



Volume 5 / Issue 2

Howdy Reader,

In your hands is the second edition of the fifth volume of *The Eckleburg Project*. Enclosed in these pages are months of hard work from the TEP staff, as well as the unique and invaluable emotions, experiences, and art of a selection of Texas A&M artists.

I have had the pleasure of knowing many incredible people during my four years with Eckleburg, as well as seeing our organization change and adapt over time. We have operated with as many as forty members and as few as twenty, and there were a few times when we had to rely on generous grants to publish our next issue. No matter the circumstances, however, we have been committed to publishing the work of our fellow Aggies. During times when funding was tight, we were inspired and motivated by the work our fellow students continued to submit – and we still are. Their art challenges us and reshapes our worldviews, and we have and will do whatever we can to publish and share that art with our campus community. Artists are vital to our community, and the foundation of our journal. You see, in the end, it wouldn't have mattered if we were staffed by hundreds of students, and had bottomless funding – without talented Aggie artists, who have the courage to share their work and the spirit to submit again, despite, in some cases, previously missing the cut, *The Eckleburg Project* would not exist. The art of Texas A&M students deserves and needs to be shared. We exist for the Aggie art community, and so long as the Aggie art community continues to thrive, we will continue to publish the art of our fellow students, funding be damned. So thank you, to all Aggie artists, for continuing to create and allowing us to share your art.

We have dedicated acknowledgements near the end of our journal for those the organization as a whole would like to thank, but I would like to take this time to, regretfully briefly, thank some who I wouldn't have been able to help organize this endeavor without. First, I would like to thank Alex Cowan, our incredible managing editor, whose leadership and initiative pushed the organization into action many times. I would also like to thank our wonderful officer board, Zach, Sasha, Kirbie, Marina, and Jackson, whose counsel and friendship were critical to the success of the journal and the maintenance of my own sanity. I need to offer tremendous thanks to our advisors, Flo Davies and Lowell White, whose guidance was priceless, oftentimes not just pertaining to the journal but to life in general. I, of course, need to thank our dedicated staff who took time and effort away from their studies to realize this shared vision. It's also important that I thank Eckleburg's many past leaders, particularly Madi Parker, Gabi Aguilar, and Davis Land, who set examples which helped me learn what it took to lead this fine organization, even if they set the bar higher than I could reach. Finally, thank you once again to our artists and our lovers of art. It is you who keep this dream afloat, and it is you who will continue to create and enrich our community.

With that said, it is my pleasure to present to you the newest edition of *The Eckleburg Project*.

Cheers,
Adam Navara
Editor in Chief

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Adam Navara

MANAGING EDITOR

Alex Cowan

HEAD OF DESIGN

Kirbie Koonse

HEAD OF FINANCE

Marina Buttecali

PROSE EDITOR

Sasha Adams

POETRY EDITOR

Zach Lannes

BLOG MANAGER

Jackson Greer

ADVISORS

Florence Davies

Lowell White

BLOG TEAM

Margaret Clark
Jess Lucas
Savanna Hoover
David Alvarez
Evelyn Leal
Erin O'Hara

EVENTS TEAM

Michelle Milstead

FINANCE TEAM

Reagan Spexarth
Tucker Hytrek

SCREENING TEAM

Jason Arrington
Lino Anunciancion
Serita Patel
Melody Christensen
Breezy Zuniga
Maggie Stephens

