

SPELL

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Spell

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The Olean High School English Department would like to thank the Tri-County Arts Council for funding the Olean High School Writing Series. A Tri-County Arts grant enabled us to conduct workshops with acclaimed poets Hugh Martin and Craig Czury and to purchase books for our Writing and Media Center. Through BOCES CoSer funding, we were able to offer two additional workshops led by Stephen Huff and Benjamin Garcia. Without this support, this publication wouldn't have been possible.

Sally Ventura
ELA Department Chair
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Back Cover Art: Lydia Brant, Grade 12

borrowed suit, borrowed man, borrowed life

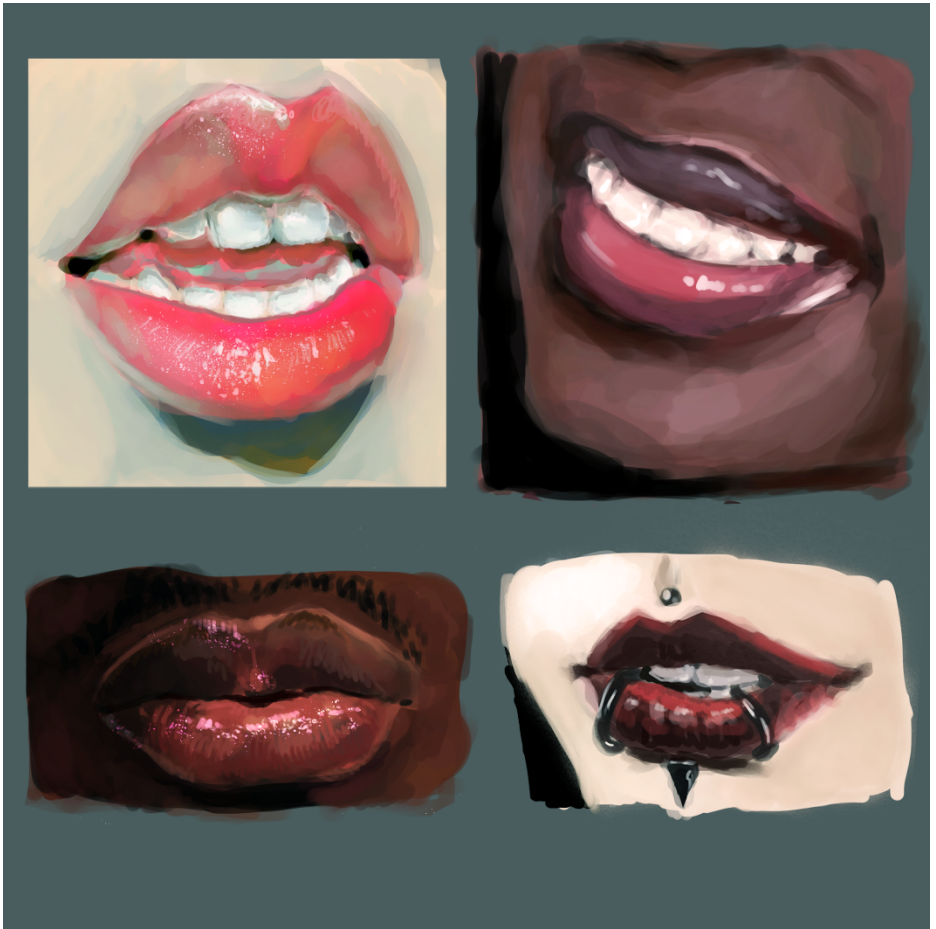
the eyes of Dr T. J. Eckleburg - blue and gigantic
they want nothing more than to be the sky
just as a woman below, with no gleam of beauty,
wants instead of a thick rose, to be a daisy

the car pulls in and the show begins
get your tickets now to see her, if you can spare the price
for her props - a dog, the ice, her husband and
a costume of crème, a face of pure fools' gold
she only is what everyone pretends to be, the only
difference is
we see straight through her

the best thing a girl can be is a beautiful little fool,
some girls only have one of those things going for them
and the others will never be beaten by anemic men
or saved from themselves by ironic headlights

under the careful yellow spectacles of the sky

Lydia Brant, Grade 12



Iris Shreve, Grade 11

The Wind's Sick

Along the side of the road the wind still blows, it brushes
wind right through your hair like a cool summer fan, the
virus begins to grow, when will it stop they say,
but unfortunately nobody knows.

