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# Bray Arts Journal

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Issue 8

April 2007

Volume 12



## EDITORIAL

I don't know if you have looked at the Bray Arts website recently, but if you have you will have noticed that we are building up a links page to locally based arts organisations and artists of all types. If you would like to be included on our links page then just send along the URL of your website and we will include you. The web is an incredibly powerful way to make contacts and network with like-minded organisations and people and of course to do business and showcase your work. You can send your details via email [bacj@eircom.net](mailto:bacj@eircom.net) or log into the Bray Arts website and you can send your details from there.

[www.brayarts.net](http://www.brayarts.net)

**Front Cover : Prisoner by Doug Ross. See Preview of April Arts Evening (next column) for more info. on Doug and website : [www.dougrossart.com](http://www.dougrossart.com)**

## BLUES WORKSHOP

In 2005 the winner of the Irish Blues Challenge (solo/duo) went on to perform at the international Blues Challenge in Memphis. He lives in Bray. His name is Dermot Byrne and if you have had the pleasure of hearing him perform you will understand why he is rated so highly on the national and international Blues circuit.



"Byrne's blues kicks hard and is the real thing...International Review (Holland)

"In the guitar department he really shines, his slide work is exceptional...Blueprint(U.K)

In his workshops Dermot Byrne narrates and performs on the origins of the blues, tracing its roots in the African/American work song and spirituals, and demonstrates the diverse guitar and vocal styles of the country blues masters such as Robert Johnson, Son House, Fred McDowell and others.

Already performed for art centres and cultural festivals throughout Ireland.

Workshops now available for schools, cultural organisations and clubs.

Duration 1½ Hours

Full text available.

For more information about workshops e-mail: [dbluesbyrne@eircom.net](mailto:dbluesbyrne@eircom.net)

Or phone Ireland: 01 2863234

International: 0035312863234

We are delighted that Dermot has agreed to give us an edited version of his workshop at the May Arts Evening on 14th May. Make a note; this is one night not to be missed.

## PREVIEW OF APRIL ARTS EVENING

**Mon 2nd April Heather House Hotel, Strand Road  
Admission 5 Euro / 4 Euro conc. Everyone Welcome**

**Doug Ross.** It is a real pleasure to have Doug show his work at Bray Arts. He was, of course, the first chairperson and founding member of the Bray Arts Club now simply called Bray Arts. The town and the county is indebted to Doug for his continued contribution to the Arts at all levels. Born in New York City in 1954 he moved to Ireland in 1966. He studied English Literature and History in Trinity College. Subsequently he worked in printing and publishing. He began painting full time in 1985, making three dimensional work in 1989 and photo-based work in 1998. Practically all of Doug's work is inspired by story or myth. In his own words :-

*"Mythology has played a role for millennia in telling the stories of a society's shared experiences and highest hopes. Such stories no longer play an important role in western society to the extent that the word "myth" has come to mean something that is untrue but widely believed. Myths are fantastic stories with demons, magicians, ogres and supernaturally gifted people. They are the stories of inner demons, the magic of being alive and inner grace. I attempt to see how the age-old mythic themes are being acted out in the people around me and in myself. However I also see new stories arising out of our shared contemporary experience that are important to tell. With each piece of work I am hoping to contribute something to a new iconography of the human condition in the 21st century. The visual idioms I use are symbolism, metaphor and dramatic narrative."*



Angela Cook

**Angela Cook** is short story writer and novelist. She will be reading one of her own short stories. Not only is Angela a very powerful writer but she is an accomplished reader which makes it such a pleasure to listen to her. Angela is a member of Abraxas writers , the Bray based writers group.

