

Week 19: Writing prompts — Losing weight; backyard

Back yard battlefield

By EMILY PATCH
Rutland High School, Grade 11

Every day after school
They get off of the bus
And start to the castle next door.
They run as fast as they can
And grab their biggest sword.
Then all four choose the side
That they will be fighting for.
Every day a battle is won.
But so far no one has won the war.
Then they fight as hard as they can,
With sword hitting sword in the process.
They back away
And advance again
Into the play
Into the mess.
In the heat of the battle
When they fight the hardest
There is a call from a castle.
The queen wants the warriors to go inside
For the twilight feast of the beast.
The battle is done for the day
And the warriors part ways for the night.
They head across battlefield backyard
And prepare for tomorrow
And its eminent fight.

Losing weight

By ALICIA WAITE
Rochester High School, Grade 9

Fat, skinny and in between
No matter what, people can be mean
It makes you wonder and it makes you think
Sometimes it takes you to the brink.

Television, newspapers and magazines
People always trying to fit between the scenes
Never feeling good enough
But always acting tough.

Celebrities make it seem too easy
But they are really oh so cheesy
With their plastic surgery and liposuction
Without these so-called necessities they could not function.

Physical features can't always be read
You have to look deeper instead
Look past the illusion and find your heart
Think things through before you start
Because losing weight can be great
But going too far will tempt fate.

Just remember you are who you are
And be careful not to take it too far
Because celebrities have no problem going under the knife
But for us, there is so much more to life.

Stop the pressure

By LYDIA GARLAND
Dummerston School, Grade 7

The pressure today to become skinny is too great. When girls start going to extremes to become so skinny, you must realize this problem. Girls today are so pressured that they turn to anorexia and bulimia. These diseases are so much an issue that you see them everywhere. In the news, talking about all those celebrities, in class, just talking. When people publicly criticize others, and then practically force them into this, you begin to see the root. To stop this problem is virtually impossible. But we can try. That is what we all need to do. Stop this disease. It will take teamwork, but we must try.

The place to be

By BRANDEN TAYLOR
Mount St. Joseph Academy, Grade 9

Twas the hit of all hits.
Ball goes flying.
Your breath slows.
You take off running.
It's a home run.
All the people you are with are screaming
"RUN!!!"
You touch the base and keep going.
When you finally get home people pat your back.
Your team just won.
Even though it's only you and your friends it feels good.
All you know is that you're in your backyard having fun and it feels good.
But why the backyard?
No other reason except that it's your favorite place, and you wouldn't want to be anywhere else.
All because you feel safe and sound even when there is no one around.
That's the way it will stay you say.
Even if day after day people come over, you will always be safe.
Why? Because it's your backyard and that's where you like to play.

Unforeseen changes

By JEN MARIOTTI
Hartford Memorial Middle School, Grade 8

I walk into my backyard. Look around to see the damage. There, here, everywhere, there are trees blown down. I think that is our neighbor's car up in our room. We did not know it was coming.
We didn't know there was going to be a tornado. We didn't know it was going to be an F5 either. We thought everything would be all right, but we were wrong.

We are standing in our backyard looking at the beautiful red oak that was blown down, looking around seeing all the trees blown down and seeing our neighbor's car in our upstairs bathroom. We wonder where our animals are and if they are OK.
We're standing in our backyard looking at the damage.

INGRID'S SMILE



Chelsea Wait, Spaulding High School

Ingrid is unlike any child I've ever met. She is a 2-and-1/2-year-old that lives in an orphanage in Guatemala City, Guatemala. Old burn marks and scars line her small, chubby arms and legs, but her face is untouched, delicate and beautiful. Ingrid already has an issue with the world. She frequently cries, throws fits and acts out. Still, it's impossible to ignore her charm and spirit. Once you've proved yourself to her, Ingrid will love you no matter what. Her rare smiles will melt your heart, and her hugs will convey all that her young mind can not yet form in words. Despite the rages, fits and fights, Ingrid is a beautiful little girl that I will never forget.

Ultimate weight loss

By Eli Millman
FAIRFIELD CENTER SCHOOL, GRADE 8

When I say "losing weight" what is the first thing you think of? I am willing to bet you think of FAT. Whether it is starving yourself, exercising like mad or diet pills, you think of excess blubber.

When I think of losing weight, I think of emotional baggage. Have you ever heard the saying, "a weight has been lifted off my shoulders?" I am positive that this weight is not made of fat. This weight is made up of much more than some extra pounds; this weight is made up of things that go much deeper than a bunch of "chub."

Society is so caught up in how we look, that we forget about what is really important; how we feel. The pressure we put on each other to fit into a "Barbie Doll" mold is so unrealistic. We do not realize that this pressure damages our psyche and makes us feel inadequate. What exactly are we comparing ourselves to? A child's toy. We are comparing ourselves to something that wouldn't be able to stand if it were life-sized.

By the time we are in junior high school the

amount of baggage we carry is unreasonable. What has our world come to when a 12-year-old child is anorexic? At the same time childhood obesity is at an all time high.

