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# Bray Arts Journal

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Issue 3

November 2008

Volume 14



*Waiting for Botticelli* by Niamh Harding Miller

Bray Arts Meeting

Monday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2008

review

Art in Recession

In the midst of this recession, some might think that art, in all its forms, is expendable and that it can be discarded in the real business of life. The opposite is true.

In his inspirational book, *The Heart Aroused* David Whyte makes a very strange statement.

“For the personality,” he says, “bankruptcy or failure may be a disaster, for the soul it may be grist for its strangely joyful mill and a condition it has been secretly engineering for years.”

It may be that the privileged life, one that has little hardship or real stress, insulates us from discovering our real selves. It may be that, if we are never tested in extremity, our true selves are never really revealed and we live out our lives like T. S. Elliot’s *Alfred Prufrock* “measuring out my life in coffee spoons”.

There is a kind of liberation, a freedom, in what the modern world calls failure. David Whyte uses poetry to chart this curious fault line in the human psyche that embraces this kind of failure. He uses poetry because ‘No language matches good poetry in its precision about the human drama.’ William Carlos Williams gives proof of this in his exquisite poem ‘*Asphodel, That Greeny Flower.*’

*My Heart rouses  
 thinking to bring you news  
 that concerns you  
 and concerns many men. Look at  
 what passes for the new.  
 You will not find it there but in  
 despised poems.  
 It is difficult  
 to get the news from poems  
 yet men die miserably every day  
 for lack  
 of what is found there.*

DMC

NCH Rising Star 2009



for Young Composers.

The National Concert Hall’s ‘Rising Star’ Recitalist for 2009 is ‘**Redmond O’Toole**’. This will be celebrated by a solo concert in the National Concert Hall on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2009. Redmond will play Bach, Torroba, Rodrigo, Hayden, Albeniz and the premiere performance of the NCH Jerome Hynes Commission Opportunity

The October meeting opened to a large attendance and a lively audience. Kerenza Darcy-Barr set the Autumnal mood by decorating the tables with decorative mats from around the world set out on the linen covered tables with large autumn leaves in green gold and bronze. Scented candles and cactus plants gave the finishing touches to the festive scene.

Zan O’Loughlin opened the proceedings and introduced Oliver Marshall, poet and short story writer. Oliver, who



Oliver Marshall

has a visual impairment, announced that he would read only one of his works and that he would ask his friend Leo Cullen to read three further examples on his behalf. Oliver captivated his audience with accounts of his association with Leo and international encounters as they travelled their literary path. Oliver read “stamp” a story poem making an ironic comment on his parents relationship.

Leo kept up the momentum with further tales of their experiences travelling with a group called “Wilde Side” before going on to read

“Anyone Else for the Last of the Ices?” a vivid memory of a hurling match starring Christy Ring. This was followed by “Fan” located at a bull-fight in Spain in the time of Franco. Leo closed with an ironic poem about buying some presents for family members. A CD of Oliver’s work is available from Bray Arts

Next, Pat Burnes, photographer and painter, entertained the audience with a fascinating description of the process involved in developing her latest work, currently on show in the Signal Arts centre. Depicting BRAY HEAD from an unusual view, Pat endeavoured to encapsulate her childhood memories of Bray and the striations of its rocky outcrops in painted, glued blocks made from layers of Bray newspaper. Lino cuts and etchings reminiscent of the rhythms of the sea completed her presentation.



Pat Burnes

Pieces of her work were passed around the audience and greatly admired.



Laura O'Connell

After the break the theme moved to film, featuring Bray Arts own Mary Ford. Laura O'Connell wrote and directed a short film about a dramatic old woman, self absorbed and jealous of her beautiful daughter. The story moves inexorably to its conclusion as the old woman walks into the river to end it all in the manner of Virginia Woolf. The star of the film, Mary Ford, thanked Laura and all the crew for being so nice to her during the production of the film.

