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# Bray Arts Journal

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Issue 2

October 2008

Volume 14



## Inspiration

Inspiration does not come uninvited but neither does it come at a time of your choosing. You must be prepared for the visitation and the more work and effort that is put into that preparation, the more spectacular and abundant are the gifts bestowed.

The artist, writer, musician, politician or scientist finds inspiration through relentless dedication and hard work. Inspiration is not a free gift; it must be earned. It is not simply a chance occurrence:

“Chance only favours invention for minds which are prepared for discoveries by patient study and persevering effort.” *L. Pasteur.*

*W. F. Donlon*

**Front Cover** : Black Striation No. 32 (Partial) by Pat Burnes. See below for further details.

## Brilliant Line-Up for the October 6th Arts Evening

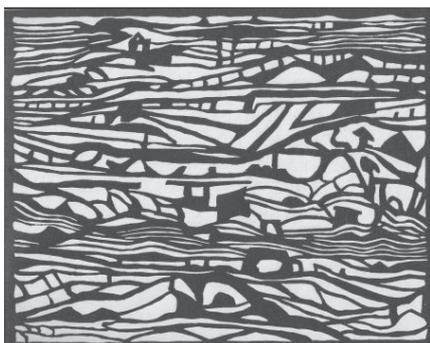
On October 6th, Bray Arts will host the second Arts Evening of the 2008/2009 season and it promises to be a night to remember with Poetry, Painting, Film and Music.

The evening will open with the poetry of Oliver Marshal. Oliver is without doubt one of the most highly accomplished poets in our community. He makes very few public appearances now, so we are delighted that he is coming to Bray Arts. Lorcan Byrne in his review of Oliver’s collection *Fathers Day* wrote:

“... while the pain is at times almost unbearable, as in ‘For My Daughter Going to Spain’ or ‘Lecce Remembered’, there is no despair. Instead there is a stoic strength and a recognition that love is the balm for any wound that time might inflict.”

### Painting:

**Topophilia** - a love of place. Artist **Pat Burnes** continues her perspectives on Bray in her second solo exhibition at



*Black Striation No 82*

Signal Art Centre.

**Topophilia** has elements similar to her first exhibition **Obsession**. The process of arduous detailed repetition in the creation of multiples is an essential part of the artist’s art practice as is the creating of a new reality through enlarging or blowing up.

### Film

**The life and death of Lucy Peth** is a short film depicting the last few hours of a woman’s life.

The woman, Lucy Peth, played by **Mary Ford**, is an eighty four year old, washed-up drama queen. Lucy is separated from her husband and is ‘downsizing’ to a smaller house, her memories, just shadows now, are being scattered to the wind. She is a nobody. While people around her- her friends, her daughter- are leading successful, rich lives, Lucy sits at her window and reflects on her own faded one.



*Mary Forde as Lucy Peth*

Lucy chooses to drop the final curtain on her own life and leave it as she lived it- dramatically.

This is Laura O’Connell’s first short film. She has just finished making a short documentary about Bray-based musician Redmond O’Toole. Laura is currently studying television broadcasting through Irish with Nemeton and hopes to focus solely on writing for her next few major projects in the future.

It is a great pleasure to introduce **Paul Allen** to our Bray Arts community. Paul is a wonderful lively entertainer with



a wicked sense of humour, a guitar and a great voice. He teaches poetry writing and writing song lyrics at The College of Charleston in Charleston, South Carolina, where

he has taught since 1974. Published in numerous journals and anthologies, his work includes *American Crawl* (Vassar Miller Poetry Prize, UNT Press, 1997) and the chapbook, *His Longing: The Small Penis Oratorio* (FootHills Publishing, Kanona, NY, 2005), a sequence of metaphysical conceits. Another poetry collection, *Ground Forces*, is scheduled for 2008 publication with Salmon Publishing Ltd. (Ireland). He has also produced a CD of poems and songs, *The Man with the Hardest Belly*, available on Napster. He is twice recipient of the South Carolina Arts Commission's Individual Artist Fellowship in Poetry.

