

The last game

By Jordan Wright

Dummerston Middle School, Grade 8

It was the end of the hockey season
It was our last game together... ever
Some of us may never see each other again
We hadn't had the best season, but we hadn't
had the worst season
We had played a great game
But we had lost... it had been a close game, but
we had lost
Some people were going to different teams
Some people were aging up a level..
Everyone was sad since it was....
Our last game together... ever

Monologue: Old woman in the park

By Kerry Johnson

Leland and Gray Union High School,
Grade 10

"I've come here every day for the past three years. I live under the bridge toward the shops, so it's only a little stroll to the park. I scrounge for coins and save them so I can buy a loaf of bread -- half for me and half crumbled up for the lonely birds that get chased by spoiled children or shooed away by restaurant managers. I feel sorry for these birds -- this empty park is their only home. But look at me; it doesn't look like I've lived in a home for years, and I haven't. I used to though, back in the olden days with my sister and parents. It was a small house but we liked it. My sister and I went to the public elementary school just a block away -- she was the popular one. Then in high school she dated a boy who introduced her to drugs and parties. That lasted for three months until she overdosed. She was in her junior year. I was only a sophomore and got ridiculed for her mistake. I would never forget it, but they drilled every horrific piece of it into my brain. I had nightmares for months. I did have some friends, but they died in a car accident one night coming home from a party. Another tragic loss in my old, unexpected life. Nearly every night after that I used to sneak out and sleep under the bridge, hear the cars drive across it, feel the chilled air hovering over the stream. The air was relaxing, and the sound of the water echoing off the concrete dome engulfed me in a new world of simplicity -- no pain existed there, and I could let go of it all. They say home is where the heart is -- I guess that was always my home. All these things led up to how I came to be what I am -- the old woman who feeds the birds. And I could never love someone again because of all the loves I've lost. The pain I've endured for so many years it's like second nature. I can't even feel the cold piercing through my ragged coat anymore. You'd never know why these birds always return to me every day. This city is bustling and full of dropped crumbs or trash in the streets. But I know -- they return because they love me."

Ants

By Briana Patten

Mount St. Joseph Academy, Grade 9

"ANTS!!" I shriek.
My patience level has reached its peak.
Where do they come from?! Can't they just go??
How do we get rid of them? I just do not know.
They're on the counters, inside the sink;
I even found one in my Mom's drink.
This is the last straw, I can't take it any more!
I'm gonna have to call the exterminator.
"Hi. Yes, I'm in need of your service.
What do you mean, you're a Nervous Purvis?!"
You don't like ants? You silly fool!
But you went to the exterminating school!!
I just want them gone! Is that too much to ask?"
To calm my nerves, I took a swig from my flask.
"C'mon buddy, suck it up, be a man.
If I can do it, anyone can."
And with that, I hung up, ready to start.
My blood pressure was off the chart.
I took my vacuum and plugged it in.
And now it was time for the process to begin.
Like a mad man I scurried throughout the room
the place soon to be the ants' new tomb.

Mom

By Amberly Ondria

Poultney High School, Grade 11

Mom, you always hold your head up high.
You never let me see you cry.
The one who's always there for me
And soon you'll have to let me be free.
Just one more year and things will quiet down.
Coming home, there won't be a sound.
But don't fret mom, because I will always call.
And I'll never forget all those times you caught my fall.
The girls' nights we had.
Some of those movies were really bad.
Those dinners we cooked when dad wasn't around.
Surprisingly they didn't turn our stomachs upside down.
Along with all the good times there were the bad.
The moments that I never thought I'd come out of being sad.
Because of the boys who broke my heart.
You were the one who had to watch me fall apart.
In your arms I'd lay there and stay
Whether I had a good or bad day.
Mom, you're always there for me.
And soon you'll have to let me be free.
But when that time comes,
I'll never forget all you've done.
I love you mom, my best friend.
You'll always be with me, right 'til the end.

UP CLOSE AND BEAUTIFUL



KELSEY GUZIAK, *Essex High School*

Guziak writes about her pictures: "I took these photos while on vacation in Florida. Because almost everything there looked different compared to the environment in Vermont, I decided to base my project on the outside, natural world. The bright colors and exotic surroundings inspired me to capture things that normally seem ordinary, but in a photo look interesting and colorful. My photos show texture of outside sceneries, but from a closeup perspective."

