

Week 22: Writing prompts -- ‘My Life’; cheating

High School

By Miranda Scott

MONTPELIER HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 9

When I first started high school I heard a lot about change. How your friends, your schoolwork and, probably, your life would change. I didn't think much of this. I mean, I knew change was going to happen, I just didn't know it would be this drastic.

It started with schoolwork where I began to slip. I didn't understand anything, and I got lost easily. My tests were horrible, and I'd forget to do my homework sometimes. I finally caught up, but I still sometimes see myself slip. I've lost the drive I thought I would have. My extreme goal of college is slipping through my fingers, and now, I just want to last another day without feeling like I don't belong.

Then the friend changes came. I had been really close with this group of friends for years. Suddenly, it seems like we're all going different ways. Some of them are doing drugs and trying to impress a bunch of seniors. One of them told me about their pot experience and said "If you tell, I'll kill you." None of the people I call friends wants to hear about my thoughts because they are too busy talking about how horrible their lives are or those seniors they want to date or other things. They don't understand, and they don't want to. So, I began to ignore them, and in turn they ignored me. I feel like I've lost a part of me. But, I'm not sad ... at least I don't think I am.

Then came the life changes. I'm feeling sad a lot of the time. I feel like I'm trapped in this pit and every time something bad happens it gets deeper. It's like I'm drowning, and no one can help me. I've been talking to my parents about this feeling, I've been talking to everyone I know about this feeling, but I don't feel like they can help. They can't keep the bad stuff from happening. Just the other day a friend of mine was joking around about how I'm "deaf." I was extremely shocked when I felt my heart sink and my eyes water up. I stayed silent the rest of the day. I have never felt so alone in my whole life.

I'm clinging to the things that keep me floating right now. The people who I enjoy being around, the classes I do well in, my hobbies. But, it never seems to be enough. I have a hole in me right now, and though I know my life isn't too horrible, I just can't seem to fill it. And I'm trying to find out what will. They said change would happen and I didn't believe them. Now, the change has begun, and I'm sinking.

Viewpoint

By Bridget Iverson

MOUNT MANSFIELD UNION HIGH SCHOOL,
GRADE 9

It's easy
To ignore her
With the side-swept bangs
And the same type of shirt
They all wear.
There's nothing about her
That makes you look twice.
*I'm silent white fury inside
And it's pounding in my lungs.
I want to let it out*

*But
There's something about being here
That keeps it chained in my chest
And refuses
To let it go.
Something
That cares more about how I look
Than how I feel.*

Her forehead's sometimes creased
As she navigates
Through people moving slower
Than she
In the halls –
Furrows deeper
Than normally caused
By a drifting couple
In her way.

*When they look at me
They see the girl
I project.
The one formed of social boundaries
That cannot be crossed
Except in the screaming silence of my thoughts
Where the rebels are beaten down
Shoved into a cage
Of high-school values
And left there
To hammer at the bars
While outwardly
I smile.*

I only grab
Glimpses of her
And usually
There's nothing to stay the eye.
She's just there.