The wind grows stronger day by day, pushing the virus
up but not away. This virus came but will not go, the
sneezing, and the coughing, it's just like a cold,

But ohhh the wind still blows, pushing it faster and
harder than anyone really knows.

When it's over we should be ok, but as long as the wind
pushes it is here to stay. Push and shove the wind won't
stop, stay in your house until the wind falls over and
flops, wash your hands every single day, 'cause if you
don't the virus will stay.

Over and over the wind will blow, but if you wash your hands properly the virus will go.

Marques Gayton, Grade 11

Dear Fear

You keep me safe,
But you hold me back.

I want to lock you away,
But am I strong enough?

My battle with you is constant,
And I'm never quite sure who's winning.

Emily Duncan, Grade 10

Decorating silence

To decorate the silence
With the vibrant thoughts
In my head.
The hums of tunes trapped
In the void of my mind.
Sometimes, they say the silence
Is too quiet.
Others, say it's too loud.
I say, it's an opportunity
To simply be in the moment.
Watching what's around you.

Thinking of what could be there instead.

Feeling the moment of peace

For yourself.

Holding onto the emptiness

Of that silence for it to be your peace

And remembering it

For when the silence breaks.

Heartly Phipps, Grade 9



Adelina Peer, Grade 9

About Refugees

No one knows what a refugee knows

No one experiences what a refugee experiences

No one sees what a refugee sees

Lives affected,

Lives lost,

Families killed,

Bombs dropped,

Times change and depressions made

When you wish you could afford something
as simple as grain

Connor Dowdell, Grade 7

Untitled Love Poem

Here, in the euphoria of you
Drowning myself in the blood and membrane
That makes your flesh and skin
You allow me to shed mine own
Hide, and be free in the prison of you

What is a prison, but a box
For me, a mime to shelter in for the night
Take me and, I pray thee, gently
And love me like someone envies you
Love me like a knife loves a back
Loves Icarus the sun
Loves Juliet her sweet Romeo
Love me as a grape its vine
And never let me go

Love me unconditionally
Unequivocally
Undoubtedly so
Love me as the tides do the shore
And embrace the moon
That draws you to it

Love me however you like
And hold me, if just for a moment,
Like someone envies you
Tear and repair me
And make me, again, whole
Take this blood and membrane
That makes my flesh and skin

And allow me to shed it

Love me as I am
Through webs of ebbing woe
Love me and embosom me in vain
Let us be young
In love
And foolish
And let us love
If just for a moment
Love like people envy us
Jim Chastain, Grade 11

Greenery covers the windows.
Barely any light seeps in.
There's darkness in a small, secluded room.
I read, searching for meaning
in this little secret room of mine.

Time does not tick,
sound does not carry,
and no one else is allowed
in this little secret room of mine.

Savannah Coker, Grade 11



Just out of Reach – Lydia Brant, Grade 12

Untitled

Life is full of drama.
Sometimes it doesn't feel real.
Fear is a completely different version of me,
And terror is hard to heal.
I was silly,
I grew to laugh,
But I refused to let my time pass.
I'm excited for what's waiting for me,
I tried something new, I considered art,
But my art was heavy, and so was my heart.
I denied the sadness, the pain I was feeling,
But I did an investigation, I needed an emotional
healing.
And that's what I did.
But that was not the end,
So I got back up,
And started over again.