Farm life

By Caitlyn Santi

Homeschooled, Roxbury, Grade 10

My life is a farm life and even though it's just a small farm with only a few cows and horses, there is a lot of hard work that has to be done every day. Even though sometimes I get frustrated and annoyed, most of the things we do for work are actually fun. It's hard to explain to most people how work can be fun but if you're working with your family, anything can be fun. Believe it or not, one of my favorite things to do is stack hay bales. To be a good farmer you have to not be afraid of hard work or getting covered in mud (because you probably will).

I think another important part of farming is having a loving family behind you. I have a family that I know would be here no matter what. I know someday I will grow up but I will never leave Vermont or stop farming. I've lived in Vermont my whole life and I love farming because of the feeling of self-reliance and independence you get when things go well, and, when things don't go well, you always have your family to help you no matter what happens. This is why I think families are so important to farming (just like they have been for hundreds of years) and it is also why I love my family and my life so much.

Dear friend

By Lydia Ducharme

Hazen Union High School, Grade 10

It's funny how things change
How people seem to change.
The once convincing facade falls.
The true you reveals itself
Or, perchance
The true me.
No matter, you nor me
We know it's different now.
We've changed
Wait -- not changed -- grew.
Grew into our true selves
Farther and farther from each other.
It's funny how people change.

Natural disaster

By Kristiana Letourneau

Mount Abraham Union High School,
Grade 10

For over a week
Your lifeless body lay
Trapped beneath a mountain of rubble
The only remains of what was once
Some kind of store, with a church in the back.
What did this building mean to you?
Perhaps you worked there, at the store
Selling hardware, all kinds of marvelous tools
Providing people with the means
To start, to build a strong foundation for a new life.
Or maybe you were a sinner
Your soul in dire need of saving
You wanted to rush right through that store
Into the church, searching for someone
You needed to pour out the truth
Separate it from all the lies
Needed an ear unknown to you
To tell you everything would be alright.
But perhaps this building was only that:
A building and you simply sought shelter
As the winds whipped faster around you.
They saw your hand reaching up
From amidst the broken brick
You never made it inside that day.
What a pity, because you were so young
Your wedding band still smooth, unblemished
She paced in the front hall for hours
But you did not return, nor will you now
You promised you'd always be there
Through thick and thin, for better or for worse
But only as long as you both shall live
She wept bitterly, and now she is numb
Gazing blankly out the window
The trees strewn about the yard like forgotten toys.
More than 27 injured, and you alone, lost
Another good thing consumed by evil
Just another storm, natural and inevitable
It could have been anyone, and yet it was you
You whose life we mourn in silent solitude.



YWP, an independent nonprofit, aims to help students write better. In the last two years it has received 7,000 submissions. YWP:

- publishes great student work in newspapers, on radio and on stage;
- runs a safe Web site for students: youngwritersproject.org;
- and builds online classrooms for schools to teach writing.

The Vermont Business Roundtable has supported YWP for two years. YWP needs your help to continue.

Go to youngwritersproject.org and click "SUPPORT" for information.



This newspaper series
finishes up next week.
However,
youngwritersproject.org
will live on
throughout
the summer.
Check it out.

An unknown story

By Rachel Dubois

Benson Village School, Grade 8

This paper is blank	Deep inside
Waiting for words	Are thoughts
To be written	That I won't
On its lines	I can't
For my thoughts	Tell
To be spilled	But it's waiting
Into phrases	Patiently
To be read later	For me
To the unknown	To confess
It stares back at me	My story
But I can't think	That I
Of what to say	

Where I'm from

By Brittney Crawford

Rutland Middle School, Grade 8

I am from a woman
from a man that once were in love
I am from a true love
from a broken heart
I am from a thousand memories
from the many to come
I am from a first kiss
from a last good bye
I am from laughter
from my family
I am from the heart
from me

Redemption

By Erin Trzcinski

Rutland High School, Grade 11

I know I'm beyond your forgiveness
I know that I've scarred you.
But, please, at least hear me out
Listen to what I know is true.

You don't really understand
I do love you, more than anything.
You were the first to treat me like a person
And, in return, I destroyed your everything.

I've hurt you more than I'll ever know
Strangled your heart and broken it, too.
Ripped the wings off the back of my angel
Shattered the very essence that is you.

But you can't leave me, I need you!
Without you, I'll go even more insane!
You're the one person that I've ever loved
That can pierce the madness of my brain.

You are the light to my darkness,
The beautiful angel of my life.
Being with you can bring me some peace
Put at bay all of the pain and strife.

I can never express how sorry I am
I wish I could take everything back.
I want to redeem myself in your eyes
Show you that my soul is not completely black.

I promise you, I swear to you
I'm going to make things right.
I swear that I want to make you happy
And end, Love, your eternal night.