DESIGN TEAM

Sarah Carlson
Madison Smith
Jorge Macias
Jihyeon Joung
Miranda Mabery

01

Springtime
Hannah Wells

02

Pomegranates
Sarah Carlson

03

Warm
Madeleine Jenkyn

04

August, Across Years
Davis Land

05

Laredo, Winter
Jason Arrington

06

Walkway
Toni Nittolo

07

Highways
Ishanee Chanda

08

Inverse
Lauren Ferris

09

Langford at Night
Lauren Ferris

12

and there you are living despite it all
Sarah McGuinness

13

A World Unknown
Daly Witt

14

Second Floor of the Holocaust Museum
Courtney Kiolbassa

16

Reflections of a College DJ
Melissa Wislan

17

Overdose #3
Chandler Corbett

19

The Phoenix
Sarah McGuinness

20

The Jellyfish
Savanna Hoover

22

Day Man
Sarah Carlson

23

Insomnia: A Dialogue
Jaci Cooper

25

Glass Elevator
Toni Nittolo

26

Milo
Rebecca Tran

27

I Think About Yellow Mustard Flowers
Nahrin Majid

28

Hanbok
Rebecca Tran

29

Portrait
Miranda Mabery

30

Happiness
Jihyeon Joung

31

Dia de los Vacas
Madeleine Jenkyn

33

Special Thanks

34

Sponsors

35

Social Updates

SPRINGTIME

Hannah Walls

I hope the thought of me
is like springtime in your mind,
where you look around
and see flowers blooming
where they haven't
in a long,
long time.

I'll warm right up when you
aren't looking,
until suddenly you're
bathed in sunshine.
Like Spring,
I want to grow on you
in the subtlest
of ways.



POMEGRANATES

Sarah Carlson

Digital Painting



WARM

Madeleine Jenkyn

Photography



AUGUST, ACROSS YEARS

Davis Land

Instead of the sun, try a child chewing on their seatbelt. Knots instead of whatever isn't knots but still churns the stomach. It is hot in the leather seat and I can taste the nylon, like writing a play about a wooden door, or even closing my eyes and imagining something else, like the sun, maybe, and then walking quietly into a church. It is the afternoon and I am warm in the living room.

A man places his hand on a shoulder but someone shuts off the television, leaving the room quiet & purposeless, before he removes it.

LAREDO, WINTER

Jason Arrington

The breath that breaks your skin,
and the stillness of remembrance.

The miles to chase a past that had already gone.



WALKWAY

Toni Nittolo

Photography

HIGHWAYS

Ishanee Chanda

My father drives like he is running from something, fast and focused through highways of broken people. The windows are splashed brown from coffee spills and nervous hands and the glass is cracked at the edges. It smells like regret and I wonder how many bags of McDonalds' french fries are in the crumpled heap behind our legs. They left grease stains on the leather seats and my father's grip on the steering wheel is so tight, it seems like his body will slip away with the rest of his mind.

The motel we last inhabited is now three states away. I left behind a button from her jacket underneath the floorboards to remind the world

that she is still here and one day she can be found. At this moment, she is in Iowa, Nevada, and North Dakota. I wanted to put her in South Dakota too, but my father drove through the rainstorms for sixteen hours without stopping. When I woke, he said there were tornadoes, but when I looked outside my window, the sideview mirror was still perfectly in place.

