

Massachusetts Letters About Literature 2016  
Massachusetts Center for the Book  
www.massbook.org

Level II Honors Award

Dear John Green,

I really had a huge thing in common with *The Fault in Our Stars*, I think that's one reason why I really enjoyed it! I really connected with the whole cancer aspect of it. I also learned a lot from your writing that honestly changed my life. Yes, I know I did not meet the love of my life like Hazel did, I haven't gone to Amsterdam, I haven't had cancer. However, I have lost someone I truly loved and that person was my sister. It was so therapeutic for me while I read this as I was coping with the death of my sister. Your writing sped up the process, so thanks.

My view on the world and my past was changed after I read *The Fault in Our Stars*. Eight years ago my sister died of stage four neuroblastoma which is a type of cancer commonly found in children. It was a rough time for my family and I, especially me. I lost my role model that I adored and looked up to. I was only four when she died. I didn't understand why she was gone but I knew she was gone and wasn't coming back. I was heartbroken. Now, I am twelve I am still sad and I miss her but it will always be that way. I have started to learn a lot from your book. Before, I was furious and constantly wondering why this happened to my family. However, after I read your book I started to understand that cancer is all around us. It's affected so many people. I'm really grateful for this gift of you writing this book, it honestly changed my life. It was very therapeutic reading. *The Fault in Our Stars* helped me in many more ways, too.

Your book didn't just help me learn, I also reminisced. It brought back so many memories because like Augustus my sister Maddy always wanted to have fun. She didn't dwell on the fact that she had cancer, Maddy lived in the moment. Reading about Augustus's activities to do with Hazel brought back memories of things me and my sister had done. One special moment was my sister was going to be in the hospital for six weeks getting a bone marrow transplant and I remember her saying the rooms were too dull and not bright and fun enough for her. So, we went to the party store and got her a disco ball, colorful wall decals, posters, and so much more. However, this also brought back some sad memories that did still make me feel happy and enlightened my heart. I remember a few days before she died I wasn't allowed in the room because of germs and I put my hands up against the glass and she put hers up against the glass and that was the last time I saw her alive.

*The Fault in Our Stars* also opened me up. My mom always tried to get me to go to therapy or a support group. I was like Hazel not wanting to go. I thought I didn't need it, I didn't want help, I thought I was fine. I always cover up my sadness with a smile. I never really showed anyone my true feelings. I ended up going to see my current therapist so my mom would be happy, just like Hazel did. The first time I went to therapy was before I read your book and I didn't really want to open up to her so it was kind of awkward. However, she recommended your book to me because when we chatted about ourselves she asked me if I liked to read and told me to get your book. I'm really glad I did! When Hazel first went to the support group there were so many other kids fighting cancer like her or who had cancer before. This really opened my eyes because all of those kids had families going through some of the same problems my family did.

Thanks for a gift that changed my life around. I needed to be at peace and understand the death of my sister. I never wanted to talk to anyone, I didn't want help. However, your book cracked me out of my shell. I don't know why but I thought I had to be strong and could never cry. But, I've realized sometimes you need to let out a cry to be at peace with something and put all your emotions out on the table. I've begun to really cope with the death of my sister and I'm not dwelling on it every single day. I'm never going to not miss her and I'll always love her, that will never ever change. I know that's normal to still love them after they've left us. Thank you so much for this amazing gift that has brought me to peace with the death of my sister.

Sincerely,

*Laci*

Laci  
Methuen  
Grade 7