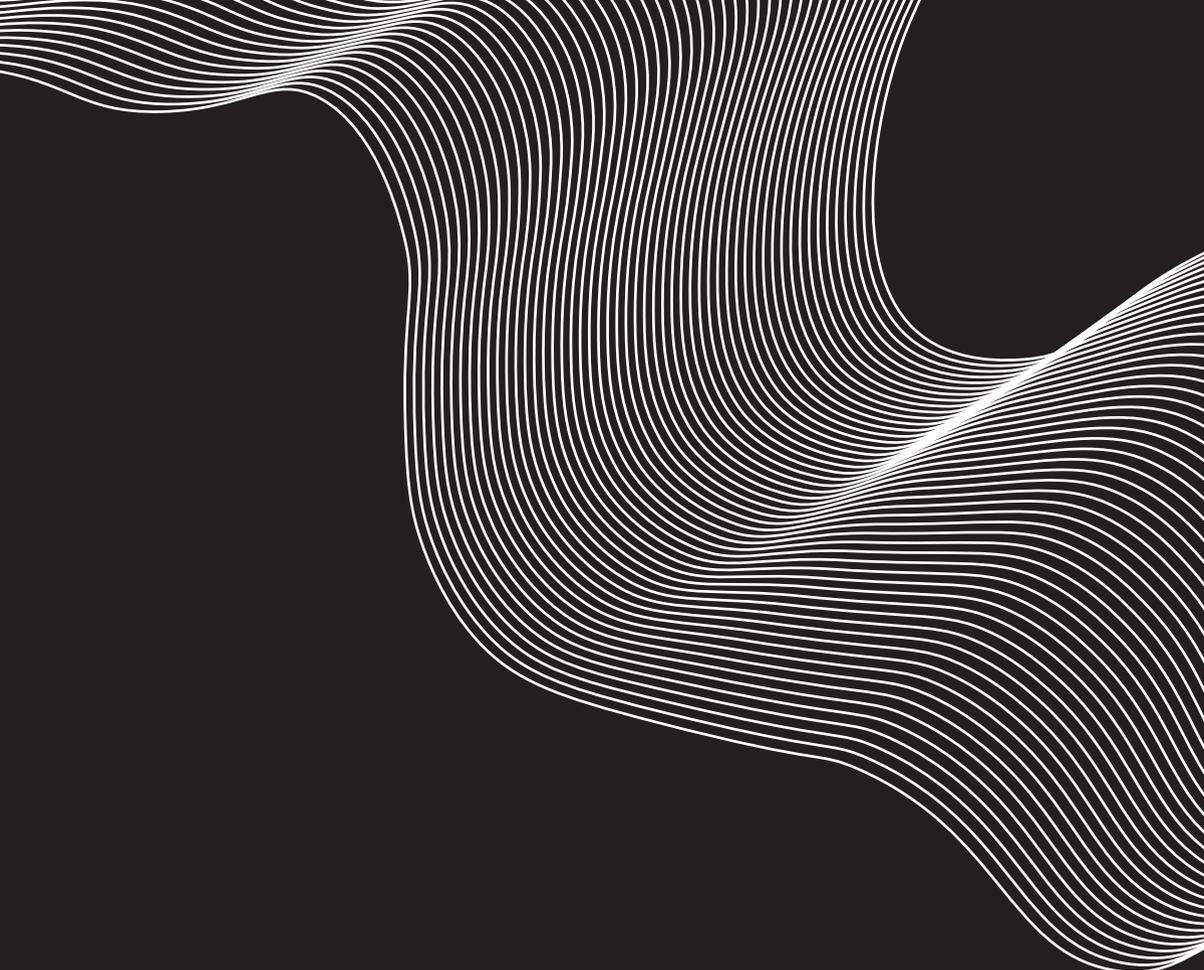


THE
Epleburg
PROJECT

The logo features the word "THE" in a simple, uppercase, sans-serif font at the top left. Below it, the word "Epleburg" is written in a large, elegant, black cursive script. Underneath "Epleburg", the word "PROJECT" is written in a smaller, uppercase, sans-serif font, following the curve of the bottom of "Epleburg". At the end of the "PROJECT" text, there are two circular icons connected by a thin line. Each circle contains two parallel diagonal slashes (//).

