

THE MARSH PRESENTS
COMPELLING IMMERSIVE THEATER EXPERIENCE
OUR LOVING COMPANIONS
Featuring 14 plays about the loyal and loving animals that touch hearts
October 15-25, 2026

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (31 August 2026) — A new immersive theater experience celebrating the beautiful bond between people and their pets will capture hearts at both **The Marsh San Francisco** and **The Marsh Berkeley** this October with the world premiere of ***Our Loving Companions*** directed by **Pamela Hollings**. Throughout the course of 90 minutes, audiences will have the opportunity to choose their own adventure of plays that highlight the laughter, devotion, inexplicable joy, and grief that defines one's relationships with animal companions. Presented in collaboration with **Grief Dialogues**, the theater and arts organization that uses storytelling to change the conversation around death, dying, and loss, ***Our Loving Companions*** started with a nationwide competition, from which 14 plays and poems were selected and crafted into this immersive storytelling experience at The Marsh. ***Our Loving Companions*** will be presented **7:30pm Thursdays-Saturdays and 3:00pm Sundays October 15-18, 2026 at The Marsh San Francisco** (1062 Valencia Street) and **October 22-25, 2026 at The Marsh Berkeley** (2120 Allston Way). A portion of the proceeds for *Our Loving Companions* will be donated to San Francisco Aid for Animals. Attendees are encouraged to bring a small picture of a dear pet for a collective art installation. For tickets (\$35 general admission, \$50 and \$100 reserved, plus a \$3 convenience fee per ticket) or more information the public may visit themarsh.org.

"Half of American households share their lives with a pet, yet when that pet dies, most of us grieve alone. Pet loss remains one of the most common and least acknowledged griefs we experience," said The Marsh Artistic/Executive Director **Stephanie Weisman**. "***Our Loving Companions*** began when veterinarian and playwright Alan Stewart approached Grief Dialogues Founder and Executive Director Elizabeth Coplan with an idea and now stories of how our pets touch us beyond their paws can now be experienced on stage at The Marsh."

Our Loving Companions is the result of a shared artistic vision between Grief Dialogues founder **Elizabeth Coplan** and co-producer and playwright **Alan Stewart**. Recognizing the need for an animal-centered immersive theater experience, Coplan envisioned a space that honors the distinct and deeply personal nature of the creatures who share one's homes, routines, and unconditional love. Stewart, a producer, playwright, Dramatists Guild Foundation Fellow, and former trustee of San Francisco's Magic Theatre, brings a distinctive artistic voice shaped by his first career as a veterinary internist and a lifelong belief in the human-animal bond as a language of the heart. Together with the creative team, they have created *Our Loving Companions*, which invites audiences not only to witness grief, but to experience it in a way that clarifies, deepens, and transforms.

The plays performed for *Our Loving Companions* will include *A Little Birdie Told Me* by **Marilyn Anderson**, *The Bridge* by **Jay Cross**, *Must Love Pitbulls* by **Jenny Mead**, *Dog Dreams* by **Jeffrey Fisher Smith**, *Tomorrow* by **Alan Stewart**, *Rollover* by **Alan Stewart**, and *What We Know* by **Stephanie Weisman** as well as short plays *Saturday*, *Duboce Park* by **Allan Baker**, *Ellie's Goodbye* by **Leslie Corn**, *A Good Dog* by **Anya Martin**, *Like a Dog* by **Anya Martin**, *Roll Over, a monologue from the cat's point of view* by **Tommy**, *Outside of the Box* by **Emily Turner**, and *For The Love of Buddy* by **Dyanna Morrison White**. Most performances are followed by a facilitated discussion with pet grief professionals for audience members interested. *Our Loving Companions* production team also includes **Michael Bud** (creative producer, director of design), Elizabeth Coplan (co-producer), **Dani Davis** (consulting director), **Alan Stewart** (co-producer), and **Anna Takayo Walden** (associate director).