## Preview : Bray Arts Evening Mon 3rd Nov

at Heather House Hotel, Seafront, Bray  
Doors open 8:00pm Everyone is welcome.  
Admission E5 / E4 conc.

**Poetry :** "I have fallen off the edge of the world" is the very striking opening line of Mairíde Woods' poem 'The Lost Roundness of the world.' This very accomplished poet will be reading from her new collection, also called *The Lost Roundness of the World*. Page 4 has three samples of Mairíde's poetry.

**Painting :** An honours graduate of NCAD, Niamh Harding Miller is a versatile artist working in oils, acrylic or water colour. Her favourite subjects are animals and botanical flowers, figurative work and abstract. Niamh is very well known in Bray where she teaches art.



The evening concluded with poems and songs from visiting poet, singer and guitarist Paul Allen from the USA. He has some family association with Limerick, the Beara Peninsula and Galway. His poetry is published by Salmon press under the title of "Ground Forces". The audience loved his humour and ironic

lines, featuring many aspects of life and living. His poem on Rwanda was poignant, sensitive and a powerful description of that terrible human experience. Paul brought the



Walk On By by Niamh Harding Miller

**Music : TBA**



Paul Allen and Anne Fitzgerald

evening to a close with his own composition of "Waiting for a Bus Blues". The enthusiastic audience showed their appreciation in resounding applause.

Cearbhall E. O'Meadhra

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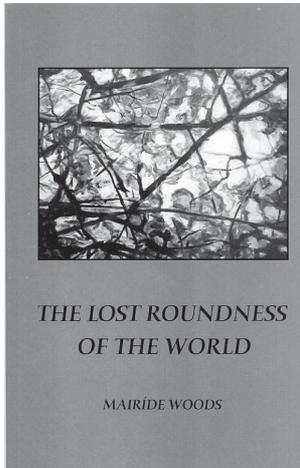
### Promoting the Tradition of Impromptu Singing

If you like singing, and who doesn't, drop into the back lounge of The Strand Hotel on 15<sup>th</sup> Nov and 20<sup>th</sup> Dec to enjoy the impromptu singing from the North Wicklow Singers' Circle. Carmen Cullen reports that it is a most enjoyable evening. There is no 'standard' set, no unacceptable genres, no cover charge, no microphone, and listeners are very welcome! Contact : Alan Stout, 286 5553 / 087-229 5489

### Dracula

Our good friend and talented actor **Justin Aylmer** has informed us that **Blue Moon Theatre Company** will be performing a stage version of **Dracula** written and directed by David Byrne. Justin is one of the cast. The play (not suitable for anyone under 15) will be staged in The Pavilion Theatre, Dun Laoghaire from Weds Oct 29<sup>th</sup> to Sat 1<sup>st</sup> Nov. E18/E15. For bookings Tel: 2312929.

Three poems by Mairide Woods  
from  
*The Lost Roundness of the World.*



**The Lost Roundness of the World**

I have fallen off the edge of the world  
which turns out to be flat after all. Voices  
speak of progress and commitment as I pick  
your floating photograph from the Styx,  
and see your anger surf by,  
a puffball drawing my heart  
towards stinking waters. I remember  
the roundness of my old safe world,  
its portholes illuminating sky-blue oceans;  
its circle lines and round-the-world trips  
promising harmony. My fingers cling  
to the frail roots of the last tree on earth's edge.  
The waters rise and there is no Noah, no Ark  
nor any curved horizon.

**Dreaming Oisín's Volkswagen**

I dream I am driving your last Volkswagen  
- the black one with the nasal burr -  
along the homesick road from Ballymena. A clear  
sky  
as I pass under Ben's planting, a care-free Niamh,  
new to driving but never doubting  
youth is eternal. I see the empty sheep-pens,  
the rhododendron covered station ...  
Then Glenballyeamonn and home through the trees.  
In Dalriada I'm proud of managing  
the sharp upturn to our drive.  
You smile at me from the sunlit veranda,  
our baby in your arms.  
The Bay shimmers and Garron is stretched out  
like a tame mastiff. My father and mother  
are setting the table. All the melodious voices  
floating forever on the pulsing air.  
Some things are irreversible. Brave Oisín

leapt from his steed, powerless against the script.  
The engine cuts and I am sliding into orphanhood...  
Not even a trusty Volkswagen  
can straddle that eternity  
of absence, silences and bolting roses.  
I sit alone amid this rustling metal  
clutching the handbrake.