Norah Sweitzer, Grade 12

God and the Dinosaurs

The sky of ashen dust awoke
Fire pelted down like rain
The rocky fist of heaven broke
The sullen earth's terrain

Mighty kings that ruled the earth
Fell to God's infernal wrath
Creatures He had given birth
And loved, smote at His hand

Scaly beasts of all kinds
Fled their homes and towns
With a heavy heart, God heard their cries
As all of hell rained down

And with the kingdom overthrown,
God, after a moment, wept
He cried upon his heavenly throne
As the dinosaurs met their end

Jim Chastain, Grade 11



Censored - Chrissy Martin, Grade
12

Reasons I like you without knowing you very well:

Hoop earrings, pants with elastic waists, turtlenecks,
and graphic tees. lace-up boots

Reserved, but recognizable;
signs of familiarity in your eyes,
your resting face, your boredom,
your smile when you talk, your tone

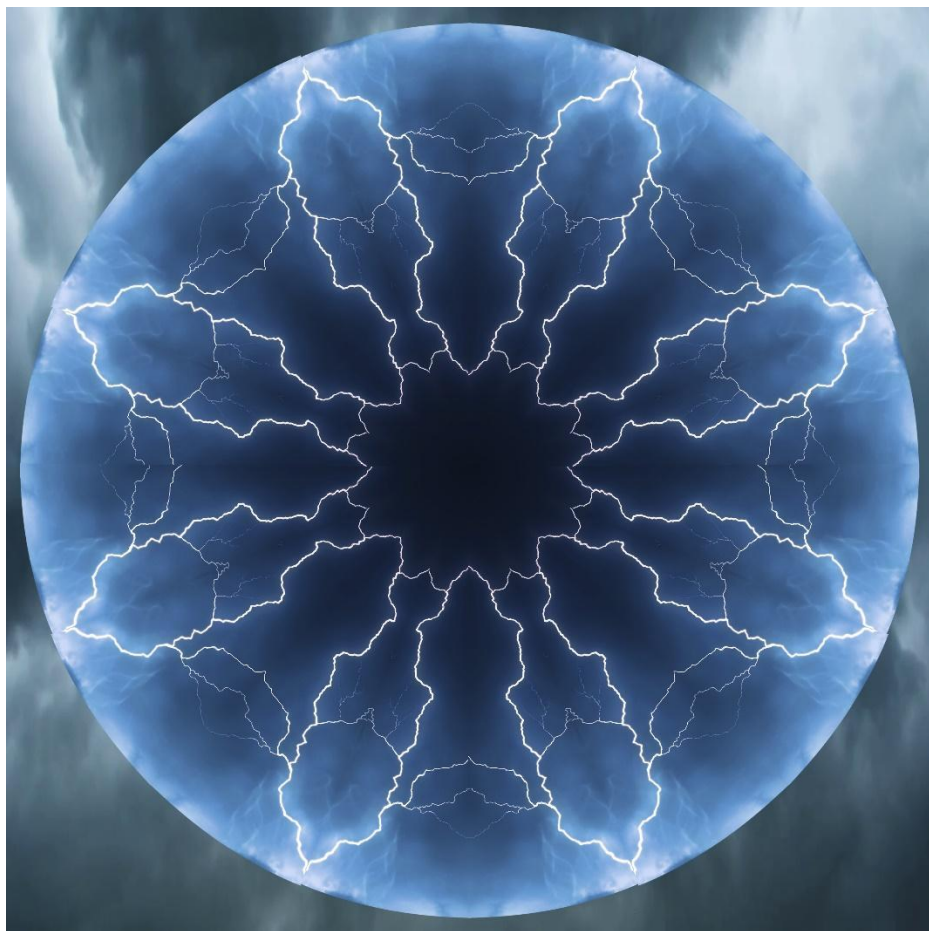
Hints;
kindness, corrections,
talking to the people I wish I was better friends with.

And you don't know me,
So I promise I'm only writing to move on.

The Storms Rage

Because I could not Halt the storm
She freely Broke for me
Her eye dangling Meticulously at the lives –
Slowly Relaxing
I ran rapidly while she was Gracefully gazing
I ran swiftly trying to Escape
My Spirit equal to my Fear
I passed the Church –
I heard – Hymns –
I passed houses
I heard the joyous laughter
When she hit – She hit Hard
The water Crashing and Splashing
For God only knew my pain
My body – My Soul
I found myself a Sanctuary –
Safely under the Storm
The Cellar – My safety
Long ago – Years before
She had her destruction before
I saw – sun
Once again –
I won

McKenzie Boysha, Grade 12



**Lightning Mandala - Prince Foster,
Grade 11**

Unspoken

I can feel
the weight of the silence.
It pins me to my chair.

