
Bray Arts Journal

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Volume 14



YES WE CAN!

By Zan O'Loughlin Chairperson, Bray Arts.

National Democratic Convention. "Festival of Life" festival was organized in Grant Park. It was a very sad time in the United States as thousands of American soldiers were being killed in Viet Nam, Martin Luther King was assassinated , April 4th, and Robert Kennedy was also assassinated. At the festival thousands of young people came on a peaceful protest against the Viet Nam war. The Illinois Guard and Chicago Police attacked the protesters with batons. Photographers and newsman were also attacked. It continued in front of the Conrad Hilton Hotel. The crowd chanted " "THE WHOLE WORLD IS WATCHING"

Forty years later a totally different event has taken place. Two weeks before Robert Kennedy was shot, a reporter asked could their ever be a black president. Robert Kennedy replied, "Not for at least 40 years". Little did he know, 40 years later we do have a black president!.

My son Caolan and I had the opportunity to attend a political rally for Obama in Omaha, Nebraska. Ten thousand people sat in the Civic Centre in downtown Omaha and waited from 4:00 'til 6:00 for Obama to arrive. He was speaking at another venue in Omaha before he came to us. I knew little of Obama and was for Hilary Clinton. After one hour of listening to Barack Obama, Caolan and I were in his camp. I am fortunate to hold dual citizenship. Although now I am living here 35 years, longer than I had lived in the States, I was able to vote for Obama on my absentee overseas ballot. The total relief and immense joy I experienced when I saw the news at 4 am in the morning, can not be accurately expressed. There were celebrations world wide. If only the citizens of the United Sated could be aware of global jubilation. I now have more confidence in the American people and can be proud of my birth country. Ireland is my home now. I feel very settled here, and have many friends to share my life. My beautiful family are so supportive and feel as happy as I with Obama's win.

Yes we can! We can chant and prepare for a healing and exciting time ahead. God Bless America to those who are ready for change and new life in American politics.

Front Cover : Gate - Painting by the very popular and prolific local artist Peter Growney.



Yanny Petters and Ann Kelly at Dec. Arts Night

Bray Arts Night Review

Monday December 1, 2008

The December meeting opened to a freshly painted and decorated room that set a bright note for the pre-Christmas table decorations. The chairperson, Zan O'Loughlin welcomed Nora Hickey, the newly arrived Director of the Mermaid arts Centre.



Nora Hickey and Cearbhall O'Meadhra



Hugh Rafferty

Hugh Rafferty started the evening with a moving reading of his own story "Happy Christmas" about the sea and a shipwreck set on Christmas Eve in a small sea-faring village . His imaginative imagery and powerful juxtaposition of people, timing and the power of the ocean held the audience spellbound until the relief of a happy ending to what had threatened to be an awful tragedy.

The popular ladies barber shop chorus, **Serendipity**, dressed in sparkling attire and directed by Pauline Edmondson, followed with five magnificent songs in intriguing tight



harmony . After the first two choral items, the choir revealed that it contained two Barber Shop quartets in its midst. The first one **Synergy** who sang “I don’t know why I love you like I do” with dramatic accompaniment. The second, the acclaimed **Four Piece Suite**, delivered a couple of numbers displaying a highly experienced technique blending the voices to perfection. The whole group came back together again to deliver a charming Christmas finale. After the break **Joe Bollard** and the queen of peace choir provided a set of Christmas carols and songs to the delight of their audience. To enthusiastic applause, Joe and the choir closed with a rich encore of Silent Night to round off the musical part of the evening.

The final event was the Christmas raffle which was generously supported by 26 Bray shops who kindly donated spot prizes.

Cearbhall E. O’Meadhra

Photographs - **Peter Grouney**



Joe Bollard



Queen of Peace Choir

Preview of Bray Arts Evening 12th January 2009

Heather House Hotel, Seafont, Bray Everyone welcome Adm. E 5 / E 4 conc.