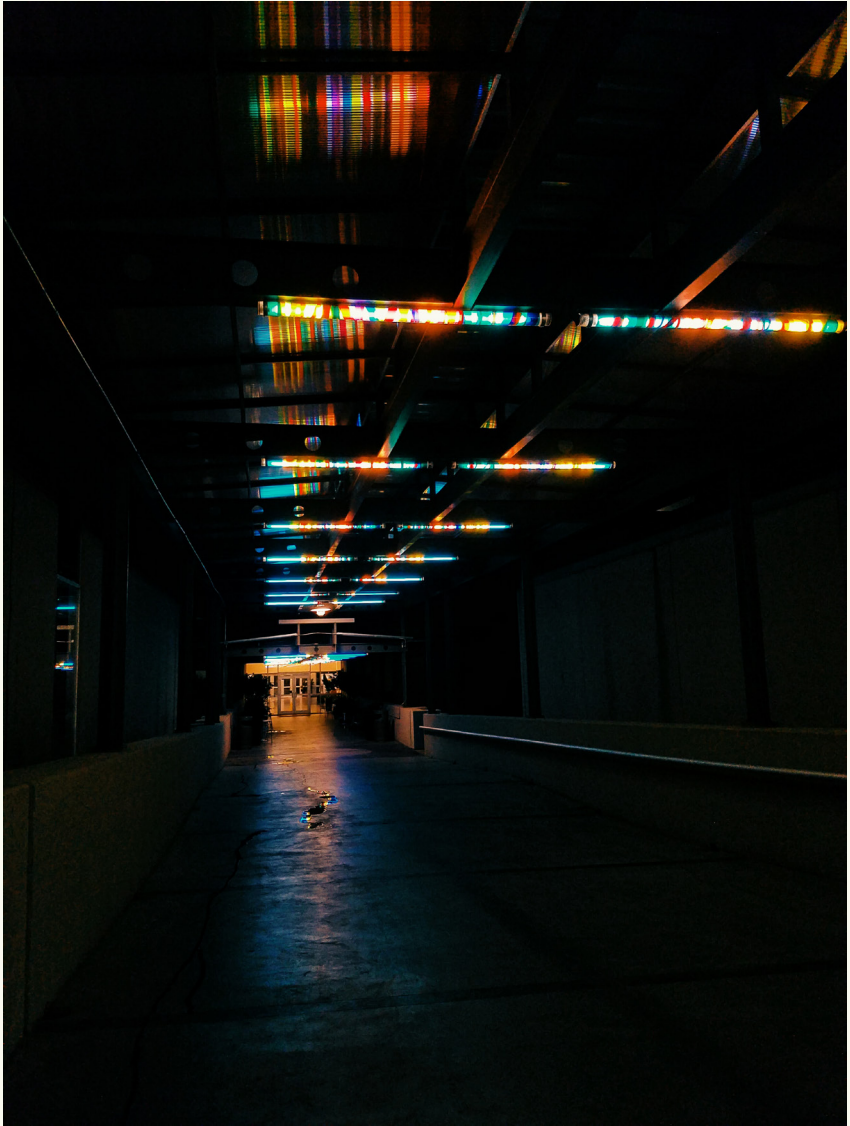
He won't tell me where we are going. I stopped asking him after Arizona, when he yelled that he would throw me out into the deserts and leave the red dust to swallow me whole. His eyes were wild and furious, and the car swerved off the road for four terrifying



INVERSE

Lauren Ferris

Paper



LANGFORD AT NIGHT

Lauren Ferris

Photography

seconds before he regained control. Sometimes when I pretend to be sleeping, I can hear him talking to ghosts in the middle of the night. He says her name, and he tells her that he is full of hatred. I opened my eyes once, and saw his face reflected in the light of the dashboard. His jaw was sharp, pointed in the direction of misery and his gaze was empty. There was a stark contrast to his jagged edges and the blur of the night sky in the window behind him. He was an unstoppable object, flying through the darkness and she was the engine moving him forward.

On the seventy-fourth day, we stop for gas. We are in some town in North Carolina, a place built under trees and cigarette smoke. His hands are shaking as he pulls into the gas station, and I briefly wonder how long it will take for the card in his hand to run out of places to run to. Sometimes, I feel like I know this land because of

the stories she used to tell me while I fell asleep. There is no need to leave a button here where even the air holds the weight of her name. She would tell me about how she would hide in the pine trees whenever she ran away from my grandfather and find warmth in the blanket of stars above her, wondering if he was really her home. Maybe that is why she left us, took her suitcase and vanished in the cover of darkness, looking for a home when she realized that we were no longer a part of it. My father's hands are clutching at the gas pump, holding onto the only fuel that keeps him running and I want to run away. I want to leave him and his red-rimmed eyes and greasy hands and his whispers to ghosts, just like she did, and I want stop running from something that I do not understand.

I look at him. His shoulders are hunched over and the muscles in his forearms are taut. He meets

my eyes. As we drive away, I fall asleep and dream of her.