**Eoin Dixon-Murphy** is a guitarist and singer/songwriter. He plays in two bands called Gunshot Glitter and Snake Eyes. In

2006 he took the lead the Pres/Loretto musical 'Half a Sixpence'. Eoin is a student of the Backstage Performance Arts Academy. Last year Eoin played in Bray Arts as part of a duo and has performed at various 'all ages' gigs around the area. He will play some of his own music



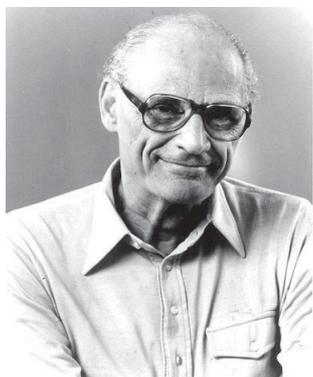
and some covers. If anyone would like to find out more about Eoin, they can check out his web page at- <http://eoinmusic.bebo.com> and listen to some of his impressive recordings.

**Martin Dunlea:** Last September Martin Dunlea arrived with Robbie Overson to close the evening with some music. They were just fantastic and gave us one of the most memorable music sessions ever in the Heather House. We made sure that night to get the telephone number of Martin (we know Robbie's number by heart now) who was new to Bray Arts and we have coaxed him to return to play for us once again. By the way Martin is an Advanced Clinical Hypnotherapist working in Bray and his website is [www.mdunleahypnosis.com](http://www.mdunleahypnosis.com). Come to think of it, he did hypnotise the audience last September...Really can't wait to hear Martin again.



## REVIEW OF THE MARCH ARTS EVENING

Once again Bray Arts Drama Group (a separate group from Bray Arts) gave us the very best of theatre with their performance of Artur Miller's 'I Can't Remember Anything.' The protagonists are Leo (played by **Benny Rooney**) and Leonora (played by **Rosary Morley**). Leo worked for Leonora's late



Arthur Miller

husband, an admired and brilliant man whose passing has left a great void in both their lives. Leonora who seems lost and bewildered visits Leo every day, drinks his whisky and eats lunch which he prepares for them. Leo takes a philosophical view of life. His practical approach to growing old, like arranging for the donation of his organs are aspects of life that Leonora finds distressing and one wonders is her forgetfulness part of her defence against the

harsh realities she would rather not face. Leo, although he grumbles about Leonora's too frequent visits which he says are distressing him, does however buy the whisky which only she drinks and when she is leaving, tries to persuade her to stop over because she has imbibed too generously. When she

insists she is perfectly ok to drive, he asks her to at least ring to tell him she got home safely which she does. This is a masterly portrayal of two people limping through the final years of their lives each facing the challenge in their own different ways but finding some solace, though not admitting it, in each other's company. Beautifully played by Rosary and Benny. The set was excellent and transformed the Heather House function room into Leo's apartment. It was produced and directed by **Derek Pullen** who with Rosary and Benny forms the core of this brilliant drama group.

## Shane Harrison

Shane read part of *The Apartment Opposite* from his recently published **The Benefits of Tobacco**. He has a very distinctive style of writing which can only be described as Shane Harrison's style and rather than try to impart what that means I think a sample from 'The Apartment Opposite' is the best way of explaining.



'Maria sleeps to the rear, a gorgeous amazon in a storm of white linen. Between us, safe in the painted seascape of her windowless cocoon sleeps our little treasure. Her sighs, so nearly undetectable, are what I search for in the semi darkness of each semi fractured dawn, between sharply raised shutters and the quickly catching blaring horns, a distant train siren and the first shouted greetings of bakers and binmen and other early morning birds. There it is, that soft sigh once more, caught like a pause in the day's falling dust.'

This is typical of Shane's ability to invoke the atmosphere and the reality of the moment, an ability that delights and instantly engages the reader. Shane is a member of the Bray based writers group called **Abraxas Writers**.

**The Benefits of Tobacco** is available in all Bray bookshops. It can also be purchased directly from **Forty Foot Press**; see [www.fortyfootpress.com](http://www.fortyfootpress.com).

## Madeline Doherty



We could not have had a more pleasing end to the evening than that provided by Madeline Doherty. Madeline sang and played her very special electro-acoustic Blue Harp. She is a most engaging performer and has the ability to communicate on a personal level with her audience. This is probably not surprising because she is involved in the therapeutic power of colours and sound to help people deal with the challenges and difficulties of daily life. Her repertoire which included her own compositions, Jimmy

McCarthy and John Lennon was most enjoyable. It is worth having a look at Madeleine's website to see the full extent of her musical enterprises. [www.madeleinedoherty.ie](http://www.madeleinedoherty.ie).