*So don't miss this exceptional line-up at; The Heather House, Seafront (opposite bandstand), Bray. Doors open at 8 pm. Programme starts promptly at 8:30 pm. Everyone is welcome. Admission is Euro 5 / Euro 4.*

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## Review of September Arts Evening

After a break for the Summer, the first performance of the new season opened in a colourful elegant atmosphere created by Kerenza Darcy-Barr. Bunting hanging from the ceiling, bead-decorated lights on colourful Bali table cloths, a reminder of the Summer that could have been. Kerenza added special herbs to create an autumnal atmosphere.

**Holly Pereira** opened the proceedings showing how she loved monochrome portraits. Preferring to work in black and white, Holly specialises in women, using only black oils in order to get a stronger impression of the features of the person.



Recreating her own identity by painting people linking with her past the cover of last month's journal appropriately features Holly's great grandmother. Holly spoke warmly of her sense of the history used of her striking portraits to investigate her own Chinese family background in Hong Kong.

Holly's rich presentation showed other kinds of comical work revealing how she can express fantasy fun and menace in her paintings.

**The Shed Poets** came next and delivered a rich and varied rendition of beautiful and simple poems from their collection called "Tidings". The audience enjoyed the selection of poems presented by the five poets. Among oth-

ers, these included:

**Marguerite Colgan** "Blue sky over Auschwitz"; **Bernie Kenny** "Unloved" - a poem about a thistle; **Rosie Wilson**, honouring bray Arts as her first venue out of hospital with "The old man making Tibetan Boots"; **Judy Russell** "Two-way traffic" about soldiers stopping at Shannon on the way to Iraq and ending on a lighter note with "Chocolate". **Carol Boland** brought the presentation to a dramatic close by accompanying herself on the conga as she presented "the Oscars" and "Crossing the Bog of Allen".



Carol Boland with Conga

After the interval, **Jimmy Cullen** captivated the audience with the integrity of his music. His very



popular open Folk and Country style drew the crowd into him.

He took his own joy from the varied songs he selected. An enthusiastic audience appreciated the empathy and fervour with which he delivered his own compositions.

The audience gave Jimmy two encores and the evening ended on a high note.

**Cearbhall E. O'Meadhra**

**GROUND FORCES** by Paul Allen

Ground Forces, (Cliffs of Moher, Co. Clare, Salmon Poetry, 2008), pp.100, •12.00.

**Review by A. J. Gatsby**

*Ground Forces* is Paul Allen's third collection, preceded by *American Crawl* (University of North Texas Press, 1997) and *His Longing: The Small Penis Oratorio* (Foot Hills Publishing, 2005). Allen is twice recipient of the



South Carolina Arts Commission's Individual Artist Fellowship in Poetry. He has opened recently for singer-songwriters Bill Morrissey and Steve Young. He has given readings and performed in a number of venues, from open mics to university writers' series, including, recently, Callanwolde Arts Centre in Atlanta, Iota Club and Café in Washington, DC, and in August of 2005, The John F. Kennedy Centre for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC. His CD's are *The Man with the Hardest Belly: Poems and Songs* (on Napster), and a homemade CD for \$5 (or free with a book). For additional information on Paul Allen visit his website <http://sonicbids.com>.

This collection published by Salmon Poetry is divided into three sections: Ground Forces, His Longing, The Small Penis Oratorio and Relics, comprising of some thirty five poems in this hundred paged volume.

Thematically these poems range in their, gambit from, 'original sin, my ass.' (15), '...almost touching Momma's hair.' (18), to 'A man and woman' (19)...rising '...among their own children.' (19). Allen is often direct, dealing with hard hitting issues head-on. Be it, 'Darfur, drive-by shootings, lepers in Bangladesh, flyers off the twin towers' (28) or 'Orphanages for the little deaf and mute' in *The Silences* (84); all of which is balanced by a remarkably wry sense of humour, as exhibited in *Personalized Checks* (59) and elsewhere. On reading *Ground Forces*, a sturdy collection of solid

poems, occasional evocative, stylistically and in tonality of: Rita Ann Higgins, Paul Durcan and Thomas Lynch. Allen's prose poems hold their strength in their narrative, (if a little shy of editing), and easy of engagement as 'they rumble towards the pass, towards open water.' (19).