**Post-Christmas Waysides**

I was looking for a wayside to fall by...  
A springy bank with clumps of thyme  
might soothe the aching heart and limbs.  
But where I live the footpaths are festooned  
with torn merriment and trailing lights,  
the leavings of goodwill. In a stalled car  
I find three fractious wise men,  
arguing over a star. I fetch them  
jump leads, tell them about  
the dozen or more stars I've fallen for.  
They're cross and lofty, barely mutter thanks.  
They tell me I'm short-sighted, female and unsuited  
to high expeditions. Go home, they say  
and watch the story later on TV. Your future lies  
in the small ads, not the constellations.

They rev the car, all fast and purposeful,  
I watch their tail-lights from the barren, starless gap  
between child and grandchild.  
The heavens are dark, the ousted Christmas trees  
stick close and thorny by the narrow path  
smothering waysides.

**Mairide** spent her childhood in Cushendall, Co. Antrim, but has lived in north Dublin for many years. She writes poetry, short stories and radio drama. Her work has appeared in several anthologies and she won a number of awards, including two Hennessy awards and the Francis MacManus radio short story prizes. In 1991 she won first prize in the Woman's Work poetry competition. *The Lost Roundness of the World* (Dublin, Astro-labe, 2006) is her first poetry collection.

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**Poemlets**

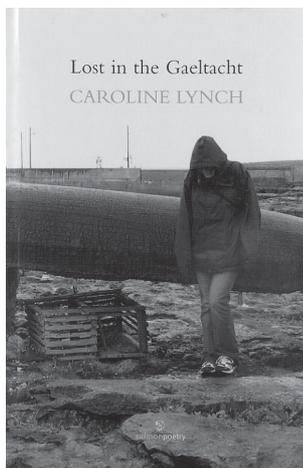
by Hugh Rafferty

I  
First bud of spring  
Gives the heart a little zing  
Makes wild birds sing

II  
Summer colours die  
Replaced by autumn splendour  
Harvest for the eye.

III  
Winter has a way  
Of making the world look grey  
Until the snow falls.

Three poems by Caroline Lynch from *Lost in the Gaeltacht*.



### The Match

I told the woodsman that hurleys arc made of ash and about the clash that is the cliché of all that.

By Salisbury Cathedral he explained the rules of cricket - enthusiastic inflection, lovely round

vowels bowled across grass. Then I picked up a sliotar on a flick of air held like a hurlev

and pucked the tight wad of nothing: high, long, over the cathedral spire's great struts of Irish oak.

### Descent

You grew nervous of the chalk man's great prehistoric club.  
I grew nervous of the strange cluster of hills around us oozing mist  
and of the soil beneath my bare skin sniffing me out as a foreign body.  
The trees in the valley below hunkered like old people gone beyond their sex  
into archetype and the black cat that had followed us was suddenly, silently gone.  
'The sound of a car accelerating swung past our ears like the buzz of a lost bumblebee –  
that small, that significant. We didn't make love, we rubbed each other up the wrong way.

Which was a sort of love, until the moon rose and we shivered back towards the car waiting  
like a domestic pet kept well away from dragons. I was speechless with the stress of being  
with you and have no clear memory left of stumbling on behind you as we went down.  
except for the heart-skittering sound of a horse's iron hoof dropped onto a shed's  
bare floor and how it rang like a warning bell before me, then behind me.  
Nothing then except your beautiful back in the gloom until a lost drift  
of music finally stopped you and when I reached you the troubled

### Tongue Twister

You sucked my tongue so hard  
it became a little less fixed in its socket.  
a little more loose at the root.

