

Week 25: Writing prompts -- “Iraq” and “Bullying”

Bullying on the bus

By Ariel Watson

Brattleboro Area Middle School, Grade 7

I've witnessed a lot of bullying incidents. I've been the bully, the victim and the bystander. There was one incident that was the worst because an older kid fought a younger kid.

I was riding the bus and a little third-grader got on and sat right across from me, which was an older kid's seat.

"Hey that's someone else's seat. You might want to move," I warned him.

"Ah, well. I don't have to move," he said back.

"Okay," I said. "I was just telling you." He said nothing back. The sixth-grader got on the bus. As he walked farther and farther down the aisle, I got more and more scared for the third-grader. I knew something bad was going to happen, and I didn't want him to get hurt. So, I warned him one last time. "Are you sure you don't want to move? He's coming up the aisle right now."

"Yeah. So. He can't do anything to me!" he said back.

"Okay." I didn't have much to say after that because it was his choice not to move. The sixth-grade boy got to the back of the bus where the little kid was sitting in his seat.

"Move!" the sixth-grader shouted.

"Make me!" said the third-grade boy. The older boy started to swear. As expected, the third-grader swore right back at him. I kept silent. Soon everyone on the bus was paying attention to the two boys fighting. Even the bus driver, who didn't say anything.

"Don't say another word or else you'll get hurt!" the sixth-grade boy shouted. The third-grader swore again. The sixth-grader held up his fist.

"Come on! He's in third grade. Don't hurt him," I said. He paid no attention to me. Then he punched the third-grader right in the eye. I couldn't believe it! He held up his fist again.

"Stop it!" I yelled as I stood up, blocking him from hitting the other kid again. The sixth-grader looked at me and walked the other way down the aisle and sat in an empty seat. The little kid was crying.

When we got to the school, I took him to the nurse and explained to her what had happened. The third-grader got some ice for his eye and nobody ever did anything about the incident. Not the bus driver. Not the nurse. Nobody.

From that day on, the little boy was picked on by that same kid on the bus, and everyday I had to watch it, and still nobody did anything about it. I continually tried to stop him but it only stopped him for a day then he did it again the next day. I told the third-grader to tell the principal, but he was too scared. I told a teacher a couple of times, but she said it was none of her business or mine. It was terrible. The bullying finally stopped when the sixth-grader went to seventh grade and rode the bus at a different time, but it never should have happened in the first place.

It's hard to believe that someone would do that to a little kid when obviously he's bigger and stronger, but it happens a lot. More than people think. People pick on kids that are younger because it's easier to hurt them mentally and physically than it is to hurt older kids. It's not fair, but it's true, and not a lot of people do anything about it. More people should stand up for other people when they're getting bullied, and maybe there won't be as many problems.

Iraq

By Kayla Wood

Dummerston Middle School, Grade 7

In Iraq
The country of fighting
Men and women
Dying for our freedom
And the freedom of the Iraqis
Needlessly dying
While we sit at home
With nothing good to do
But complain that life is not good enough
While our troops fight for many lives
In Iraq
And we can't seem to understand
What it is like to fight for our lives
We don't know how much pain they go through
Fighting
In Iraq
A car comes,
And the phone rings
A mother screams and cries,
"Don't let this happen to me"
While every small child
Tries to understand
What her tears
And her words are for
A loved one dies
In Iraq
We complain because we had to do 20 pushups in gym
They have to keep fit to survive
We cry because our favorite TV show is canceled
They cry because they have to watch a friend die
And there is nothing they can do to help them
Our lives are different
They try to protect
While we try to be happy
Iraq has brought nothing but pain in most lives
But the war is not to see who can kill who
It is to give the victims their freedom
And us our protection
Iraq may be a pain to us
But just try to imagine
What it is like
To live in a war stricken country
That is called
Iraq
With no help
And no freedom
Living under a wicked person
Who would kill if what he wants is not done
So what would you do
If you had to live
In the country called
Iraq

MY MANY SHADES



Sean McCleary, an eighth-grader at Hartford Memorial Middle School, says this of his self-portrait: "The reason I chose to draw a rising sun in the background was because it reminded me of one morning when my mom and I were going to the airport, and we saw the sun rising over the tips of the mountains. I thought that it was one of the coolest things I'd ever seen. I'll never forget that morning."