**Private Charter by Paul Allen** (from *Ground Forces*)

Some men at the dock drag blocks  
of ice from the humming house  
that has dripped all night in the shallows,  
clang tongs in the faces of waking kids.  
Standing against the name of the white boat this early,  
the wife of the prominent surgeon does not see any of this.  
Her back is to this first day's getting ready  
and the Gulf she smells. She is looking upriver.  
She would say she is looking at nothing.  
Something is eating her, biting her ankles.  
Her hand goes down to her calf.  
She stomps, looks upriver again.  
She is watching the river come down,  
watching its thick self part the blond marsh grass  
which has been stained by the tides.  
The colors board—shorts, bright shoes.  
The kids fly off the dock, thump onto the well  
now iced and ready for the catch—;  
some Kings, some Blues. It is her turn.  
She eases down into the flapping hands  
and arms shining even this early.  
She smiles sinking into such wanting.  
They rumble toward the pass, toward open water,  
diesel smoke roiling the oils of her people  
back upstream across that same marsh grass, the marsh,  
and into wooded lots where someone  
is watching her party go out. A man or woman  
has risen among their own children  
and carried their coffee across the floor of a yellow kitchen.  
The bronze deckhand cuts bait.  
When it is too late to turn back for anything,  
she does not look back. She is part of the party  
now, tightens the straps on her children,  
hands her husband a beer when they ease past the marker.  
Before she opens her own, however,  
she looks down through the smooth first fold of their wake.  
She watches the deckhand's trimmings drift down  
into the glitter of trash fish, feeding.

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**SEVEN UP**

A short story by **Hugh Rafferty**

Timmy Quill had always felt cheated and now at last his time was come. He pushed the tractor hard and it was doing forty as he tore along the access road to the hospital. He felt like singing but he hadn't a note in his head so he settled for the occasional cheer as he let his mind roam over the good times to come. *At last*, he thought, *the Quills will have their day*.

He was the seventh son of a seventh child. His father had no

doubt been a son and seventh in line but he had been the only boy in a family of girls. Timmy had been that close. It was like losing the winning lotto ticket. Of course being a seventh son he had tried. Oh, how he had tried. Laying on hands, rubbing on ointments, manipulating bones, palpating swellings, even praying, but nothing worked for him. He had no particular competence, not even the cure for ringworm or for warts, let alone the magical healing powers of a true seventh son of a seventh son. It had coloured his youth and he had grown in to manhood with a big chip on his shoulder. Still, it says something for his resilience that the young Timmy could look beyond his immediate misfortune to realise that he could build on his own stature: all he needed was a good childbearing wife. There was a lot to be said for being the father of the healer; plenty of reflected glory in that.

So Timmy had set about getting a wife. *A fine strong woman*, he thought, *not one of those young ones with notions*. And he had found her, two parishes over. Mary Doran! Good natured, kind hearted Mary, from a family of twelve, who stood as sturdy as an oak, and who seemed to like him as well. Not much of a dowry but that didn't matter and he coming in to his Auntie Maire's place.

They were already married when he told her of his plan.

'Is that so, Timmy Quill,' she had replied with a bit of an edge. 'If you think I'm going to carry seven children, you can think again. I saw what it did to my mother havin' the bunch of us.'

But Timmy could be a charmer and he had got round her, time and time again. They had eight children; six sons followed by two girls, and now Mary was having her ninth and Timmy just knew that this would be the seventh son.

He had been over with Paici Lynch dipping sheep when young Tim had come running.

'Mam's gone to have the baby with the doctor.'

Timmy had left Paici in mid sheep, jumped on his tractor and pointed it for the hospital, with young Tim in the cab beside him hanging on for dear life. They roared up to the front entrance, abandoned the tractor and raced inside.

'I'm after Mary Quill. She's having a baby.' Timmy shouted at the young one in the office. That stalwart looked at him, her eyes taking in the stained work shirt, still damp from sheep dip, and the old dungarees stuffed in to soiled wellingtons, and she almost gave him his answer, but she relented.