*When they look at me
I wonder
What they see.*

My life

By Gabriella Goruso

SUGARWOOD SCHOOL, GRADE 2

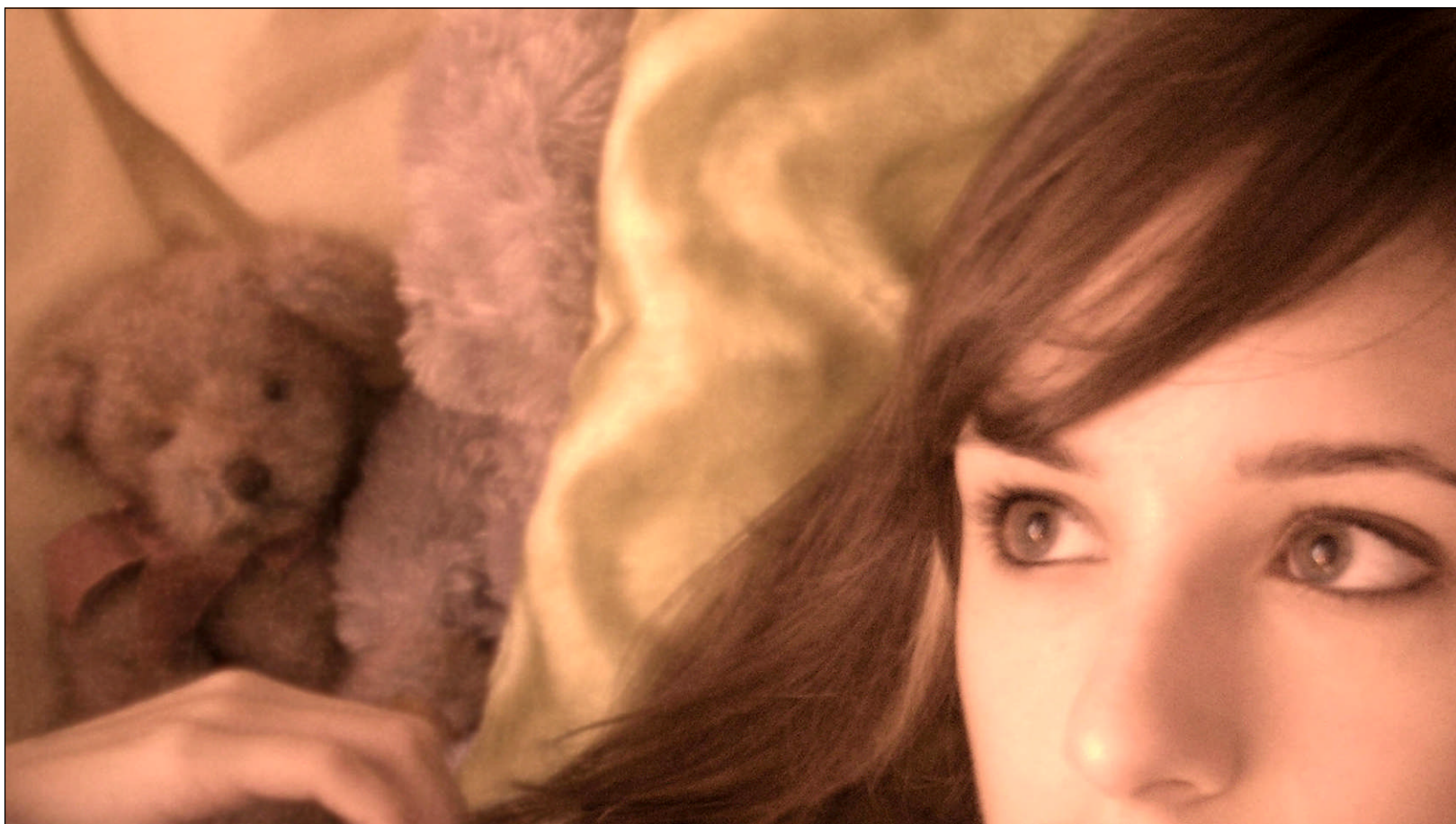
When I was a baby I was really cute. My mommy dressed me up. Every time she put socks on me it took a long time for me to get them off! I didn't like socks, and I still don't!

When I turned two I could walk. Sometimes I fell down.

When I was four I could read "Go Dog Go!" When I had just turned six, I was in a play called "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever." There was a fire in the play, and we all had to run across the stage and pretend that there was a real fire (and there really was smoke!) The best part for me was being a baby angel because I had a mom (who was really a boy!) He was extra nice to me!

I like school. I like learning about many different things. I like learning to read. I like to read to my teacher, Peggy. I am really proud of how I read!

PORTRAIT OF A DAYDREAMER



Liza Desmarais, a student at Essex High School, says this about her photo: "When told that our assignment was to take a self-portrait, my first reaction was what a simple assignment this was going to be. I take pictures of myself all the time, who better a subject than myself? Well, I definitely thought differently once I started in on the project. Capturing candid photos of yourself is one thing, but taking a photo that shows your true meaning — who you really are — that's difficult. In this photo, I decided to reveal the day-dreamy, less crisp part of me. I always seem to be spacing out in my own little world, and I think this picture really gets that across. I matted it so that my picture was in the corner, so my eyes look off into the white distance. It was an assignment that really made me look deeper at myself."

My last tears

By Samantha Rose Newell

BRATTLEBORO AREA HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 10

No answer. I thought I was going to die at that very moment. Everything I had ever hoped for went down the drain. I thought my life and everything in it was gone, but I was wrong. I asked again, "Do you still love me?"

"Look, it's not like that, I do still love you, but I can't handle this right now, it's too complicated."

Too complicated? TOO COMPLICATED? I don't think so. We were perfect for each other, and he knew it. And it's not like that? Hello? If it wasn't like that then he would have answered me the first time. He can't handle this right now?

I had so much running through my mind that I started to cry, and those were the last tears I can remember me ever crying. I haven't cried since. Three people have died since then; I have gone to the funerals and wakes but never shed a tear. I don't know why, but I can't seem to do it. Not a tear.

When my great-grandpa died I went to his wake, and I was really sad. I wasn't that close to him, but

he was very close to my father. Seeing my father cry made me want to cry, but I couldn't do it. Not a tear. My father looked at me like I was purple when I was the only one at the wake not crying. I was just standing there like it didn't matter to me. But it did. I really loved my great-grandfather. When I realized he was staring at me I ran into the bathroom and put water down the ducts of my eyes to make it look like I was crying, and it worked.