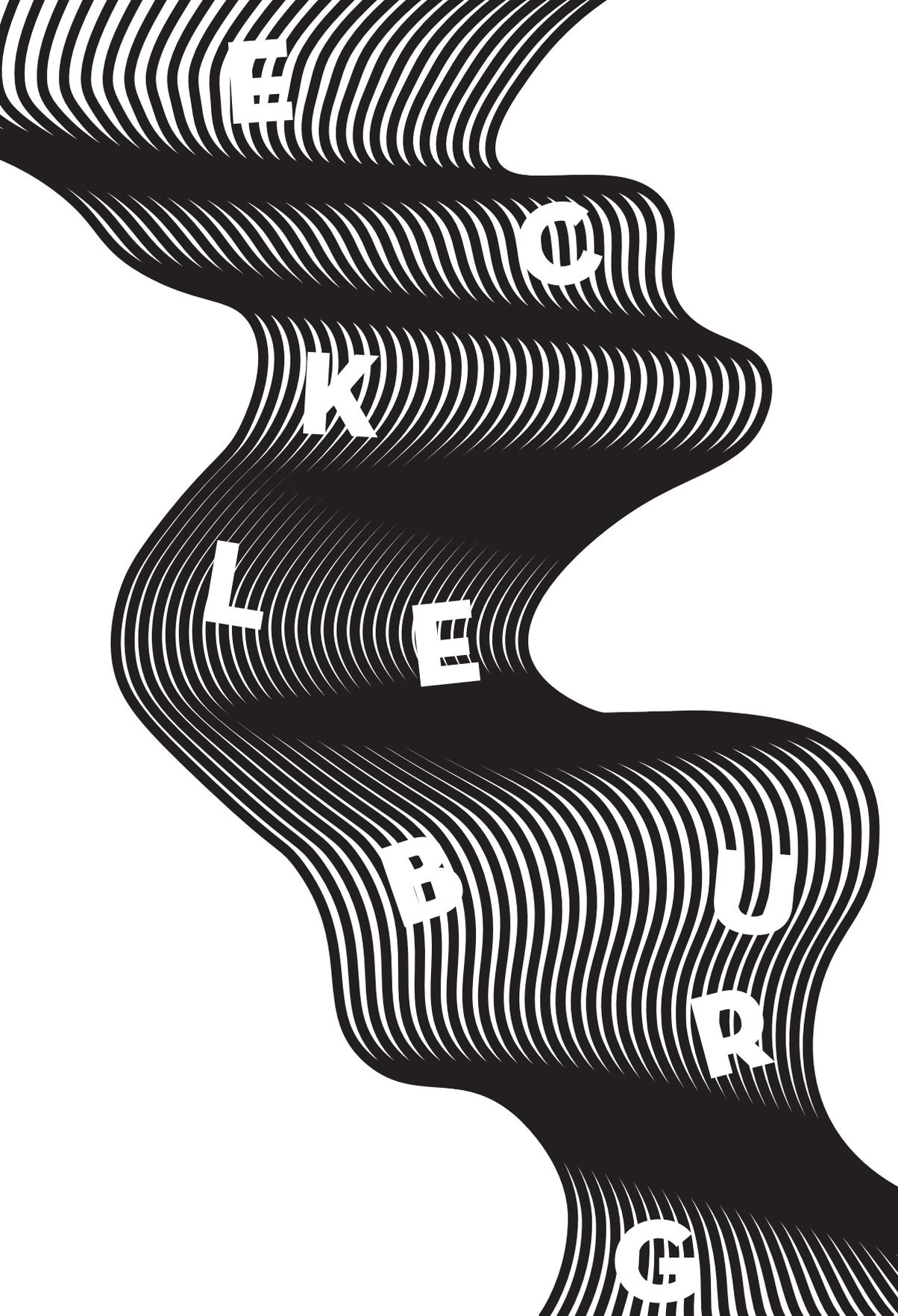


**Do I dare
Disturb the universe?**



**In a minute there is time
For decisions and revisions
which a minute will reverse.**

T. S. Elliot



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G

I sat down to write this and instead of writing, I immediately typed “editor’s note” into Google. According to the results, Editor’s Note is a racehorse.

Foaled in 1993, Editor’s Note is best known for his “stretch duel” against two horses, both much more famous than he—one of which he beat and the other of which fell behind early in the race due to an injury. Both horses were supposed to beat Editor’s Note.

It would be great to find a metaphor in that race, to say that somehow this edition of The Eckleburg Project came out against the odds and flew across the finish line, later retiring in Argentina and earning its owner a nice sum of \$1,601,394 (or whatever the equivalent fate would be for an undergraduate-operated literary and arts journal). I would hope that such a thing happens, but since I’m writing this before this edition is printed, I can’t know.

If you’re wondering where I’m going with this Editor’s Note anecdote, the answer is nowhere, and maybe that itself is a metaphor. Normally my editor’s notes are stepping off points into the following issue, but this is my last edition as Editor-in-Chief, and I’d like to use this note to issue a charge to our incoming staff, both immediate and in the future.

Take The Eckleburg Project further. Do something else.

The Eckleburg Project reflects the collision of culture that occurs on our campus, and each edition speaks to the artistic concern of its moment. Do not seek to make that timeless—it’s not possible. Instead, seek to make something true to what is happening now. Build whatever weird, kinda-pretentious thing that presents itself. Showcase the multiplicities of experience and history on our campus. Look towards the past and build on it.