'Take a seat over there.' She pointed at a bunch of chairs to one side of the door. 'I'll find out how she's doing.'

They had been sitting perhaps ten minutes and Timmy was getting restless when a doctor, a lady, not old Doctor Boyle, hurried up to them.

'Mister Quill,' she said drawing him by the arm to one

side, away from young Tim. 'Mary is fine but she is having a tough time of it.'

'Well?' Timmy asked.

'Well, what?'

'Is it a boy or a child?'

'For God's sake, Mister Quill, you should be ashamed of yourself.' The doctor was quite angry. 'Your poor wife is tired out. Too many children. I hope she has the strength to deliver these twins. Who cares what sex they are?' She glared at him for a moment, then turned and marched off.

The doctor was mistaken if she thought her words had chastened Timmy. He had not been listening to her. However, he had picked up the reference to twins.

'What did she say, Pa?'

'Shush Tim.' His thoughts soaring, Timmy waved the young lad away. *Holy God*, he thought. He had never heard of twin seventh sons of a seventh son. *Wouldn't that be somethin'!* However, he did have the wit to realise that it might not be two boys but at least his nagging fear that there might not be a son fell away. He did a bit of a jig in the hall much to the amusement of the young one and then he sat down. He put his arm around Tim's shoulder.

'D'ye know, Tim boy,' he said. 'Your mother is a great bit of stuff.'

They sat like that for a long time. It seemed like forever before the doctor came back. She looked very serious. Tim was up like a shot.

'There you are Mr. Quill.' She saw the concern on his face and instantly she smiled. 'Oh, all's well, two beautiful babies. You can have a quick visit. Only for a couple of minutes now because Mary is really, very tired' Timmy tried to push past her but she held him. 'You can't go on the wards like that.'

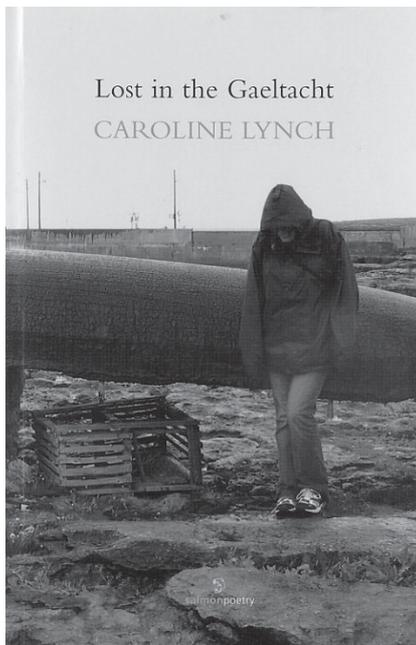
They togged him out in a white coat over his work clothes and found old slippers to replace his wellingtons. They could have dressed him in petticoats for all he cared. At last the doctor led him along the corridor.

Timmy Quill, seventh son, head up, heart dancing in his chest, went eagerly to embrace his assuredly bright and glorious future.

END.



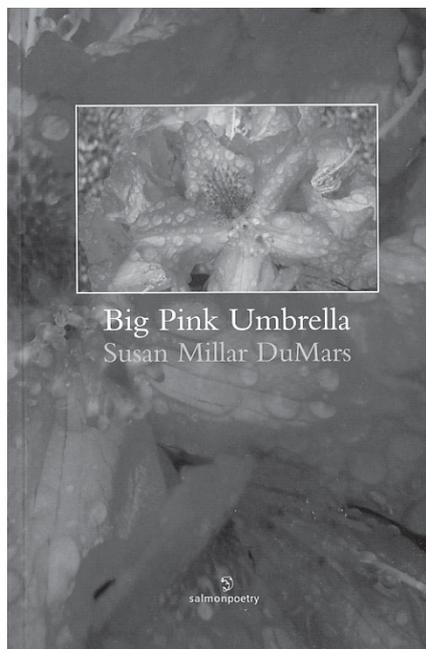
Hugh Rafferty is a member of Abraxas Writers. He writes short stories and poetry and has been featured in this journal many times.



