# Table of Contents

## Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrival After Three</td>
<td>Tamara O’Hearn</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visions and Pigeons</td>
<td>Matt Theado</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something Beyond Betti or Betti Beyond Something</td>
<td>Denver S. Butson</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night Thoughts</td>
<td>J. Gregory Barrett</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tata-The Gardener</td>
<td>Dave Svec</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jump Burn Return</td>
<td>Ken Gonyer</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold</td>
<td>J. Gregory Barrett</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Window</td>
<td>Tamara O’Hearn</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners</td>
<td>Elizabeth Betts</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry Poorly Written and Misunderstood</td>
<td>Dave Svec</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurricane</td>
<td>Ken Gonyer</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoo-Lee Ah</td>
<td>Matt Theado</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Anthony</td>
<td>Denver S. Butson</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Art

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nuns at St. Peter’s</td>
<td>Lisa Olsen</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow Me</td>
<td>Cathy Crisp</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leather and Laces</td>
<td>Brenda Hooper</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Portrait</td>
<td>Carrie Beth Rhoads</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Stompers</td>
<td>Denise Nelson</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is not Biff</td>
<td>Robert Flory</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>Aaron Cole</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue/Green Living Room</td>
<td>Betsy Purvis</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gravestone</td>
<td>Brad Thompson</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenn’s Store</td>
<td>Andrea Lee Neilan</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festival of Trees</td>
<td>Mike Remy</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wartime Economy Produced Happiness For All</td>
<td>Phyllis Jackson</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim of the Suburb</td>
<td>Elizabeth Stutzman</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infinite Head</td>
<td>Karen van der Veer</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>Aaron Cole</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mars the Pig</td>
<td>Karen Whitlock</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>Angela Tao</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RR Bridge</td>
<td>Isaac Harrell</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>Karen Whitlock</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>Kathy Cluverius</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>Lara Tomlin</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>Todd Slaubaugh</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>Kira Reed</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>Dawn Ringsdorf</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night Mist</td>
<td>Catherine Fisher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brothers</td>
<td>Janet Frank</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangerine Dream</td>
<td>Andrea Lee Neilan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Blessed Virgin</td>
<td>Karen Whitlock</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>isaac Harrell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>Karen Whitlock</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love 1987</td>
<td>Kathy Cluverius</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Return</td>
<td>Lara Tomlin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gypsy</td>
<td>Todd Slaubaugh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>Kira Reed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta Residence</td>
<td>Dawn Ringsdorf</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filtration</td>
<td>Catherine Fisher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>Janet Frank</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>Andrea Lee Neilan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>Karen Whitlock</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Arrival After Three

Rain-soaked hair
The porch light grasps
Copper highlights.
Behind brown spectacles
Grey eyes peer at me,
Past three
Passed out on my shoulder
In the living room,
Rain patters on the window.
You are not handsome
Self-contained
Your father’s torn shirt-
Sockless leather shoes.
My cheek brushes your hair
I want to hold you,
Despite your mess of a life
You allow me
To lose control.
Later sober,
Hung over and quiet
At the end of my couch-
Sunlight reflects in your teacup
Blinding you to me.

Tamara O’Hearn
Lisa Olsen
Leather and Lace
B/W Print

Lisa Olsen
Follow Me
B/W Print
Visions and Pigeons

I have visions of having visions
I see them coming to me in waking dreams
I will sniff a certain flower
    and fall into a trance:
    a vision, butterfly fashion,
    will flutter to my nose.

I have visions of having visions
I see flaming tongues dropping from Heaven
to fuel my mood and fan my words
to white-hot inspiration
I invoke the Muse to show me a light
with four or five Budweiser beers
    but the sky is clear
    and all I get
    are hangovers

I have visions of having visions
when will my day come
to confront a Blakean rose, a radiant sword, the crooked worm?
what biscuit must I bite at tea
to be swarmed by every memory of things past?
I scream for visions, pathetically
    like a boy bursting
    with breads in his hands
    upon a flock of bobbing pigeons
    and they scatter...

I have visions of having visions
why have I been blindfolded, manacled,
    and left in a soundproof booth?
I didn’t get to kiss the Virgin
    bound in the thistles
    and say to unbelievers
    “Don’t you see?”
I didn’t get to speak with a burning bush
    (I did see Janet Jackson on MTV
doing a hot number)
Once, in Rome, I shuffled in muffled echoes
to stand, hands in pockets,
in a hushed crowd in St. Peter’s
where stooped women bless themselves and bow,
before the Pieta: the weeping mother, the son
in soft marble death, halfway
to heaven--and tears rolled from my eye
a bit of grit had adhered
to a contac lens, an irritant
not like the grit that mothers
the pearl in the oyster,
j ust an infertile air-borne
piece of dead Roman shit
a reverent woman wrapped in her rosarie
tipped her head to me, knowingly,
her eyes on eternity

I have visions of having visions
I brace myself for the apocalypse
subisting on Pecan Sandies and coffee
My eyes are open for Sybil the prophet
to lip me visions-
ears perked for the idyllic pan flutes
of shepherds in the sylvan glade
I close my eyes and see
 a cooing Cybil Shepherd
reclining in a silken chamise
accompanied by a chorus
of thinly clad Victoria’s Secret models
vamping...