When I look back, I see that our previous leaders, our staff, and I have done just this. Each semester marked a new experiment in how we could publish art on this campus, in how we could open up our pages to more and more members of our community, and I’m excited to see this continue. There will be mistakes and there will be failures—there always are—but there will be successes as well. The future of this publication is an exciting one, and I know The Eckleburg Project stands ready to jump straight into it.

Thanks, as always, for reading.

Davis Land

Volume 5 / Issue 1

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Optical Orb

Daly Witt

Ariadne

Taylor-Danielle Nutt

There is a space in between the walls.

The curving of the rock
at the end of the river.

Light that filters as smoke
through screen.

Ragged bones and weighted sighs
against endless halls.

Arches and Valleys catching at her trailing fingers
against broken barricades.

Dust that falls as ash
through veil.

The curving of the flesh
at the end of the line.

Her Anxious fingers tugged
against flushed thread,
Trapped
in between the margins.



American Pie

C.P. Black

I loved going to Office Depot as an eight year old.

The back section was my playground.

Beyond the spinning chairs the safes rested heavily—
all rectangular, all in monochromatic hues, all on display.

Mr. Krabs fed me the idea and America nodded her head.



Cold, hard cash. So much, you need
a safe.

So much, you need two safes.

Time to go already, Mom?

I was getting school supplies last
month when I remembered:

*I think the safes I used to look at
were back there?*

But they weren't there. I asked an
employee.



*What the hell do you need a safe
for... he thought as he led me away...*

...towards the clearance section?

Actually, a couple of rows before it.

And there the safes were—sitting on
a shelf.

Like... the top shelf... above my head
and arms.

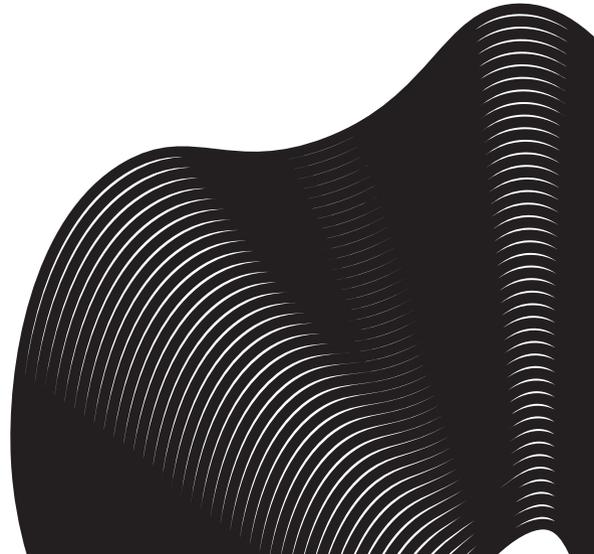
Still in their boxes.

Something made my stomach hurt.

“Tell me if you need me to get it
down for you,” he said.

Stained

Toni Nittolo



O5

Homes, Free to Prent

Loren Mullen

I have fallen in love with a company of Ghost,
who only fill the hearts of those
who find,
not words printed on a page,
but memories
of their most
dearly beloved friends.

3

south-ern at-mos-phere All your wor-ries dis-ap-pear You hear the dark-ies'neath the trees,
 play-ing old time mel-o-dies tu of my
 old Ken-tuck-y home you al-ways find a lot of sun-shine, wh dear 'old moth-er's
 near. My sweet-ie Sue she's just a tle bunch of sun-shine, too
 And if you go down there mid-summer for Stop! Look! I know that you'll sur-ren-der, to the
 sun-shine of my old Ken-tuck-y home. You'll al-ways home.

1. 2.

You'll Always Find etc. 2

Transparency

Lauren Ferris

07



Showdown

Sean Fleming



OCEANS & GALAXIES

Jaci Cooper

The girl in the mirror has blue eyes
blue like the ocean, I guess,
but don't tell her I said that,
because she hates clichés.
I've said my words to her
two hundred times
and she understands them.
But your eyes are brown;
they are deep and dark
and also full of stars.
I'm from the city, though,
where the night is full of
traffic and light pollution,
so I'm not used to stars yet.
I don't know how to look
at constellations and
not lose my heart
to the vast mystery of
the galaxies.
I've said my words
two hundred and one times
to the girl in the mirror.

But on the two hundred and second time
I know I'm going to fail.
The Pacific does not
communicate with the Milky Way.
And where the ocean isn't shallow
it is undiscovered.
It will not be understood.
So I pray
that you'll forgive me
when the waves try
to speak to the sun
and the Mariana Trench
tries to speak to Neptune.
Forgive me,
because the galaxies don't
need the oceans,
but the moon tells the
ocean where to go.





There was a bird that never landed.

