

Week 31: Writing prompts — “Tests” & “General submissions”

The test

By BRIANA PATTEN
Mount St. Joseph Academy, Grade 9

Sweat rolls slowly down my forehead.
This test is important.
I've been struggling for an hour on it.
Every question is like an impossible journey to figure out an unknown.
This test is important.
I tap my pencil in a steady rhythm against my wooden desk. Maybe it will give me some inspiration for an answer, but I doubt it.
“Ten minutes left,” a teacher announces, and I'm not even close to being finished.
This test is important.
The other kids seem to be in my same situation, some holding their heads in their hands, others staring off into space, mouths slightly ajar.
Can't this just be over? The bell rings, and my prayers are answered.
I wipe my forehead and walk out of the room.
This test was important.

Test-taking jitters

By TRAVIS GEARWAR
Benson Village School, Grade 7

I have a small fear of tests, although I don't think I've ever not passed one. I still get nervous when I'm about to take one.
Studying for tests is my big problem. I know how to study. It's just that I always feel as if I'm not studying the right material or the right way. I try to find ways to make myself more comfortable studying.
Sometimes I'll take my book out to study one more thing before I go to school, or, because my mother works at the school, I ride in the truck with her and I might take out my book and study one more time before we get to school. Right before a test is when I'm most nervous.
I try to relax during a test, and it usually works! I get frustrated when I've studied one section really well and then that question isn't on the test. Instead, it's different information that I'm not sure I know.
When I get my test back, I'm usually relieved if I've done well. Sometimes, when I'm in the low 80s, I'm not really happy, but I'm usually satisfied. At times, I make the dumbest mistakes, too. I'll think, "I can't believe I made that mistake, I know that!" But sometimes I do really well.
Overall, I think I've pretty much overcome my fear of tests, although sometimes I still get a little nervous. If I get a good grade, I usually think I shouldn't have been so nervous. Eventually, taking a test might be just as easy as writing about it!

MESSAGE IN THE MUSIC



Sarah Sherman, Essex High School

This photograph is from a series inspired by lyrics: “It seems music has a way of putting into words thoughts and emotions that are too broad and deep to communicate otherwise. How I would describe it though, in my best attempt at an explanation, is that the lyrics ‘I can't let you let me down again’ symbolize the vulnerability many people experience during their teenage years as they search for something to believe in, and are often let down by the very thing they trust the most. However, even this explanation can not truly do justice to my piece, because in reality it is an expression, an artwork, and it is open to individual interpretation. It is said, though, that it is easiest to express and portray to others things that you can relate to, things you have experienced yourself, and that is why I have picked this topic. And so, through my photographs, I attempt to express all the emotions that I've ever felt and yet could never quite seem to verbalize — to be interpreted as you wish.”

Your thoughts on my thoughts

By ELLIE LAUKAITIS
Williston Central School, Grade 8

Have you had a time when you imagine every conversation every last word and then they never get said? When something's planned to go one way but then it backfires and the getaway car turns left instead of right. And that's when you realize windows are two-way and maybe every feeling is two-way also... so you look at it the other way and imagine speaking about that Like with the archery target and the sharks and minnows and the fact that you didn't drown on your 200 breaststroke. Did you even watch me? I'm sorry, but I believe I'm at the point where you can't remember where conversations end and thoughts and e-mails begin. Did I ever tell you about that day? Did you know being spontaneous is actually planning

then forgetting (or forgetting to forget and actually remembering and then you're not spontaneous at all but you have to still make it look like you haven't been planning this conversation for the past week or so, which of course you haven't, so maybe really the people who are good at being spontaneous are actually just really good actors). Did you read everything I said? Everything I wrote? Can you hear all the unsaid words I hung in the air with fishing line last August? Maybe I underestimated you my great rambling friend Maybe, by some freak chance you understand and you can read this even though you'll never read this and you feel the same way and maybe you could hear the whole time and now you're left standing there wondering where all those unsaid words go.

