

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

Thoughts about Iraq

By Emily Vasseur

HARWOOD UNION MIDDLE SCHOOL, GRADE 7

Iraq. A place of love, fortune and peace. Wait, no it's not; it's the exact opposite. What do I think when I hear the word Iraq? Death and a lot of sadness.

Our troops are in Iraq right now fighting for our country's safety. What if this war becomes another World War? Some people say "No way! That could never happen! The only people this involves and affects are the people fighting and the president." Well I think differently. It affects all of us. Some kids' moms and dads — and other family members and friends — are fighting in the war. Iraq is now being guarded and watched. Would you want your children experiencing that? We have to be there now or they would come after us. Now what are we supposed to do?

Well, President Bush is trying to figure that out. Are we just supposed to just sit back and do nothing while our soldiers' lives are in danger? As a 13-year-old I can't really do much, but a lot of people can. Some people can send food and donate supplies to help out our troops. I hear the soldiers love to get letters while they are in that dreadful place called Iraq. There's that word again and guess what, it came right after dreadful.

So that pretty much sums it up. Iraq is dangerous, sad, deathly and just plain crazy.

I hear

By Ashley Haven

RUTLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL, GRADE 8

I hear America crying
I can hear the soldiers crying
I can hear the families begging
I can hear the gunshots and the pain.
I can hear Bush telling them to stay.
I can hear the bad news
I can hear the mournful cries
I can hear their stomachs growling
I can hear them coming home safe
But somehow changing.

I hear America crying.

In the airport

By Jarett Legg

FERRISBURGH CENTRAL SCHOOL, GRADE 3

In the airport	Third month
My dad is	My heart was
Coming back	Pumping really
From Iraq, while	Fast, my mom
He was in Iraq	Was thrilled to
A bomb exploded	See my dad, Oh
In his face.	You should have
He couldn't hear for	Seen my brother
About 15 days	He was about
But then my	To cry
Dad came home	My family was
On the last	Happy together
Day of the	Again.

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.

Pebbles

By Bridget Iverson

MOUNT MANSFIELD UNION HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 9

I'm laughing and	I'm laughing to show it's a
He's laughing	Joke
Too.	And he's laughing
The insults are	Alongside
Friendly, tossed like	Because it's just
Pebbles.	Fun.
They hardly chip his	Right?
Smooth	If it hurts he
Exterior	Doesn't show it.
Shell.	He just
It must not hurt	Laughs
Because then	Along with us.
He'd ask us to	But
Stop.	Pebbles still
Right?	Sting.

Aggravation

By Nathan Beauregard

BENSON VILLAGE SCHOOL, GRADE 8

One day	Not any more.
I was aggravated	I wanted to hit her,
Annoyed	But I couldn't afford
Bothered.	The punishment.
I had been called names	So I turned my head,
Simple names.	And said a word
Aggravation	A horrible word
I could feel it	Especially to her.
Building up.	I need to learn
I couldn't hold it.	To watch what I say.
I wouldn't.	Because the punishment,
I wouldn't stand for it.	Was worse.

COLOR ME



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."

Reflection

By Rachel Sullivan

BURLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 11

"I hate you."
She looks up, startled, innocent wide eyes gazing back, astonished, into my own.
"Look at you. You're repulsive. How can I not hate you?"

She looks down, fingering the worn tattered edges of her graying hoodie, her breath catching audibly in her throat.

"You're disgusting. I bet that hasn't been washed in weeks."

She looks up quickly, tears gathering at the corners of her eyes, making them shine in the harsh lighting.

"And let's not forget those jeans," I add, glancing down at the hole-riddled atrocities, "they really don't do anything for that pear shape you've got going on."
Her hands go immediately, almost protectively, to her midsection, causing her to double over slightly, shoulders hunching in shame.

I shake my head at her, "It's too bad none of those diets are working for you. Seriously. You must just have been a born cow, since you hardly eat anything."

I can tell I hit a nerve as her lip quivers, but what would normally be a sympathetic reaction fast becomes disgust at the sight of her pathetic whimpering.