I have visions of having visions
 but all I get
is this

Matt Theado
Cathy Crisp
Self Portrait
B/W Print

Cathy Crisp
Baby Stompers
B/W Print
Cathy Crisp
This is not Biff
B/W Print

Carrie Beth Rhoads
Diana
Oil Paint
Something beyond Betti
or
Betti beyond something

in the crazy silence

in the absinthe kiss

of her eyes, of her eyes

time’s toothpick smile splinters.

Encyclopedias douse themselves
with gasoline tears
and burn
laughing.

Denver S. Butson
Night thoughts

Li Pai

or was it
white frost on winter’s grass-
That moonlight!
pale on the floor of the room.
Gazing up, I wished to touch you,
moon;
I bow my head and think of
home.

J. Gregory Barrett
Denise Nelson
Festival of Trees
Chromarama Paper

Brenda Hooper
Glenn's Store
Color Print
Robert Flory
The Wartime Economy Produced Happiness For All
Mixed Media
Aaron Cole
Victim of the Suburb
Ink, Gouache, Acrylic

Aaron Cole
Infinite Head
Clay/Acrylic Paint
Fleshless legs piston the plodding bicycle
As Malaysian morning solidifies from vapors,
And clings in beads to all solids.
Narrow bones frame the bicycle and Tata.
As liquid steam marbles roll into old lungs,
He leaves the wet jungle hills,
Gagging on humidity.

The two skeletons grind as one through Kuala Lumpur traffic,
A black bicycle propelled by a skeleton
Clad in Tamil black skin,
Wizened from city-sun and three-score years of work.

A toothless smile of red
Spits the beetlenut blood,
Upon the muggy roadside.
Tata wipes his leathered lip,
And maneuvers through a tin and atap village,
Before reentering the foreigners’ residential seclusion.

Passing the walking amahs,
Tata enters the walled residence.
Father greets him with "How is it going Tata?!!"
As he roars off in the Scout,
Ready for embassy work.
Tata fixes his gaze downward "Goodmorning Tuan,"
And hobbles off to prune.

He erupts a smile of red
At the diplomat’s chubby child
Gorging on morning fruit,
And slaves into scorching midday.
Jump Burn Return

once in a while i stop time
and jump hard
swimming in the everything of future.
eyes and senses steeled for could-be's.
heat is gone.
keep on walking
no stops.
and dark hulls fall over cracking
crispy and lifeless.
a bright dot being
pops and continues to jump
hard.
White fills up the wind
and we are falling falling fall
we twist and writhe and bake and peel.
i am
back and alone.
she is gone, or he, or it
that made time stop out.
jumping hard, caught
now i just look at the moon upstairs
and laugh out loud.

Ken Gonyer
Betsy Purvis
Mars the Pig
Colored Pencils

Betsy Purvis
Paris
Graphite
Betsy Purvis
Fisherman
Graphite
"Welcome home."

She flipped the light switch, filling the hotel room with ugly yellow light, and sat down on a chair by the window. Pulling the plastic curtain back, she looked down five floors to the dark alley below. She really couldn't see much of anything and began thinking about home. Then she thought about Darcy. She shivered and closed the curtain. He stumbled in behind her, closed and locked the door, and looked disinterestedly around the room for only a moment. He turned toward her with a frown.

"Nice. What did you say your name was, again?"

"Angel. You can call me Angel. What's yours?"

"John."

Angel laughed and then stopped. Silence. She stared nervously at her feet.

"It just sounds funny, you know?"

He put the bottle to his mouth and took a deep drink. It made him grimace. "You got the stuff? You said you had the stuff. Where is it?"

"Sit down. I got it right here. Don't worry honey, just give me a minute to get it out."

She reached in her purse and began rummaging around inside, looking for the small plastic bag she had promised him. She stared for a moment at the knife inside, which she carried everywhere ever since Darcy... The handle felt cold, and heavy, and she looked for a moment up from her purse to the dirty, unshaven man with dt's who sat on the bed next to her, drinking something from a bottle. She smiled.

Pushing it aside, she found the bag. She pulled it out, along with a small mirror, and carefully sifted some of the contents of the bag out onto the mirror.

"How's that? You want me to cut it for you?"

He was staring at her again. "No, I want to cut it. Get up." He put the bottle he was drinking from on the nightstand and staggered over to the table. "Get up."

"You got the money for this, right?"

