

Memories

By Elizabeth Annis

Dummerston School, Grade 7

That day I went into the attic brought back so many terrible memories. I was looking through a box my mother had given me before she passed away. Most of the stuff was just her old trinkets from when she was young. There was a little wooden sculpture of Jesus Christ, an old picture of my family, and a doll that had been my mother's and then mine. I would've given it to my daughter but I thought it had been lost, and now she is off living with her husband and 2 boys. It made me sad to think I would never see any other baby girl playing with this doll that I loved my whole childhood.

I brought the old box downstairs and set it out on the table. I emptied everything out of it and, while taking the last trinket out, I hit the box off the table. When I leaned down to pick it up I saw that something had flown out of it. When I picked it up I saw that it was an old photograph. As soon as I saw those three faces I nearly fainted. I had to grip the side of the table to keep myself from falling.

The picture was of Millie Ordinance on the left — she had been one of my better friends when I was growing up — myself on the right, and then in the middle... that was... that was... that was Richie Lilafeld. Richie was my best friend when I was younger. We were inseparable — connected at the hip most people said.

Richie's father owned a farm right next to ours, separated from us by a couple of acres and a river. Every day we would meet each other halfway and go to either of our farms and jump in the pile of hay, or go see the cats out in the barn. Whatever we did we had a good time.

I remembered the day we took that photo. Millie, Richie and I had gone down to the river to go swimming. The bank of the river was pure mud and we had had a mud fight. About an hour after we got to the river my mother came running up to us screaming that we were having a picture taken in about an hour. We had to sprint home, get cleaned up, get our nice clothes on and get our hair cleaned and put up. So much to do in such a little time. We got everything done but after the picture was taken all of us, including my mother, started laughing. We laughed until we cried.

A few days after that was when it happened. Richie and I had planned on meeting together halfway, like always, but when I got to our meeting place she was not there. We had planned on going swimming that day because it was so hot. I just assumed that she had gone down to the river already so I walked down to there. Sure enough, I saw her boots, bonnet and socks lying next to the muddy sand bar but I did not see her. We never went anywhere other than right under the bridge because 20 yards down was a waterfall. Besides her not being there, there seemed nothing wrong so I decided that maybe she had seen some berries in the woods and had gone to collect them, yeah that was it. After waiting ten minutes I slowly took off my shoes and socks and stepped into the water.

As soon as I stepped in I knew what had happened to Richie. The current was so strong that it took my feet out from under me. Luckily

Mill girls — Chace Mill, Burlington, 1910



Writers were asked to create a story based on this photograph taken by Lewis Hine, an investigative photographer who took photos of children at work in mills, mines, factories and farms in the early 1900s.

Late again By Amber Brooks | Rivendell Academy, Grade 9

I fled. Ran as fast as my skinny legs could manage, past the horse pasture and then the barn. I halted next to the well and pulled the lever. Grabbing the pail and splashing the cool water upon my face, I attempted to wash the traces of sweat and dirt. I sprinted toward the house and climbed onto the deck, my dress bunched in my hands. I leaped over the lazy old dog that lounged on the porch, and leaped up the steps to the screen door. I scrambled in the door and stopped as I saw the scowl on my mother's face.

I smoothed my hair down over the planes of my face and wiped away the gritty dirt that was embedded in my skin on the back of my dark dress. Mary stood with a hand propped on her hip and narrowed her eyes at me.

there was a huge tree branch that I was able to grab onto before the current could take

me away. When I finally got out after some struggle I ran home as quick as I could. I saw Mama out in the garden and all I could do was scream to her. My father came out with his gun when he heard me screaming and quickly ran over and asked what was wrong. I was finally able to tell him after trying four times. He ran into the forest and then didn't come back till night.

All I could do was think about Richie. Was she OK? Was she hurt? Would they find her? Then the most terrible question came into my mind. Was she still alive? I started crying my eyes out then and slowly cried myself to sleep. I had dreams of falling — just falling — and my mother had to shake me awake because I was screaming non-stop. The next morning when I woke up my eyes hurt from crying. They were red and puffy, and my throat was sore from screaming in my sleep. Before I called my mother I heard her and my father talking. "We found her last night and she was

'As soon as I saw those three faces I nearly fainted.'

"About time," she sneered
Abby glanced at me with small quiet eyes and finally came over to the man with the camera. His eyes were filled with boredom. I mashed my lips together and proceeded to walk toward my sisters. Abby sighed, filling the awkward silence, and slung her arm on the side of Mary's shoulder. Mary glumly angled her body toward the camera, her hand still resting on her hip. I lay my hand on Abby's shoulder, and watched as the man fumbled with the lens. I looked at my mother's eyebrows that never relaxed, how they furrowed in the middle. I tried to suppress my laughter and managed to smile as the flash blinded my eyes.

still breathing slightly," my father said.
"Is she going to live?" my mother said. My father didn't answer. I

knew what the answer was. As quickly as I could, I threw off my blankets and ran out the front door. All I could think of was getting to her before it was too late. My bare feet running over the sharp rocks and debris on the path hurt. Every couple of feet I could feel my feet being slashed by the rocks but I could not stop running. Nothing in the world could slow me down.

When I got into their house I saw everybody standing around a bed. There was a doctor there. He had a sad and hopeless look on his face like everyone else there. I slowly moved toward the bed. Suddenly looking at her was the last thing I wanted to do, but I also needed to look at her one more time. When I finally got the courage to go see her I was shocked. Her face looked like my feet; she had probably been slashed by the rocks in the waterfall while falling. I could just imagine myself sitting at the bottom of the waterfall bleeding, cold, and knowing that I was going to die. I suddenly started crying uncontrollably. I could



Young Writers Project is an independent nonprofit that engages students to write. It provides writing prompts for this newspaper series. It maintains youngwritersproject.org, a Web site for students; and it builds Web sites for schools: ywpvt.net.

NEXT PROMPTS

Lyrics. Create lyrics that could be put to music. We are looking particularly for ballads — lyrics with a story about Vermont or Vermont history.

Alternate: "That is so annoying." What really annoys you? Write about a moment or tell a story about a time when you felt annoyed.

Deadline: Friday.

Thanks!

Last Tuesday an estimated 7,000 students at 50 Vermont schools participated in Vermont Writes Day in which students, teachers, staff and guests joined in for a seven-minute write. Even Gov. Jim Douglas joined in the writing.

Young Writers Project is selecting the very best work submitted for the "Dear President Obama..." prompt and will be sending those letters to the president.

We also will be publishing some of the work here over the next few weeks.

Thanks to all the schools who took part.

have gone down to the waterfall's bottom and found her. Maybe she would be fine right now. I gripped her hand and just couldn't stop crying. Her little chest was slowly moving up and down. I stayed there all day while people slowly moved in and out of the house. That whole day I sat there crying, holding her little hand. At 9:00 that night I felt a little squeeze on my hand. I looked up at her face. She made a little smile, and then her chest stopped moving.

The funeral was the worst day of my life. I couldn't listen to anything anybody said because I was crying so hard. I felt someone give me a little hug, but when I looked up no one was there.

I had not thought about Richie until that day in the attic, but everything came back to me like it had happened only yesterday. My best friend had died before my eyes. The only thing that had made it halfway bearable was knowing that she had reassured me that everything would be OK.