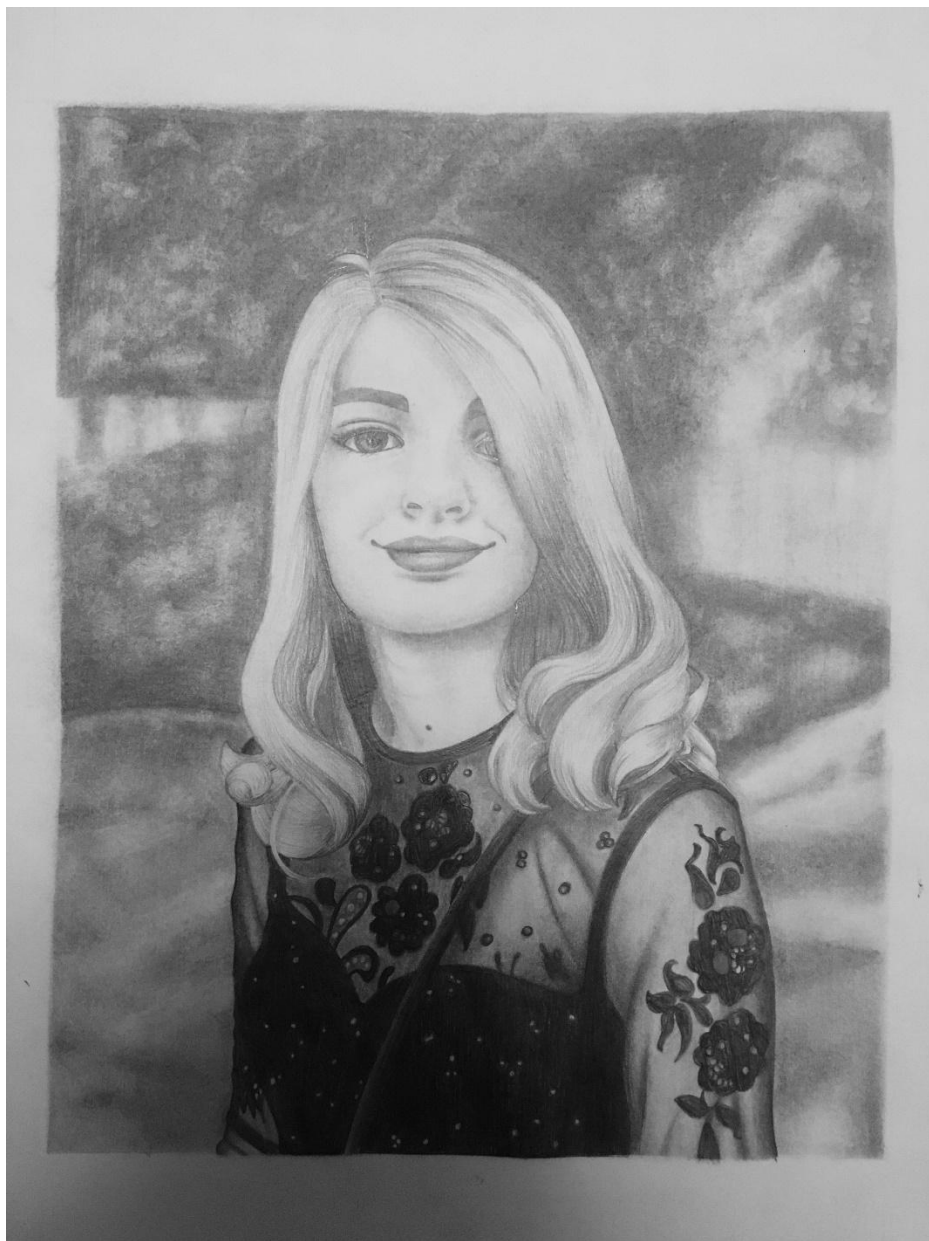
I try
to take my mind off of it.
It does not work.