Bray Arts celebrates another year with an exciting lineup of talent to chase away those recession blues.

Breda Wall Ryan is a highly regarded contemporary Irish writer with an impressive publishing record including: *Faber’s Best New Irish Short Stories, 2006-07*; *The New Hennessy Book of Irish Fiction*; Sunday Tribune’s *New Irish Writing and The Stinging Fly*. She has also broadcast on RTE. Breda is a native of County Waterford and lived and worked in Spain and Cork before settling in Bray, where she started writing literary fiction.

About two years ago **Mary Duffy** resumed painting, having established an international reputation in photography and performance art; and subsequently in Radio where her first documentary “The Lino Crossing- Tales of the Observed” was nominated for the Prix d’Italia.

In March of this year Mary had a highly successful solo exhibition of her work in Signal Arts. “When I paint, I feel alive. Engaged. Challenged. I take comfort in my ability to become engrossed in the world around me through the process of painting.”

Don Carollo

Dan is a Seattle-area acoustic finger style and rhythm guitarist (currently living in Bray) who performs a blend of contemporary and traditional Irish/American tunes. Dan performs solo and accompaniment Irish-style guitar and has been playing guitar for over 25 years.

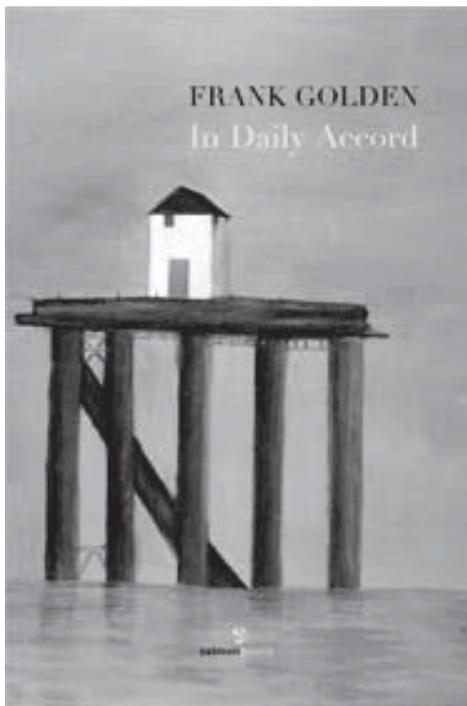


Don Carollo

In 2004 he was selected “Northwest Folk Artist of the Month” on KBCS 91.3. and performs annually at Seattle’s Northwest Folklife Festival.

You can listen to Dan’s beautiful guitar playing by logging into <http://ie.myspace.com/celtograss>. You can also buy his CD ‘Mile From Dublin’ from the site.

In Daily Accord
Poems by Frank Golden
(Co. Clare, Salmon, 2008)



Daily Accord presents a selection of short poems written daily over a twenty month period. Loosely based on Haiku and Senryu forms

Extract from collection:

In love that does not fully contain us
Undelivered by the graciousness of being
Daylight takes on an indifferent sureness

Years of deep intent
Constructing patterns
Something to penetrate later

The Piano in mud
Is larger than the human body
And more emotional

We peer walk sing
Green sky
Grinding moon

*I'll stay with you
It's easier
But nothing is permanent*

I remark on each bird in turn
Bullfinch stonechat swan
Yellowhammer blackbird sparrow

No one stays longer than they must
We outlast to our own needs
Outlandishly determined

I might as well kneel
It's a form of prayer
Trying to hear

In the hillside wood
trees have fallen
And in my heart

Miss what
You
Less

Write
Seed
Relinquish

I bake rum cake
Drink most of it
Iron awkward shirts

Flibberdijibbet

By Lauren Norton

When I think of all the fishing trips I've ruined -
The wretched mackerel I left in a stranger's bag
So we came home empty-handed from the barge,
The minnows thrown to sweet seals,
Who stalked our boat so nothing bit or bent our ready poles,
My slapping shoeless soles collecting stray hooks, fish guts,
tears -
Granddad, I wonder why you brought me,
To wreak havoc on your test lines and your snell knots,
To have you bent for hours over a tangled reel,
I would have left me home and brought the boys.
I loved you for your patience, love you for the time you said
I must catch a wealthy man who can afford me,
For your silence, for your breakfast rituals,
For your voice in the kitchen when Nana calls.
Casting off in nights as deep as this one
I surface - salty toes braving a rusty bar for height
Eyes on your hands, your hands on the spool.

