

# Search for treasure

By JOSH DUDLEY  
Sheldon School, Grade 8

The sun sat, full as a fragile water balloon ready to burst, spreading a wave of drowsy heat over the green. The trees stood happy and tall, and the fronds of the underbrush lay on the sides of the smooth black road, as if they were resting without a care in the world.

The camper door shut with a subtle clank as I stepped on the mat and then on to the grass. I walked over to the picnic table and took a seat.

“What’s for dinner, Mom?” I asked casually as my eyes studied a nearby stump.

“Chicken,” she said cheerfully. We were camping at North Beach campground in Burlington. It was nice, just me, my brother, mom, and dad. This was my favorite campground, mostly because of the sparkling blue Lake Champlain waters that lapped like real ocean waves. Life was good.

Eventually my brother came out of the woodwork and took a seat besides me. “Look at that poor guy,” my mom whispered to my dad. “He looks lonely over there.” My mom was referring to a man in the campsite to the right of us. He looked older, maybe fifty, and he was fuddling with something at his campsite. My dad started talking to him. They talked for a while; my dad was waiting for dinner and this man appeared to have nothing to do. I just sat back and let the smells of dinner wash away the weight of that days vicissitudes like the tide flowing over a rock and then slowly ebbing away.

The next day that same man was there at the campsite to the right of us, but this time his wife was there. Jimmy was his name. My brother and I sat at the picnic table again.

“Want some corn, Jimmy?” My mom asked this time.

“Nah, I’m good,” he said. His lie only encouraged my mom.

“C’mon, it’s gonna be good and juicy. We have plenty extra,” my mom persisted. I hoped that he would take the bait. He seemed to enjoy talking with my dad, and anyone’s better off with others than being alone.

“No, I couldn’t,” said Jimmy, who was moving closer. He was now looking longingly at the corn, but then forced his head away.

“Jimmy, get over here,” said my mom. That did it. So Jimmy and his wife came over for dinner. After that Jimmy and his wife brought their chairs to our fire. Jimmy told stories and laughed. Jimmy was really quiet and lonely before, I thought. Now that we’ve showed him a little kindness he’s really come out of his shell. Who knew that he’d be so fun to be around? Jimmy made the scene complete.

The next day we were headed to the beach when I got sunscreen in my eye.

“Geez, it kinda burns, Mom” I said. That’s when Jimmy’s wife came over with a glass of water.

“Just hold it up to your eye,” she said. “Imagine that you’re searching for treasure. Just look through the water.” So I did, and by the time all the water had drained from the cup onto the grass below, my eyes didn’t burn anymore.

That night Jimmy and his wife came to sit by the fire with us again. Those nights were good nights, very good nights.

Eventually we had to leave North Beach, and so did Jimmy. We kept thinking about him though, and later when we went to North Beach again, guess who was there? Jimmy. This time, before we left we gave him our old canopy for setting up over picnic tables.

“Some other camper gave it to us,” said my parents. “So now we’re passing it on to you.”

That was the last time we saw Jimmy. Sometimes I just sit down and think of life from Jimmy’s point of view — how he must have felt when we invited him in, gave him



# YOUNG WRITERS PROJECT

building a generation of better writers

Welcome to the seventh weekly installment of great writing by area students as part of a partnership between the *St. Albans Messenger*, the Young Writers Project, area schools and the many talented young writers in our communities. Each week the *Messenger* will feature work from students in Franklin and Grand Isle counties.

Young Writers Project is a Vermont nonprofit dedicated to helping students improve their writing. Students submit work each week — responses to YWP prompts or general writing — and YWP selects the best for publication. YWP maintains a safe, civil Web site for students at [youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org) (where all work is submitted). And it creates Digital Writing Classrooms for schools to use as part of their curriculum. Thanks to support from **FairPoint Communications**, Digital Writing Classrooms are operating at Milton High School, Enosburg Falls Middle School, St. Albans Town Educational Center and Grand Isle School. Swanton School and St. Albans City Schools are also participating.

