

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### ♪ *The Fault in Our Stars*: Interpreting a Text through Song ♪

In class we watched the [music video](#) for Troye Sivan's song "The Fault in Our Stars," which was inspired by John Green's novel. As a class we discussed parallels between the novel and the song and examined [the lyrics'](#) use of figurative language to depict meaning. Now it is your turn to be inspired by *The Fault in Our Stars* and write your own song lyrics or poem!

This assignment contains two parts.

★ **PART ONE: Compose either song/rap lyrics OR a poem (in 120 words or more). Don't forget to give it a title! The lyrics or poem should accomplish one or more of the following:**

- Respond to one of the characters and her/his concerns
- Imagine and convey the thoughts and emotions of one or more characters
- Explain a lesson you learned from the novel
- Examine a theme from the novel and describe its significance in terms of the characters and/or society
- Examine at least one symbol from the novel and describe its significance in terms of the characters and/or society

★ **PART TWO: Write a short statement (250-500 words) in which you describe your choices as a lyricist or a poet. You should explain the elements of your lyrics/poem and describe how they reflect the novel and its characters. Consider the following questions when writing this statement:**

- What is your song or poem about? A specific character, a theme, a lesson, all of the above?
- How does your song/poem reflect the novel and its characters? What are some textual parallels or similarities between the two texts?
- What is/are the purpose(s) of your song or poem?
- What is the meaning of the language you chose? What is the reasoning behind your diction and use of figurative language?
- What emotions did you aim to evoke from your audience? What conventions or language did you use to meet this aim?
- What should the audience know in order to fully understand your interpretation of the lyrics/poem?

**Note:** You are welcome to write your lyrics to the tune of a specific song. This is *not* required, but you should feel free to explore different types of music that could match your lyrics. If you do find a song that suits your lyrics, please include it as a note at the bottom of your assignment.

## Student Model

### PART ONE

#### “The Illusion of Control” by Student A

<sup>1</sup>The illusion is fading, yeah, yeah—  
I’m just waiting until you’re gone.  
The world will pale and all hopes fail  
And still I keep plodding on.

<sup>2</sup>Your sickness, your soul  
O’ it creeps deep into my heart,  
I cling to those memories,  
Anything to keep me from falling apart.

<sup>3</sup>It’s the illusion of control,  
We need to let go. Let it all go.  
If I can’t control the very air I breathe,  
Then who is to say that we control anything?

<sup>4</sup>Prayers to No One  
Answered with the sound of silence,  
Ghouls floating above our heads,  
What the living do to make sense of the dead.

<sup>5</sup>Yet you believe in the capital “S,”  
There’s gotta be Something, Something beyond all this  
And who am I to say that you’re wrong?  
Maybe God is like me, just writing a tragic Song.

<sup>6</sup>It’s the illusion of control,  
We need to let go. Let it all go.  
If I can’t control the very air I breathe,  
Then who is to say that we control anything?

<sup>7</sup>It’s the illusion of control,  
We need to let go. Let it all go.  
If I can’t control the very air I breathe,  
Then who is to say that we control anything?

## PART TWO

Through my song lyrics, I examined and expanded Hazel's thoughts regarding Augustus's cancer recurrence, God, and humanity's inability to control the things that truly matter, like life and death. Hazel is familiar with death and dying, but losing Gus will be different. Augustus is not only her lover but also her newly-found passion for life, and so my lyrics reflect the dull reality that is a world without Gus: "I'm just waiting until you're gone. / The world will pale and all hopes fail / And still I keep plodding on."

My lyrics also represent Hazel's complicated relationship with God and the heavens. In the novel Hazel admits that she does not believe in an afterlife, although she revises this statement with an indecisive addition: "Well, maybe I wouldn't go so far as no" (Green 168). Her views on prayer also seem complex and dissonant when she states that "Maybe some people need to believe in a proper and omnipotent God to pray, but I don't" (201). In response to the novel, my song references both Augustus's belief in "Something with a capital S" and Hazel's cynicism of a godly presence: "Yet you believe in the capital 'S,' / There's gotta be Something, Something beyond all this / And who am I to say that you're wrong? / Maybe God is like me, just writing a tragic Song." Thus, in an attempt to better understand the more metaphysical aspects of life, the speaker compares God to herself, a lyricist who is writing words of sorrow.

Moreover, John Green's novel *The Fault in Our Stars* frames control as an illusion that is widely accepted by those without terminal illnesses. Hazel, a victim of cancer, recognizes that she has little control over her own life and body, but still she wishes that she could do something to help Gus and prevent him from deteriorating into a shadow of his former self. My speaker challenges this illusion in the song's chorus: "If I can't control the very air I breathe, / Then who is to say that we control anything?" These lines allude to Hazel and her lungs' deficiencies to illustrate humanity's inability to control much of life's circumstances.

What's more, the title and the stanzas work together to establish this theme of illusory control. Indeed, the speaker cannot control sickness, she cannot stop her friend from dying, and she is unable to gain a sense of worldly control through her shallow "faith." She accepts this reality and encourages others to do the same: "It's the illusion of control, / We need to let go. Let it all go."

"The Illusion of Control" is intended to be a solemn and fatalistic song, one that is played to a sad tune. My diction serves to evoke a sense of melancholy from my audience, as the words "pale," "plodding," "sickness," "creeps," "ghouls," "dead," and "tragic" together convey depressed or otherwise gloomy connotations.

*The Fault in Our Stars – Song/Poem and Statement Rubric*

**Part One: Song Lyrics/Poem (x3)**

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<u>1</u>	2	<u>3</u>	4	<u>5</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Song/poem may be unoriginal or off-topic; there are no apparent connections to the novel and its characters.</li><li>• Song/poem does not engage significant themes, issues, or instances from the novel.</li><li>• Song/poem does not fulfill the word count requirement.</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Song/poem is original, but its connections to the novel and its characters may be unclear or confusing.</li><li>• Song/poem briefly engages significant themes, issues, or instances from the novel.</li><li>• Song/poem fulfills the word count requirement.</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Song/poem is original and includes notable references to the novel and its characters.</li><li>• Song/poem purposefully engages significant themes, issues, or instances from the novel.</li><li>• Song/poem fulfills the word count requirement.</li></ul>

Teacher Feedback:

**Part Two: Statement of Lyrical/Poetic Choices (x3)**

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<u>1</u>	2	<u>3</u>	4	<u>5</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Statement is off-topic, unclear, or includes only a minimal explanation of the lyrical elements.</li><li>• Statement does not refer to specific instances/themes/issues from the novel.</li><li>• Statement does not fulfill the word count requirement.</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Statement describes a few elements of the song/poem and explains how these reflect the novel and its characters. Further detail or clarification may be necessary.</li><li>• Statement briefly refers to specific instances/themes/issues from the novel.</li><li>• Statement fulfills the word count requirement.</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Statement thoughtfully and thoroughly describes the elements of the song/poem and explains how these reflect the novel and its characters.</li><li>• Statement includes multiple references to specific instances/themes/issues from the novel.</li><li>• Statement fulfills the word count requirement.</li></ul>

Teacher Feedback:

$\frac{\quad}{\quad} / 15$ Part One: Song Lyrics/Poem
$\frac{\quad}{\quad} / 15$ Part Two: Statement of Choices
$\frac{\quad}{\quad} / 30$ Total