After that, there was only one  
thing I kept quiet, held back by a single  
tendon. It snapped last night.

My tongue flew out, hit my hands  
with a slap and lay there like a fortune-  
telling fish. The way you

acted so surprised, as if it had  
nothing to do with you, meant I didn't  
have to wait for the fish to

twist and curl into a prediction of  
red knots to know which way it would  
end. You paused, then started

speaking - delicately, carefully -  
and all I could hear was the click  
of your tongue, infuriatingly intact.

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### REVIEW by A. J. Gatsby

### Lost in the Gaeltacht by Caroline Lynch

(Cliffs of Moher, Co. Clare, Salmon Poetry, 2008), pp.39, •10.00.

Caroline Lynch was born in 1976 and grew up in Cork and lives in Galway. She studied law at UCC and holds an MA in Creative writing from NUI. She is the recipient of the Sean Dunne poetry competition, and an Arts Council Professional Development Award and the Listowel Writer's Week poetry collection (2007), from which these poems are drawn. She was also shortlisted for the SeaCat/Poetry Ireland award (2001).

The twenty seven poems presented in *Lost in the Gaeltacht* are, thematically speaking, an interesting presentation from a poet working her way towards a first collection. Apart from the title poem other titles are *Emily Brontë Has No Regrets*, *In Edinburgh*, and *From the Fury, Deliver Us*. But perhaps the most arresting work is to be found in such titles as *Descent*, *From a Lost Traveller's Diary*, *Tongue Twister* and the opening poem, *The Match*. On occasion line breaks are questionable, nevertheless it will be worth awaiting Lynch's full collection to see if "... in every house hidden rooms are muscles/knotted deep under a skin."(10).

**The Last Rose of Summer**

By Stanley Regal

"I don't know what I did, or said. I really don't," Joe said. Tommy really wasn't listening, he kept his eye on his pint, taking almost imperceptible sips. He didn't want to be the first to finish. The first one to finish his pint usually ordered the next round and he didn't have the money for two. Gina had tried to curtail his drinking by only allowing him a certain amount of money so he only had enough for one more pint.

Joe sighed again. "I really don't know what I did. She just went mad. She started yelling and told me to get out. She wouldn't even feed me and I'm starving. I was looking forward to a nice lunch. I could starve to death. It would serve her right if I did. Then she would really be sorry."

"But then you would never find out what you did Joe."

Joe looked up at Tommy. He nodded and smiled. He downed the last of his half. Tommy gave a silent sigh of relief as Joe picked up his glass and without another thought picked up Tommy's as well. He stood and clinked the glasses to get the barman's attention. He held up the half pint glass and held up 4 fingers.

Tommy stared at Joe.

"Helen thinks I'm drinking too much. So she made me promise I'd only drink halves."

"But you ordered two halves, for each of us. Two halves equal a pint."

Joe gave him a sly look. "Is that right?"

When the barman brought over the drinks Joe asked. "Do you have any food? I don't mean crisps or peanuts. I need something a bit more substantial."

The barman shook his head. "Sorry but with the kitchen being refitted we're only serving sandwiches. There might be some left in the back but they'd be past their sell by date. They don't sell that well so we only get a few in at a time."

"Don't mind, as long as they're edible. So what if the bread is a bit stale."

The barman winked. "I'll see what I can do." He returned with a few sandwiches. "On the house."

Tommy and Joe grabbed the sandwiches off the tray. "Thanks."

Joe bit into a turkey sandwich. Tommy was tucking into a ham. He looked at Joe. "Tell me what went on. Two minds are better than one. I'll bet we can figure out what you did together."

Joe swallowed his bite of sandwich. "We were sitting at the kitchen table having a cup of tea."

Tommy listened intently. He nodded at what Joe was saying. "And?"

"And she got up to put the kettle on. I just happened to mention that I noticed that she looked like she was putting on a bit of weight."

