

Tommy  
Steve Mar, Occupational Therapy '13



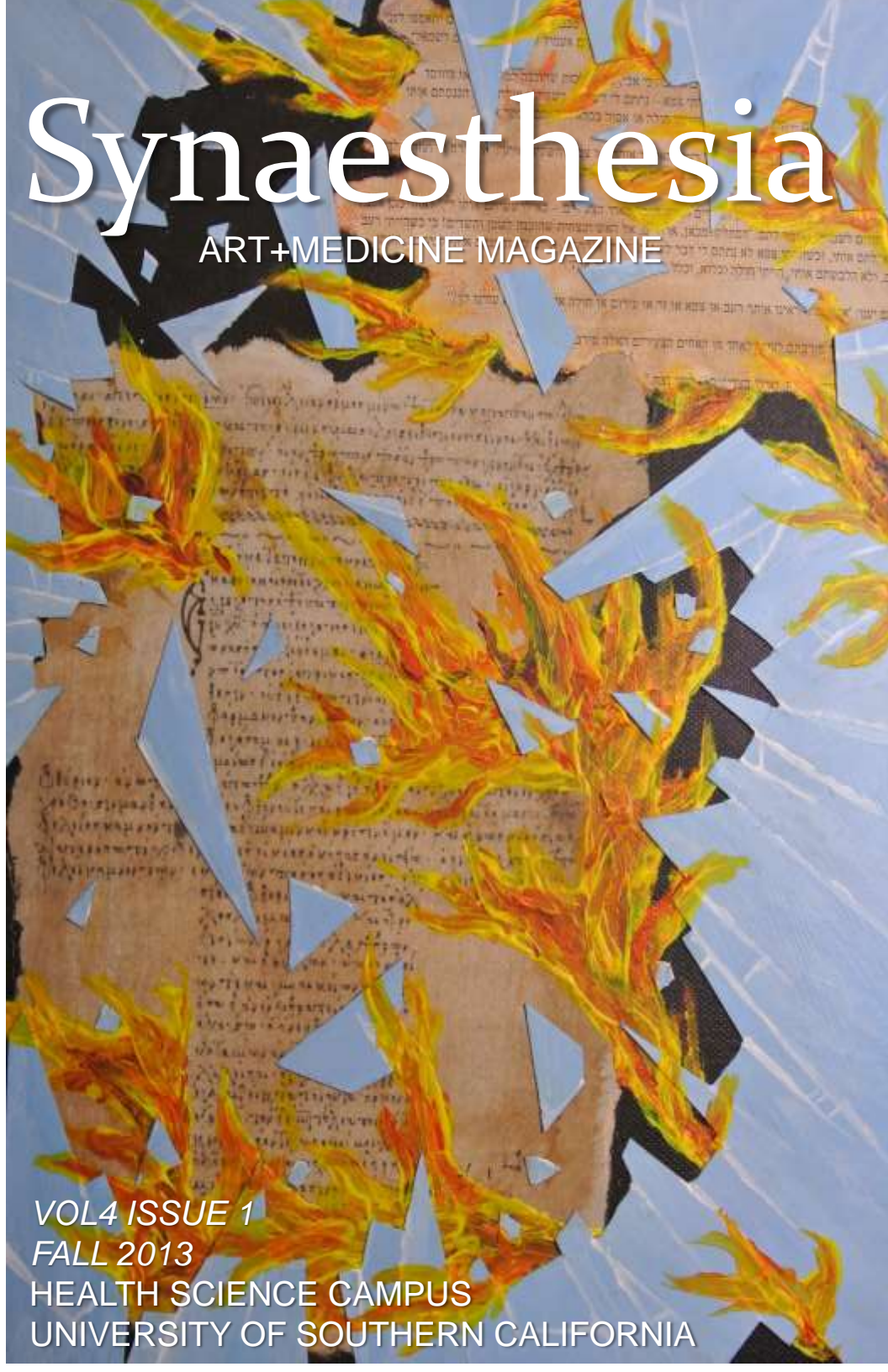
SYNAESTHESIA ART+MEDICINE MAGAZINE

VOL4 ISSUE1  
FALL 2013

HEALTH SCIENCE CAMPUS  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

# Synaesthesia

ART+MEDICINE MAGAZINE



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&lt;&lt; Cover

*Shattering the Glass Floor*

Warren Yamashita, Medicine '17

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## About this magazine

Synaesthesia is a student publication showcasing the literary and artistic talent of the USC Health Sciences Campus. For this issue, we have included several pieces on the theme, "The first time I..." Through these works, we hope you will reflect on those unforgettable "firsts" in your life!