My heart
races uncontrollably.
It overwhelms me.

I see
the words on the paper in my hands.
They mean nothing.

Words on paper do not matter
until they are spoken.
Yet no one will speak them into existence.

Sara Thomas, Grade 11



Llian Shoup, Grade 11



Adelina Peer, Grade 9

The Stream Runs Calmly

The stream runs calmly.

The water gently flows.

I look out longingly,

As a gentle mist blows.

The water gently flows.

The water runs clean.

As a gentle mist blows,

The rocks have a sheen.

The water runs clean.

The dirt washes away.

The rocks have a sheen,

An end to the gray.

The dirt washes away.

I look out longingly.

An end to the gray.

The stream runs calmly.

William Snyder, Grade 11



Aila Shoup, Grade 9

There are many, many ways in which she reached out to
the people around her-

it was almost like a dance.

And much like a burning flame she dances along, rain or
shine,

with a certain air of carelessness that gives her a kind of
benevolent beauty.

And there I stood,

in the spot where my feet still had not moved from.

It still wasn't until this moment,

after I had a bit of time to witness her dance before me,

then

I realized I was in the presence of

Wildfire.

Casi Spiller, Grade 10

The Falls

Bright sunbeams fill the sky.
The low rumble of the water
intensifies as I become nearer.

Nearer and near to the falls I get;
watching the water spew over the jagged rocks.
Conscience of the sound around me.

Mist fills the air.
As the sun's rays mix with the water droplets;
A rainbow appears ahead of me.

The low rumble of the water
has turned to a roar.

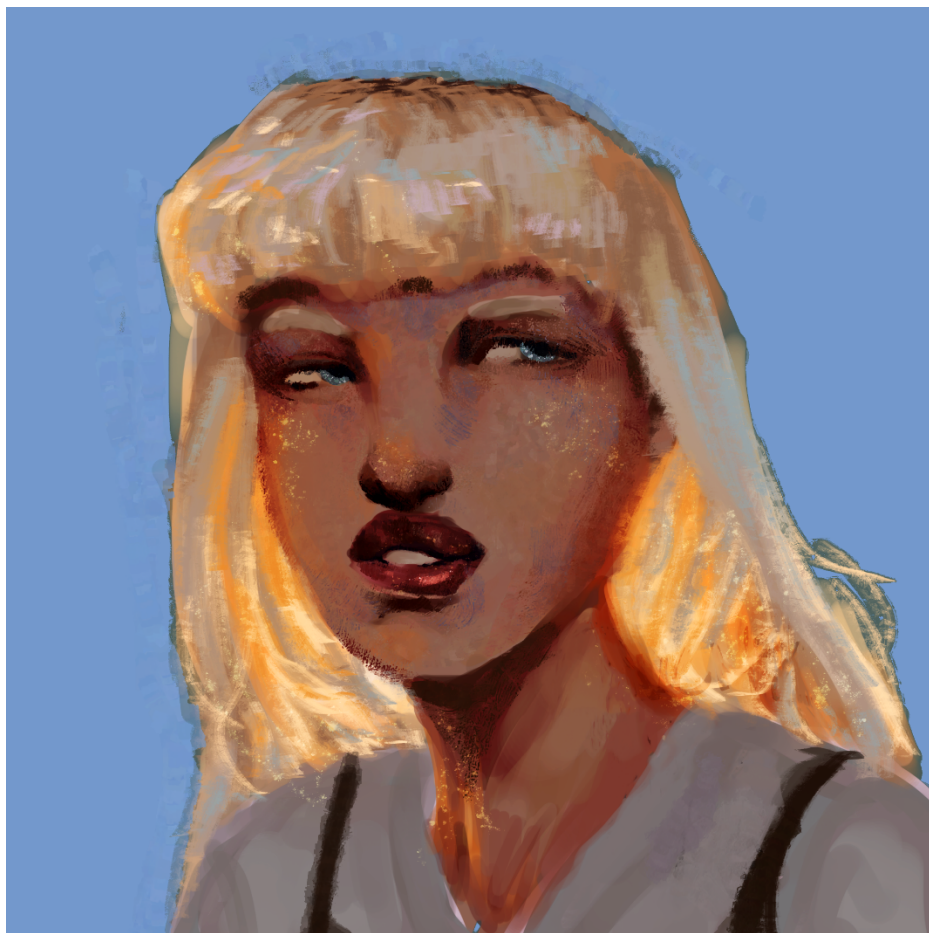
Not an obnoxious roar,
a soft calming one.
A sound so gentle;
it calms me.

