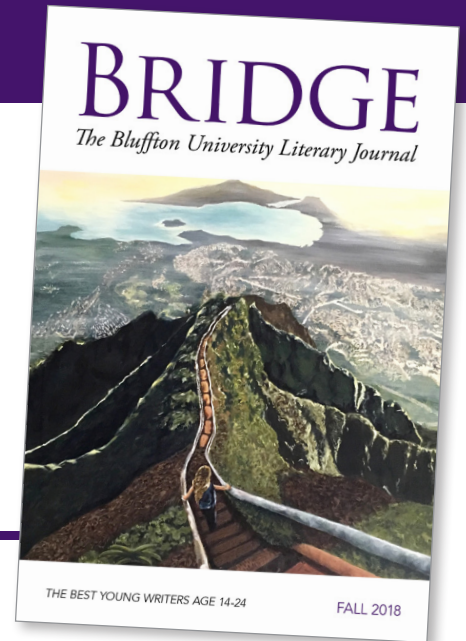


BRIDGE

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A CONVERSATION WITH MY DEAD BEST FRIEND

Julia Edinger

“Come back. Even as a shadow, even as a dream.” —Euripides

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We sit across from each other in the café
as he stirs his black coffee incessantly,
as if the friction from his spoon clanking
on the glass
could somehow infuse the coffee with
more caffeine.

I tell him of all that has changed,
(School, work, clean drug tests)
and all that has remained the same:
“She still loves you, you know.”

He taps his fingers against the oak table
with enough staccato to create ripples in
my latte.
He was always able to do that,
to create change without changing himself.

His grin still stretches across his face,
nearly disguising the flash of regret behind
his eyes.

“It was too soon,” he finally says,
clasping his bony fingers together.

I don’t know how to respond. I’m older
now
than he was when he took his last breath.
Still, I gaze up at him expectantly.
“I miss you,” I finally mutter, staring at my
lap.

I pause,
waiting.

When I look back across the table,
it is empty.
The shop is absolutely silent,
except for the clanking of my spoon
against my glass.



JULIA EDINGER

is an emerging writer studying English at the University of Toledo. An Ohio native, she hopes her poetry will help readers engage in difficult conversations about contemporary issues.