When I got home I realized something. Maybe we were perfect for each other. Maybe after a broken heart nothing seemed to be worse. That was almost a year ago, and I haven't cried since. I never liked to cry, but if it's the only way to show people that I don't wish to be bothered then I miss those tears. Not being able to cry just makes me want to do it more. But I can't. I wish I could, but I can't. Those tears won't fall. They are gone, but I hope it isn't forever.

Anxious Victims

By Jessy Davenport | WOODSTOCK UNION HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 10

Anxious Victims
Eyes darting
Suspicion floating like a toxic fume in the air
Thick ...
The silence is penetrated by the scribbling of pens and pencils
The quiet sighs of students
Watching like a predator, the teacher observes every bodily twitch
Nervous sensations hang in the atmosphere
The clock rhythmically ticks in the background
Well studied and prepared,
Some sit completed, relaxed, satisfied in their hard plastic chairs
With their pens resting
Others anxiously look across the table
around the room
On the laminated floors
Up at the ceiling
At the door
Staring as if the answers are hidden in the room
Ready to appear if you stare long enough
Pens and pencils in hand
Nothing comes to mind
With no escape, anxious victims break rules.

Card shark

By Emma Seaver | HARTFORD MEMORIAL MIDDLE SCHOOL, GRADE 8

Cole cheats at Old Maid
all the time.
He thinks it's cute.
I find it annoying.
Of course
I have to be nice
he's only seven.

But I don't let my
irritation show.
I let him think I have no idea.
He thinks he's being clever.
Maybe he'll grow up to be a
Pro poker player
or something.

Cheater's guilt

By Laura Voelker-Hebert

HARTFORD MEMORIAL MIDDLE SCHOOL, GRADE 8

"Okay now it's time for the test.
Hope you're ready for this one."
The teacher says, enforcing it right to me.
I know I didn't study,
And I know I'm going to fail,
But still I act as if I'm totally ready.
The paper is placed in front of me.
I sit and stare.
Then I can't pretend anymore.
I can't do it.
But, oh ... that smart new kid's paper is showing itself to me ...
The answers: a, c, b, c, b.
I write them down feeling no emotion.
Turning it in,
Trying not to look into the teacher's eyes,
And hurry back to my seat.
Phew, I'm glad that's over.
But then the guilt,
All the guilt hits like a bullet.
Bam!

Rose

By Bailey Walker

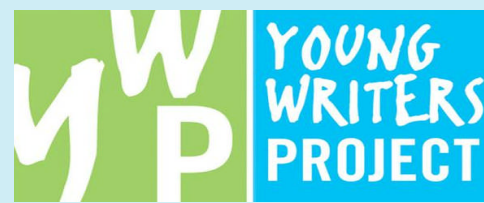
HOME SCHOOL, DERBY, GRADE 8

Rose. That's what they shout out to me as the sun sets behind the purple mountains on the horizon and the dinner bell from our kitchen is sent into work. But I never come. Why should I want dinner, when I can feast on the colors and smells of my world? The apple tree at my back, rough and delicious, the grass, tickling my bare feet smelling of summer and all the pleasures I adore.

After a while, I would expect them to stop shouting my name from the barn, over the fields. It won't do them any good.

I am a rose, after all. Why would I want to close my petals, to close me to fit in? I like it better, out here, where I can spread myself wide in the glow of the setting sun, where I can chase fireflies until I drop to this wonderful earth, exhausted.

A rose can't survive without water, and mine is right here, against the apple tree, watching my lovely earth kiss the sun good-night. And this is where I'll stay.



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.

VERMONT BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE

On the Web

at

youngwritersproject.org

ONLINE BOOK CLUB. If you're a high school student who likes books, go to YWP's Web site — youngwritersproject.org — to participate in discussion forums on each of the 15 finalist books for the Green Mountain Book Award. The site also contains book summaries, study guides and more. Find links on top of the front page.

2008 WEEKLY PROMPTS. Check out the YWP's weekly prompts scheduled through the rest of this year. Upcoming is a special prompt on Farming with a cash award! Go to the Web site, click on "Publish" in the top menu bar and follow the "Prompts" link.

YWP WINTER WRITING CONFERENCE. The Young Writers Project will host a day-long writing workshop with some special guests on **March 8** from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Unitarian-Universalist Church in Montpelier. To attend, you must sign up ahead of time. Space is limited.

For more, go to the YWP Web site: youngwritersproject.org and click on the link under "Announcements" in the bottom right column.

And check out the site for more student writing – blogs, forums, podcasts, commenting, a Writer's Library. Register and log in to participate.