Sara Thomas, Grade 11

Killing The Crow

It's so easy to think of killing a crow,
But when you try it's like leaving a living thing,
The living thing, a thing you know.
You kill the bird,
But the squawks still ring in your head,
You think you can leave it dead alone,
But when it comes down to it
It's finally known,
It's impossible to leave the bird,
And its dying faded tone

Connor Dowdell, Grade 7



Iris Shreve, Grade 11

The Memory

I find it
in the smell of fresh cut grass
and in the rays of sun that gently kiss my uncovered
skin.

I find it
in the flowers that blow around in the slow breeze
and in the constant chirps of happily singing birds.

I find it
everywhere
and
anywhere.
But sometimes,
I don't want to find it
anymore.

It plagues me
like a tick on a dog
always there,
still holding on tightly,
after all of the scratching,
and chemicals.

Maybe part of me doesn't want to forget,
because still,
I find it.

When the scent is gone,
and the sun doesn't tell the same story,
the flowers will only be falling because it's getting
colder.

Then, I will look for it

Because maybe,

just maybe,
I find comfort,
When I find it.

Savannah Coker, Grade 11

addressed to heaven's mailbox
by: me (brantly)

dear simon,
before i ever went to school
i learned everything i ever needed to know.
mama taught me how to make pants and grow time,
the language of a super moon, (once she leaned so close
to hear my whisper
i couldn't tell if the fire was still going)
there's a spot in the stream over where the leeks grow
where clay climbs out every other spring
not this year, but the next one - you know how it is,
and never climb an apple tree, no matter how good the
apples are,
bee stings aren't that bad, swallow your pills whole
moisturize your hands, stop slouching (it'll make you
look like an old man),
and music sounds better the louder it is and
sometimes you gotta scuff your knees up if you want to
have a good time
and never, ever, ever lie to mama.
that's everything you need to know, i think.
it sucks that you'll never get to drive a car, but at least
you got to meet jesus

i'll play a song for you on your birthday,
okay? pinky promise.

