

# Stopped short

BY SARAH BUEHLER

Dover Elementary School, Grade 5

I was enjoying myself snowboarding on the mountain on a Thursday afternoon. It was snack time and I knew my mom would pick me up soon. I told the teacher on duty that I would be going to the clock tower to wait for my mom. I had to wait for three hours before she picked me up, and I was so mad because I had to wait that long.

She came crying and I had no idea what had just happened. Once we got home she pulled to the side and told me that my father had had a heart attack. My family and I were crying and so very sad that day. I was so scared but I knew that life goes on even if I was scared.

Today I am still in mourning. In a few weeks it will have been a year since my father died.

# The dance

BY LINDSEY BRAND

Brown's River Middle School, Grade 7

I walk out of the sweaty gym where most of the 7th and 8th graders are dancing in hustling packs. I need a three-second break from the flashing strobe lights and pounding music.

The hallway is surprisingly quiet in comparison, and there are small circular tables lining the sides with slightly eerie blue lights hanging above them. At first glance I think the hallway is empty, but soon I realize that around each small table is a group of friends, slumped into the shadows. They are all hugging some crying person or consoling a whimpering friend. I wonder what could be going on. In each little group there seems to be a problem causing tears and broken hearts. I try to imagine what could ever make someone so sad on a night where everything, from the music to the lights, seems so happy. Yet, how could I ever imagine this when I am not in their shoes? I am merely an outsider, barely making a ripple in the surface of their lives. Their stories I can only guess by the looks on their faces.

I've had enough; the last song is barely starting to fade out of my head. I turn around and walk slowly back into the gym. Into the crowd.

# School stress

BY CONNER RENEE LAFROMBOISE

Chelsea Public School, Grade 10

School is stressful

From boatloads of homework

To the never-ending, high school drama.

The stress builds and builds.

It clouds your head and invades your mind.

It nags at you and you feel like there's never enough time.

You want to revel in your teen years but they fly by. So when life gets crazy, relax and try to enjoy all the madness.



# THIS WEEK: "Stress" & "My Story"

Each week students respond to prompts provided by Young Writers Project. Best work is submitted to [youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org) by students and teachers from Vermont and New Hampshire. A team of students help select work. For more student writing go to [youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org). Students are welcome to join and share additional work on the site.

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

YWP is an independent nonprofit that engages students to write, helps them improve and connects them with authentic audiences for their best work.

YWP runs [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 go to [ywpschools.net](http://ywpschools.net).

## YWP NEWS

YWP has received a generous grant from the Vermont Humanities Council to hold in-person and online workshops with Vermont authors.

Please check in at [youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org) for details of the upcoming forums that begin in March.

The sessions are free.

# Everybody's different

BY SASKIA BAILEY-DE BRUJIN

Brattleboro Area Middle School, Grade 7

Everybody's different  
there's no two-of-a-kind  
we're different shapes and colors  
and we've got different minds  
there's a difference in our faces  
'Cause that's who we are  
and we live in different places  
some are near, some are far  
I like peanut butter and honey on my bread  
you might run PB and J instead  
I like to run around, have loads of fun  
You'd rather be in church  
You wanna be a nun  
If we're the top of the food chain,  
the ones with the brains  
why do we act so insane?  
why not be who you want?  
why not be free?  
why not do what you want?  
'cause I'm not you and you're not me!

# Willow

BY AIDAN HARRIS

Brattleboro Area Middle School, Grade 7

Sneaking, hiding, stalking, hunting  
looking at me from the bushes  
footsteps  
rearing back, ready to strike  
glancing over my shoulder  
frantic  
scared  
coming closer  
I begin to run  
watching me  
stalking me  
hunting me  
At last I can see home  
one last glance  
a flash of black  
following me  
faster than I can run  
closer, closer  
black blur flying towards me  
pouncing on me  
tail wagging  
my dog, Willow

# Vermont

BY COLIN CAMPBELL | Brattleboro Union High School, Grade 10

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

Vermont is the way I live — the fresh air I breathe, the extreme seasonal changes and the uniqueness that describes every individual. For the past 17 years of my life I have come to know Vermont in its beauty and glory, and not just because of its colorful foliage or its state-of-the-art ski mountains. I have experienced the deeper aspects of joy in Vermont, whether skiing at Maple Valley when I was four, or going to Mount Snow and finding the trails that are unknown to the average tourist.

Living my entire life in one town has allowed for experiences that will never be forgotten. If I were asked to take someone somewhere in Brattleboro I could do it with a blindfold. This town and state is my home and, as I continue to grow, I am starting to realize my spiritual connection to this place...

# Stressed

BY DREW M. WOOD

Dummerston Middle School, Grade 8

With my brother

I deal with a lot.

He bugs and bugs

till he gets what he wants.

He's annoying like a bug  
that I can never swat.

What I do

is try to calm down

then the bug goes away. ...

FOR NOW.

## NEXT PROMPT

**Elevator.** You are in an elevator. The door opens and in walks an annoying type of person. Suddenly the elevator stops between floors...tell us what happens. (No real names, please!) *Alternate:* **Peeves.** What is your number one pet peeve?

**Deadline Feb. 26.**

Submit at:

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

# Imperfection

BY RUBY McCAFFERTY

Edmunds Middle School, Grade 8

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

I can't help it. I can't help the way my mind buzzes, from an almost-inaudible murmur to a cacophony of thoughts and images and memories and muses. I can't help the way my pulse races, my heart beats. Stress is just another thing for me a burden I have that has blended into the background, adding a tinge of gray to my blue skies. I would love to learn how to fly, to let all of the weight disappear from my shoulders. Instead, I wear my burdens like a tattered blanket. They let me know that I'm still human, and they keep me occupied from other things that may grab my attention. I look for perfection because in my eyes, it holds a light that will take me away from this seemingly boring world of normalcy.

What I do not want to understand is that there is no beauty in perfection. It is the gray of the world. It is blended exactly, lies flat on a page; it behaves like any color should. Imperfection is like the color white. White is not a color, you say. It is just the absence of such. It is what lies beneath the color, what we try to wash away and delete from our lives. Look a little closer though. Inside white is every color we have ever known, everything we have ever wanted to be. Imperfection leaves room for colorful personalities, quirks, odd tastes in music, funny nicknames and unusual laughs. Anyone who tries to achieve perfection is just slowly draining the color from their lives, leaving behind the dullest, most flawless gray you have ever seen...