

Temporary utopia

By Christine Reilly
Twin Valley Middle School, Grade 8

As I jump into the water
And all the bubbles surround me
It's peaceful, quiet, and feels like I'm in
My own little world..
This is my utopia
Where under the water,
it's so silent
everyone's words are muffled
and you can hear your own thoughts, your own
breath.
But then I come up for air
And the chaos starts again...
My utopia has disappeared.

Happiness

By Zoe Chaine
Brattleboro Union High School, Grade 9

The papers scattered around my feet,
tell the story,
with the characters you won't ever meet.
The window is open,
and the wind billows the curtains,
like a pirate ship's sail.
I wish I could sail away,
right out the window and into a different
world.
But no,
the best I can do is stand on these papers,
and smell the salty air.
Picturing another place,
where I could finally be
happy.

Toy car

By Josh Champney
Academy School, Grade 5

I lost this Mercedes hot wheels car. It had
a yellow paint job with black vinyl on it. I
named it Shelby. She was so slick and slim and
sleek.

When I lost Shelby I was on the way to my
uncle's pizza place in my grandpa's car. My
brother was in the front, my grandpa driving,
me and my cousin were in the back seat. My
cousin was playing with my toy car and she
was giving it back to me when she dropped it
in the hole by the buckle. The hole was too
small for my hand or my cousin's hand to fit
in the hole. So now, when I am in the back seat I
hear it go back and forth.

I am very sad that I lost that toy car but I
have a new one, the same car. I bought it off
my brother's friend.

Lost

By Chace Perkins | *Bellows Falls Union High School, Grade 9*

(Excerpt: Full story at youngwritersproject.org)

... It was dark. I held my hand in front
of my face, or at least I think I did. I knelt
and began feeling through my full back-
pack and fished out a headlight. With
numb-cold hands, I fit it over my head,
turned the bulb to the left and received a
stream of light. I illuminated a tree, the
stump I had hunted on all day, leaves,
sticks, dirt and finally my backpack. It had
taken forever to get my tree umbrella
down with wet and cold fingers (not to
mention I had made a nigh-on impossible
knot), and my grandfather was probably
already at the truck waiting. I pulled out
my high-tech walkie-talkie and tried to call
him.

“Gramp?”

Static...

I waited about 30 seconds and, sur-
prised, tried again. He was usually very
prompt and would never let me wait this
long. I shook my head, pocketed it,
unzipped another pouch and retrieved my
cell phone. I looked at the upper right cor-
ner and marveled at my impeccable luck.
“No Service” was splayed blatantly in the
corner.

I looked around and realized that I did-
n't know how to get back. Gramp had led
me there early in the morning, by a differ-
ent route than the usual one. I knew the
long way I could take out, but at the
moment I was scared. I admit it. Any
“tough guy” appearance one may have is
instantly gone the moment he realizes, He's
in Trouble.

I thought I knew which way we had
come in. After all I had had my headlamp
on then, too. I picked up my gear and gun
and went that way. After about 20 yards I
was at the beginning of a small river, and I
found myself in a mini-swamp. I had found
a stream, good. All I had to do was follow it
down, and I would find some kind of civi-
lization. Yet, the feeling of unease about this
decision was unbearable, especially since I re-
cognized none of the area I was in. Suddenly an
idea came to me, and I was surprised that I had
not thought of it earlier.

“HEEEEEEEEEEEY!” I screamed. It truly
was a deafening silence; a nightmare. I was
breathing hard and sweating in the 30-
degree weather, I wanted out of this place.

“HEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEY!” Again noth-
ing. Only the drum of my panicked heart.

Then I heard something I had not heard
before. Someone else was shouting. I felt a
ray of hope. It sure wasn't Gramp, but any
way out was fine with me. I checked the

safety on my rifle. Safe, as always. I had
taken my first step towards the noise when
I realized something. These weren't
responses. They weren't heartening.
Someone was angry. There were two men
somewhere getting really mad at each
other. Any feeling of hope, or the possibili-
ty of hope, was gone. It was replaced with
the crushing feeling of pure dread.

I stumbled back over to my sitting-
stump, remembering Gramp's words, “Just
plunk yourself down, and think your way
out.” I sat and I thought. I thought I was
going to have to fire a round or two into
the air and see what response I got. I
looked up and my light moved with it at the
familiar landscape. I knew this place, but
in my panic I somehow got it into my head
that I had to get out the way Gramp and I
had come in.

I jumped. The all-too-familiar jingle of
a walkie-talkie caller vibrated and sounded
in my pocket.

“You there?” I heard my grandfather's
husky voice call. I grabbed for the gadget,
unzipped the pocket, yanked it out, and
dropped it in the leaves.

“Hello?” I snatched it up and held on as
if it were a bar of soap. I jacked up the vol-
ume and replied,

“Yeah, here.”

“Where are you?”

“At my spot still.” I replied breathlessly.

“You alright?”

“Well, yeah. Not really, I have no idea
how to get outta here.”

“Ya don't?” He said with an air of
humor in his voice.

“Not really.” Trying not to let my irrita-
tion sound over the radio.

“Well, plunk yourself down, I'm on my
way.”

“I'll be here.” I said, frustrated by how
childish I sounded.

Fifteen minutes later, he was there and
he led me out with an uncanny ease.

This is a true story, make no mistake.
These emotions and problems were real.
My dad later told me that that particular
river would have dropped me off at a
neighbor's house and I could have gotten
home with a riverside walk. I am not a stu-
pid person in the least, and my psyche is
intact. Yet, there is one thing that contin-
ues to bother me. My grandfather may be
62 but his hearing isn't bad. While we
walked back I was getting nervous over
those two arguing men, but he never heard
a thing.



Young Writers Project is an independent nonprofit that engages students to write, helps them get better at it and connects them with authentic audiences for their best work. YWP provides writing prompts for this newspaper series; maintains youngwritersproject.org, a supportive online community for students; trains college mentors to provide students with feedback; and builds *Digital Writing Classrooms* for schools and afterschool programs. For more go to: ywpschools.net.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Vermont Writes Day 2010

Tuesday, February 9

A day for schools, teachers, students, administrators to **STOP** what they are doing and write for SEVEN minutes. For more:

youngwritersproject.org

*EDITOR'S NOTE: On youngwritersproject.org, stu-
dents from around the state are posting their six-
word predictions of what Vermont will look like in
2110. Here is a sampling of their predictions,
with students' online usernames in italics:*

There won't be any senile owls.

— *IrisDoll*

Every tree, gone. Every road, paved.

— *SamB*

Cows have taken over the state!

— *kadycheesebandit*

Metal trees, mountains moved, nobody there.

— *Zenjoy*

Predictions are useless; wait it out.

— *AlonewithFriends*

Upcoming Prompts

Get published in the *Reformer!*

Faking it. Admit it, you've had to pull the wool over someone's eyes when trapped at an unexpected moment. Write about it.
Alternate: Four. Write about the number four. Could be the time on the clock, the number of people or the number of leaves on a clover. Use the number in a story, poem or play.
Due Friday.

Future prompts and to submit:

youngwritersproject.org