"You really don't have a spine, do you? I guess that's why you never win anything. That's probably also why you suck at sports. Remember gym last week when that puny little kid managed to knock you over, and then everyone laughed? That must have been so embarrassing! Then again, that kind of stuff happens to losers like you all the time, so maybe by now you've built up immunity to it."

Clearly not, as tears begin to roll down her pasty cheeks, dribbling down her chin and landing on her grimy sweatshirt. Then again, I wouldn't have expected anything less from a wretch like her.

"Oh, don't cry," I growl at her, "It only makes me hate you more."

She bites her lip and does her best to stop the tears, but she doesn't quite succeed in arresting her clearly visible anguish.

"I bet you'd shut up real quick if Paul was here."

That catches her attention, and I laugh at the pure ridiculousness of her schoolgirl crush.

"Yeah, I bet you would. He's real cute, isn't he? Of course, he only goes out with cool, skinny, clean, pretty girls, so I wouldn't exactly hold my breath if I was you."

"He could like me," she whispers, voice crackling with emotion, "You don't know."

I snort derisively, "Yeah. Sure. What was that thing he said to you the other day in the lunch line? As I recall, it was pretty romantic."

She looks down at the floor, hugging herself, "That doesn't matter."

"Sure it does. He asked you to move. That's the most acknowledgement he's ever given you, and that's got to count for something."

"Enough!" She yells, eyes livid with feeling, "I've had enough! Just leave me alone!"

I shake my head slowly, "No, you haven't. Not yet. You see, I just can't live with you like this. Something has to be done."

She looks at me, recoiling within herself, almost as if she knows what I'm about to do.

Hot, white electricity shoots through my veins as I look at her, seeing her greasy hair, vacant eyes, dirty clothes and pasty white skin.

I hate her.

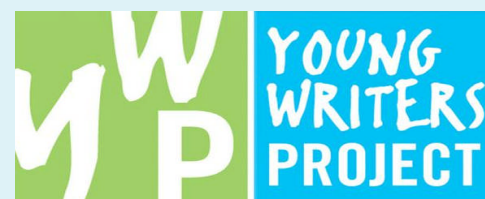
I really hate her.

With a cry full of loathing and rage, I raise my fist and throw all my weight behind it, striking her squarely in the face.

A scream.

A flash of pain.

And then her image explodes, the glass shattering as the mirror breaks, the sharp pieces shredding my skin and spilling my blood all over the floor.



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

The bully

By Jordan DiNapoli

MONKTON CENTRAL SCHOOL, GRADE 5

One time there was a girl named Ilianna who got bullied by a kid named Bruno. (If your name is Bruno I was not thinking about you.)

It all started when Ilianna was at her school getting her lunch out of her locker. All of a sudden Bruno came up to her and stole her lunch.

"Hey why did you do that?" Ilianna asked in shock.

"Because I am hungry and I have only stolen three other lunches today," Bruno said getting very mad.

"I am not going to deal with this right now because I have had a bad day already so if you bully anybody else that I see I will go straight to the principal." Ilianna said very strictly.

"That will never happen. I'm allowed to bully anytime I want to so, HA!" Bruno replied.

The next day ... Ilianna saw Bruno bullying a kid named Eliza so she ran and got the principal. The principal had a very big talk with Bruno and Bruno's parents.

From then on, Bruno never bullied anybody again.

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?

We don't need them!

By Basundhara Mukherjee

FREDERICK TUTTLE MIDDLE SCHOOL, GRADE 6

Hatred. Bullying. Bullies.
What is the definition of a bully? To me, a bully is someone who takes their own pain in life out on other people. Usually bullies will have people bullying them. That's what I think. But, why? Well, if you ask me, they have nothing better to do. They want power. They seem to need power. Why would they want power? They don't want anyone to know they get bullied.

If you really think about it, bullies create more bullies. Bullying creates more bullying. So, before you bully someone, think about it. Do you want to create another monster who takes their pain out on others? Or would you rather save yourself and another person from turning into that monster?

If you're being bullied, don't let that take you over. Just think about.

Hatred. Bullying. Bullies. What are the definitions of them?

Check out the Web site for more student writing – blogs, forums, podcasts, commenting, a Writer's Library and the 2008 prompts. Register and log in to participate.