It just flew

upward,

forgetting what the ground was.

A Bird

Joshua Stenzel

Reflections

Joshua Stenzel

In your line of questioning, you have traced all the strange myths and urban legends that dwell in this city to this place. Deep underground, following old steam tunnels, abandoned sewers, and the hollow bones of forgotten cities below, you traversed the strange and nameless places until you arrived here - a wide, low-ceilinged concrete room, dominated by a single mirror along one wall. If you were naïve, you would say it looks like a dead-end service corridor converted into a dance studio. But you are no fool. You notice two strange things about this room.

One. The lights in the room, activated by an old pull-lever on the back wall, cast strange hues that reflect through the room. Hyperbolic orange, stygian blue, and neon beige - impossible colors - mix to create a nauseating rainbow.

Two. The mirror reflects incorrectly, which is to say, its not reflecting at all. Your image on the other side is not flipped right-to-left, but instead appears exactly as you imagine other people see you. You raise your right hand - so does your reflection. You look into your eyes. There is an urgency, an

expectation there that you don't recognize.

As you approach the mirror, the lights of the room overlap and convolute the surface before you. Under the light, the mirror becomes a prism; your reflection diffracts into a multitude of images. As you vary your distance and angle, you can see into the reflections of your different lives.





Worlds overlapping worlds, arranged in a spectrum of alien light.

The world where you took that trip abroad, despite your apprehensions. The world where you studied harder, and graduated top of your class. The world where you didn't let the one you love walk out of your life. The world where you lost everything, and gained wisdom.

None of what you see surprises you. In your research, you are familiar with the promises and tricks of this mirror.

One

Joshua
Ernst

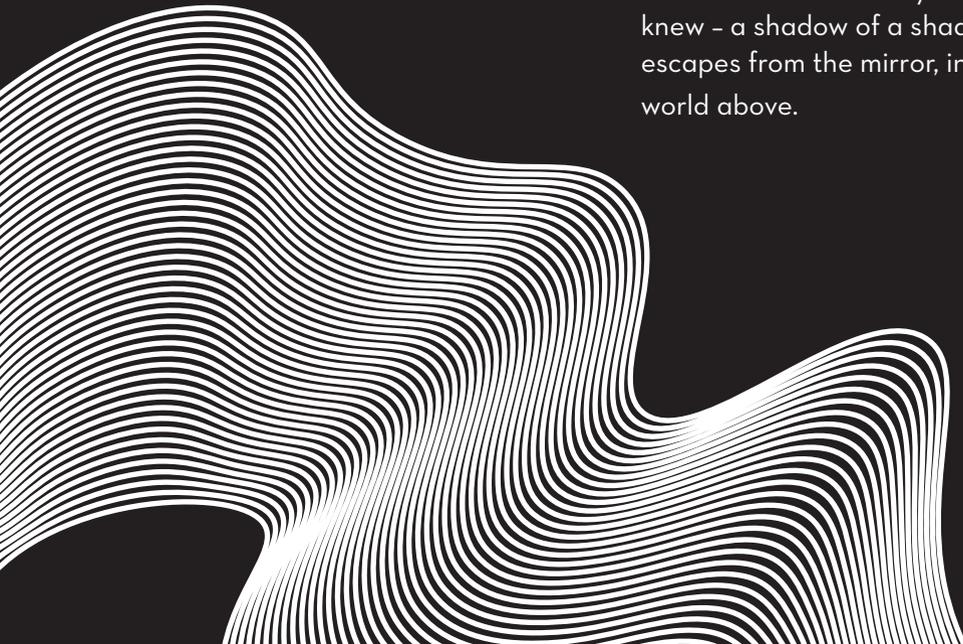
Others like you, with similar thirst for discovery, had seen an image of a life that they craved, and stepped forward at just the right angle into the mirror. Without a reflection in the way, there is nothing of substance to stop someone from passing through the plane. But when the reflection emerges in kind, it has its first experience of freedom. Invariably, its first act is to cry - the same for all those who newly face a life of overwhelming possibility. Meanwhile, the original traveler is trapped in an unfamiliar world, doomed to live without power as a mere reflection, simply acting out the life of an image in a mirror. An unknowable amount of people have been lost and forgotten this way, their identities usurped by near-imposters.

But you are wiser. You pace the room, searching for the right vantage that will allow you to find the reflection you seek. Prismatic interference washes bright over your eyes as you look. Then you see it.

The world where you were never born.

An empty room stares back at you from the other side. With no reflection standing in your way, you pass through the mirror, into a world free of expectation and the chains of the past. A world of freedom.

Yet when you cross the threshold, something else crosses from the other side. The empty space of your absence from a world you never knew - a shadow of a shadow - escapes from the mirror, into the world above.

