

Natural habitat

BY ANA PETRIE
Main Street Middle School, Grade 6

My natural habitat consists of a pastry shop that greets me with mouth-watering smells, a bookstore filled to the brim with imaginative books, a candy store with a hundred different kinds of candy, a five-star restaurant customized just for me, a spa that's always ready to make me relax, and a chef that makes the world's best brownies and guacamole.

That is my natural habitat.

Watchful eyes

BY MEGAN BENWAY
Hazen Union High School, Grade 10

Can't shake it
can't escape it
Eyes wide
scared.
Knowing,
knowing that somehow you're not alone...
Breath quickens
mind races....
races to the worst thoughts possible.
Eyes piercing,
piercing every crack,
every little space.
You're all alone
yet somehow....
You can't shake it,
can't shake the feeling....
the feeling that you're being watched.

The days I love

BY KIA'RAE HANRON
Main Street Middle School, Grade 8

The sun beats down warm on my face
The remnants of winter gone, without a trace
The springtime air filled with life
The sights, the sounds, Ahh, so nice
Arms and legs stretched across the bright green grass
If only these warm, sunny days would last.
The hot, steamy, sunburned daylight
Followed by cool, buggy, starry nights
These are the kind of days that I adore
'Cause as soon as the cold wind blows
Life's a bore.

THIS WEEK: General writing



Each week, Young Writers Project receives submissions from students all over the state. We select the best for publication here and in eight other newspapers. This week, students submitted general writing — work done on their own or at school. For more and for student blogs go to youngwritersproject.org, a safe, civil online community of young creators.

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

DON'T MISS! 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.**

This workshop is part of a series of writing workshops with Vermont authors made possible by a generous grant from the **Vermont Humanities Council**.

The fire

BY ALYSSA ATKINS | Spaulding High School, Grade 10

(Excerpt: Full story at youngwritersproject.org)

... When we got to Michele's house we put our pajamas on and I was brushing my teeth when my cell phone rang. A phone call from my sister? This was weird, especially at 12 o'clock at night. I picked up the phone and could tell there was a worry in her voice. All she could really say was "The house is on fire," and that my parents didn't want me to come see it. Of course I didn't listen, and I called up my friend to bring me to my house. As soon as he heard why I called him to get out of bed to bring me home he drove about 80 miles an hour to get to my house.

From a mile away I could see the smoke and fire trucks lining up outside my house. There were seven fire trucks and three ambulances. We couldn't drive up to the house because the road was blocked off entirely, so I decided to jump out of the car and run to the house.

My mom was at the end of my driveway sitting in her car with my dog and all the belongings she could grab in a bathrobe. I didn't know what to do; I didn't see my dad so I ran to the house. I got stopped by a couple of firefighters right before my front door and they said I couldn't enter. I ran around the back of the house to find my dad and grandpa covered in black soot. They both told me to go back down the driveway and wait

with my mom.

There we sat in the car watching hundreds of people run around trying to save my family's entire life. The one thing that really made me mad was that out of the seven fire trucks none of them had water at first because it was the middle of winter and everything was frozen. We waited about two hours, till it calmed down and the flames stopped, then my mother told me to go back to Michele's house.

We brought my dog and my sister back to her apartment. I still had not cried, but when we drove away from her apartment I couldn't keep it in any longer. I burst into tears thinking about everything I had lost. They say I had a panic attack but I was just very upset. I went to go see my boyfriend at the time, who didn't believe me that my house had burned down. I think he got the hint though.

I didn't get all that much sleep that night knowing that my parents were still there dealing with it all. The next morning I went back to see the damage. The fire trucks were gone and it was just my parents, me and the burned-up house. I grabbed my stuffed animal, Brian Bear, who was lying in my bed in a pile of insulation, and some clothes that had not been burned out of my dresser. ...

We were hoping to rebuild the house and to be back in it within six months. About ten months later the house was in livable condition so we moved back in. ...

What it takes

BY TYRA IZOR
Crossett Brook Middle School, Grade 7
(Excerpt: Full story at youngwritersproject.org)

.... Being a gymnast is harder than it seems. It isn't like you can just walk on the floor and whip out a round-off-back handspring-back-tuck without warming up. It takes many things such as practice and concentration.

When you do a skill for the first time you have to make sure that you are completely focused on what has to be done. You cannot get distracted. When you are having trouble with something the best thing you can do is visualize. Training your body isn't going to do anything for you if your brain isn't in the right place. Always think positive thoughts, and if you mess up on a skill, face your fear and do it again, better than you did it before.

Any time I walk into the gym, even if I try to think of all the fears I have, I make my brain think positively, and I train my brain to think of only what I have to do to fix my mistakes. If I have my head in the right place, my body ready, am completely focused and know what my fears are and how to fix them, then I am set. All I have to do is ... DO IT!

Wind

BY MAGGIE NOWLAN
Main Street Middle School, Grade 6

Brisk, icy wind
Paints the city gray
With uneven bristles of satin.
The world is
The wind's canvas
The white, swirling clouds
Its palette
The artist leaves his work unsigned.
Wind cannot be captured
Like the boldest, fiercest lion
The timid, sheepish lamb.
Some cover inside when the wind roars
But walls between them
Cannot change that it is there.
I stand outside
I let the wind paint me
I let the wind knit me a watery sweater.
Wind is not in the art set of any random man
Highly exclusive to the artist in the sky.
I love the wind
full of possibilities
Like a flickering flame.
Wind whistles through the alleyways
On a cold winter night.
Walk outside in a storm
Let your hair flutter in the air.
Let the wind paint you.