"Here's your fuckin' money." He threw it on the table. She glared at him for a moment and then put on her sexiest smile. Her eyes squinted. He reached for the bag.

"Sure, baby." She got up, walked over to the TV, and turned it on. A late movie was playing. It looked Italian. They were foreigners and they didn't move their mouths in sync to what was being said.

A sexy young woman was standing over a group of men seated around a table, watching a card game. She was with her husband. The men smoked cigars. Then they wouldn't let her leave when she wanted to go. Maybe it wasn't her husband, maybe it was her boyfriend. Angel hated turning on a movie in the middle. The men got up from the table and were all around
her, pushing her, touching her. She smiled uncomfortably as they began to push her. Angel began to shift on the bed, and she reached out to change the channel, but kept watching, looking over occasionally to see what he was doing at the table.

"You want some?"

"What?"

"You want some of this shit?" He pointed at the table.

"Yeah, I'll have a little." She jumped up and moved toward the table. He stood up and blocked her way. He wouldn't let her by him.

"You got a nice ass. I can't wait to tear into that tonight." He grabbed her shoulder, holding the long soft hair which fell over it firmly in his palm. His hands felt oddly dry and rough on her shoulder. Sandpaper.

With a subtle movement she slipped out of his grasp and hungrily threw him on the bed.

"I can't wait for you to tear, baby." She turned toward the table, "Soon as I have some of this."

He propped himself up in the bed, reached for the bottle on the nightstand, and was again drinking and staring at her. When she got up and began to move toward him, he frowned.

"Sit down, I'm not through drinkin' yet." He pulled the bottle back and drank from it. "That was good shit. I'm already starting to feel it."

"Yeah, it's real good. He gave me special stuff."

"Did anyone ever tell you your legs are too short for your body?"

"What?"

"Nothing."

John sat at the bed and stared at her with his dirty face and dirty eyes and drank more from the bottle. She got up and changed the channel on the TV. John continued to stare at her. The TV went from one static channel to another. It ended back at the same channel. She shut it off without looking, stopping another agonizing scream. "I can't believe they would show that on TV." She turned around quickly and saw that he was laughing at her.

"What the fuck are you laughing at?"

"I heard about your friend Darcy. Too bad."

"How do you know?"

"Everybody knows."

"Well what the fuck did you mean, sayin' that, and who the hell are you?"

"I'm John, and I didn't mean nothing. Come here."

"Look, I had a bad day, and I think I need to go."

He jumped up. "What the fuck do you mean. I paid my fuckin' money. Come here."

She sat at the foot of the bed. He was holding her tightly by the arm. She looked longingly at her purse and the knife, which seemed so far away from where she was. "You want more stuff? I got more in my purse. I can get more for you."
"No. That's not what I want." He leaned back against the headboard of the bed, pulling her with him. "Come here." He was staring at her and she began to shake. "Come here. Take the handcuffs...Take them." She shook violently. She could hardly move her arm to reach out for the cuffs. "Take them and chain me to the bed. I'm a bad boy and I need to be punished." He lay back on the bed.

She laughed, the muscles in her neck and back growing limp in relief. "OK honey. Look, you lay right here like a good boy while I wash up and I'll be right back." She walked into the bathroom carrying her purse, closing the door behind her. "I'll be right out, John...just give me another minute."

She walked back outside a few moments later, wiping off the mascara which had run down her cheek. A small drop of blood appeared under one of her fingernails. She turned out the light. "Poor thing, chained down to the bed. I'm goin' to see that you have a good time tonight." She took off her clothes and climbed onto the bed. "My hands are cold." She touched his chest to make him jump. But he didn't move. "Hey, what do you want?...Hey, you didn't pass out, did you?" No answer. She was sitting on top of his chest and he wasn't moving.

There was a rapping at the window. She started. She began rubbing his chest passionately. "You didn't pass out did you?" There was a rapping again. "You didn't hear that did you?" She tried slapping his face to wake him up, and began to feel the coolness of his body seeping through her already-cold hands. There was the knocking again, but this time it was angry and constant, like someone wanted in. She talked to the ice-cold body beneath her. "No, you didn't hear that. It can't be...five stories up." Her voice was shaking again. The knocking grew louder. The room began to lose shape, changing colors. The knocking was constant, and steady. She screamed at the window. "Why don't you leave us alone?" She was crying. She hit the man below her. "Wake the fuck up, goddamit, wake up. Make them go."

The knocking continued, shaking the entire room in its violence, and suddenly she knew. The room filled with color. She knew who it was. Angel jumped out of the bed, her arms spread wide open in joy.

"Darcy! I'm comin' honey, hold on, I'll open the window. Take me with you! God, let's just love each other. I missed you!"

J. Gregory Barrett
Burning horizon
We stare out
Wrapped around each other

Sunday afternoon
Sun falls,
The day ends.