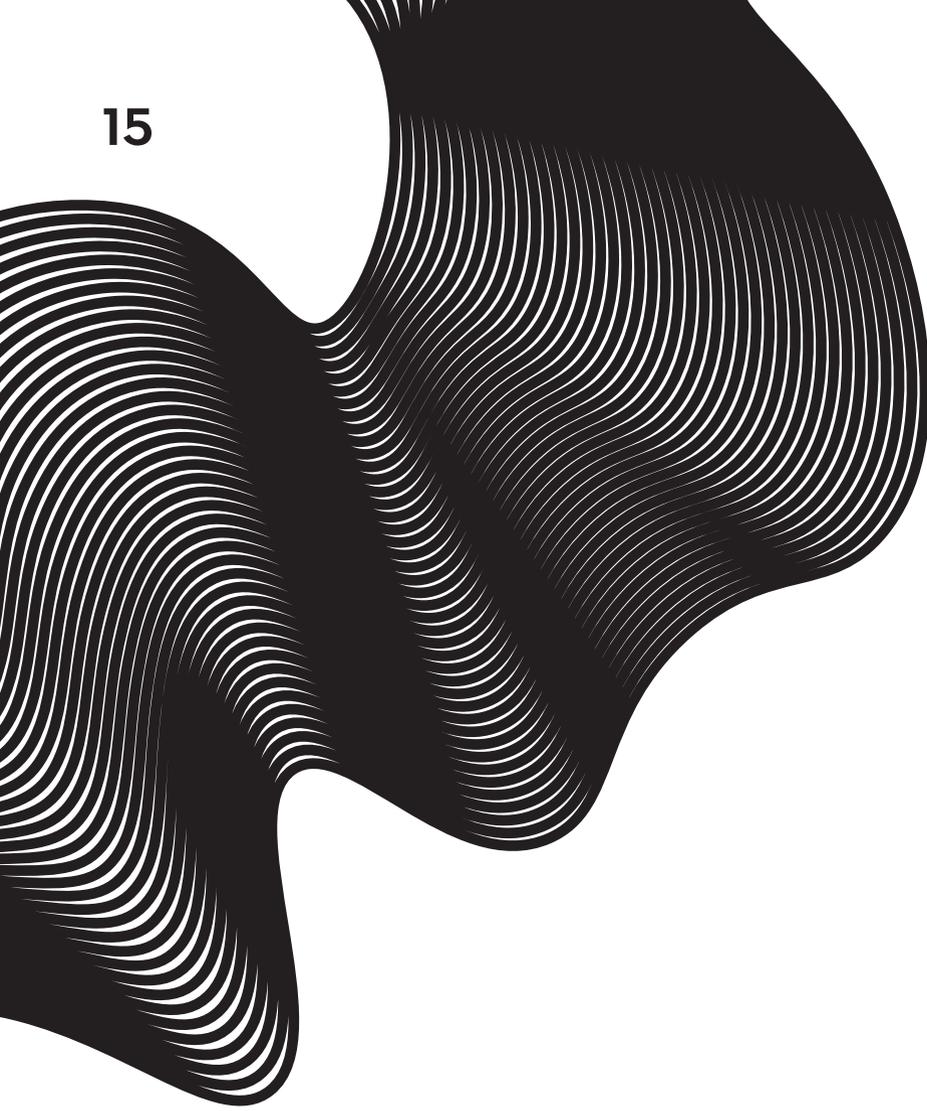




12:30

Lauren Ferris

15

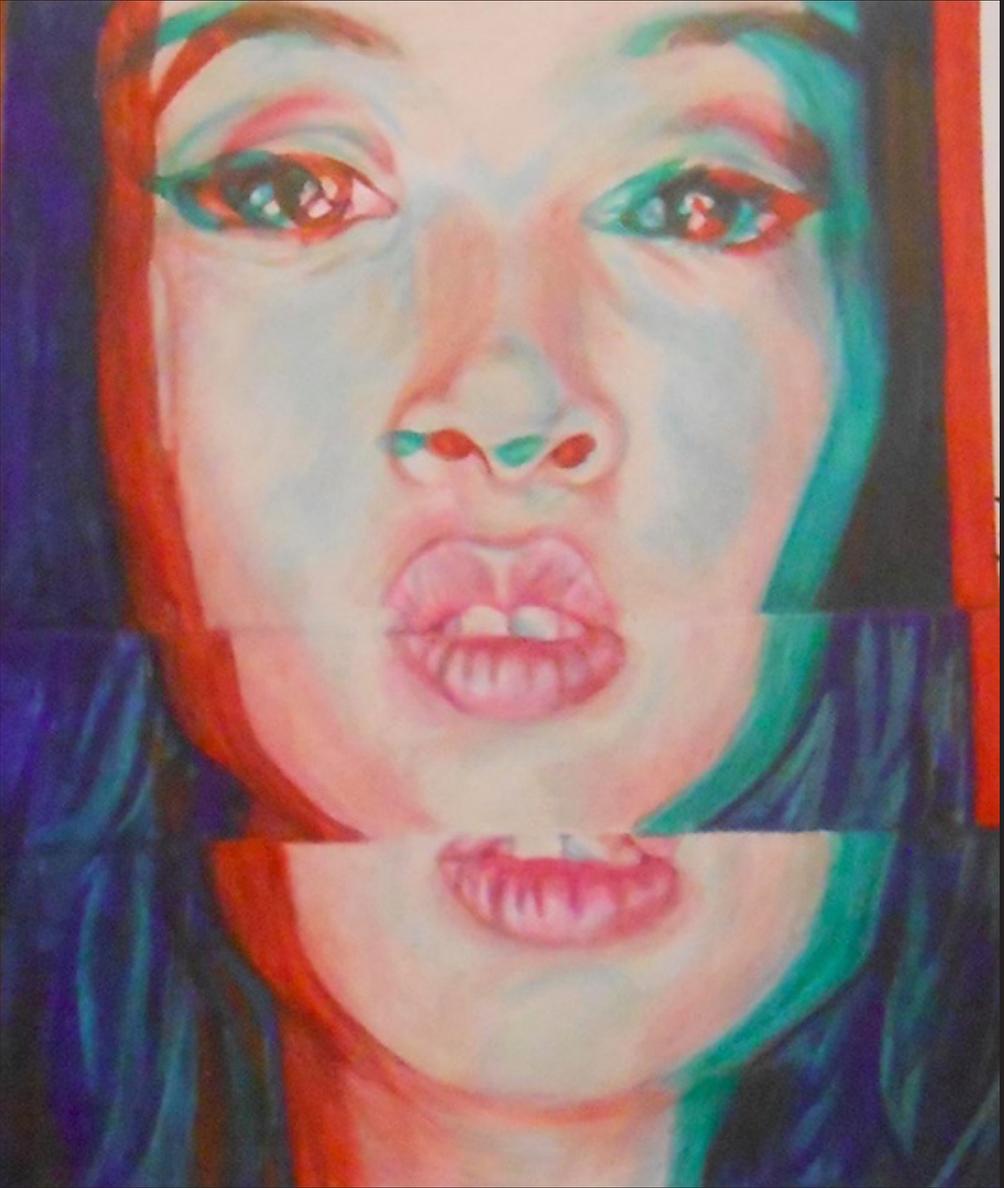


God, Today

Marc Schneider

I. God, glistening over Gaia,
drapes His dewy shadow
upon her goosebumped back.
From His griefburdened brow,
bloody clots of sweat drop
and burrow into her parched body,
engendering there the endless generations
of clay congregations, effaced
and necrotic gossipers
whispering about gossamer faiths,
and wandering the earth empty, like wraiths.
Hush and you may hear the hurried humming
coming from the secrets in her pith,
from the boiling slag in the pathways
underneath her breast, heaving in malaise:
When He breathes His last and she her first,
the basalt skin will bulge and burst,
forging finally perfect flesh,
halving her from the him,
to have and mold a them.

II. Today, we run under ruddy Texas sun,
donned in blood-of-the-Lamb-stained shirts,
the rips in our knees packed with fresh dirt.
My sunstained sister chases me, her little
brother, both of us squealing like rosy kettles.
As tender as a hummingbird, she gulps
the fragrant giggles I give, pinned to the earth.
Meek murmurs of mirth wheeze through our wiggly teeth,
as we, a tangled tumbleweed, blow across the yard.
We sprawl in the dust stirred by the breeze,
tossed into tents torn before we were born, maroonscarred
Mephibosheths fumbled by the fatherings of the sun.



Prisoner

Adilene Ramirez



Revelation

Sara Garza

On February 11th 1858, Bernadette had her first vision of 'a beautiful lady'. During a mission to collect firewood, Bernadette stumbled across a grotto that, at the time, was filled with rubbish washed up from the river.

The television's black-and-white documentary image illuminates the classroom and you are leaning forward in your miniature chair. Your bony elbows are stacked on your knees, the rough plaid fabric from your uniform skirt making impressions. But you are mesmerized. The grainy picture reveals two silhouettes: a woman in glowing white and a little girl, all mud. The teacher points at the little one and explains that, "This is Saint Bernadette. She is a young girl who Mary appeared to in 1858. Her family sent her out to gather firewood and she came home reporting that the Mother of God appeared to her." Kindergarteners' mouths hang half open in sleepy curiosity, but you are already entranced, waiting for the moment you will be chosen.

On returning home, she told her parents. As a result, her mother forbade her from returning. Usually, Bernadette was very obedient to her parents' wishes, but in this instance, Bernadette felt inwardly compelled to return. After mass on Sunday, she found her way back to the grotto where she once again experienced a vision of the "Lady in White."