A Life in the Death of Matt Brogan

By Berni Alexander

May
16/5/85

This morning I forced my mug between my lips; it felt clumsy, awkward but I clung to its familiarity. The steam melted into my face and I drew hot tea onto my tongue; a half-hearted fuck lopped it back out and it freckled my white shirt. A blister was born, I could feel it but not much else: not grief not the pain of old skin stretching across the bones of my new reality. The house had resumed its settled demeanour but my floors lay wounded, Doreen's high rise heels driven through their fibres in her endless quest to replenish sandwich platters and tea cups. The letterbox fluttered and yet another Mass card free falls through air, still heavy with cigarette smoke and sympathy. The twins had left for school, bereft of enthusiasm, exams looming.

17/5/85

I watched them come up the drive yesterday hoping to gauge the impact of their first day back at school. Apart from the absence of his school tie held at arms length and spinning lasso fashion, Brendan looked unscathed. Alice seemed relaxed but more dishevelled, the braid resting like a ladder against her spine as she'd left now loose, she sidled up to Brendan, nudging his shoulder in an attempt to sabotage his spinning tie trick. They came in with cheese and onion on their breath, bristling with a shift in focus . . . change pinkening their cheekbones . . . salt plumping their lips. They filled the house with their day, in voices too loud . . . too fast . . . too desperate. By dinnertime Alice was withdrawn and Brendan was playing with his food.

21/5/85

Doreen found a window of opportunity in her blonde life today and put me into it. She slipped past me in the hallway; leading by her shoulder pads, perfume trailing like a kite tail behind her. She sipped my coffee and told me I look raw boned, haunted and emotionally disconnected. As if I don't know I'm a shadow skimming a shadow of a life.

22/5/85

Fuck you Doreen!!! I don't have the courage to force or to face an alternative.

25/5/85

They were irritable and hot when they came home today, bodies stifled in acrylic uniforms, futures strapped to their backs. I bought Chocolate Chip ice cream and ordered pizza to cheer them up but we ate in silence. Brendan plucked a sympathy card from the unopened post. I could hear the laughter building in his chest. He banged the table as it burst out of him. Alice and I jumped. She read the card and, solidarity cackling in her throat, passed it to me. It was from the builder who did the extension. The usual clichéd sentiments were printed on it; it was the PS he'd added at the bottom, "Matt lived 'til he died" that had set them off. I felt a childlike giddiness ripple through me and for the first time since the accident I felt the three of us had stepped outside it, a simultaneous release. Abruptly,

Alice stopped, laughter dying in her throat smile perishing on her lips. I almost lunged at her, cradling her face in my hands, tilting it toward mine, I saw her lips tremble . . . felt her tears breaking on the heels of my hands and though I whispered 'It's ok to laugh Alice, it doesn't mean you don't love him,' I could tell she felt she had inexcusably let him down. We tried to recapture the mood but the moment was lost. Later we sat down and watched Grease. I feigned exhaustion and went to bed early but lay awake long after they were asleep haunted by the guilt and betrayal on poor Alice's face. It was not the first time they had sat at my table.

26/5/85

I actually wanted to get up this morning. Maybe the laughter last night has unlocked something.

June
3/6/85

Karl called this morning to ask when it would be convenient to collect the files from Matt's office. I told him anytime; he said he'd come straight over. I went down to the office to wait for him. I sat in Matt's chair, my back lost in the curve shaped by his.