Contact us: [emailuscsyn@gmail.com](mailto:emailuscsyn@gmail.com)

## Editors

Manna Hagos  
Amitha Ganti  
Mridula Nadamuni  
Warren Yamashita  
Helen Yang

Dr. Jo Marie Reilly Faculty Advisor



# Photography



## *Los Angeles*

Steve Mar, Occupational Therapy , '13

Forced to pick a disease, I wouldn't pick Pick's,  
Organophosphate poisoning? That's tough to qiq.  
My dog votes for ARF,  
My cat, cru-di-chat,  
Maybe a VIPoma? that'd be slick.

## *Untitled*

Zachary Skaggs, Medicine '15

## *The Doorway of Indecision*

Kenneth Fraser, Staff

Don't just do something, stand there!

That doesn't set well with fans of Arnold Shapiro's "Rescue 911." Despite the stereotype that Americans don't care, the series demonstrated that most of us would get involved.

But does rushing in always improve a deteriorating situation?  
In fiction? Absolutely. In real-life, not always.

Beneath an upper floor architrave I encountered, for the first time, a synergy of agony and desolation that I would later understand, but could never know. I had a decision to make, and I made the right one.

No decision!

*Primum non nocere*. If you have doubts, use them.

I blocked that door, stemming a potential tide of incipient heroism that, like my own impulses, could only exacerbate things. Before then I had called the real Rescue 911, Los Angeles Fire Department EMTs.

In the aftermath one would never know daylight, scratched from life's race at the starting gate. Darwin and Spencer vindicated most hideously. Another would continue. But a date would pass, a question mark at the end of the first sentence in Genesis 1:31.

Ever since I've carried a curious sense of guilt. And I've carried it without a license.