Tommy nodded. "You know, I've noticed that too Joe."

"So it isn't just me. But she went ballistic. She said 'how dare I say things like that to her.' She said I should look in the mirror. Then she started slamming cupboard doors. Finally she picked up a rolling pin and

said that I'd better leave before she did something that we'd both regret."

Tommy laughed. "Women."

Joe nodded. "Women! They spend billions on space, billions on trying to cure all kinds of diseases. But how much do they spend on trying to understand a woman's mind?"

"Nothing," Tommy answered.

"Nothing," Joe emphasised by slamming his hand on the table."

"So what did she do then?"

"Dunno, I left."

"And you don't know where Helen is now?"

Joe shook his head.

Helen banged on Gina's front door. Gina did not arrive fast enough for Helen so she rang the doorbell while she pounded on the door.

Gina opened the door. "What's wrong Helen?" Helen pushed past Gina. Her hands were

shaking. "Got anything to drink?"

"Cup of tea?"

"Something to drink," Helen said again.

"There's a bottle of wine that I got as a gift. Don't know how good it is. It's from Bulgaria or somewhere weird like that. I was going to use it for cooking."

Helen nodded and headed for the kitchen. She searched in the drawer for the corkscrew. Gina put on the kettle and brought out the bottle of wine.

They sat at the table. Gina reached over and took Helen's hands in her own. "What's wrong Helen? Has something happened? Is it Joe?"

Helen wanted to cry but she was too angry. "Joe said I was getting fat."

"Bastard," Gina said. "You are not getting fat Helen."

Helen smiled weakly at Gina. "That is kind of you Gina but I am. I've put on nearly a stone in the past month or so. Some of my clothes don't fit any more. I've tried to cut down. I use skimmed milk. I get off the bus a few stops early and walk to work and back home again. I'm going to join a gym or go to keep fit night classes. But I have been putting on weight. The thing is that Joe didn't have to tell me. I already knew it. The last thing you want your husband to tell you is that you're getting fat."

"I'll come with you Helen, either to the gym or to keep fit classes. Whatever you want."

"But you're not getting fat Gina. You haven't put on an ounce since I met you."

Gina shrugged and thought, 'and I don't want to start putting on weight like you are.' She smiled at Helen. "We can encourage and support each other."

Helen leaned over and gave Gina a hug. "You're a great friend Gina."

At the pub Tommy offered his advice. "The best thing to do is to apologise Joe."

"For what?"

Tommy shook his head. "Don't matter Joe. Either apologise or get used to eating past sell by date sandwiches."

"I'm not going to apologise for something I didn't do."

“’s up to you Joe. But if it was me, I’d be down on my knees with flowers and chocolates and whatever else it takes. It doesn’t matter if you did anything or not. You’ve got to make a gesture. A big gesture.”

Joe stared into space. “A big gesture?”  
 “A big, big gesture Joe.”

Tommy was hoping to talk to Joe what that big gesture might be over another few halves. But Joe downed the last of his glass and headed for the door.

“Where you going Joe?”

“I’m going to find a big gesture Tommy.”

Joe’s first visit was to a florist where he asked the price of a dozen roses. He winced at the cost. “Need to go to the cash machine,” he said as he left the store.

At the newsagent he asked the price of a box of chocolates. Again he thought the price was a bit high. He thought about what he’d do to cut down the costs but the words, a big gesture, kept running through his mind.

He bought the medium box of chocolates and a single red rose. He had his own ideas of what a bit gesture might be, so he bought a couple rolls of red ribbon from the bargain shop.

He phoned home. There was no answer. He rushed back and tied one ribbon on the inside of the front door knob and one to the inside of the back. He trailed them both to the bedroom. Then he stripped off naked and lay on the bed. He positioned the rose strategically. He heard the front door open. He heard Helen’s tentative call? “Joe.”

Helen followed the ribbon to the bedroom. She saw the Joe naked on the bed, backlit from the last light of the day coming through the bedroom window. She saw the rose and started to giggle. “Oh Joe,” she said tenderly.