Unbidden, my father's sound drifted into my mind. His whispered curses when fingers, raking drawers for spare glasses came up empty the laboured footfalls of a body commandeered by arthritis. It took me ten days after his death to realise his sound was missing. Only then did my real grieving begin. So far Matt's death has brought only the all-invasive sacred edged silence that death brings. Somehow his office had escaped it; there was no silence here no soul, just the air of suspension that accompanies the abrupt severance from a predictable routine: a room holding its breath, a dog, ears pricked waiting for the return of its master.

Karl rapped the windows with his keys and I left him to get on with it. I offered him a coffee; he declined. He launched into a nervous speech about drunken drivers and how victims like Matt and their families pick up the tab. I could sense his unease. I wished him well and shook his hand as he left but he could not look me in the eye and I realised that he knew.

5/6/85

Everything is skulking away; my eyes have left their lookout posts and my cheeks have slipped beneath their bones.

6/6/85

I feel as if I'm spiralling, unravelling...

7/6/85

When I woke up this morning, you were gone. Grief had fine-tuned my senses. I could feel the air moving through the hairs on my skin, the pulse of the clock. The numbness dissipated, reality rumbling in my core. I passed the bathroom, gagging as Brendan's deodorant caught in the back of my throat. I made my way down stairs, along the hall, bare feet slapping like wet fish on the stabbed floorboards . . . freezing, starving. I turned the heating up but I couldn't get warm. I watched my hands feed bread into the toaster then shuffled into the hall for my coat. My hand slid across your leather jacket. I curled my fingers

around the collar, removed it from the hook and wrapped the cold skin around mine. The letterbox fluttered as a bulky envelope crash-landed into the porch, to copper fasten death's presence: your memorial cards had arrived. The grandfather clock chimed nine; each solemn stroke resonated within me. I was too hungry and disorientated to butter the toast. I crammed it in; it burnt my tongue, my lips.

"Fruck" I screamed into the silence, it tumbled from my mouth and unfurled in slow motion at my feet.

"Fuck, fuck, fuck."

I slid down the cooker; the oven knob registered every joint in my spine; tears fractured on your jacket. I felt everything at once, shock, fear, anger, loss but predominately, predominately Matt I felt betrayal. I loved you. I hated you. I was glad you were dead. I was glad she was dead. You swore to me on your children's lives that it was over.

11/6/85

I seem to do nothing but cry. The raw edge, blunted by denial, and days, lived in soft focus has been sharpened by the memory of the great hulking shadow of death that rapped on my door on the 12th of May. There is nowhere to hide from the fresh-faced policeman's stammered words in my hallway, Alice's scream behind me, or Brendan's paralysed silence. No way to stop the 'they' from the sentence, 'they both died instantly,' falling from the doctor's lips straight into my already violated heart. Nowhere to offload your guilty secret. I now guard it in your death as you guarded it in your life to protect my children. They believed she was a client, why wouldn't they, you were their hero.

12/6/85

I bought three perfect red roses for the grave. Brendan refused his, Alice accused him of disrespect. I walked behind them, sifting through memories, trying to find the Matt I knew and loved but you weren't there, nor were you beneath the raw mound of clay that I stood staring at. She was in the way, and I realised the only thing I could ever mourn here was the loss of my trust. I didn't even know I was crying 'til Alice squeezed my hand and I wished, for all of us, that I had the uncomplicated grief she was presuming. We stood in silence for a while. Then I placed my rose down. Alice put the other two beside mine. Her hand had barely left them when Brendan took the head of a yellow rose from his pocket from the climber Matt insisted would 'Make the back garden.' He hunkered down, it rolled off his palm onto the grave . . . petals falling away with every turn. I thought my heart would break at the honouring in the thought.

13/6/85

I dragged my body out of bed this morning and wondered why? "The kids and fucking spite," I shouted through my toothpaste. Is there anything you've forgotten to take? I don't even have a grave to visit.