When I wake, we are stopped at a broken house. It is on the outskirts of town, surrounded by an empty riverbed and the sound of silence. The front porch is unrecognizable, composed of rotting wood and a shattered porch swing, but I see the yellow painted shutters of her memories and realize that we were breathing in the origin of her story. He walks to the door, full of her weight and the memories she left behind, and he lays a hand on the rough wood. His shoulders are rigid and I can see her palms on the ridges of his backbones.

There is a shuddering gasp, a harsh intake of breath filled with the guilt sitting in his stomach and he stands there, in the fading light of the sun under the woodwork that holds the only remnants of her soul that he knows how to find. He stands there until the sun melts underneath the oak trees, until the stars begin to peek out of the rust colored sky, until her memory is absorbed into the tips of his fingers. His frame is fragile now, soft and malleable underneath the light of the lamppost and he walks gently back to the car, to us, to everything we left behind.

We drive away.

AND THERE YOU ARE LIVING DESPITE IT ALL

Sarah McGuinness

Digital Painting



A WORLD UNKNOWN

Daly Witt

Digital Painting



SECOND FLOOR OF THE HOLOCAUST MUSEUM

Courtney Kiolbassa

this is the first thing you notice:

the clinging smell of rubber fogs in your chest,
and the voices have faded into gray murmurs.

ahead, a slow, dutiful march of tourists.
the sun slanting onto the bare walls.

this is what comes next:



you stand in a hallway with four thousand shoes
and the piles of tattered leather spill into the corners.

you take careful footsteps. you have cotton in your throat.
the fear of waking someone laces in your ribs.

how the souls still linger, waiting for your witness
to the empty spaces their feet once filled.

you look over the glass barricades
at the shoes, at the flat expanse of beaten fabric,

and you try to stir up some profound reflection
on humans and evil and what it means to be gone

but even your thoughts seem too loud.
your pulse. an intrusive drumbeat.

this is what catches your eye:

on top of the gray lake,
delicate white shoes. spotted in brown.

the dainty flower designs.
the limp leather: torn, hanging.

this is all you can think about:

a young girl stepping off a train.
the men with guns.

her confused eyes.
her frail hands holding her best shoes.

REFLECTIONS OF A COLLEGE DJ

Melissa Wislan

Fabric



on
the
morning...

after his third overdose,

Lazarus wakes with the word "thief" decaying on his lips. It's funny how death changes the meaning of things, but this word still tastes like charcoal across his tongue, so he inhales, lets fresh air fertilize "thief" into an olive branch that he can snap between his teeth to deaden the pain. And screams. The phosphorescent light is so much harsher here. He cries out to God, begging that it was only a dream, wants to ask someone why living feels worse than dying but there's no one to listen so instead he just weeps.

From his tomb, he hears the world's loudest alarm clock, His voice a trumpet, pulling him into life. But Lazarus knows this will always be the wrong song. Sound too much like, "Come back," not enough like "Welcome home." Gabriel played it better, standing at the checkpoint between hell and holy, head cocked, ears perked like he was tuning harmonies to his brother's fiddle.

He saw Elijah there, in heaven, lighting cigarettes off his chariot, and asked what it was like to understand the unknown. The

OVERDOSE #3

Chandler Corbett

prophet laughed but said nothing, just sucked in more smoke, so now, standing before the Messiah, Lazarus feels uncertainly claw it's way back into his chest.

He's never wanted to punch a rabbi in the throat before. Things like that need a reason. But then again, he never meant to hear his mother sobbing either. He's homesick for a place he didn't know he belonged to and this, *this*, could never be it. Don't you get it? He was always meant to be a martyr, never wanted to be a miracle because it sounds so much like victim. He will not glorify this. Lazarus contemplates tying his bandages into a noose, but he already feels too much like a puppet to find the thought comforting. So instead, he begs to follow the Thief up the cross, because at least then he'll have some assurance.