## A.E. Houseman



Alfred Edward Housman was born in Fockbury, Worcestershire, England, on March 26, 1859, the eldest of seven children. In 1877, he attended St. John's College, Oxford and received first class honours in classical moderations.

Housman became distracted, however, when he fell in love with his heterosexual roommate Moses Jackson. He unexpectedly failed his final

exams, but managed to pass the final year and later took a position as clerk in the Patent Office in London for ten years.

During this time he studied Greek and Roman classics intensively, and in 1892 was appointed professor of Latin at University College, London. In 1911 he became professor of Latin at Trinity College, Cambridge, a post he held until his death. Housman only published two volumes of poetry during his life: *A Shropshire Lad* (Self Published in 1896) and *Last Poems* (1922). The majority of the poems in *A Shropshire Lad*, his cycle of 63 poems, were written after the death of Adalbert Jackson, Housman's friend and companion, in 1892. These poems center around themes of pastoral beauty, unrequited love, fleeting youth, grief, death, and the patriotism of the common soldier. After the manuscript had been turned down by several publishers, Housman decided to publish it at his own expense, much to the surprise of his colleagues and students.

A third volume, *More Poems*, was released posthumously in 1936 by his brother, Laurence, as was an edition of Housman's *Complete Poems* (1939).

Despite acclaim as a scholar and a poet in his lifetime, Housman lived as a recluse, rejecting honours and avoiding the public eye. He died in 1936 in Cambridge.

## A. E. Housman's Prose

Extracts from *The Name and Nature of Poetry*

I cannot satisfy myself that there are any such things as poetical ideas. No truth, it seems to me, is too precious, no observation too profound, and no sentiment too exalted to be expressed in prose. The utmost that I could admit is that some ideas do, while others do not, lend themselves kindly to poetical expression; and that these receive from poetry an enhancement which glorifies and almost transfigures them....

'Whosoever will save his life shall lose it,  
and whosoever will lose his life shall find it.'

That is the most important truth which has ever been uttered, and the greatest discovery ever made in the moral world; but I do not find in it anything which I should call

poetical. On the other hand, when Wisdom says in the Proverbs

'He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul;  
all they that hate me love death,'

that is to me poetry, because of the words in which the idea is clothed; and as for the seventh verse of the forty-ninth Psalm in the Book of Common Prayer,

'But no man may deliver his brother,  
nor make agreement unto God for him,'

that is to me poetry so moving that I can hardly keep my voice steady in reading it.

Poetry is not the thing said but a way of saying it. Can it then be isolated and studied by itself? For the combination of language with its intellectual content, its meaning, is as close a union as can well be imagined. Is there such a thing as pure unmingled poetry, poetry independent of meaning? Even when poetry has a meaning, as it usually has, it may be inadvisable to draw it out. 'Poetry gives most pleasure' said Coleridge when only generally and not perfectly understood; and perfect understanding will sometimes almost extinguish pleasure. Meaning is of the intellect, poetry is not.

A.E Housman's Poetry from *A Shropshire Lad*

## XIII

When I was one-and-twenty  
I heard a wise man say,  
'Give crowns and pounds and guineas  
But not your heart away;

Give pearls away and rubies  
But keep your fancy free.'  
But I was one-and-twenty,  
No use to talk to me.

When I was one-and-twenty  
I heard him say again,  
'The heart out of the bosom  
Was never given in vain;

'Tis paid with sighs a plenty  
And sold for endless rue.'  
And I am two-and-twenty,  
And oh, 'tis true, 'tis true.

## XL

Into my heart on air that kills  
From yon far country blows:  
What are those blue remembered hills,  
What spires, what farms are those?

That is the land of lost content,  
I see it shining plain,  
The happy highways where I went  
And cannot come again.

## Easter Dawn

by Sinéad Norton Boland



Some time ago I attended a Creative Writing class at St. Kilian's College in Bray. One night, the tutor, Shane Harrison, asked us to write about 1000 words on the theme *The End*. No bother, I thought, deciding on a short story. A theme like that must have countless possibilities: the end of an era, the end of love, the end of the road, the end of innocence, the end of the rainbow. There could be no lack of inspiration.

