

Meeting in slumber

By Jacqueline Susmann
Northfield High School, Grade 12

I'm biting my nails.
I ball up my iron fists and —
You Are Arctic Cold.
“How could you leave me?” I say
It's calm, the words flow out of me
naturally, like
The first flakes of snow —
a summer stream running through the
woods by your house.
We make eye contact for the first time
since . . .
Your body went limp.
I can remember when our eyes first
shook hands and made small talk.
Yours weren't as bloodshot, and
mine weren't so confident.
“You didn't matter,” you began
“I felt like there was nothing left”
Your honesty makes my insides catch
fire.
I want to tell you all the countless oc-
casions
where I've sat in my room
— in the same state of mind you were.
Nothing was left, I had been caught,
there was no hope —
But you always mattered.
Those nights, instead of taking orders,
I dragged
my bruised emotional self into bed;
I waited for the sunrise.
I allowed my body to breathe, and my
heart to beat.
I woke up in the morning and
faced my self-inflicted monsters
I turned them into kittens and grew
fond of them, and
I turned the bruises on my thoughts
into tattoos.
Things you can tell your kids you did
when you were young and stupid.
You didn't give your homemade mon-
sters a chance
to grow on you, but instead
tried to erase permanent marker with
your bare fingers.
You let your Mercedes brain be driven
by Mr. Daniels,
Mr. Jack Daniels,
— you let him kill you too.
He easily led your finger to that trigger
— told you to squeeze
And you shot your own Mercedes in
the oil tank
You closed your eyes forever, and
now you sit here, with a blue face and
cold feet—
— while monsters turn into kittens and
brains turn into cars, and
my eyes are really closed, and falsely
open, and you're right here
but you're not really there anymore.



THIS WEEK: General Writing

Each week students respond to prompts provided by Young Writers Project. Best work is submitted to youngwritersproject.org by students and teachers from Vermont and New Hampshire. A team of students help select work. To read more student writing go to 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 — 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.

Human

BY CASSIE EURICH
Harwood Union High School, Grade 9

If you were to strip away this shell
this fragile, translucent, useless defense
built of walls cracked with age
and futile tries,
you would see a different me.
I'm not
perfect —
not even close.
I'm not
pliable
not flexible, not a go-with-the-flow
kinda girl,
no, I'm just
weak.
I'm just slightly
pathetic
in enough areas
so that I work harder
to weave the illusion of
perfection
in the leftovers.
And yet,
I stay perversely optimistic,
irritatingly opportunistic,
and I just keep trying.
I don't know why.
Even though everyone can see
through this self
I've wrapped around me,
they still have this notion
that I'm something different.
But really,
If you stripped away this
hallucinatory outside cover,
I'm something much worse;
Human.

YWP NEWS

Vermont Humanities Council

YWP is sponsoring a series of work-shops with Vermont authors at YWP.

Author **Erik Esckilsen** will lead the first session March 20, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., at Champlain Mill in Winooski. Online participation follows.

ALSO: **Win a cash award!** Writing challenge! For more about contest and forums go to youngwritersproject.org

Drawing

BY HENRE HERMANOWSKI
Crossett Brook Middle School, Grade 7

Free hander.
Sketcher.
Ink fingers.
Let your mind
go free
and your
hand
will follow.
Pencil,
eraser,
paper,
pen,
expressional
mind
free of
all pressure.
Tracing,
free hand,
spilling ink.
Shading.
Stroking.
Makes you think.

NEXT PROMPT

Avoidance. What do you avoid? Tell a story about a time when you avoided something. **Alternate: Intolerance.** In your life have you seen intolerance, prejudice or discrimination? Write about it; tell a story about your own experience or observation. **Due Friday.**

Submit at:

youngwritersproject.org

The wind

BY DEVLIN MOREY
Northfield Senior High School, Grade 11

The wind brings endless movement to the world
The wind makes the grass dance
The wind makes new pathways for the
clearest of waters
The wind allows the trees to
communicate with one another
The wind brings new air to earth
The wind lets the leaves fall where they want to
The wind brings distant noises to one's ears
The wind allows conversation to be lost
and found.

The way I see it

BY GEORGIA PARKE
Stowe High School, Grade 10

(Excerpt: Full story at youngwritersproject.org)
Wednesday is blue.

A starless blue to fall right into.
One where you sink right to the bottom
but still feel the sparks tickling at your toes.
A deep, soft one that feels like your quilt
as you yank it back over you on a snow-
day morning.
Friday is green.
It's not in eyes or cars or jealous lies,
but a second-place ribbon
you won in a contest and stuck on your wall.
A bright, subdued, hazy, clear
color you've got no reason to fear.
Sunday is yellow.
A 'good morning' type of golden splash
That's more than a reason to get out of bed.
Not the kind that never shows up on paper
but the one that startles you with its clarity.
It means hello,
but you're so comfortable. It's OK.
You can go back to sleep.

Ode to a flyswatter

BY NATHANIEL KAZLOW
Harwood Union Middle School, Grade 8

Cutting through the air, a dart of morbidity.
Its whirl a harbinger of doom for little
winged bugs.
Right time, right place; we call it serendipity.
A blur —
its victim soon merits the reaper's tug.
The swift arc of death —
Grace in its most original form,
Like a sword needs its sheath,
the swatter requires a swarm.
The head, the tail, the entire framework
resembles a hunter, a cobra, waiting still.
Its prey succumbs in a sickening jerk.
Crafted by man; an instrument to kill.