# Poetry

1<sup>st</sup> and Grand

Lauren Maldonado, Medicine '17

## *Untitled*

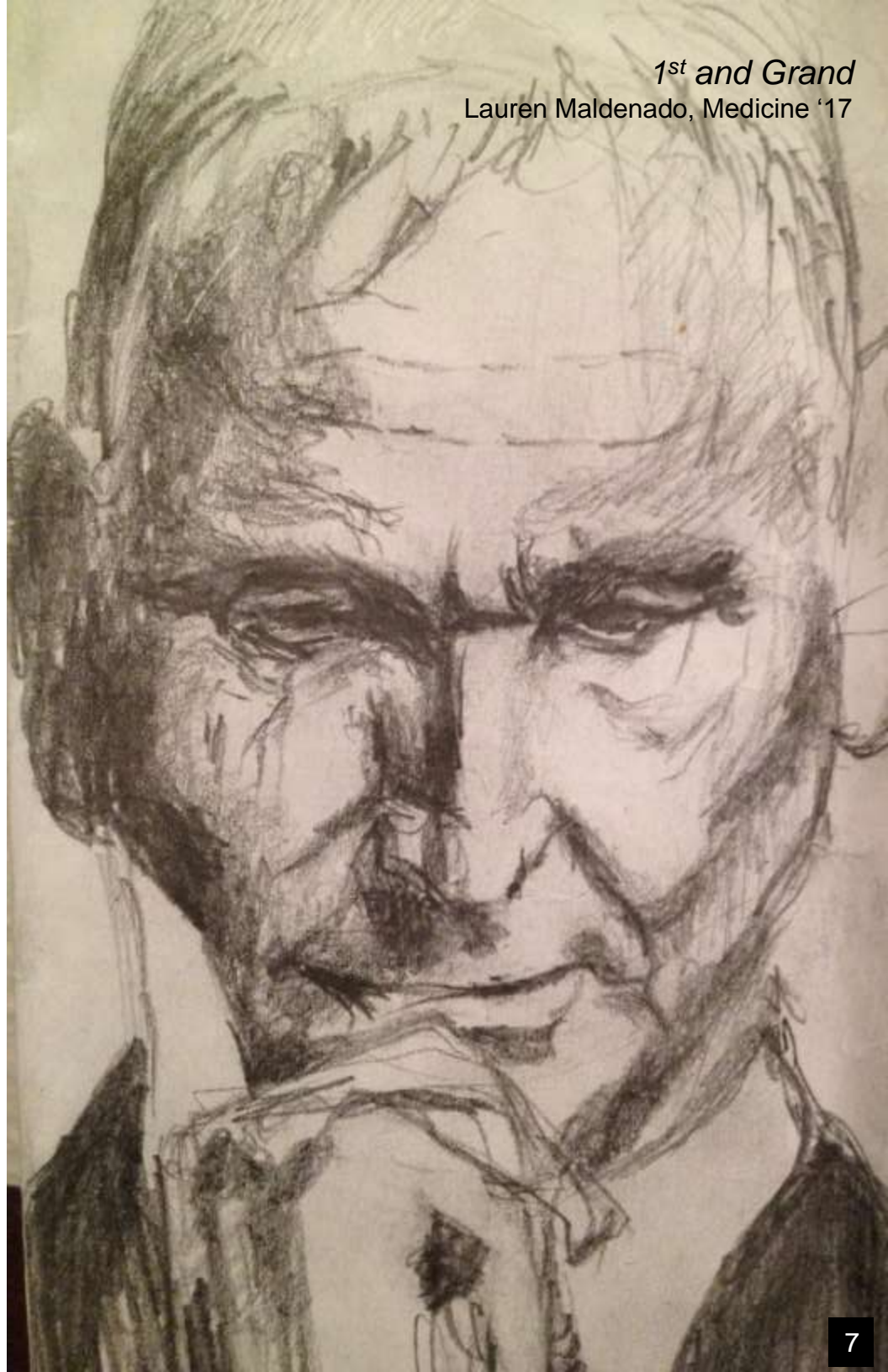
Molly Murphy, Occupational Therapy '15

We met at 3. Dusk, long forgotten.

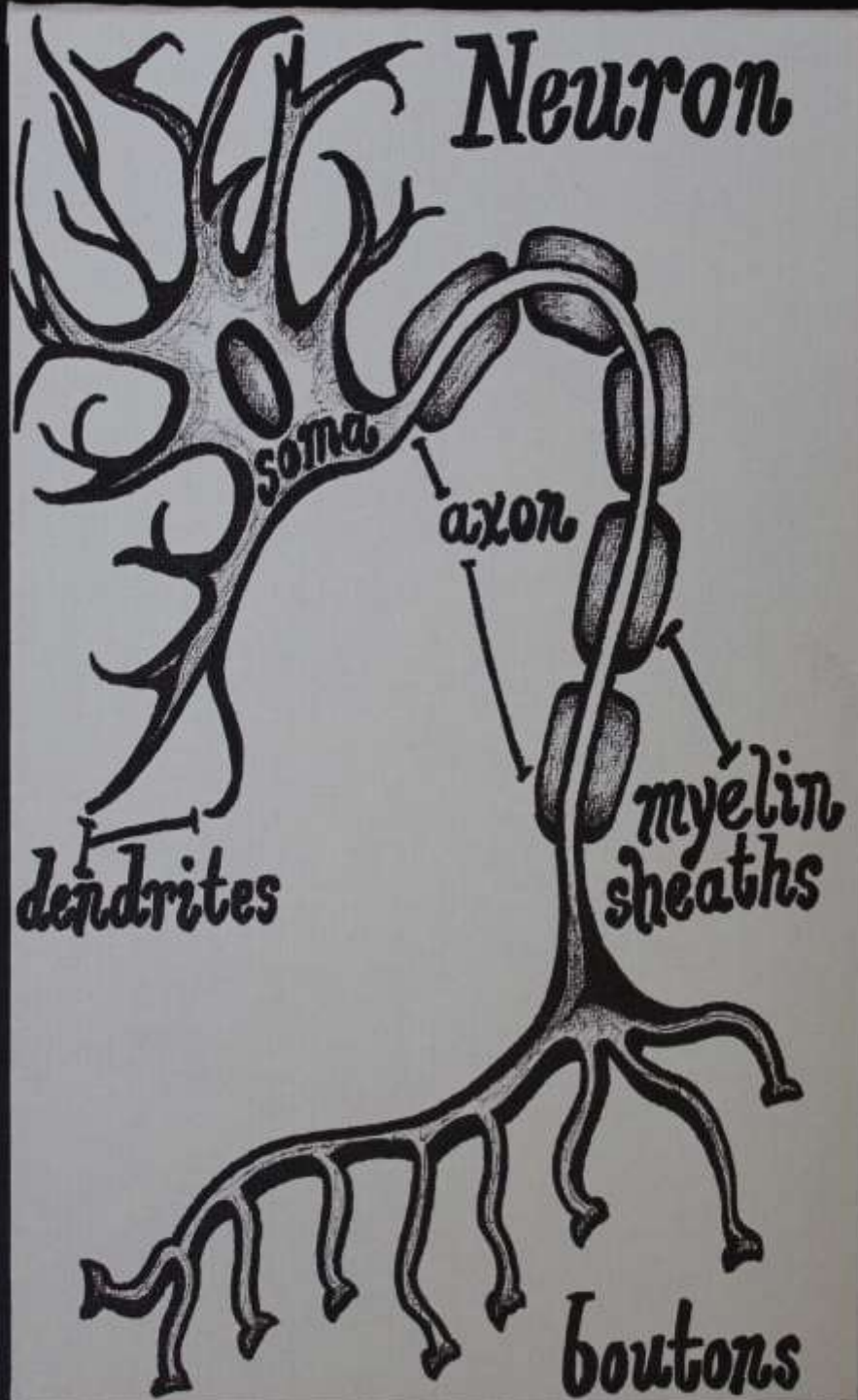
Walking in the hours balanced between closing time and first light.  
Early April wind brushing the surface of the inlet. Tinkering and toiling  
until it swept past our skin. Separate. But flush with the chill of new  
beginnings.

