

Week 20: Students write free with general prompts

Is it worth it?

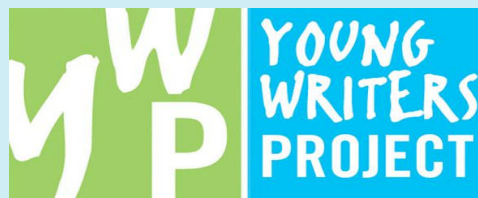
BY SARAH PORCH
Rutland Middle School, Grade 8

Dear daddy...
I miss you...
I love you...
Come home!
It all started in 2001
When two planes turned our world upside down
Fathers and mothers and children and friends
The ones we held close had to leave
Supposedly to fight for our "freedom" or something
But I know I would trade
Any day
I'd give my freedom away
For all those we knew
And even those we didn't
They gave their lives away
For what?
Is this the answer?
So many tears shed
So many lives lost
The fear and torture
It ruined their lives
Everything they had to miss
How will peace come from fighting and violence?
These men and women became killers
Slanderers
We fear for their lives each precious day that passes
For we know one day that the news will come
This poor boy that wrote to his dad
A man who was worthy of praise
He found out soon that his daddy had died.....
For his country?
For his freedom?
For us?
Was it worth it?

Drawing

BY NIKKI DUQUETTE
Crossett Brook Middle School, Grade 8

Drawing is the one thing that lets your
Imagination wander.
You could be a dancer leaping and
Skipping your way across the dance floor.
Drawing is the one thing that lets you
Be the one thing you have always
dreamed of being
An artist making new
Famous paintings.
Drawing is the thing that lets you
Be who you want to be.
NO one to judge you
No one to tell you WHO to be.
Drawing lets you express yourself.
You can be a fluttering happy bird
With no worries
Or a girl curled up in fright
Afraid of what's under her bed.
Drawing keeps me out of situations
I would rather not be in.
When it is snowing
You can go to a tropical island and be warm
When it is way too hot to be outside
You can be some place cold and frozen
Drawing lets your imagination wander.



YWP is a grassroots nonprofit that helps students write better and gain an audience for their best work. YWP offers writing 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.



On the Web at

youngwritersproject.org

NEW 2008 Prompts. 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.

Join the High School Book Blog-In. If you're a high school student who likes books, go to YWP's Web site — youngwritersproject.org — to participate in forums on the 15 finalist books for the Green Mountain Book Award. Site contains book summaries, study guides and more. Find links on top of the front page of the site.

More writing on the Web site.

ALONE



Errica Caposseo, Essex High School

The Glover: Part 1

BY EMILY KULIG | Rutland High School, Grade 10

He sits in his shop all day long; plucking each hair off the skin of a goat, and returning them, properly, to an expensive looking shawl. His beard is scruffy, white, and he has minimal hair on his head. The clothes that he wears are never polished, never as fine as the materials he fixes — at least that's what I can see from outside.

Young men continuously pelt his window with rotten eggs and snowballs. Their hands are covered with a cheap, manufactured material, his own kind betraying him. As soon as they're gone, he picks up his glasses and heads outside to start wiping the streaks off; always clockwise.

I watch from my familiar bench on the idle street corner, reading the paper and drinking my black coffee.

I decide it's time for me to take a closer look in his small shop. Day after day, I peek in his window, but it is dark, and I see very little. After I am done with the paper, I throw it away as I make my way over. The cold whipping through my own trench coat, I grab hold of my hat to protect it from the wind.

When I open the door, a soft "ting" reaches my ears. I hear rustling in the back.

His shop is small, rectangular and overflowing with handmade clothes. All the way back, about 20 feet, is a rack of finely made coats of all types: raincoats, overcoats, suits, fur coats, vests, jackets, sweaters. I could barely make out what types of coats they were — there were so many hugging tightly together.

"I'll be right with you," calls the voice, still from the back. I continue looking. To my left are shelves sectioned off to show hats, mittens, gloves, socks and scarves.

I pick up a pair of gloves and instantly became entranced. The touch is like feeling something so soft it was hardly there. It is smooth and silky, but not so silky that it feels oily or fake or metallic. So soft, yet I sense it to be strong enough to do what gloves were meant to do.

It now felt thick and reflexive. With these gloves in my hands I feel as if I could handle any degree the wind would shriek at me.

"You like them?" The man startled me when he spoke. His voice is not so much in the salesperson tone as it is in a satisfied composure. He has a mountain-man, rugged-looking beard, and his eyes are the color of dark storm clouds on their way to cause a nasty rainstorm. He is a tad shorter than I am and when I look down at him, I can see that only a few white hairs stand directly

on the top of his head. His hands folded to his chest; I can see they are balanced and subtle. Both delicate and strong, almost knowing.

"Yeah," I reply. "They're something else."
He moves behind the counter, but when he spoke again it wasn't to try to sell me the angel's hands I held onto most dearly.

"I see you every morning on that bench. Reading the paper and sipping coffee. The oncoming cold does not bother you?" he says as he cocks his head.

