hugh Rafferty : Short story writer, reading his own Christmas story specifically commissioned by Bray Arts.

Queen of Peace Church Choir : Wonderful four part choir with Christmas songs, sacred and secular, under the direction of their very talented choirmaster **Joe Bolland**.

Christmas raffle: with lots to give away.

Bray Arts is grateful for the support of Bray Council, Wicklow Council, CASC and Heather House Hotel.
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