Rebecca White, an eighth-grader at Hartford Memorial Middle School, says this of her self-portrait: "I've always considered myself a colorful person and this picture certainly shows it. My main inspiration was the Northern Lights. I used pastels in many different shades to show my personality and the natural beauty of the Aurora Borealis."

I live with a bullet

By Emma Redden Leland and Gray Union High School, Grade 10

Pray for me ...
I am a child. I live in a world created for the strength of mothers, not the vulnerability of children.
Pray for me ...
I am a mother. I exist everyday trying to give my child the best life possible. I worry everyday I am not doing a good enough job.
Pray for me ...
I am a woman of Iraq. I live everyday under the veil of non existence. I am no different a woman than the rest of the daughters, sisters, wives, filling the streets of our world. I live with the same emotions, the same sentiment, and the same zest for life. However, I live with a different tremor, different horror, and different trepidation. I live with the fear that the world may find out the woman under the cloth is a fearless lion. Then the lion may die.
Pray for me ...
I am Mother Earth. My body is at war. My heart, my soul and mind is being put to waste. I have become desolation, destruction, devastation, dilapidation, dissipation. I am afraid. I am afraid that I am no longer fearless, no longer courageous, and no longer intrepid. I am afraid I am no longer my own hero. I fear becoming a ghost, a skeleton. I fear I will become a drift of dust blowing by my own being.
Pray for me ...
I am an Iraqi mother holding her crying child under the protection of the tire of a tank shooting missiles killing any victim in its line of destruction.
Pray for me ...
I am a mother trying to protect her baby from the cruelty of this world, from the cruelty of war. My home is in shambles. My heart is in pieces. I have no house, never mind a home. I find shelter under a tank. I find safety, no where.
Pray for me ...
I live with a bullet.

Aggravation

By Nathan Beauregard
Benson Village School, Grade 8

One day
I was aggravated
Annoyed
Bothered.
I had been called names
Simple names.
Aggravation
I could feel it
Building up.
I couldn't hold it.
I wouldn't.
I wouldn't stand for it.

Not any more.
I wanted to hit her,
But I couldn't afford
The punishment.
So I turned my head,
And said a word
A horrible word
Especially to her.
I need to learn
To watch what I say.
Because the punishment,
Was worse.



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.



UPDATES

YWP thanks Ann Chapman's creative writing class at Leland and Gray Union High School in Brattleboro for assisting in the selection process for this week's submissions.

DEADLINE APPROACHING:

CHAMPLAIN COLLEGE WRITING CONFERENCE

Don't miss out on this year's CC Young Vermont Writers' Conference. Held on Memorial Day weekend, this conference is a great experience. **Deadline for applications is April 1.** Go to: www.champlain.edu/write/ for more information and application forms. Or call: (802) 865-6451

When I hear

By Lydia Garland

Dummerston Middle School, Grade 7

War,
Soldiers,
Desert.
All things I think of when I hear "Iraq".
Teacher,
Death,
Waiting.
Waiting for what?
Innocent Children,
Women,
Men.
Not one person is safe from this.
End,
Beginning,
Middle
The end of war, the beginning of peace, the middle of life.
Why,
Hope,
Prayer.
Hope for peace; pray for now.

The Daily Read

By Matteo Bjornsson

Woodstock Union High School, Grade 10

As I get my daily news from the walls
Of the bathroom stalls
I read so much needless hate
That the last user felt the need to make.
Why is it people need to declare such words at all
In this meaningless place on the wall?

I don't understand

By Kara Piergentili

Dummerston Middle School, Grade 7

Iraq.
War.
Pain.
Needless.
People's sons and daughters, even fathers and mothers, being sent out around the world not knowing if they are coming home.
Little boys and girls asking every night for their mommy or daddy.
What do you tell them?
When will it end?
How much longer does this have to go on?
Needless pain is being inflicted at this very moment.
It has been going on so long it is a lost cause.
One question ...
Why?

On the Web

at

youngwritersproject.org

CHANGE YOUR HIGH SCHOOL! A special challenge on the site: Tell us one thing you'd change to improve your high school. Your voice matters: Educational leaders and the Vermont Principals Association are developing a program aimed at helping students get more voice in school decisions and curriculum. Your voice will help focus that project.