

Number nine

By Becky Hemenway

SPAULDING HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 12

Some people say that cats have nine lives. Well, in my case, my family and I all say that my mom has nine lives. This is because my mom is very sick with cancer and every time she ends up in the hospital the doctors say she is very lucky to make it. You know, maybe my mom really is becoming a cat; she does lie around all day sleeping on the couch. Maybe I will come home from school one day and she will be catching some mice or birds.

Wearing No. 9

By Sophie Hale

SPAULDING HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 9

The number nine, that red jersey, with a white 9. It's the number my brother wears. He's such a successful soccer player. It's his dream, the only thing he works hard for. I have never seen anyone try harder at anything. He does whatever he can to help out his team. I look up to him. We don't always get along, but he knows when it is the right time to be the bigger person, and, even though he doesn't always show it, he loves me and protects me. I have watched him through the years on all the different teams he has played on. I've watched him with all the friends he has made. I have sat on the sideline in my lawn chair just watching him play his heart out.

I remember a game he played against a Boston team last year at Tree Farm in Essex. It was the first game he played in the Synergy (Football Club). Within the first few minutes of the game he dodged four or five players on the other team and went down the field, passing back and forth to one of his teammates. Then he took the shot and made the first goal of the game. Everyone was cheering for him even though he was new to the team and the parents knew little more than his name. But to see my brother out there on that field reminded me how far he has come. I sat there so proud, thinking, "Yeah, that's my brother!"

Nine lives

By Braxton Williams

BARRE TOWN SCHOOL, GRADE 4

My mother says all the time that I have nine lives. I mean, whatever I do I don't get hurt. Like if I slide off my garage roof, my mom says I have nine lives. That's pathetic! If I have nine lives I must be magic because most people I know have only one or two lives.

Mothers — how could they believe this kind of stuff? It's weird. I just don't get it.



Young Writers Project is an independent nonprofit that engages students to write. It provides writing prompts for this newspaper series; maintains youngwritersproject.org, a supportive online community for students; trains college mentors to provide students with feedback and builds *online classrooms* for schools and after-school programs. For more: ywpvt.net. To read about the project: ywpvt.net.

TODAY

is

VERMONT WRITES DAY

Join the statewide writing effort. Get your school and teacher to set aside seven minutes to write on three suggested prompts. Or join in the fun at vermontwrites.ywpvt.net

Go there to write, see the prompts or read other students' work.

Then they were gone

By Colleen Banister-Garvey

SPAULDING HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 12

And then they were gone.
Just like the sun and the rain.
Pretty rainbows had formed,
People were laughing,
Children were playing,
But then they were gone.
The grass was green, the sky was blue,
The houses were pretty, the cars were shiny,
The fruit was ripe, the vegetables were growing,
The plates were clean, the glasses were washed,
But then they were gone.
The warriors had fought, the war was won,
The land was filled with laughter and joy.
The sea was as pretty as the blue sky had been
The fish swam with such freedom
But then they were gone.

Ashes to ashes

By Lianna Reed

RANDOLPH UNION HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 11

Each one suddenly fringed with colorful little tassels
the embers glow scarlet, persimmon, black and charcoal.
The skeletal pieces flake off the body, as if —
the cinders drifting along the grated bottom,
gazing at the vast heaven.
Soot covered them
blanketing each one
in darkness and despair.
Eventually those colorful tassels begin
to fade, the oranges to reds
reds to black and the final
sparks burn until gray.

(“each one suddenly fringed with colorful little tassels.” from “Tension,” by Billy Collins)

When I was nine

By Katherine Hill

THETFORD ACADEMY, GRADE 8

I was nine when I first hunted deer.
I sat in the woods hoping to hear
The crunch of leaves, the snort of a buck.
I knew the rules — all I needed was luck.

The sun was shining on my face,
Then I heard the steady pace of
A deer coming up the path.

It seemed like it was a minute and a half.
My breath was quick, my heart was fast,
I waited for the deer to walk on past.

I finally got a glimpse of its brown,
But on her head, she had no crown.
But that didn't matter, all I wanted was meat.
So I slowly leaned forward in my seat.

I fired the gun; she had no time to run.
She fell to the ground, not making a sound.
I was nine when I first hunted deer.
I hope I enjoy it every year.

Defeat

By Haley Grigel

THETFORD ACADEMY, GRADE 8

A 9/10 on her spelling test...almost.
A 99-cent toothbrush — I wouldn't buy it if it was a dollar.
99 bottles of beer on the wall — never 100? who drank it?
His 9th birthday — not quite double digits.
9 socks packed for her trip. "I won't have five pairs!"
9 kids in gym class. The ninth girl has to throw the ball with teacher.
He bowls a 9 and sighs — not a strike.

MORE writing, songs, podcasts, forums, comments
youngwritersproject.org

General Writing

Listen, and hear us

By Cassie Eurich

CROSSETT BROOK MIDDLE SCHOOL, GRADE 8

Listen.
What do you hear?
To those with closed hearts
and minds locked tight,
their ears are blocked,
they hear nothing.
But there are those special few
who listen,
really listen.
For everyone speaks
in their own way.
Through words in ink,
through a song,
or a riddle,
the way they act,
the things they do,
sometimes even
just the way
they look at you.
Some even dare to say aloud
what most of us
are screaming inside.
So listen,
what do you hear?
We all scream
that we are frightened,
confused people,
who want protection,
who want support,
who want to fit in,
or who want to stand out.
Who want just to be told
we are important,
we are special,
we are wanted.
We scream that
surrounded by people,
we are still lonely,
we are afraid.
But to help
you must first hear the cry.
So listen,
what do you hear?
For it's not what you hear
but rather the fact
that you continue to listen,
to reach out.
So open your heart,
unlock your mind,
unplug your ears,
and listen.
What do you hear?

DEADLINE NEAR!

Applications due **APRIL 1** to attend
**Champlain College's Young
Writers' Conference, May 29-31.**
More at: [Champlain.edu/Young-
Writers-Conference.html](http://Champlain.edu/Young-Writers-Conference.html)