14/6/85

The kids have really studied hard. I told them they could get the dog. They said they didn't ask for a dog . . . I'm sure they did.

16/6/85

Doreen's Labrador, Poppy, had pups. She asked me if I'd decided if I wanted a pup and I remembered it was Matt, not the twins, who tried to talk me into it. I'm not losing my mind.

August

13/8/85

GREAT DAY!!! They passed their exams. I bought a cake and gave them the Walkmans they have been lusting after for months. Doreen came over with champagne and cheques for obscene amounts of money. Later I almost told her about Matt but it was Alice and Brendan's day. I don't know whether it was the champagne or the buoyant atmosphere but I heard myself asking Doreen if she'd bring Matt's stuff to the charity shop she patronises and she said she would. I can't believe I've agreed to do a night class with her in September, but we've shook on it so I can't back out.

14/8/85

Jesus my head's splitting. Doreen rang about Matt's stuff. Tomorrow or Friday.

15/8/85

Rang Doreen, it has to be Saturday when the kids will be in town. I made a point of going out to buy some black plastic bags. Mrs. Nolan stopped me on the way home to assure me that Matt didn't suffer. Don't fucking remind me!

17/8/85

I opened his wardrobe this morning and reminded myself never to make an important decision when I'm drunk. I realised that on some unacknowledged level I had been dreading the enormity of this moment. The tangible aspects of his identity were easily disposable but imbued with the trace of his natural scent, it seemed like a living part of him still remained, a sacred residue that I was about to put into plastic bags. But as I folded his things, an automatic reverence kicked in which balanced the sense of defilement. I began with his suits; they were easiest: a formal daily skin that reflected nothing of him except his respect for his clients and a professional code. His shirts were much harder: they had lain against his skin. I gathered them in my arms and held them and it occurred to me that he would have pulled her close to him and she would have felt the heat of his skin through them, heard the thump of his heart just as I had. I felt desecrated, my children, my home, all I held sacred. Not only had his affair denied me a grave; she was in my bedroom, our bedroom. I swept through the rest of his stuff with less respect than I began with and the more I crushed into bags and boxes the more empowered I felt. By the time I filled the last bag I was exhilarated. I lined it up in the hall with the others. I sat on the stairs waiting for Doreen and looked at the remnants of my marriage spread out before me beneath a collage of family photographs . . . a fitting head stone.

19/8/85

A life, different but nevertheless a life is kicking in.

25/8/85

We sat in the conservatory today and listened to the rain. It was one of those days that lends itself to memories we

talked about when they were small. I got the photo albums down and, before opening them, made a commitment to myself to live in that time with you and them for an afternoon without clouding it with your affair or your death. We were half way through the second camping trip to France when I felt their silence settle on my skin. I heard their tears before they came. They deserved better Matt.

26/8/85

I still feel warm from yesterday's reminiscence and the kids really enjoyed it. I told them I have a memory box in the attic with things from their baby years and promised I'd bring it down and we could go through it. Please God don't let there be a mouse or a rat up there.

27/8/85

Matt's sound followed me down the hallway and throughout the house all day yesterday: the clink of his keys on the hall table, the tender tone that was reserved exclusively for Alice, the high fives with Brendan, the rush of his breath when he kissed my neck. Later I lay in the dark and acknowledged a question I have been avoiding since the accident. Did you leave me for her twice Matt or did you never really come home after the first time?

31/8/85

I pulled on old jeans and a tee-shirt this morning and got up into the attic. I turned on the light hoping I was alone and scanned my surroundings. Everything lay in the centre apart from the children's cots and bits and pieces lying against the wall. I stepped on the joists to get over to them and a memory of crossing a river, as a child, stone by stone, drifted into my mind. The cots were dismantled, Fisher Price activity Bears still attached. I brushed the barrel in the bear's tummy with my fingertips; a chime rippled through the air and I remembered the summer they were nine months old, happy, tanned, teething, in white sleeping suits grasping for the bars of their cots, knees giving way beneath them, gibberish tumbling from their mouths . . . perfect.