A black screen clicks. Despite the new and unfamiliar sound of the word apparition, Bernadette's story is miraculous yet plausible. It sends you skipping home to inform your mom, dad, and little sister about Our Lady of Lourdes over Mom's homemade lasagna. Later that night, you fall asleep with your fingers tracing your warm belly, that apparition swirling around in your sweet head: the Woman, her white, the girl, and her filth (like yours sometimes when you come home from a parish-league soccer game with the field still caked onto your skin).

On the ninth apparition, Bernadette was asked by the lady to drink from the spring. Bernadette could not see any spring (there was none at the time), therefore she began digging with her bare hands in a muddy patch and drank a few drops of muddy water; the lady also asked her to eat some loose grasses. Bernadette's face was covered in

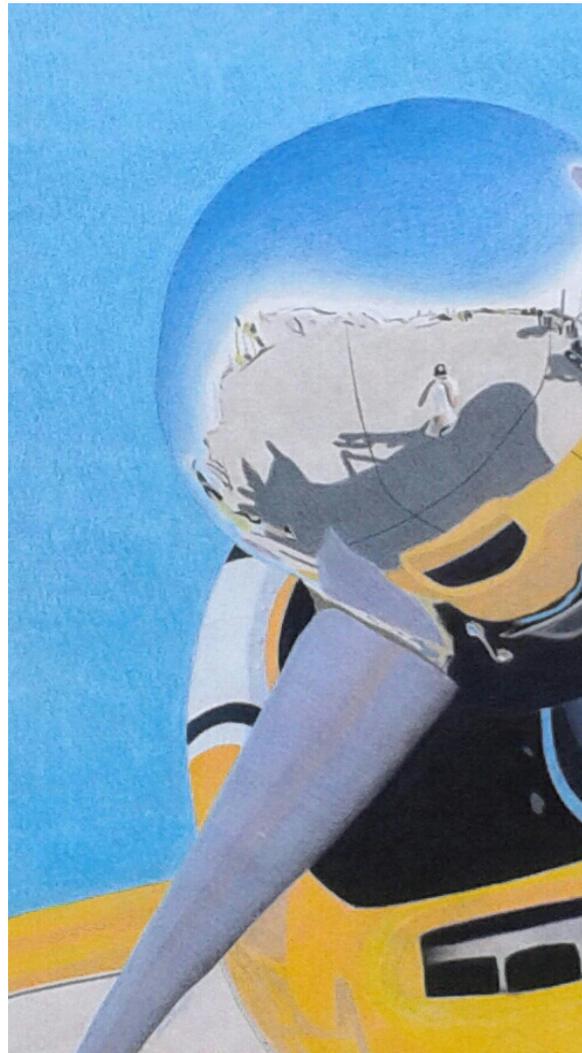
mud, until her relatives wiped it clean with a handkerchief. From this water flowed a spring in which people started to have miraculous healing experiences, and this remains one of the great attractions of Lourdes to this day.

Your mother peeled a dirty soccer jersey off of your small frame, removed the shin guards embedded into your legs. You are naked, covered in mud stains, blades of grass, icebox oranges. Mom grabs under the arms and dunks you in the bathtub with your favorite pink bubble bath. She scrubs deliberately at your knees. Between her scrubbing and wiping beads of sweat from her forehead, she laughs, "What a mess!"

At the time of her birth, her family were relatively prosperous; however, due to a series of misfortunes her family were plunged into dire poverty. However, despite their material privations, the family were said to be loving and devoted to each other.

When you are clean and eight years older, you step out of the shower and into the kitchen for a breakfast bar before school. Mom is crying and it is only 8 a.m. Her face is red and puffy. She is leaned over the kitchen island.

