

COAST

ORANGE COUNTY

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OCTOBER 2009



Donna Hilbert

GRIEF BECOMES HER – A DIFFERENT KIND OF LOVE STORY

Some events have the power to transform. For poet Donna Hilbert, it was the sudden death of her husband. For Laguna Beach-based filmmaker Christine Fugate, it was hearing Hilbert read from *Transforming Matter*, the poetry collection inspired by her husband's passing. "I had recently lost my grandmother and two aunts and was grieving," says Fugate. "When I heard Donna's poetry, I was so moved. I introduced myself and told her I was going to make movies about her poems."

An award-winning filmmaker and Chapman University film instructor, Fugate had examined the complexities of women's lives in modern times in her previous films,

including the award-winning films *The Southern Sex* and *Mother Love*. Her film *Tobacco Blues* was screened onboard Air Force One for then-President Bill Clinton, and her feature-length documentary *The Girl Next Door* had a successful theatrical run in more than 25 cities in the U.S. and Canada. But the process of transforming Hilbert's poetry to film was another matter altogether. "Since I had never directed anything based on poetry, I relied on my dreams and flashes of imagery to create the storyboards for each scene," says Fugate.

The project first took shape as a short film, directed by Fugate, which brought three of Hilbert's poems to cinematic life. The short was so well received that Fugate and a team of other award-winning filmmakers decided to develop a longer, 20-minute film that took more than four years to complete.

The result, *Grief Becomes Me: A Love Story*, intertwines documentary footage, interviews with Hilbert and narrative interpretations of poems from the *Transforming Matter* series to create a powerful statement on life and love – after grief.

"We wanted to show Donna's journey back to life after her husband's death," says Fugate. "The film is a painful, touching, but ultimately inspiring portrait of what happens when one's life changes in an instant."

—CARRIE STORKE WILLIAMS

SCREEN IT

■ **WHAT** — *Grief Becomes Me: A Love Story* Screening

■ **WHEN** — October 15, 7 p.m.

■ **WHERE** — The Women's Club, 288 St. Ann's Dr., Laguna Beach

■ **HOW MUCH** — Free (suggested \$15 donation benefits the Women's Resource Center)

■ griefbecomesme.com

DISPOSABLE INCOME

SENSORY OVERLOAD

As if eating locally and promoting sustainable agriculture weren't enough, now you can also breathe air perfumed by organic California produce and herbs, and pair your highly moral meal with scents like *Sommelier* and *Vintage*. Lake Forest-based odor guru Traci Arnsten, co-founder of fragrance and candle house *Voluspa*, has paired up with five-star pro chef James Boyce to produce his namesake collection, which includes scents like *Spice Market* (cassia, ginger, ground clove, and a mix of Tandoori masala spices) and *California Citrus* (locally sourced satsuma tangerines and Meyer lemons) designed to remove kitchen odors, and *Vintage* (brut Champagne, almonds and oak) and *Sommelier* (ruby Port, Mission fig and cooking smells like a fine wine (candles priced \$18-\$29 each). Something tells me I'd rather be drinking real wine than smelling a pricey wax version of it, but multitasking scent-philes may feel differently. —JESSICA FORSYTH



SMELL IT

■ **WHERE** — Laguna Colony Company, 384 Forest Ave., Laguna Beach

Spa Montage, 30801 S. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach

Surf & Sand Resort, 1550 S. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach

■ voluspacandles.com

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