But the Thief just looks at him with pity and says,

"Some day,
but not today."



THE PHOENIX

Sarah McGuinness

Digital Painting

THE JELLYFISH

Savanna Hoover

I turn to my friend. "Have you ever heard of Adolf Eichmann?"

"No," she says, furrowing her brows together.

We stop walking. I set my beer bottle down on the rocks and look out to the liminal grey line of the horizon, where the sky meets the ocean. I stare hard, thinking about how to describe this man I still loathe, years later. The sun shoots stars across my vision. I look down.

A jellyfish lays on the rocky shore, but it lacks every enchanting beauty a jellyfish would normally possess in the ocean. I found most jellyfish to be gorgeous, and I loved watching them at the aquarium where they would glow and dance elegantly amidst a soiree of other colorful fish. This one is different. It isn't even pink. It's barely alive, but not because it's dying, because

that's where it wants to be. It's a white, gelatinous blob covered in thin, grey slime. It reminds me, suddenly, of this same friend.

"See this?" I say, pointing down at the heap of flesh.

She nods.

"This, is Steven. Lying here flaccidly, the water greets him and leaves, greets him and leaves, but he never participates in life. Existing only on the border of the ocean, he is too spineless to say more than 'hey'. To look at him is to feel a deep wave of dissatisfaction."

I pick up the beer bottle. I lift it high above my head and bring it down in one fell swoop! Glass shards are scattered across the top, embedded in its skin. I pour a large bag of salt onto its oozing flesh and still, still!

It only pouts, moving an inch to the left. "Hey," it says. It's uncomfortable. It feels that this was, like, not a cool move.

My friend takes a small step back.

"Why can't you go live? Why can't you go out and live?!" I cry out to the jellyfish, waving my arms. "Think something for once!"

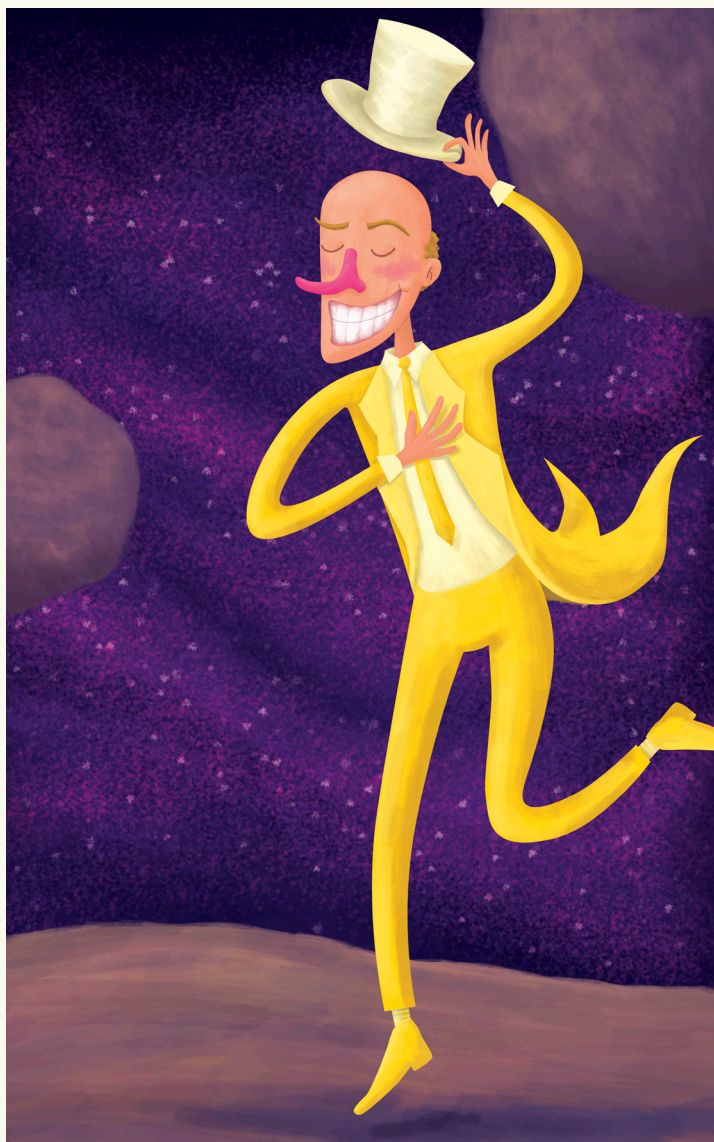
It feels offended, but it lacks the neurons to connect the synaptic sequence for original thought.