Sand painting-
Subdued greys and fiery rust
Drift past our eyes

Shadows intrude
Slide along the wall,
Dusk’s artistry
Leaves us alone.

Tamara O’Hearn
Brad Thompson
RR Bridge
Silver Print
Brad Thompson
Untitled
Silver Print

Andrea Lee Neilan
Untitled
Silver Print
Mike Remy
Aggressor
Water Color

Phyllis Jackson
Untitled
Gouache
Phyllis Jackson
Enchanted Forest
Lithograph

Elizabeth Stutzman
Untitled
Oil on Linen
An empty auditorium
lights off
rain pounding on roof.
Slipping off my shoes
I dance
to music from within.
You hear the same song
and we dance
side by side, never touching,
Our feet sometimes in unison.
We finish
and none are there to applaud.

Elizabeth Betts
Words gush out my front window
As they view the world
In a single image.

But, from outside,
The words are prism-imaged,
Octagonalized.

From inside the frosty pane I see
An oak tree with tire swing,
And a red, ice-glazed tricycle.

Little Betsy,
Knees scraped from upsetting the trike,
Looks into the window,

And sees me staring at her,
Words flying from my hot core.
A single message, with eight flashcards
Says to her,

The Oak Wood Desk is Coasting on Three Wheels.

Dave Svec
Karen van der Veer
Untitled
Nickel

Karen van der Veer
Untitled
Sterling Silver
Karen Whitlock
Brothers...
Color Print

Aaron Cole
Night Mist
Gouache
Isaac Harrell
The Blessed Virgin
Oil Paint

Angela Tao
Tangerine Dream
Linocut
Kathy Cluverius
Untitled
Hand Made Paper

Karen Whitlock
Untitled
Lithograph
Hurricane

I love it when the wild wind whips my breath
   And cleanses me fresh.
The rush of power pulls and pushes
   And flips and flings and tumbles,
Smashcrashing open artificial formality,
   Bruising and scouring until only
Nature gifts of stronger mettle remain.
   A breeze won’t satisfy me
I need a gale
   To drag me up like Dorothy
But take my sparkling slippers, please-
   I don’t ever want to go home.

Ken Gonyer
Hoo-Lee-Ah

When she laughs,
the jackhammers stop;
streetworkers in tee-shirts
hook fat fingers in belt loops
and whistle;
tiny birds swing upside down
from birch branches;
old men twirl the moustaches
they shaved off years ago;
young women look to their shoes
and curse the heat of afternoon;

but when she sits
by the window,
her eyes fixed
on nothing outside,
her rhythmic fingers
combing through
her tangled hair,
it is only I
who loses his mind.

Denver S. Butson
Lara Tomlin
Love 1987
Lithograph & Photo Collage

Sometimes I can tell you
Still love me and
All I can do is laugh
To myself.

Todd Slaubaugh
The Return
Silver Print & Xerox
Dawn Ringsdorf  
Atlanta Residence  
Pen & Ink
kneeling upright...humble, pious
desirous of being empty, free, undesiring
I bend my neck down until my head hangs
fingers tensely interlocked
the dry scaly skin of my hands pressed tight
eyelids rolled down like the deep stain of night
and a cry choked in the tightness of my throat
no cry, however hoarse and raspy, can bear my voice to heaven
only from the unending blackness of my rolled-up eyes
can a prayer emanate, rise through clouds, and beseech holy ears:

St. Anthony I do not know your face
but hear and help me in your infinite mercy
I undeserving yet believing
have lost my feet
when I try to walk the sidewalk sways beneath my legs
the wind blows me down
children point and laugh
adults stare in disgust
while the wind pushes me down in the street
St. Anthony help me find my feet
I want to serve the lord once more
as I did in my youth of doves and candle flames
bearing the cross, lighting the candles
the waxy wifts of smoke drift up into my tiny nostrils...heaven scent
cruets brimming with mysterious holy water
desperately I would wonder
what's behind the immense red velour curtain softly enfolding the altar
yet never daring to peek
St. Anthony help me find my feet
and once more I'll bear the tall wooden cross
I'll light the holy candles
I won't peek behind the curtain
I'll be good
I cry to be good
but St. Anthony--I repeat,
how can I serve without my feet?
What good am I who cannot stand?
What good am I who stumbles on stumps
through storm and night and fire and flood?
who cries alone?
I look down my legs and see no feet--
clouds of huge eternal secrets float
like shining marble altars in the sky
but I cannot reach up that high
on these truncated legs--
what good am I, who remembers all my
acolyte prayers and intentions; poems and intonations
now scattered across my clumsy path
broken, looking, incomplete,
   Oh, Saint Anthony
   help me find my feet

Matt Theado
Janet Frank
Untitled
Graphite

Andrea Lee Neilan
Untitled
Silverprint
Karen Whitlock
Untitled
Silverprint
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