THE VANISHING LINE  
(KCET) 10 p.m. Tuesday

Physician-filmmaker Maren Monsen's philosophical discourse on the medical response to death, this week's installment in public television's "P.O.V." series explores a difficult subject with depth, substance and, given Monsen's coolly detached style, surprising compassion.

With the help of hospice social

worker Jim Brigham, whose wife died from multiple sclerosis, Monsen chronicles her own coming-of-age as a doctor beginning in complete innocence and ending with profound insights into the nature of death and the proper role of the healer.

Using a highly articulate documentary technique laced with an imaginative use of pop culture images and sounds, and effectively narrating the 80-minute film from a straightforward script by her and Olivia Crawford, Monsen creates a vivid and illuminating revelation of how those who are dying might be better served.

Laurence Vittos

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