**Lost in the Gaeltacht**  
Poems by CAROLINE LYNCH

12.00Eur | Paperback | 127 x 203 mm | 40 pages | ISBN 978-1-903392-84-3 | June 2008

Caroline Lynch is the real thing. Hers is a root language that, like the commonplace wife who plays Medea, takes us far beyond the commonplace. Her world is one where chaos muscles its way into the corners of every safe place. It is a dangerous world which she negotiates through myth, through prayer, through literature. Her poetry, a signalled intention to communicate, to penetrate, is, as she has written, a 'skirmish for freedom'. In the end, her hands are free to accept whatever small beauty that falls into them. In welcoming this volume, I congratulate Caroline Lynch on a fine achievement and wish her well in her poetic quest. **Gabriel Fitzmaurice**



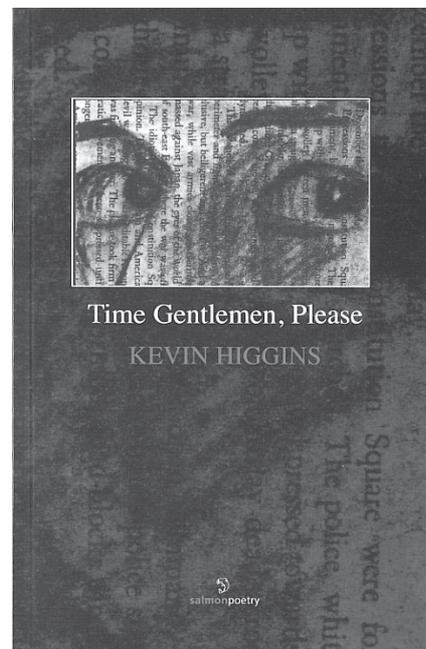
**Big Pink Umbrella**  
Poems by SUSAN MILLAR DuMARS

12.00Eur | Paperback | 130 x 204 mm | 64 pages | ISBN 978-1-903392-74-4 | April 2008

*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**



**Time Gentlemen, Please**  
Poems by KEVIN HIGGINS

12.00Eur | Paperback | 130 x 204 mm | 96 pages | ISBN 978-1-903392-76-8 | March 2008

"What makes Higgins' work so fresh is that the objects of his wrath are both contemporary and powerful. He does not kick people when they are down, like the fake satirist, or flog dead horses for a comfortable audience. His targets are doing damage now and he's out to get them...No, Higgins is not Swift but I still hope they'll put up a plaque to him in Galway Cathedral - or spray paint one of his poems on a wall, which would probably please him more." **Rory Brennan**

"Gifted poets like Kevin Higgins rescue language from the "blatant blather of knaves" in which it is immured, and harness its vitality to tell it like it really is." **Tomás Mac Síomóin**

## Video Voyeur

Harold Chassen

I was quite disappointed with **In Bruges**. I went to see it because I wanted to see what was being touted as an Irish film with Irish actors do well. This is a kind of stranger in a strange land film with hit-men hiding out in Bruges while things cool down at home. While I watched it I kept thinking of other films with similar themes and found this seriously lacking. It is an adequate film but I wouldn't recommend it to anyone. There were bits that made me smile but I was hoping for a lot more. The city of Bruges was lovely to look at but a film needs more than scenery to keep me interested.



**Martin McDonagh**  
**Brendan Gleeson & Colin Farrell**

## THE SONG

by Gavin McCabe

1

The song was born  
When silence became too much  
When the rush of past and future  
Threatened to sweep everything  
Away  
The song, like a dam,  
Stood fast against these flood waters.  
It continued  
When the body disappeared into itself  
The song vibrated from gut  
To skull  
And into air,  
Out and up into the sunlight  
Then silent for a time  
drowned out by incoherent voices  
Babbling in traffic, Asshole junk peddlers  
Half-cocked curators of money  
And all its miseries  
Those whores of commerce  
Copulating under a great steaming cloud  
Of empty, alien noise

2

The song sidled away, sauntered down avenues  
And alleyways of memory.  
Dulled with poisonous thoughts,  
The song learned how to say goodbye.