"It didn't used to," I respond. "The coffee kept me warm."

He chuckles. "And when the coffee runs out?"

"Well, you can imagine what I'm doing here."
"Ah, yes," he says as if he suddenly realizes he is in his own shop of garments. He says nothing further.

"So how much are they?" I ask, reaching for my wallet.

"Sorry?" He puts his finger behind his ear.
"The gloves"—I hold them up—"how much are they?"

"For you?" He says, calculating the price. He cups his chin in his hand and gazes up at the ceiling. "For you?" he says again and looks straight at me. "Take them; they're free."

"No," I say getting some dollar bills. "Please, I couldn't. Here, please accept this." I offer my crisp bills toward him, but he holds up a firm hand.

"No. I saw your face when you picked up those gloves, saw the glimmer in your eyes. You truly understand the delicacy and deliverance of them. You have the touch; do not let anyone tell you otherwise. Hmm... cherished, caring, compassionate yet firm... You were meant to have them. I could never come between what is meant to be. Take them," he says again.
"But your business," I blurt out before I can stop myself.

"My business is not your concern," he says without a hint of anger in his voice.

Very few customers come into his shop. He produces more wares than he can sell. And the shop is not exactly in the center of town.

"Nor is it a concern to me." He gets off the high stool he had perched himself on and moves to a low chair, where his goat skin was halfway gone and he was working on the second of the two gloves. His hands never shake and are sensitive and critical in taking the hairs and moving them from one object to the other.

I am from

BY KALINEN BARROWS | Rutland Middle School, Grade 8

I am from the tin roof house on the old dirt road
from a pineapple couch and a big wicker chair
from sitting on a little rusty heat vent and feeling the warmth on my shoes
from Barbie Dolls all over the living room floor

I am from one bathroom and five people
from a little white bedroom with rainbows, balloons and clowns on the wall
from stealing my brother's candy
from playing with my sister's things
from crawling into bed with my parents and hiding from the monster

I am from splashing in a cheap worn-out pool
from drinking straight from the hose on a hot summer day
from digging in a makeshift sandbox with my friends
from making hay forts with my cousins

I am from Mickey Mouse T-shirts and pretty little ponytails
from "Are We There YET?"
from singing "Miss Mary Mack, Mack, Mack!" over and over

I am from eating ice cream on the porch with sister
from watching ants disappear into the ground
from late night bonfires by the river
from staring into the rising heat although it stung my eyes

I am from the wagon that I broke riding it into a ditch
from a little rusty tricycle
from an oversized ball uniform
from purple forget-me-nots growing in the shade

This is where I'm from
This is ME

How could you?

BY SARAH DEBOUTER
Middlebury Union High School, Grade 11
Dedicated to a boy with cancer

What is that tube doing in your neck?
Why is that thing over your face?
Look at you.
Your face is pale and your hair is gone.
You can barely squeeze my hand
or move your fingers.
Sit up, it's time for your medicine.
I don't care if you don't like it.
It's going to help you, you'll thank me someday.
Lick your lips, they are dryer than sandpaper.
God forbid brush your teeth.
Your breath is worse than rotten fish.
When was the last time your clothes were changed?
Speak to me.
Your voice cracks barely into a whisper.
I can't hear you.
What did you say?
Huh?
When was the last time you went to school?
Do you realize how much education you've lost?
You really should get a tutor.
I know I sound bossy, I just don't understand.
How could this happen to you?
Hello?
Are you paying attention to me?
How can you leave me here like this?
Your eyes, they look faded.
You look paler than usual.
I think I'll get the nurse.
NURSE!
She's coming, don't worry.
Why are you smiling?
You haven't smiled in months.
What's that you say?
You are going where?
Where is that nurse?
Look at me.
You will not leave yet.
You will not!
I refuse.
NURSE!
Stop smiling like that?
You will snap out of it.
You always do.
See, see, you're squeezing my hand!!
You haven't done that all week.
You're making progress already.
NURSE!!!
She'll be here in a second, and you'll be all better.
Hello?
Squeeze my hand again.
Hello? HELLO!
No, no, NO!
That thing needs to stop beeping.
It is not time.
NO!
Come on!
Open your eyes, look at me!
NURSE!!!!
How can you just lay there and leave me here?
How can you look so peaceful, and I'm freaking out!!
I can't lose you!
I won't lose you!
.....
I did lose you.
Nurse, he's gone.
He's gone.

The goose hunt

BY CODY BROUILLARD
Rochester High School, Grade 9

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Laying in the blind | Landing in your decoy |
| 5 in the morning | spread |
| Waiting for the geese | Waiting |
| Waiting till they start | Waiting to hear, "get |
| flying | up" |
| You can't beat it | Sitting up |
| When you see a goose | Aiming |
| coming in | Shooting |
| Putting on their landing | Watching the neck |
| gear | Fold |
| Feet down | Fall |
| Wings locked | The feeling |
| Minds set on landing | It's unbeatable |