I stared at the blank page in front of me. Where would I start? I knew that *beginning* was the other side of the *end*-coin: an end implies a beginning. Anything that ends must first begin. And everything has a beginning, surely?

Then I thought of the old Penny Catechism, which stated that God had no beginning: He was always there, *ab initio*. The divine case must be truly exceptional because God has no end either: He will always be there, *ad infinitum*. Here was a case of an *Absolute Being*, an entire existence without limits.

Anyway, since most things *do* have a beginning and an end, I decided my story would follow that finite pattern. Logically then, the first step was to find a beginning, in the form of a title. The theme itself inspired the obvious title and so I wrote *The End* in large letters at the top of the page. Such words of finality, however, looked odd at the top of the page. Surely the phrase *The End* belonged at the bottom, and so that's where it went.



Things were looking up. I had made a start—albeit with the end—and only another 998 words to write. All that was missing now was a beginning (and of course something to put between the two).

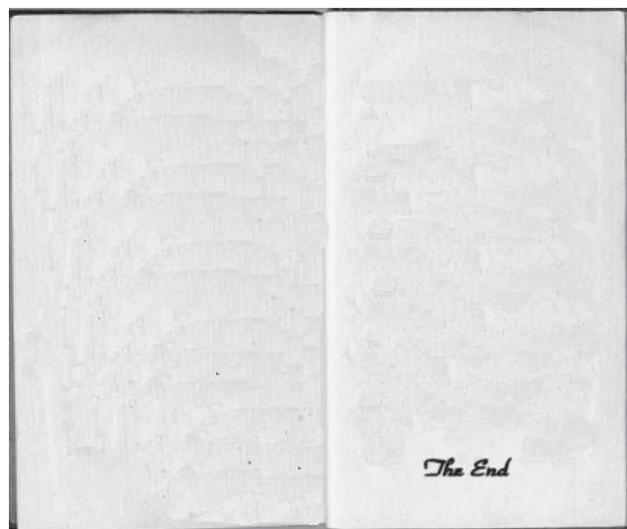
An agonised hour later, the page remained stubbornly unchanged. Who said this would be easy? Somehow I must fill that space! Perhaps I'd draw inspiration from the Creative Writing class itself.

I began to think of the many characters we had created during the course. We had given them life and breath, flesh and blood. They had walked and talked among us, laughed and cried, dreamed their dreams before our very eyes. How would *they* end up if we, their creators, abandoned them? Having given them birth, were we not obliged to carry them onwards with compassion and tenderness?

I wondered how my own paper creations would turn out. I felt a maternal instinct to protect *one* of my characters (a young boy whose brand new Confirmation suit is destroyed by local bullies) from the clutches of a nasty dynasty whose influence would destroy not only his innocence but also his very identity. Perhaps I'd lend him Justine Gaarder's book *Sophie's World* and, like the caterpillar in *Alice in Wonderland*, ask him: "*Who are you?*" I might thus entice him onto paths philosophical and thereby alter his destiny by uplifting his mind to the eternal questions that beg for answers.

All these ideas but still not three words on the page. Ridiculous—but at least Shane would see I'd heeded his advice to condense my writing and avoid unnecessary words!

In the end, I had to submit the page as it was: blank apart from "*The End*" at the bottom.



Could there be a subliminal message in the empty page? Perhaps there's not that much difference, when all is said and done, between the A and Z of life. I think of the plain little caterpillar that turns into the exquisite butterfly, the tiny acorn that dies to make the new oak tree, the embryonic spring in deepest winter.

I see the darkness of Good Friday vanquished by the glorious Easter dawn.

Every end a new beginning, every beginning an old skin shed, every *omega* a new *alpha*—the wonderful wheel of life itself.

## JIGS AND REELS

Christ Church Bray is organising an evening of traditional music on **Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2007 at 8pm** in the Church. Proceeds from the event will go to the fund for restoring the church organ, a magnificent instrument now sadly in need of major overhaul.