3

From a seventh story window  
A body crashed and fell at the feet  
Of the song,  
Blinking, half choking, cursing  
The song entered the body's bones  
Rattling, pushing outwards  
Against the flesh  
It struggled furiously  
In this new carriage until sleep  
Overcame it, as always  
The song was carried for decades dreaming  
Of release  
It stopped around in dark pools of hunger  
Trying to understand its prison  
An then, while drugged out, draped  
Over bars, half dead on doorsteps  
The song heard another  
And woke and listened, listened again  
To that sweet vibration so new  
But still so ancient and eternal  
And soon the song remembered  
Itself  
And was ushered back into the world.

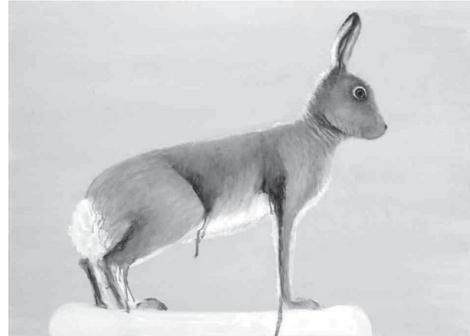
*Gavin is a singer/songwriters with **The Cujo Family**. Recently they had a very successful outing at Electric Picnic 2008.*

## Signal Arts Exhibitions:

Past : Painting Exhibition by Hilary Orpen

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> October to Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2008

Hilary's work is about footprints; the footprints of people, communities and cultures. It is also about metamorphosis and change. It concerns the way history is constantly being rewritten, how place, memory and changing circumstances affect our view of the past.



The work for this exhibition is inspired by two uninhabited islands off the North Mayo coast. Apart from the savage beauty of the place, and the richness of animal and bird life, the islands lay claim to a surprising and colourful past. Not so long ago life off the west coast involved piracy, idolatry and an almost total disregard for the forces of law or church.

Women's Albert Art Group : Exhibition of Oil Paintings

Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> October to Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2008

The Women's Albert Art Group was formed in 1994 under the direction of Miriam Sweeney in the old Albert Walk Studio, which subsequently moved to the new Signal Arts Cen-

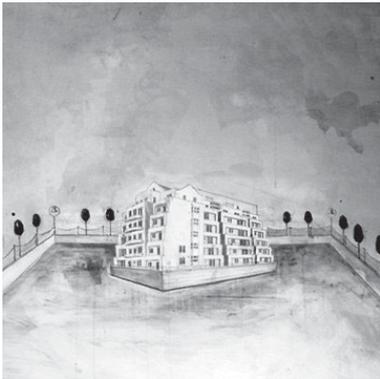


tre.

The group consists of Áine McHugh, Jo Rutter, Margo Madden, Margaret Bamford, Anne Clarke and Eileen O'Donnell. Some of them exhibited their work in the Signal Arts Society exhibition last July. This is their third exhibition.

## Mermaid Gallery

**In Diamond Valley** : An exhibition of paintings by Felicity Clear.



Thu 2nd Oct - Sat 1 Nov

The Title of this exhibition is a reference to the gated apartment blocks, springing up all over the artists native county Wicklow. Her large scale drawings and paintings are drawn from photographic references and architectural plans.

## Submission Guidelines

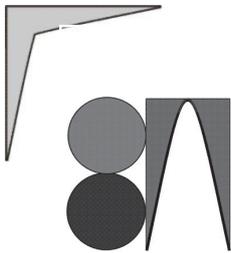
Editor : Dermot McCabe : [editor@brayarts.net](mailto:editor@brayarts.net)

Creative Writing Editor : Anne Fitzgerald :  
[afitzgerald3@ireland.com](mailto: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 6th Oct  
at the Heather House Hotel Strand Road 8:00 pm  
5 Euro / 4 Euro Conc. Everyone is welcome.*

Oliver Marshall : Reading his powerfully evocative poetry

Pat Burnes : Presents work from her upcoming Topophilia Exhibition

The Life and Death of Lucy Peth : A short film by Laura O'Connell  
starring Mary Forde

Paul Allen (Poet/Songwriter): Very special guest from  
Charleston, USA. Powerful, funny and raw.

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