love,

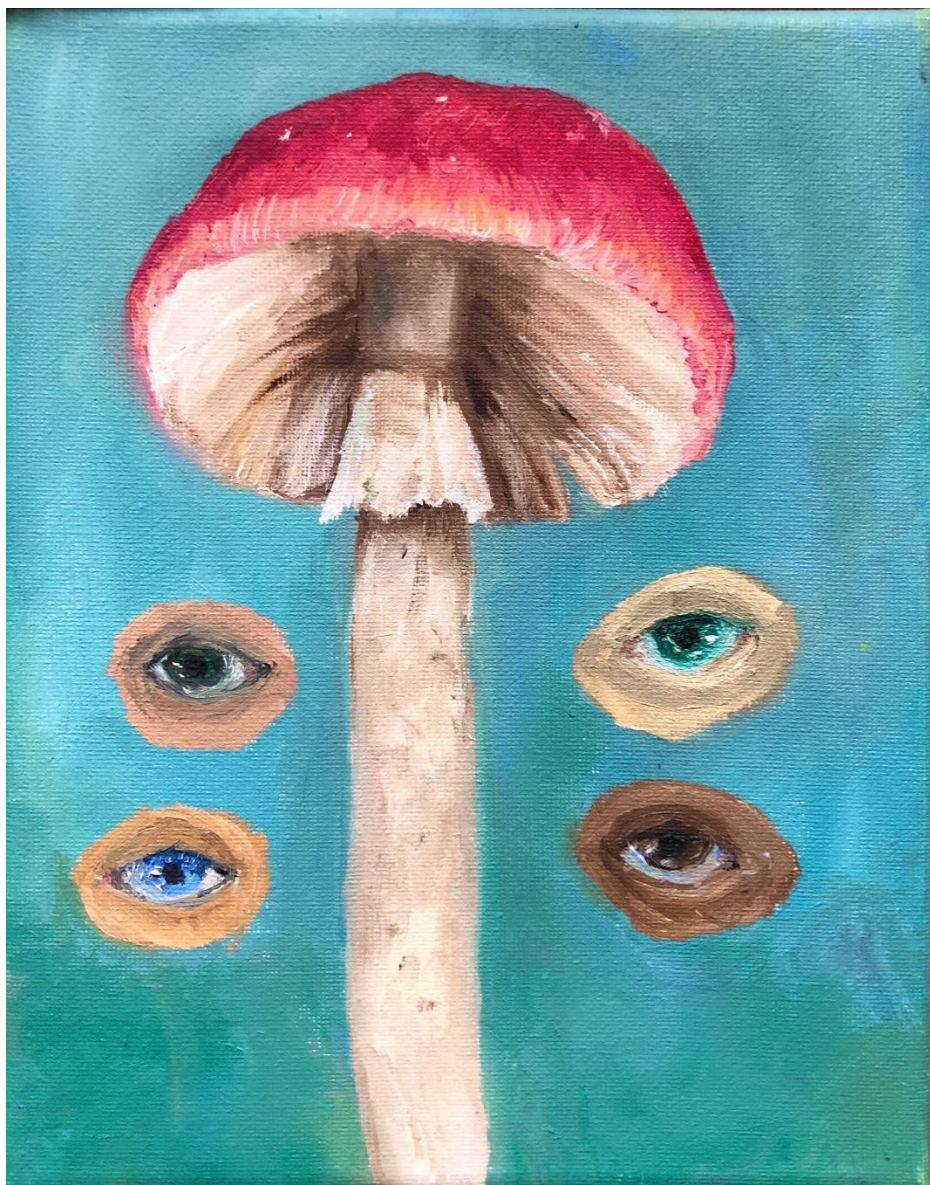
someone who never met you, but still misses
you

Lydia Brant, Grade 12

Winter, My Friend

The frigid wind of the winter sky crashed against
my face,
Leaving its footprints on my frozen skin;
The frosty air stood static for the slightest
moment,
Whispering December's numbness through my
anatomy.
Stop this torture.
Scatter your frozen flakes to the North,
The sun will rise to melt your bitter heart with the
warmth of the next season's beauty.
Continue the path to your next destination as
spring follows behind,
Until I see you again, my "friend"
Goodbye.