This sweet pie

By TOMMY BOWEN
Benson Village School, Grade 7

This sweet pie
It smells so very delicious
It smells as good as
The summer breeze
When I go closer
It feels like I have discovered
A chest full of treasure
I see it now
On the window sill
It steams
Like a nice warm bath
Ready to get into
I have a piece
It makes me feel warm
Loved
Like a mother with her new child
This sweet pie

Reflection

By ROBERT KNOX
Rutland High School, Grade 11

I look at my Reflection	Living on the Other side
In the water	And looking into
And I wonder	The water and
If the person	Thinking the
That I see	Same thing
Is really me	Is it just a
Or if it's	Reflection?
Someone who	Or is it
Looks like me	Something more?

The deserted room

By ELI MILLMAN
Fairfield Center School, Grade 8

The wind whistled through the dark deserted room
Calling to the ones that left far too soon
It knocked over the chairs
And blew open cupboards
As if searching for something left there by others
It howled
It screeched
Then the wind cried
As the soft summer breeze
Rested
Then died.

Speaking of needs...

By KENNAH MCMAHON
Essex High School, Grade 10

I want to be able to fall asleep at night
Without feeling like dreams are an escape.

Inner peace that would wash
Over me like a baptism of forgiveness
For my lazy tongue.

I want to climb to the top of the
Mountain and lie on the
Emerald carpet of moss

I want to drive through California in the
passenger seat
Of a pink Roadster, and speed its silver wheels
along the rough
Roads that line the glass shores. I want to step
into Hollywood

And hold his hand in mine without
That nervous, boiling-insides feeling
Racking my entire body.

Without feeling inferior
But have the freedom and
Audacity to leave it all behind.

I would love to spend a few days
With my kindergarten teacher
And try to understand what

She tried to teach me 11 years ago.
I want to have the faith and peace
Of a young child again.

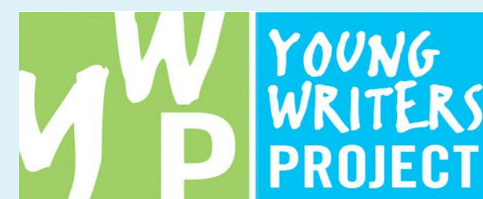
I want color and music, milk and cookies
Fire to warm myself by at night, and water to
bathe in.
I want to sit on the couch

I want justice and equal opportunity
For all of us.
I want to be able to look back

Drink a fine cup of tea, and hear you talk me
To sleep every night. I want to be able to
Surprise you and enlighten your mind.

On every word and touch and
Be able to justify the inappropriateness
Of them all. All I need is the

I want to sing from the heart
Every time.



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On the Web

at
youngwritersproject.org

THROUGH MAY 19: CHECK OUT THE INTERACTIVE FORUM WITH DOUG WILHELM, AUTHOR OF “THE REVEALERS” AND “FALLING.” DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY. BEGINNING MAY 20: ERIK ESCILSEN.

Check out the Web site for more student writing – blogs, forums, podcasts, getting and receiving feedback, commenting on the news, a Writer's Library and more. Register, log in and participate!

Cadence

By ERIN MAGUIRE
Essex High School, Grade 9

the buzzing in her head started again but that's OK because it keeps her thoughts from the cacophony in her knees are still stiff and she imagines with every stride she's breaking the bonds of winter and leaving them behind, melting snowflakes with her sneakers on the sidewalk is still a little icy interrupted with puddles and mud that are a welcome alternative to dirty snow lines the roadside as she flurries floats flies by and thinks of the people she told my new shoes are going to make me run faster jump higher, and the way they didn't believe her and how if only they could see

the spring in her step

today.

The dream test

By LOUIS SULLIVAN
Lyman C. Hunt Middle School, Grade 8

The cold seat beneath me
The cruel test before me
No sleep at all last night
No concentration now

“You may begin now!” she says
The words echo around the room
As I bend over the desk
I blink once and suddenly
My world goes haywire

The numbers and letters lift upwards
Elongating and growing until
The classroom is filled with dancing forms
Filled with the utter nonsense of dreams
The figures all dance
To the sound of pens
And the hopeless cries
Now I stand with them
With fear in my eyes
The room seems to melt
Melt into nothing
and I am falling
Falling into darkness

“Pencils down everybody!”
I bolt at the sudden sound
To see all of my laughing
Merrymaking classmates
I stare hopelessly downward
At my unfinished test
And I sigh