"There's a whole ocean out there! What are you doing?!"

I reach down and grab it. The grey ball of flesh squelches in my hands. I throw it as far as I can into the ocean.

It sails ten feet and hits the surface with a dull plop before slowly submerging. "Hey" I hear before it's gone.

My hands are on fire. I've stepped in the glass; blood and sand are mixing in the cut in my foot but a heady joy shimmers between my skull and frontal lobe. The shimmering joy continues to grow, stretching across the top of my grey and white matter, flooding dopamine over receptors, all the way back to my occipital lobe. It flows down my spinal cord and reaches out across my body. The tingling success is everywhere. They ask me why? Always, why? Why did I do that? My friend said that I was "upset." They still ask, why? I can't help but smile, can't help but tell them I have no regrets.



DAY MAN

Sarah Carlson

Digital Painting

INSOMNIA: A DIALOGUE

Jaci Cooper

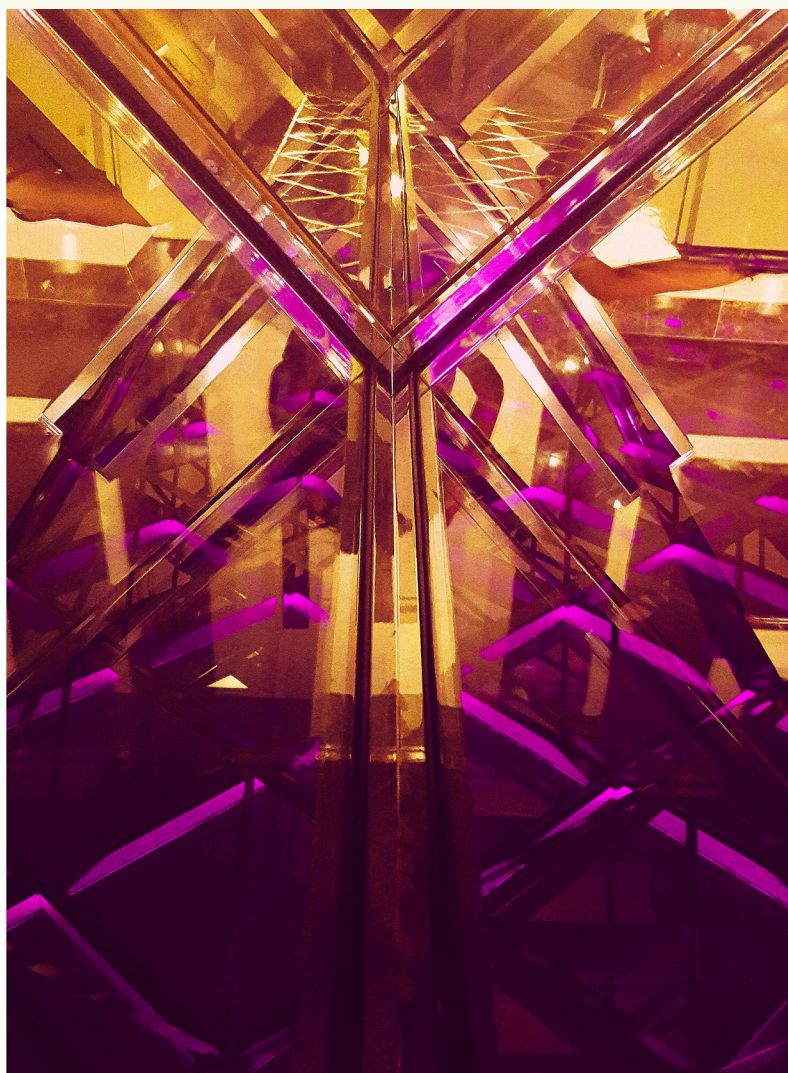
you lived a lot of life today
there were so many ways you failed today
have you noticed that the air has started to feel like June?
there were so many things you wanted to say, but didn't
have you noticed that the sunrises are getting earlier
there were so many questions you didn't have answers for
and the sunsets are getting later
there were so many mountains you couldn't climb
summer is coming
the future is coming at you fast
do you remember being young
and you aren't ready for it
and running barefoot through the grass?
you're barely able to handle the present
do you remember the mountains?
a classic case of wasted potential
you could see them from your backyard
a classic case of whatever-happened-to-her-anyway
do you remember how your brothers used to tease you
a classic case of just-not-quite-like-her-brother
and tell you that there were monsters in the basement?
do you like the person you've become?