Touching for just one moment. Unwhispered thoughts as clothed  
fingers touched clothed fingers, fleetingly. In an instant of hushed  
intimacy.

Would this be forever? We talked liked it would. In the whirling  
whispers of the twilight hour.



*I wish Henry Gray had known about neurons*



Leah Hiller, Occupational Therapy '15

## To Remember

Katherine Fu, Medicine '17

Black text on colored sheets, words like “justice”, “honor”, and “cure” sit quietly on a page titled “Hippocratic Oath”, while words like “empathy” and “compassion” are thrown about like juggling balls during discussions about the qualities of a good physician. Yet I cling to these little packets of letters, hoping that I will never let them dissolve into abstraction or seep into my brain as synaptic connections that simply encode the knowledge I am supposed to possess. It is so easy to just understand a concept and not apply it to life, so easy to fall into the comfort of routine and complacency and mediocrity.

So I hope to always hold my love for my family close, the love for my mother, father and brother, and use it to remember that my patients, too, are the mothers, fathers, siblings, and loved ones of others. I will strive to remember those who have helped me when I felt I had nothing, was nothing, and deserved nothing, so that I can be generous to those in their times of need. Though as a child, I wanted to have powers like invisibility and telepathy, I promise to use those powers I do possess: my knowledge, skills, and abilities, for good. I remember those days when I was too weak to pour myself water or too much in pain to be friendly and cheerful so that I may better devote myself to restoring the health of those under my care and readily forgive their irritable moods and angry complaints. And when the secrets and private lives of others are not mine to share, I am committed to remaining silent.

To remember, I sweep away the old decorations of past success and broken glass of past failures and mistakes. I push aside the clumps of present worries and the glitter and feathers of my emotions from yesterday, today and tomorrow. I breathe in dust and cough. My eyes water, but I want to remember. I want to remember what is important.

I want to do well. And I want to do good.



## *Fooled by Love*

Collete Bibayan, Pharmacy '15

I once saw a girl, short and shy, step inside  
With her tall heels into a new world,  
He caught her eye with his looks and charms  
Finding a way into her arms,  
Humbly speaking she laughed and smiled  
While he was so glad to be fooling a child.

His eyes were as beautiful as a blooming flower,  
He as tall as the Eiffel Tower,  
Her smile, eyes, and smooth hair all complemented  
As he steered himself to her heart accepted,  
In her eyes he was the one  
When in mine he was soon to be gone.

Day by day he came out of his hole as a larger spider  
Telling her in silent words that he was a liar,  
He never did love her, not even once,  
Stealing her heart, enjoying the stunt,  
She finally grew up and saw what was happening,  
This mistake took all her love like a kidnapping.

Why did she not step out of the darkness earlier?  
What caused her to be fooled by this dimpled face  
When she herself was with so much grace?  
Now with assorted feelings, no longer blocked by a barrier,  
I then saw a young girl, tall and brave, step outside  
From a forgotten world headed towards the future.



*4<sup>th</sup> and Central*  
Lauren Maldonado, Medicine '17

## *The human in the body*

Helena Yu, Medicine '17

When you pass someone on the street, how do you register him or her as a human being with a life, a personal history, and a backstory? Are these thoughts abstractions based on who you imagine or assume the person to be? Do you ever spend more than a few fleeting seconds thinking about the stranger you just passed?

Now imagine meeting someone who can't talk to you. You can't see his face. Everything you need to know about him is already neatly typed onto a spreadsheet with numerous other entries, pinned on a bulletin board for hundreds of people to read. He also happens to be wrapped in fabric shrouds and two layers of plastic.

### **I had my first anatomy lab of medical school a few months ago.**

It was simultaneously strange, awesome, formaldehyde-filled, chaotic, exciting, and everything I imagined medical school to be.