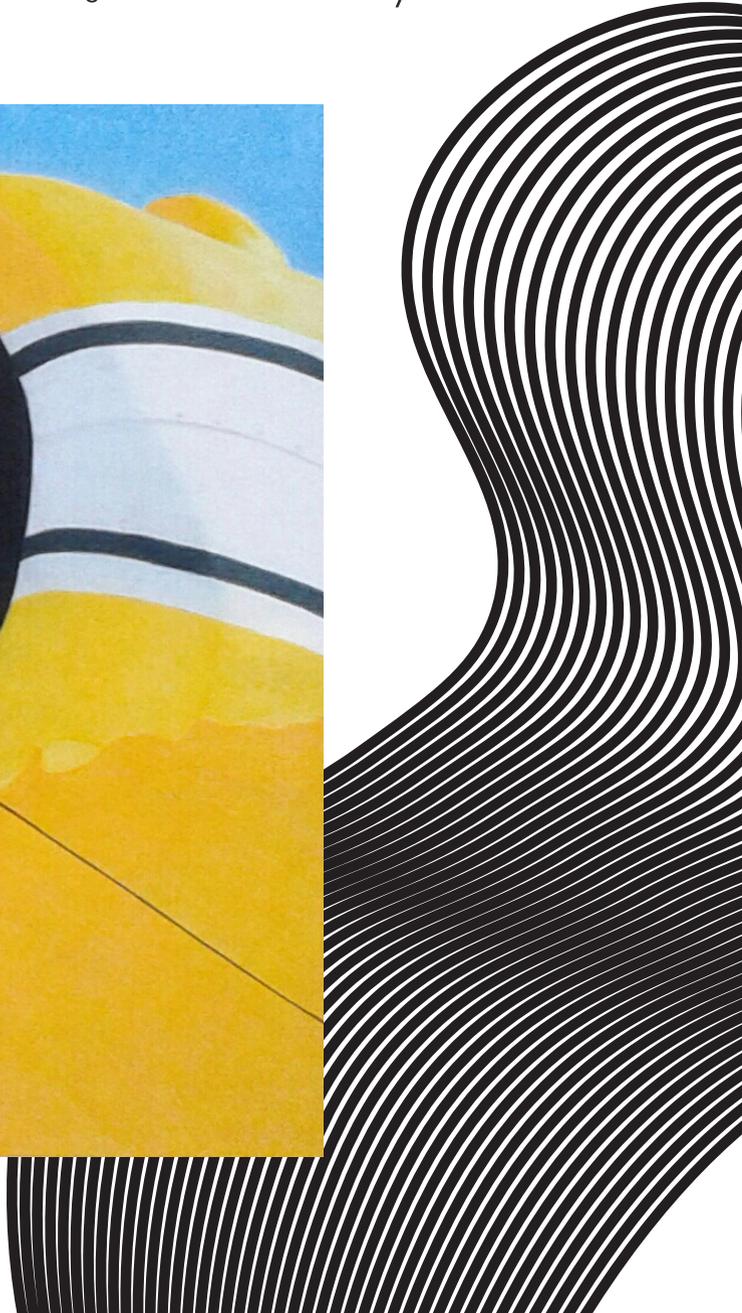
Dad is cooing and she is recovering. When you ask her what is wrong, she blurts out, "I don't know how we are going to pay your tuition," and then, "It's going to be okay. We are going to figure it out." Later that day the students are



shepherded into chapel. Tall vowels loom in the bright acoustic space. *Ave, Maris Stella, Dei Mater Alma*, floats out of thirteen-year-old mouths and five-year-old mouths alike. You are still wearing your plaid uniform skirt and, this morning,

Air Show Reflection

Alex Meyer



misplaced guilt when you arrive at May Crowning. You feel the dam sweat beneath your cotton shirt turn to ice as you find your pew. This year you have been elected to lay a bouquet of roses at Mary's feet during the Alleluia Sequence.

She describes the apparition, "Then I turned my head towards the meadow. I saw the trees quite still...I heard the same sound again. As I raised my head to look at the grotto, I saw a Lady dressed in white, wearing a white dress, a blue girdle and a yellow rose on each foot, the same color as the chain of her rosary; the beads of the rosary were white."

When your cue is given you find yourself face to face with this woman in white—Mary, Immaculate Conception, Mary, Most Pure, Our Lady of Wisdom—and you are stricken. When you lay your flowers down you expect them to take root in that very church, bypass the carpet, then the concrete. You imagine that they would grow where she walks. And you pray that she does walk, towards you, make herself a full apparition to your tired self, or at least extend a porcelain hand assuring you that for this divine moment, you are chosen.

day job

Maggie Pruitt





Skyline

Victoria Le





Sunset



Victoria Le





Cracking Spines

Courtney Kiolbassa

how many times a book has been quicksand
for me and my treacherous, curious wonder.
i can slow sink into any twisted sitting,
and will discover

carpet-dimpled elbows
neck cradled by hard wall
strained eyes
knees clenched tight

chapters after the discomfort settles in.
words are salve enough
to stay propped up. or awake. or to let my
thoughts wander through pages i do not always
understand. what is this ink tugging me into
the deep, this swimming through the undertow?
some pulse in here knows that words
will always break me and gather me together.

Old Hong Kong

Camila Prudencio Aranibar

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 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.

— **The Eckleburg Project Staff**



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The quote featured at the beginning of the issue references *The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock* by T.S. Eliot



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The logo consists of the text 'THE Epleburg PROJECT' in a mix of fonts. 'THE' is in a simple sans-serif font at the top left. 'Epleburg' is written in a large, elegant cursive script that dominates the center. 'PROJECT' is in a simple sans-serif font, positioned below the cursive word. A graphic element at the bottom features two circles connected by a horizontal line, with two parallel diagonal lines inside each circle, resembling a stylized 'E' or a logo mark.