Instead of focusing on losing pounds, our youth and those who support them need to focus on fostering healthy attitudes. By encouraging youth to participate in sports and other physical activities they are able to live a happier and healthier life. Sports teach children much more than rules of the game, they teach them the lessons of life. We learn how to interact with other human beings; we learn what it means to be part of a team and how to support each other. We learn how to succeed and how to fail. How to win, and how to lose. We also learn our place in the world. This gives us strength to battle the emotional baggage that we come to know at such an early age.

We should focus on losing the weight that we place upon our own shoulders. When we accomplish this, we have achieved the ultimate weight loss.

Backyard of a farm

By EMILY FARIEL
Hartford Memorial Middle School, Grade 8

A backyard is not just grass.
It's the place where I rode my bike and the chain came off.
Where my sister and I played hide and seek in the surrounding woods.
Where our garden grew most of the vegetables we ate.
Where we picked wild strawberries, and attempted to make jam.
The place where the sheep were grazing, and wandering around,
Seeming to have no purpose in their lives.
Where I swam in the pond each summer,
And jumped off the dock with my friends.
Where I would lie on my stomach to watch the Canada geese,
With my super-power binoculars.
Where Mary the donkey would come down to visit me, and I'd give her a carrot.
I'd open milkweed pods and watch them float away on the breeze,
Landing as gently as possible on the water.
Where I was offered a chance to escape from the world of noise and pollution.
My backyard was not just grass.

Weightless in motion

By Samantha Burns
FAIRFIELD CENTER SCHOOL, GRADE 8

Pressure builds up
Can't break it down
Overflowing the full cup
Turn it around
Look back
Look back
Look back
And smile
At the tracks
You've laid for miles
Tears released from your eyes
Weightless emotion
You're free
Now fly

The forest in my backyard

By MILES LATHAM
Hartford Memorial Middle School, Grade 8

The meadows dance in the wind.
The pines in the forest groan.
The snow gently glides to earth.
The moon casts white shadows through the trees.
As I continue to write by just the moonlight,
I sense the evening chill.
But I couldn't care about the cold less,
As this place is my second home.



YWP is a grassroots nonprofit that helps students write better and gain an audience for their best work. YWP offers writing ideas or prompts, special projects and a safe Web site, youngwritersproject.org, where students share their writing, comment on the news and each other's work, participate in group discussions and work on projects. YWP is indebted to the generosity of the Vermont Business Roundtable which is funding its core work for the second year.



Her Empty State

By CHLOE DICKINSON
Woodstock Union High School, Grade 10

She walks through the hall; walls are made of eyes plastered together with harsh whispers which hide none of their contempt. The walls move in closer and quickly she ducks in to a nearby safe haven. Here the walls are of cold shiny brick, but it brings her warmth, she knows this place so well, too well. She looks into the pain of glass that dictates so many people's lives; it smirks at her vulnerable state. "You know what would make you feel better?" It seems to ask, and she knows, so well, too well. She turns to face the wall of blue plastic; it welcomes her with opened arms. Like a vortex sucking her in she moves her feet without realizing, the trance engulfs her retching mind and stomach until she is left empty. Finally empty, her mind, her troubles, her feelings and her stomach all empty, this feeling of empty simplicity she knows well, too well.

The big, fat lie

By CAITLYN REILLY
Dover School, Grade 6

Some people think that being skinny is the only way to be popular and have friends. That is the big, fat lie. Being overweight isn't the end of the world. It's not like if you are one pound over you'll be an outcast. So for all those girls who think that being overweight is the worst possible thing, it's not. It's the big, fat lie!

Innocence

By HEATHER SHELTRA
Rice Memorial High School, Grade 9

Running through the yard
Laughing with friends
Laughing like hyenas
Wanting simplicity to last forever
Sophistication is around the corner
Hoping your time doesn't pull you away from innocence
Hiding in the playhouse
Playing flashlight tag
Pretending to be magnificent mermaids
Swimming in the pool
Like fish in the deep blue sea
Showing signs of innocence
Wishing you were older
Envyng the teenagers down the street
With their make-up and their new cars
Laughing at the younger kids in the neighborhood
As their parents push them around in baby strollers
Not noticing never-ending innocence
One day you get older
Old enough to have best friends forever
One day your personality changes
Those old friends like new things
The same things aren't funny any more
The signs of innocence slowly leave
Running isn't as fun
There are other things to do
You'd rather be on the phone
Laughing hysterically about boys, basketball and clothes
Different friends
Innocence disappears

On the Web
at
youngwritersproject.org

High School Book Blog-In. If you like books and you're a high school student, go to YWP's Web site — youngwritersproject.org — to participate in forums on the 15 finalist books for the Green Mountain Book Award. Look for more information and links on the front page of the site.

NEW 2008 Prompts. If you are looking for some writing ideas, check out the YWP's weekly prompts that are scheduled through the rest of this year. Go to the Web site, click on "Publish" in the top menu bar and follow the "Prompts" link.