

## Perfection?

**By Lydia Bouricius**

*Edmunds Middle School, Grade 8*

A laugh,  
A hug,  
That warm feeling that envelopes you  
And makes you smile.  
It's involuntary, and you can't help it,  
You feel like everything in your life at that  
one moment is perfect.  
Now multiply it by ten  
And live in it.  
Be it.  
Be the smile that spreads across your face.  
Your ears are the sound of laughter,  
Your nose is the smell of fresh baked cookies,  
Your skin knows a hug better than you  
know your name.  
Utopia,  
The perfect place,  
Where no one's sad  
And all you can ever be is happy.  
Bored —  
Bored of happiness  
With tons to do  
But only one way to feel,  
With nothing to compare  
Your pleasure to.  
The feeling droops and slowly,  
Oh, so slowly,  
Withers and dies  
Leaving you empty  
And wishing  
That you could live outside the laugh,  
Push away the hug  
And be mad or sad or scared  
Or something —  
Something that isn't happy.  
Without the anger  
Or the sadness  
Or the fear  
The good feeling means nothing.  
For it is all you know  
And you take it for granted,  
It's wasted.  
Utopia isn't the place you'd think it would  
be.

### Next Prompt

**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 your favorite athlete. Use the number in a story, poem or play. **Due Friday.**

Submit at:

[youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org)

## Never found

**By Addy Campbell**

*Mt. Abraham Union Middle/High School, Grade 8*

One eye appears  
above his bent arm  
palm resting against his head.  
A half-smirk  
plays at the corners of his mouth  
tantalizing.  
It's this one look  
that sends me tumbling,  
lost  
groping for solid ground.  
It's this one look  
stealing the very breath from my lungs  
that makes me never want to be found.

## My utopia

**By Kyla Muzzy**

*Homeschooled, Grade 4*

My utopia is a place up in the sky,  
atop a cloud. My utopia stands like a statue,  
waiting for someone to come and discover it.

Three endless rows of mountains are covered from top to bottom with powdery snow.

It makes me feel good to know that I can have a perfect world right inside my head.

## Anatomy of lost thoughts

**By Devon Preston**

*Mount Mansfield Union High School, Grade 9*

Circles  
Happy when they resemble a face  
Circles of friends that never end  
A promise that can never be broken  
Circles are very positive  
Unless you are traveling in them  
Seeing the same things over and over  
Like a childhood book  
But Red Riding Hood never mocked your failure  
The clock on your car radio  
Used to compliment your punctuality  
Now it nags your tardiness  
Getting home  
Never seemed to cross your mind  
Now it's all you can think about  
Constant self-doubt  
What if I went this way?  
What if I get into an even bigger labyrinth than before?

**MORE STUDENT WRITING AT  
YOUNGWRITERSPROJECT.ORG**

## Winter-white

**By Ruby McCafferty**

*Edmunds Middle School, Grade 8*

I'm lost.  
Maybe in a different world  
I could be found  
safe and warm.  
But  
for now  
I've been cast out into a world of winter-white.  
Stark.  
Cold.  
Blank.  
It matches paper,  
taunting me with my  
lack of ideas.  
I want to run  
yell  
color this world with my words  
until it matches my imagination.  
Paint trees with graphite.  
Stain the snow with ink-drawn flowers.  
Wash over the blank with a written waterfall.  
Pencil in the details,  
the colors,  
the life.  
But for now  
I am lost  
in a world of winter-white.

## Lost in the woods

**By Elizabeth Richards**

*Rice Memorial High School, Grade 9*

*(Excerpt: Full story at [youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org))*

... I start off in the  
direction of my house.  
Or at least  
what I thought it was.  
Once again  
I move through the trees.  
This time  
the branches don't scratch me.  
This time  
the trunks don't  
move so fast.  
But this time,  
I'm worrying about  
where to go.  
Do I remember  
this tree?  
Have I already passed  
that rock?  
Did I notice  
this stump before?  
Everything looks the same.  
I can't see any light  
except by looking up.  
But the sun is setting,  
soon darkness will come  
and I will be lost.



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](http://youngwritersproject.org) — a supportive online community for students; trains college mentors to provide students with feedback and builds Digital Writing Classrooms for schools. For more: [ywpschools.net](http://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](http://youngwritersproject.org)

## Alone

**By Keegan Black**

*Edmunds Middle School, Grade 8*

*(Excerpt: Full story at [youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org))*

...On the last day of my ski instruction, my group took a big lift to the top of a huge mountain in the Alps. At the top I saw one of my group members and his dad going for hot chocolate so I followed them inside a little coffee shack. Once I was inside, though, I could not find any of the people in my group. I could not find them outside, either. By then I was getting cold ...

I searched around for an easy way to get down because I had never skied down anything except a bunny slope in my life, but I could not find a trail that looked safe. Then I realized I could take the gondola, so I got on the last gondola going back to the base of the mountain.

After I got off the cable car I had to hike all the way back to the bunny hill, where our car was parked, in my ski boots. When I got there I sat near our car for a long time until I saw a crazy woman sprinting toward me. I had found my mom. As she drew near and I braced myself for the impact, I realized that my parents must have been worried. Then as my mother almost squeezed my soul out she told me that I had been lost for over five hours, in Germany, where I did not speak the language, on a mountain in the Alps, as a Texas boy in the winter, when I was only seven. I had done pretty well.