**TODAY:** Response to the prompts: “Hunting” and “General writing.”

## Jumpin’ boots



Kelly Barford, Essex High School

a sign that he mattered. Sometimes in this world we forget that we have value, and the people around us have a lot of effect on that. Jimmy was dying of cancer. I’ll never know what the outcome was. All I know is this: When we were kind to Jimmy, not only did he feel good, but we did too. When you meet someone, you never know what kind of situation they are in. In our case it turns out that that person was dying and that we may have left the last impression on him before he passed away. If that’s true, I’m glad that we had that opportunity to make that last impression a good one.

## UPCOMING PROMPTS

**Franklin and Grand Isle county students:**  
Send us your best writing!

We are looking for more great general writing or reponses to YWP prompts. Here are the next three prompts:

**School.** What experiences in school have really engaged you? **Due Friday.**

**Super powers.** You’ve been granted powers never thought possible. What are they and what will you do with them? **Alternate: Excuses.** Write an excuse as to why you didn’t do something that is so outrageous and funny that we have to accept it. **Due Nov. 27.**

Submit work  
at our Web site:

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

## Coming home

By JORDAN HOFFMAN  
BFA Fairfax, Grade 8

I reached the door and knocked loudly  
Tapping my foot with the beat of the rain  
Hair dripping on the porch making puddles  
with my tears  
The door opened with a well-oiled creak  
I looked into the warmly lit room  
And my eyes caught Daddy  
His light hair with streaks of gray  
His lips in a tight line  
You could tell he was angry  
His hand looked molded to the door knob  
I heard my name from somewhere behind him  
And I knew this is the right thing  
Choosing to come home after I had run away  
Leaving my tent miles away in the woods  
I had left my problems with it in the pouring  
rain  
As my mother stepped out and I saw her face  
light up with joy  
It was worth it as her arms pulled me into a hug  
Even with my dad still standing in the doorway  
looking livid  
I knew he would come around eventually  
After I had made my fair share of apologies  
I realized I had no real reason for leaving  
My family was where I needed to be  
And that place was home

More student writing  
at  
[youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org)

# The hunt

By SCOTT BEDELL  
BFA Fairfax, Grade 8

The leaves crackled under our feet as we walked to our hunting spot. We sat down and started to relax. I was thinking about what the dogs would do trapped inside all day long while Zac and I were hunting. I had put the dogs inside so they wouldn’t follow us and scare the deer away.

We had just started to get restless and were going to start walking when, all of a sudden, we heard some leaves cracking. We stopped moving immediately and slowly turned our heads so we didn’t scare what was walking parallel with us in the woods. At first it looked like my dog but then I realized what it really was. Zac took a slow step but the stick under him cracked. The coyote looked and ran toward us snarling. But then we heard lots of rustling, crunching and cracking. We immediately thought the worst, another coyote. But it was my dog. Ughhhhhhhh, why’d she have to get out of the house? My dog realized what was happening and jumped in front of us and started barking and snarling at the coyote. She was more ferocious than I have ever seen her before.

The coyote took one snap at my dog. My dog looked like she was ready to kill if that meant she could protect us or die trying. The coyote turned tail and ran away and never came back.

I am so glad that Bailey, my dog escaped from the house and followed us out here. We walked home, petting and playing with her. When we got home I reached for the door and knocked loudly. My dad opened the door.

“Dad, we didn’t get a big deer but we got something better: we got an amazing and unbelievable story.”

## Don’t sweat it . . .

By ALEXIS PELLETIER  
Fairfield Center School, Grade 8

I’ve lost it,  
Not because I was screaming  
Or hurt,  
Because I’m speechless,  
Almost in tears,  
Why me?  
I have the burning in my eyes,  
My face is getting hotter,  
I’ve blocked everything out,  
Trying not to burst into tears,  
All over a paper.  
It’s hard having other priorities  
And forgetting what they want.  
I was hollered at,  
Kicked offline,  
And now I’m here  
Writing this  
Because I have nothing better to do.  
Why is it so difficult?  
It’s not like I have to have the paper,  
It wasn’t even there when I went to get it,  
My urge to cry has disappeared,  
Am I OK  
To go back  
And join everyone?  
Or should I stay  
And continue dreading,  
Over a simple paper?

\*Don’t sweat the small stuff, because every minute you spend being mad, is a minute you’ve lost that you could have spent being happy.\*

## Frosted webs

By SHOSHANA DANIT SIVLERSTEIN  
Homeschooled, Grade 11

Silver strings crossing  
Against enveloping mist  
Webs bridging the leaves.