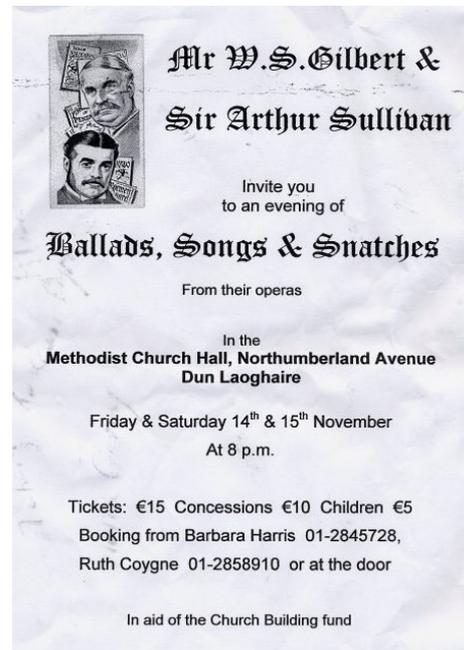
Then she saw the box of chocolates. Her attitude changed immediately. “You call me fat and then buy me a box of chocolates?”

At last Joe knew what he had done. He thought quickly. “They’re for me Helen. I didn’t mean that you were getting fat, not like that anyway. I thought I’d buy them to put on a few pounds myself. If you want to we can find something to do to loose weight together. Join a gym or something?”

Helen thought for a second. The chocolates were her favourite. She always had weakness for them.

She walked over and closed the blinds on the window. She stripped off and slid into bed beside Joe. “You know there are better ways to loose weight than doing exercised in a gym. Come closer and give me a cuddle.”

The End



## Signal Arts Exhibitions

### Healing the Inner Child

An Exhibition of Oil Paintings by Kary Mullally  
 From Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November to Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2008

Opening Reception: Friday 14<sup>th</sup> November 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.



### Landscapes

An Exhibition of New Paintings by Derek Fitzpatrick  
 From Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> November to Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2008

Opening Reception: Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> November 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.



## Video Voyeur

Harold Chassen

Mongol is another foreign language film that I found interesting. It tells the story of Genghis Khan from his birth to early manhood. I looked at it as I would have looked at those old American westerns made in Monument Valley. It was loaded with wide-open spaces and CG armies but the battles focused on just a few people. It tells the story of the man and not a ruthless killer. It is subtitled and although not entirely an action film I found it quite good. If you’re looking for something different than the sameness of Hollywood films take a chance on this one



## Greystones Orchestra Concert

As part of the Holy Rosary Church Greystones centenary celebrations, the Greystones Orchestra will hold a concert in the church on Saturday 15th November at 8pm .

The programme will include Schubert's 5th symphony, Faure's Pavane, Beethoven's Romance in F - soloist Hazel Fortune and the slow movement from Mozart's clarinet concerto - soloist Robert Clarke (both soloists are members of the orchestra). There may be more surprises on the night.

Tickets on the door or from orchestra members price E15. Concessions E10

PS If you wish to have the Journal posted to you each month please send E 10 to Editor , Bray Arts Journal, Casino, Killarney Rd. Bray (cheques payable to Bray Arts).

## Submission Guidelines

Editor : Dermot McCabe : editor@brayarts.net

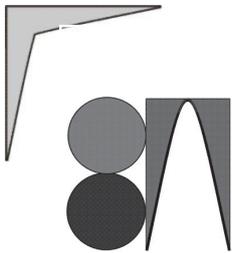
Creative Writing Editor : Anne Fitzgerald :  
afitzgerald3@ireland.com

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 3rd Nov  
at the Heather House Hotel Strand Road 8:00 pm  
5 Euro / 4 Euro Conc. Everyone is welcome.*

**Mairíde Woods : Reading from her collection *The Lost Roundness of the World***

**Niamh Harding Miller : Talking about and showing her paintings.**

**Music : performer/s TBA**

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