

Egress is the only way

BY SASKIA BAILEY-DE BRUIJN

Brattleboro Area Middle School, Grade 7

Egress is the only way
Now that darkness is here to stay
No brightness and love
From the skies up above
Where is the way out of here?
The path that is blurred and feared
Show me the way out of here
The path is unclear
This empty space is something I fear
It is not a happy place, my dear
For all year round I see darkness and fright
Why not show me love and light?
I must escape from this place
From this never-ending space
But where is the path I seek?
That takes me away from a future so bleak?

A lesson

BY ELIZABETH ALESSI

Woodstock Union High School, Grade 12

I do not wish to preach
But rather to teach
I want to explain
How not to complain
When life is so good
And others don't have what they should
Instead of saying "I want"
First put in some thought
Before you become a material girl
Think of others in the world
When you feel your heart shrinking
Please start thinking
Maybe life's not so bad
When you stop regretting what you never had

NEXT PROMPTS

Farming. Do you farm? Have you ever worked on a farm? Visited one? Write about it. Do you know a farmer? Talk to her or him and tell their story. Try not to romanticize. Tell a story that describes the reality of farming today. **Deadline: April 23.**

Rain. Tell us a story about your best or worst experience in the rain. *Alternate: Phobias.* Heights, small spaces, thunderstorms, spiders. Do you have a phobia? How do you deal with it? **Deadline: April 30.**

Dreams. Nightmares, happy dreams, day-dreams. Write about a dream you have had. Or, write about your dreams for the future. *Alternate: Poetry.* Write an ode, limerick or a shaped poem. **Deadline: May 7.**

Submit at:

youngwritersproject.org



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. For 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.

YWP NEWS

Win cash! YWP is partnering with Bookstock, the Green Mountain Festival of Words, to offer five \$100 awards to young writers. **Due: May 1.** Topic and guidelines at youngwritersproject.org.

ALSO: Phoebe Stone, author of "All the Blue Moons at the Wallace Hotel," will lead a writing workshop at YWP's headquarters. **Saturday, May 15. SIGN UP at youngwritersproject.org.**

Secrets to keep

BY NICOLE WINOT | Leland and Gray Union High School, Grade 8

(Excerpt: Full story at youngwritersproject.org)
Chapter 1 - Katie

The cool autumn wind rustled through my hair. It was warm but the breeze made it feel much cooler. I tightened the reins of Sonny's bridle. I made a soft clicking sound and nudged him forward lightly with the backs of my heels. We trotted through the meadows, crisp with frost, under the leafy canopy of the forest. I loved taking him to enjoy the last songs of the birds before winter. Sonny whinnied and shook his mane at the next gust of wind.

"Better get back to the barn soon," I thought. As we came over the fence line I could feel the last rays of sun warming my horsehair-stained jacket. They hit my face like last waves of warmth. My cotton, worn-out riding pants made my legs stiff. I shook them, trying to loosen the cling.

Sonny's hooves clumped across the frost-hardened earth. As we came into a clearing, I could see the weatherworn boards that made up the reddened horse barns. I clicked my tongue and tapped Sonny lightly at the sides. We began to canter, then our canter became a gallop. It always felt like flying, galloping across the meadows and fields.

I closed my eyes and began to imagine us flying. Over rooftops and chimneys, past clouds, up to the sun! I gripped the reins tighter. Oh, how lovely it would be to fly! I reopened my eyes to the bright light of sunshine, glinting through the trees. Sonny slowed to a trot, then to a walk. He whinnied and shook his mane in the wind.

As we came through the edge of the wood, I realized that while daydreaming, I had taken

the right path instead of the left. Sonny came to a halt, though I had not told him to. He was awaiting the same thing I was. We were three feet above the yard of Ms. Andersen. Ms. Anderson was a sour lady in her late 40s – early 50s. She had hard, dark-brown eyes that could stare into your very soul; her hair was like steel and always sprayed down with ten times as much hairspray as needed.

My least favorite part of her was her dogs. She owned three massive guard dogs. A Shepherd mix she called Vermin, a Great Dane named Sniper, and a Boxer named Noreen.

"If we can just slip around the edge of her yard, maybe she won't catch us." I whispered to Sonny. He snorted softly, as if in agreement. I patted his side gently, leaning back slowly as Sonny began to make the descent down the steep, rocky hill to the grass below. It might have looked like a soft, careful drop from top to bottom, but on horseback the climb and retreat were treacherous.

We had almost reached the ground below when a dark figure loped out from behind the kennels. The massive 112-pound German shepherd bared its teeth and snarled. It let out a tremendous roar of a bark that made me cringe. I should have seen it coming, but the next instant, Vermin was barreling straight ahead, and Sonny was spooked.

Sunny leapt off the rocks, throwing me to the dirt. The landing took my breath and as I lay on the steep ledge I felt the breath of the dog puffing down the back of my neck. He leapt onto me and I threw my fist in his direction. I could feel the razor-sharp teeth clamp down on my wrist. A sharp pain shot down my arm. I struggled and twisted, but Vermin bit harder. ...

All about Annie

BY CHELSEA WRIGHT

Rick Marcotte Central School, Grade 5

MY TEDDY BEAR

When you're alone in a thunderstorm
and when it's cold and dark in your room
when the night light has gone out and
and the fuses to the main hallway lights
have been blown,
sometimes all you really need is your teddy bear.

FRIENDS

When they whisper I feel the burn
The burn that she warned me about
It hurts.

I ask them what they talk about but
they just laugh and for the second day, in
the sand box, I'm all alone.
And I wonder if they're actually my friends...

ASKING QUESTIONS

I ask Miss Jane what she wanted to be when she
grew up, if she wanted to be a firefighter,
but she answers no. I wonder if she cares about
all of us equally or if she just says that.

When I ask Sydney what she thinks about pink
she imitates some one barfing.

I wonder why she does that. I mean what's
Wrong with pink?

Today's a lousy day and Mom's not going to be
home after school so I ask questions.

BIRDS

I see a baby bird out the window while Miss Jane
Explains the number 1 and I watch it try to fly
but it

Falls. I watch it try again and again until it
finally starts to fly.

It bursts away from the nest
and comes nearer to the school.

It's going to hit our window — it's out of control!
I jump out of my seat and leap to the window.

I open it wide, and the baby bird flies in,
lands on the soft carpet.

It isn't hurt at all but everyone starts laughing
at me. They say, "Why'd you do that?"

"You stink." "UGGG."

Miss Jane stares daggers at me and
Picks up the bird. "You shouldn't do that,"
I say.

But she throws it out the window.

Luckily it flies away safely and discovers the
world now by itself.

I'm a good person inside, really I know it.

Surprise

BY WILL

Shelburne Community School, Grade 3

I had the surprise of my life when I opened the
door and saw a fox! I was at my grandparents'
house in Maine.

I stood there staring at the fox. He stared
right back. We stood there for what seemed like
forever. I started to inch closer but then he turned
around. I thought he would never leave, then just
like poof he left.

I will never forget that day.