Kaidyn West, Grade 12

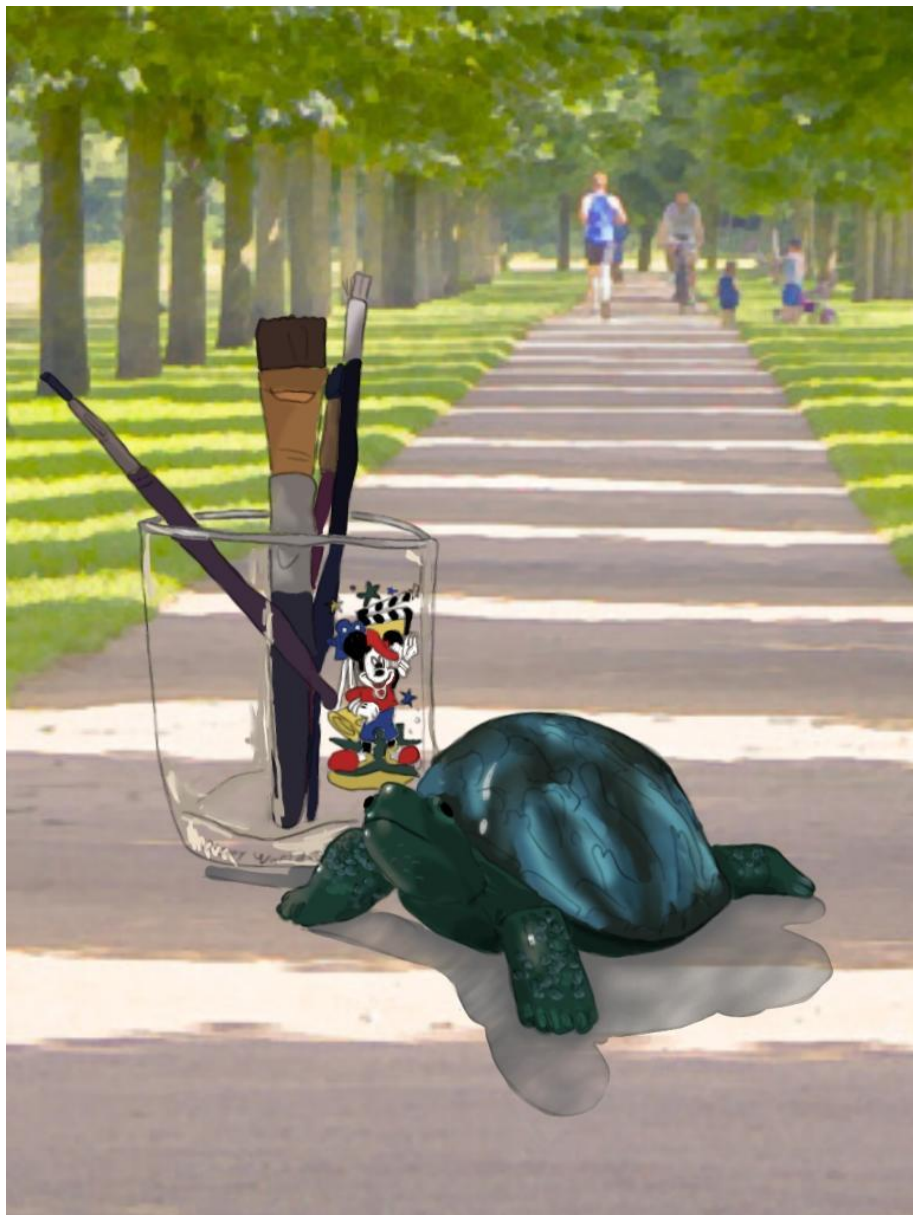


Adelina Peer, Grade 9

Deer in the Road

Take away my words,
Take away my silence,
until I am nothing but nonsense
and small talk
on a platter.
I will regurgitate out opinions
so you can twist them
and shove what's no longer mine
back down my throat
Back down this road;
this place we've always been
why won't you listen to me?
Use those ears of yours.
undo your stagnancy.
Use those feet of yours
you moron,
Walk.

M. Graves, Grade 11



Lydia Brant, Grade 12

After the Red Line

Lines on a paper

Straight, blue, parallel

Except for the red one

That one cuts through

Lines – interrupted

Life – interrupted

Interrupted and not ended

I think that's the point

The writing begins

after the red line

Ruth Scordo, Grade 12

Inspired by Lax

Robert Lax was "among America's greatest experimental poets, a true minimalist who can [could] weave awesome poems from remarkably few words."

Richard Kostelanetz *The New York Times Book Review* (1978)

While Robert Lax, Olean native and renowned poet, first garnered praise for his more conventional works like his *Circus of the Sun* (1959), his later works are the ones that have proven most interesting to the literary world. His unusual method of presenting his poems in columns, often a single column down the middle of a page, with each line containing few words, or even a single word, or a single syllable, defied easy classification. Critics characterized this work as minimalistic, or abstract, or concrete with none of these adjectives able to precisely describe what Lax had created, a testament to his unique and innovative style. The poems usually contained simple observations of the natural world Lax encountered on the Greek Islands he called home for more than 30 years, with the tone of the works ranging from serious to humorous to playful.

The following poems were written by OHS seniors who accepted the challenge of emulating the Lax's groundbreaking style. We hope Lax would be happy with what they've produced; we certainly are.

Lou Ventura