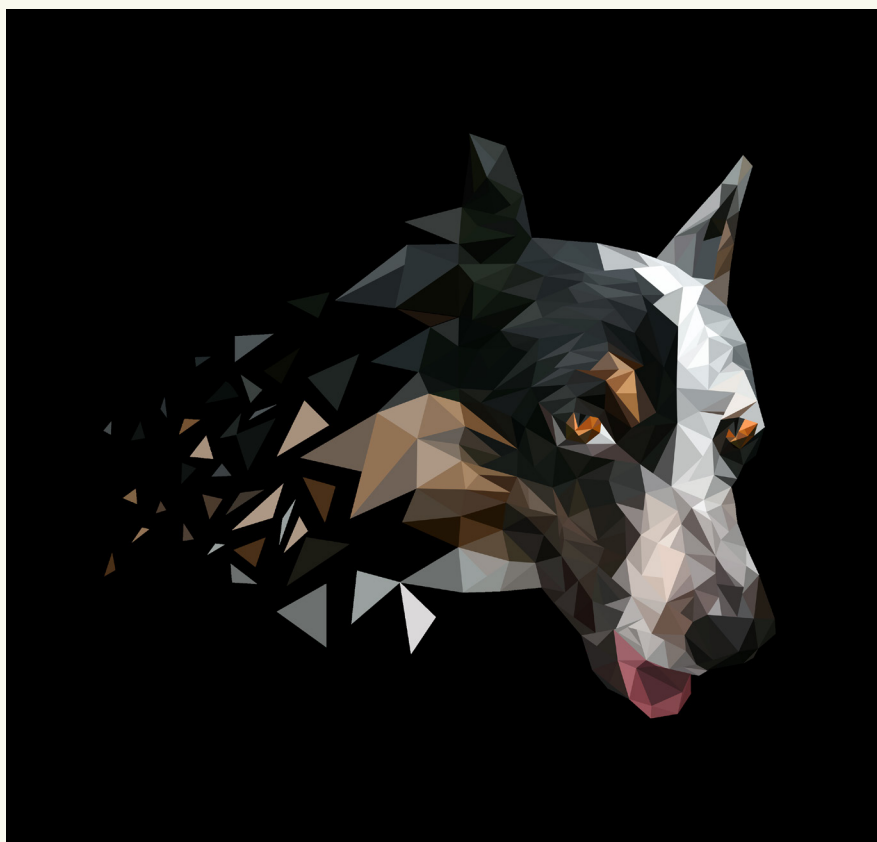
you would bravely say you didn't believe them
no one else seems to
but wouldn't go to the basement for weeks
maybe if you were braver
do you remember elementary school report cards?
maybe if you were smarter
do you remember valentine's day parties?
maybe if you were prettier
do you remember the tie-dye t-shirts you wore on field day?
maybe if you were stronger, faster, more confident
do you remember your best friend from fourth grade?
maybe then you wouldn't be so invisible
remember in sixth grade, how you believed you were in love?
maybe then he would notice you,
remember planning your dream wedding with your sister?
talk to you
do you remember what it was like to be young?
if you were different
life was so sweet
maybe life could be sweeter
and it still is
don't give that up