Hours slipped by as I moved in and out through museum exhibits of our history together, peering in at and pulling out memories, smiling, crying, laughing, loving you . . . loving us.

On the periphery of the central chaos, flanked by ceramic garden urns from the yard of our first house, stood the leather hatbox that held the revered relics and mile stone markers of the twin's childhood. Beside it stood an old suitcase with "HANDLE WITH CARE" painstakingly printed across it. Inside lay the holy grail of your material possessions, your vinyl album collection. I sat cross-legged on the floor and sifted through them, placing them in small stacks either side of me with a reverence that your reverence for them had seared into my bones. Half way down I saw it, the Levi jacket that lengthened your stride and forced your hands deeper into the pockets of your jeans. I slipped it on and the years rolled back to a Saturday in Darcy's wood and a group of teenagers swaggering, staggering, fragmenting into pairs. I fell in love with you that day in that jacket, standing at that tree, afraid you might kiss me . . . afraid you might not. When you did it was tentatively given and tentatively received . . . cigarette

smoke and blackberries mingling on our lips. I sat for a while and looked around me then inside of me for your point of disconnection Matt but all I could find was us . . . bookends.

I deliberated over whether I should bring the jacket downstairs but realised this was where it belonged and placed it and your precious album collection back with the respect you would. I took my memory box and stood for a moment in a site only you and I could lay claim to. A safe and impenetrable space where she had no access, a sacred place, inviolate and I knew I had found your grave. I heard footsteps in the hallway and Brendan's hybrid voice drifted up with an offer of help, puberty and a newfound responsibility stretching his bones, but I told him I could manage on my own and I know I will, just as soon as I stop loving you. x

September

THE END

THANK YOU

The committee of Bray Arts thanks those below for their generosity in donating prizes for our Christmas Raffle. Between admission fees and the raffle we raised over €400 which will go towards the production of our monthly journal.

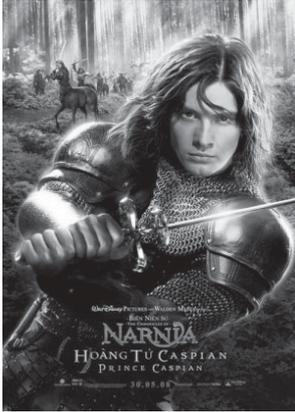
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The Health Shop, Main Street
The Larder Delicatessen
The Mermaid Arts centre
Totterdell
Vision Optics
Yanny Petters

May we wish everyone the very best for a challenging year ahead.

Video Voyeur

Harold Chassen

Prince Caspian is the second in the Narnia series. The Pevensie family return to Narnia only to find that a thousand years have past since their last visit. This time they are enlisted to join the colourful creatures to put Prince Caspian, the rightful heir, back on the throne. I was quite disappointed in the film. It seems the film was turned into an adventure film lacking the magic of the book. Another film is planned and I would suggest you see this one to keep up with the series.



Submission Guidelines

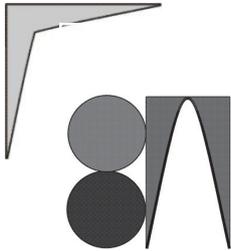
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Email submissions to any of the above or post typed submissions to

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

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*Arts Evening Monday 12th Jan 2009
at the Heather House Hotel Strand Road 8:00 pm
5 Euro / 4 Euro Conc. Everyone is welcome.*

Breda Wall Ryan : Highly regarded contemporary Irish writer.

Mary Duffy : Her paintings are highly charged, vibrant and as energetic as the painter herself.

Dan Carollo : Dan Carollo is another hidden gem in our midst. His superb, finger picking guitar style is a delight to hear.

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