

New Jersey English Journal

Volume 6

Article 12

2017

An English Teacher's Lament

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Recommended Citation

Lerner, David Drew (2017) "An English Teacher's Lament," *New Jersey English Journal*: Vol. 6 , Article 12.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.montclair.edu/nj-english-journal/vol6/iss1/12>

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2:20 p.m.

by David Drew Lerner

The rows of desks are empty:
No eager hands reach for attention –
No laughter, no shouts, no brags, no put-downs –
The exuberance of youth has fled to fields, friends, or quiet corners.

Now crumpled papers, discarded wrappers,
And secret notes lamenting lost loves
Litter the classroom floor.

Left behind, slumped at the large battered desk,
The teacher stares at stacks of essays
Demanding to be graded
And gathers her strength for another day.

David Drew Lerner has taught high school English for 26 years; the first eight at Thomas Jefferson High School, Brooklyn, New York, and the past 18 in Somerville, New Jersey, at Somerville High School, where he currently teaches AP Literature and Composition and a Creative Writing elective and was the advisor to the school's literary magazine, *The Muse*. He especially loves Shakespeare, Poe, and Frost, and enjoys writing poetry both for his Creative Writing class and for his own pleasure.