Our anatomy lab is located in the basement below our MDLs. Oddly enough, we are only a flight of stairs away from the donors when we're in the MDLs; perhaps this proximity is symbolic of the central importance of anatomy in our medical education.

The entire first year medical school class, wearing oversized scrubs, rushes to the lab after anatomy lectures to perform dissections. Some of us are eager to dissect (like me), while others may shy away from the body, preferring to learn in a less hands-on approach. Many kind and knowledgeable professors float about to patiently answer our questions and keep us on our toes with frequent pop quizzes for each group. One of my group members had previous experience in anatomy, but the rest of us were completely new to this subject. As such, many of us spend countless extra hours beyond lab time studying in the lab.

**Before starting anatomy, I had heard the horror stories: the insidious ability of formaldehyde to permeate all articles of clothing, smells of gruesome body parts, strange squirting bodily fluids, and endless memorization.**

Yet anatomy is more than just this list of small nightmares. In fact, the study of human anatomy has historically been more than a required component of modern medical school curricula.

Anatomy has had an interesting history and place in medical education for millennia. Parts of the Hippocratic Corpus are built on some assumptions of anatomical knowledge. Praxagoras of Cos utilized animal dissections to develop conjectures about the human body. In Alexandria, Erasistratus and others used prisoners' bodies for anatomical instruction purposes through vivisection. William Hunter, a famous 18th century anatomist, practiced during the days of grave robbing and body snatching for the purposes of anatomy, before the Anatomy Act of 1832 was passed.

### **My donor is an old man.**

The first cut was not as monumental as I thought it would be, but as we got deeper into the layers of back muscles, I began to imagine my donor making the decision to donate his body to a medical school. I started to picture conversations that he may have had with his family about choosing to give his body "to science." I found myself wondering what his spiritual and religious beliefs were, if any, and what he was thinking in his last lucid moments of life. Where did he think his body was going to go and how did he think he would help science progress? Did it make him just a little bit uncomfortable to know that medical students would be cutting, hammering, and sometimes even sawing through his body? Was he concerned about feeling exposed and knowing that we would get to see nerves, veins, bones, organs, and arteries that he had never seen, thought about, or even heard of during his life?

In thinking about the corpus of medical knowledge, we often adopt the teleological view that we are marching toward some sort of progress through our inevitable accumulation of more knowledge and expertise. For instance, genetic technologies such as genome sequencing seem to presume that, indeed, our efforts are worthwhile and slowly inching toward some new form of understanding. But what about anatomy, and what about the histories, lives, and backstories of the donors? In choosing to donate their bodies "to science," what do they expect will come of their decision? Is it the hope that somewhere down the road, by developing an anatomical understanding, medical students will turn into well-educated doctors, some of which will go on to have careers as physician-scientists to ultimately build on this corpus of "science"?

In the end, I do think anatomy has been and will continue to be worthwhile, and I think it's already become one of my favorite experiences in medical school. I just hope that we don't forget about the human behind the donor, even as their body is slowly and sometimes brutally being deconstructed for our learning purposes. The human makes up the body, and the body is incomplete without the human.

# Short Fiction

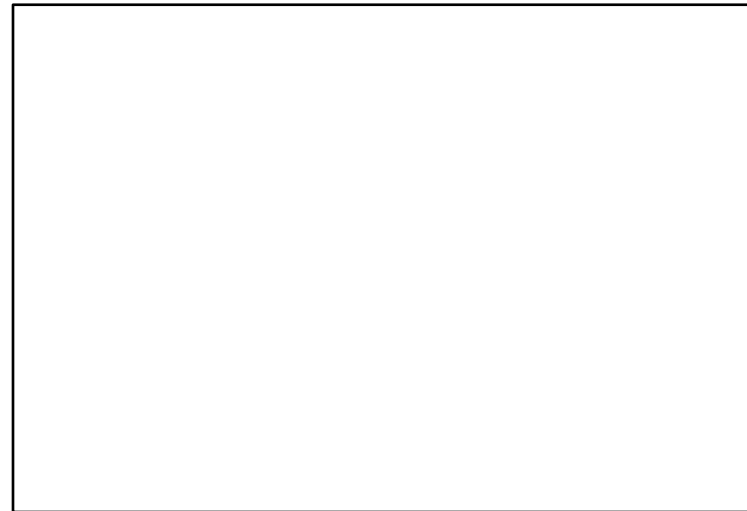
*Title*

Student, School 'Year

(Or poetry, or more art)

Sample text for written pieces.

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*Title*

Student, School 'Year