GLASS ELEVATOR

Toni Nittolo

Photography





MILO

Rebecca Tran

Digital Painting

I THINK ABOUT YELLOW MUSTARD FLOWERS

Nahrin Majid

I think about home, 20 hour plane rides
tracing back our steps
to where it all started, arriving
at an airport that can't contain
our stories, our baggage,
the reasons we ran away.
In textbooks, it's made clear.
I'm from a "less developed country."
Maybe they're right,
but least we can drive past people
that look like us
on billboards.
In this place, brown is divine
enough to be magnified
tenfold, painted across buildings
captured greedily by film.
I think about billowing fields
of yellow mustard flowers
welcoming me home with soft arms,
monsoon rain pellets attacking
rusty metal roofs when we stay
in the village where my mother
grew up, bathing in ponds marred with
mud and soap. I think about rinsing my hands
in clay bowls, eating rice without utensils,

sitting cross-legged on dirt floors.
I think about parents who left
to start over in other places, the
"land of opportunity"v that
spat their dreams back in their faces.
I think about running
back home.

HANBOK

Rebecca Tran

Digital Painting



PORTRAIT

Miranda Mabery

Pencil



HAPPINESS

Jihyeon Joung

I believe in the warm summer
lake waters, a small boat carrying a thousand
souls, a little boy drifting
apart, a storm which coughs for a
while and leaves, the sun lying on
the distant hills; and on the boat
the present holds onto
the future, asking to stay
a little longer, asking for a chance to
bury the happiness, to treasure
the laughs, to forever
live in the present.



DIA DE LOS VACA

Madeleine Jenkyn

Bone / Paint



All material contained in *The Eckleburg Project* was obtained and published with each author's consent. All rights to the material are property of each author, respective to their contribution.

The viewpoints and opinions expressed in the material do not necessarily reflect the viewpoints and opinions of *The Eckleburg Project*, its staff, its sponsors, or Texas A&M University.

FROM ALL OF US AT ECKLEBURG:

The Eckleburg Project would like to thank the University Writing Center for their continuous support and funding of the magazine. The staff there helps make all of this happen, and we are truly grateful.

To Florence Davies, thanks for being there as our advisor and friend when we needed it the most. You have been invaluable to the success of this magazine.

To Lowell Mick White, our newest advisor, whose additional guidance will only continue to strengthen TEP.

To our great University, its faculty, its students, the creative community of Bryan/College Station, and every brave soul who shared their creative work with our screeners, thank you for your support of this project and its creative vision.

To all the hands and hearts that have influenced the work we've published here:

Cheers all around.

It truly takes a village to raise a creative project.



**UNIVERSITY
WRITING CENTER**
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY



Want to paint and design your very own ceramics?
Artistic or not, it's a great way to relax, create,
and get together with friends!

Post Oak Village
900 Harvey Road, Ste. 5A
College Station, TX 77840

upaintit.com

FOR
updates
ON WHAT WE'RE
DOING &
weekly terrible
PUNS, VISIT OUR
WEBSITE AT
theeckleburgproject.com

— OR —
follow us
ON:



[facebook.com/
theeckleburgproject](https://facebook.com/theeckleburgproject)



[@LitTamu](https://twitter.com/LitTamu)



[@theeckleburgproject](https://www.instagram.com/theeckleburgproject)



theeckleblog.com