The concert will be given by

**Triona Marshall (Irish Harp)**

**Máirín Fahy (Fiddle)**

**Chris Kelly (Guitar)**

The programme played will be mainly traditional music from Ireland - jigs and reels and other types of dance music as well as slow airs and old Irish harp tunes. It will also include music from Scotland, Cape Breton and Spain.

Tickets can be purchased on the evening at the door (price 15 Euro, concessions 10 Euro) and refreshments will be available in the interval.



### TRIONA MARSHALL

Triona comes from a family of musicians in Portlaoise. She started playing harp when she was seven years old and initially trained as a classical harpist. She held the post of principal harpist with the RTE Concert Orchestra for five years till 2003 and was then invited to play with the Chieftains. Since then she has performed solely on the Irish Harp playing with the Chieftains on tours throughout the world and as a solo performer. She appeared as a soloist in the 2006 Beo music festival in the National Concert Hall in Dublin, at the 9th World Harp Congress and the Special Olympics Opening Ceremony held in Croke Park. She has also appeared in the 2005 & 2006 Edinburgh Festivals.

### MÁIRÍN FAHY

Máirín was the featured soloist in Riverdance since 1996. Her

fiddle playing has been lauded as amazing and unique by critics all over the world. She is also a regular guest with the Chieftains on their tours and played with them alongside Art Garfunkel for their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary gig at Carnegie Hall. Máirín has played for Princess Diana in the Royal Albert Hall, the Emperor of Japan at Tokyo International Forum, and Prince Rainier of Monaco at the Red Cross Ball. Her music has been featured in the Brad Pitt/Harrison Ford movie "The Devil's Own" for which she teamed up with Dolores O'Riordan of the Cranberries. Empire magazine described it as 'haunting with a wicked fiddle solo'. Her 2 solo albums have received great musical acclaim and she has also won the "best female vocalist" award from the leading music critic Bill Margeson, Chicago. Máirín fronted the band Reeltime whose second album "Live it up" featured in the top 10 albums in the USA (Crossroads). She joins the rest of the Fahy family in "Furry Village" and the new Celtic musical "Tara". She also fronted the Máirín Fahy band and takes the lead role in "Trad on the Prom".

### CHRIS KELLY

Chris Kelly is regarded as one of the most innovative guitarists in Irish music. His style is unique and has been lauded by the critics as a benchmark for other guitarists. He draws from an eclectic mix of rock, jazz, blues and latino influences. As well as playing with Reeltime and the Máirín Fahy band with Máirín, he is also a member of Furry Village and was project manager for the Celtic musical "Tara" which premiered at the prestigious Luxor theatre, Rotterdam. Chris has played with Frankie Gavin, Mairtin O Connor, Brendan Power and Niall Keegan. He has recorded and produced many award winning albums and is one of the leading tutors of guitar and harmonic accompaniment in the Irish World Music centre at the University of Limerick. Chris and Máirín created and produced the phenomenally successful show "Trad on the Prom".

## Draw the Natural Way

With Artist Brigid O'Brien

Saturday 10am - 12pm

Starting April 14th

10 sessions € 100



Signal Arts Centre Bray

Phone : 087 638 3998

## SIGNAL ARTS EXHIBITIONS

### All That Shines...

Exhibition of new work by Robin Read  
Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> April to Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> April

South African born Robin paints using a unique style and materials. His favourite medium is gold and silver leaf. The exact process remains a trade secret but Robin will usually start with texturing up the canvas, then applying gold and silver leaf, onto which he uses a home made varnish to paint in monocolour. Occasionally he will use a little oil paint on top of the metal leaf. The effect is stunning and original and really must be seen to be believed. The paintings have a huge amount of depth and a rich appearance, the perception of



which will change with daylight and artificial light. His themes range from nudes to scenic and even contemporary or abstract styles.

Robin does not like to exhibit with predefined themes. He feels that being forced to create paintings within the constraints of a theme inhibits the artist creativity. The artist must feel free to respond to any visual stimulus that surrounds him. He has exhibited in Portugal and Ireland. He has exhibited in Galeria Capital, Museum do Trajo do Algarve and Galeria Mouzinho de Albuquerque amongst others in Portugal. His show here in Signal Arts Centre last August was a huge success.  
**Opening Reception: Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> April 7pm-9pm**

### Pastoral

An exhibition of new work by Sheila Kavanagh  
Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> April to Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> May.