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Pamela Hollings (*Director*, she/they) is a theatermaker, working as a director, dramaturg, educator, actor, deviser and writer. Her career has focused on developing new work; working with playwrights as both director and dramaturg and as a deviser of new work, often site-specific. She is an ensemble member of Aviva Arts (formerly foolsFURY) where most recently they served as a co-writer, dramaturg and performer for *Burning Wild* a climate catastrophe devised piece performed outdoors in both Sonoma County and San Francisco. She was the curation & education director at 3Girls Theatre, and the board chair (2013-2021), as well as an ensemble member (2018-2022) of foolsFURY Theater and the former artistic managing director of both The Yat/Bentley Centre for Performance, SF Bay Area and Soup Kitchen Theatre, Melbourne, Australia. They trained in Theatre Direction at Australia's National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA). Hollings is also a breath practitioner and voice teacher working at the

intersection of theatre, education, ritual and somatic wellness.

ABOUT GRIEF DIALOGUES

At **Grief Dialogues**, theatre is used as the artistic expression most likely to reach an audience on a personal level. Theatre and art are the ultimate empathy generators. The productions allow individuals and as a society, to face the untold, unheard, and often misunderstood tales of life and death. Celebrating 10 years, Grief Dialogues believes that learning is centered by engaging in theatre. The main goal is to feel what another is feeling, whether it's an actor on the stage, or a member of the audience sitting in a dark theatre.

ABOUT THE MARSH

The Marsh is known as “a breeding ground for new performance.” Launched in 1989 by Founder and Artistic Director Stephanie Weisman, it annually hosts more than 500 performances across the company's two venues in San Francisco and Berkeley. A leading outlet for solo performers, The Marsh's specialty has been hailed by the *San Francisco Chronicle* as “solo performances that celebrate the power of storytelling at its simplest and purest.” The *East Bay Times* named The Marsh one of the Bay Area's best intimate theaters, calling it “one of the most thriving solo theaters in the nation. The live theatrical energy is simply irresistible.” In April 2020, The Marsh launched its digital platform MarshStream and hosted more than 700 live streams which provided 300 performers and its youth class participants a platform to continue discovering, developing, and producing art during the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown. Today, The Marsh presents both in-person live performances and content on its MarshStream, continuing to expand its reach to audiences onsite and around the world. The Marsh believes in the power of people's storytelling and has several classes for the public to create their own works as well as through its developing work performance series: Monday Night Marsh, Tell It on Tuesday, and Marsh Risings. The theater company also collaborates with over 15 San Francisco public schools providing a year-round youth program serving students at its theater and SFUSD's after-school programs.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: A new immersive theater experience celebrating the beautiful bond between people and their pets will capture hearts at both **The Marsh San Francisco** and **The Marsh Berkeley** this October with the world premiere of ***Our Loving Companions*** directed by **Pamela Hollings**. Throughout the course of 90 minutes, audiences will have the opportunity to choose their own adventure of plays that highlight the laughter, devotion, inexplicable joy, and grief that defines one's relationships with animal companions. Presented in collaboration with **Grief Dialogues**, the theater and arts organization that uses storytelling to change the conversation around death, dying, and loss, ***Our Loving Companions*** started with a nationwide competition, from which 14 plays and poems were selected and crafted into this immersive storytelling experience at The Marsh. Attendees are encouraged to bring a small picture of a dear pet for a collective art installation.

***Our Loving Companions* is:**

Directed by **Pamela Hollings**

- WHEN:** **October 15-25, 2026**
October 15-18, 2026 at The Marsh San Francisco
October 22-25, 2026 at The Marsh Berkeley
- SHOWS:** **7:30pm Thursdays-Saturdays and 3:00pm Sundays**
- WHERE:** **The Marsh San Francisco, 1062 Valencia St., San Francisco**
*Parking: New Mission Bartlett Garage, 3255 21st St.
(21st St between Mission & Valencia)
BART station (closest): Mission & 24th Street*
- The Marsh Berkeley, 2120 Allston Way, Berkeley**
*Parking: Allston Way Garage, 2061 Allston Way between Milvia & Shattuck.
BART station (closest): Downtown Berkeley BART*
- TICKETS:** \$35 general admission, \$50 and \$100 reserved, plus a \$3 convenience fee per ticket
- INFO:** For information or to order tickets visit themarsh.org or call **415-282-3055**
(Monday through Friday, 1:00pm-4:00pm).
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- PRESS:** Contact Raymond Harris, CBCO Public Relations & Marketing.
raymond@cb-pr.com | 707-789-5274
- PHOTOS:** Downloadable high-res photos are available here:
<https://cbpr.co/press/ourlovingcompanions>