Sheila obtained a Fine Art Painting Degree at NCAD and also studied at Pennsylvania School of the Arts. She is currently living and working in Dublin.

Sheila works mainly in oil paints, with an emphasis on traditional techniques. The work she produced for her first solo show of still life subjects showed the influence of Dutch and Spanish Genre painting. A successful portrait painter, Sheila has won the National Portrait Awards Open Prize twice, the first time being the youngest ever winner, at the age of 22. Her second solo exhibition dealt with mythological subject matter. Classical themes are an interest of Kavanagh's, with more recent drawings being inspired by Greek sculpture.

An academic approach underpins Sheila's landscape work. This is hardly surprising given the fact that her tutor as an art student was Carey Clarke R.H.A, who nurtured her interest in the work of the great landscapists such as Poussin and



Lorraine. Kavanagh's own favourite landscapist is Corot, whose work she was able to study firsthand, in the National Gallery's collections.

Sheila has completed a variety of commissioned works, including a Joycean series, based on his Ulysses, for the Ormond Hotel, Dublin. Her work can also be seen in public collections (Irish Life Assurance). She is currently much in demand for privately commissioned portraits. She recently completed a commissioned portrait of Edmund Rice for The Edmund Rice Centre in Dublin.

Sheila's adaptability is evident in the range of her current subject matter which includes still-life, portraits, figure studies and landscape subjects.

### VIDEO VOYEUR

Harold Chassen

I went to see All the King's Men expecting to see a biopic of Huey Long, the controversial Governor of Louisiana. I knew a little about him but the main character of this film was not even called Long. I later found out that the film was loosely



based on him. The term loosely is more than a true statement. It had a wonderful cast but I found Sean Penn's performance more of a pantomime than real acting. Maybe the director wanted to portray

all the characters as over the top but I found the whole film a bit too OTT for my taste.



**The Dublin Painting and Sketching Club**

*The President Breda Reilly and Committee  
request the pleasure of your company  
at the opening of  
our 129th Annual Exhibition  
at the Concourse, County Hall  
Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin  
on Sunday 18th March 2007 at 2pm (until 5pm)*

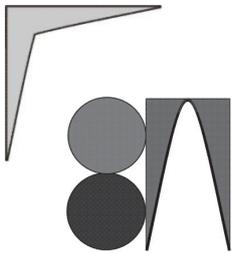
*The Exhibition continues until Sunday 1st April.  
Open daily 10am-5pm Sat/Sun 11am-5pm*



## Submission Guidelines

Editor : Dermot McCabe : [bacj@eircom.net](mailto:bacj@eircom.net)  
 Creative Writing Prose/Fiction Editor : Anne Fitzgerald :  
[afitzgerald3@ireland.com](mailto:afitzgerald3@ireland.com)  
 Poetry Editor : Eugene Hearne : [poetrybray@yahoo.ie](mailto:poetrybray@yahoo.ie)

Email submissions to any of the above or post typed submissions to  
 The Editor BAJ 'Casino',  
 Killarney Rd. Bray,  
 Co. Wicklow  
 Visual material: Photographs by Post. Digital Images by Email or CD in JPEG format.  
 Deadline 15th of each month.



**Arts Evening Monday 2nd April**  
*at the Heather House Hotel Strand Road 8:00 pm*  
**5 Euro / 4 Euro Conc. Everyone is welcome.**

**Doug Ross** : His art and the influence of mythology.

**Angela Cook** : You will be enthralled with her moving and powerful short called Dominics Party

**Eoin Dixon-Murphy** : talented young singer/songwriter performing a mix of his own songs and covers.

**Martin Dunlea** : Master guitarist in all genres and he can sing beautifully.

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

If undelivered please return to :  
 Editor, Bray Arts Journal  
 'Casino'  
 Killarney Rd.  
 Bray  
 Co. Wicklow