

Summer's last swim

By Willow Forbes

UNION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, GRADE 5

Summer is almost over. The days are still muggy and humid, but are slowly getting shorter. Soon the heat will be gone, replaced by the crisp, cold of fall. There is still time for one...more...swim.

You slowly dip your toes into the luke-warm pond water, creating ripple after ripple, breaking the quiet surface. The water on your toes feels smooth and cool.

Slowly, you ease yourself from the dock into the water. The water comes up to your armpits, so you raise your arms as you edge into the deeper water.

Suddenly, you completely submerge. The cold water washes over your body. You can feel your hair float around your head.

You open your eyes underwater, gently treading water. You see the murk and mud and weeds. A small fish peeks out from behind a rock, swims in a few tight circles then disappears from sight.

Changing direction, you head upward for a breath of air. You can feel the cold on the top of your head as it cuts through the surface. You gulp a deep breath, than sink back down into the murky depths.

Here, underwater, all your troubles are gone. You are simply a plant or a rock, with no more care than a bird. Life seems so easy, you wish you could stay forever.

But, of course, you can't. Just thinking this makes you remember that you only have a few minutes to escape to this peaceful haven for the last time this year, and that your mom will be impatiently waiting.

As you sadly pull yourself out of the water, you heave a sigh even though, in your heart, you know this pond will wait and be here for you with open arms next year.

And remember

By Reliance Touchette

CROSSETT BROOK MIDDLE SCHOOL, GRADE 7

I will never die,
but when my body is long gone and
In the ground,
I will be the green of the grass,
I will be the clouds in the sky,
I will be the smell of the tulips in my garden,
I will be the light of the sun,
The whisper of the wind
Telling you
"Don't worry, I won't leave you"
and if you start to miss me...
just look
at the grass,
at the clouds,
at the flowers,
at the sun,
listen to the wind,
And remember.

THROUGH THE EYES OF ...

YWP students jump into *The Lake Champlain Chamber Music Festival*

From time to time, YWP corrals a few good young writers and invites them to immerse themselves — and write about — events. In late August, more than a dozen students attended rehearsals, talks, meals and performances at the first Lake Champlain Chamber Music Festival led by the brilliant violinist Soovin Kim.

Read more student reflections of the festival at youngwritersproject.org.

First fig(ure of speech)

By Luna Felker

U-32 HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 11

It's out of sight
out of mind
so why is this pulse,
this voice
so insistently there?
It's one piano,
four hands,
a delicate courtship ritual
of right and wrong
notes,
right and left
hands
everywhere.
Too delicate,
I want to take
a sledgehammer
to the strings,
make those felted hammers
envy my percussion.
I want their ease,
their offhand precision,
their lifetime of practice;
I want to have had,
but not to have to do.
But then
those four hands stop,

pick pencils
up from the stage,
and I want the pulse back,
so I can breathe
again in
the perfection of the
impermanent
imperfection
of their rehearsal.
Now I have
their music, and if I do not hold it
in my head, in my brain,
from their tendons to my synapses,
everything is lost,
because they don't rehearse
for an audience.
Not yet.
They rehearse for a future,
for the knowledge
that they'll play
again,
and they've given me this memory
that
in a few measures,
has slipped away.
Coda brings it back.

2009-2010 prompts

Each week YWP offers students ideas to write about. Here are a few of the upcoming prompts. For the full list: youngwritersproject.org



2. Photo Prompt: Write a story about this photo, taken by Dorothea Lange in California, March 1937, "Toward Los Angeles." (See full photo at youngwritersproject.org.) Alternate: **Back.** "Oh gosh, they're back..." Write a story based on or using that phrase. Deadline: Sept. 18.

3. Headline. Write an attention-grabbing news headline and then create a story about it. Alternate: **Listening in.** Take a moment to listen to conversations at school, home or in a public place such as the hallways, cafeteria, playing field, a restaurant or store. Take some of that dialogue and write a story or poem. Fill in the gaps. Deadline: Sept. 25.

4. General Submit best non-prompt general writing you have created. This call for general entries is repeated each month and you can use the same "general" term when submitting each time. Deadline: Oct. 2.

Ready, set, WRITE!



Welcome to a new year of the Young Writers Project, an independent nonprofit dedicated to encouraging student writing. Each week YWP and this newspaper will feature some of the best student writing in the state.

Support the newspaper; and be sure to give the students feedback — it means a lot to them.

Today we release the first few suggested prompts for the year; for a complete list, visit youngwritersproject.org.

Young Writers Project reaches as many students as possible, engages them to write, helps them get better at it and finds audiences for their best work.

YWP runs a safe Web community at youngwritersproject.org where students share writing, post audio and images, exchange feedback and receive critique from top students at University of Vermont and Castleton State College.

YWP creates Digital Writing Classrooms for teachers to integrate into their curriculum. This year, YWP will maintain over 30 such sites. Go to ywpschools.net for more.

YWP received its founding support from the Vermont Business Roundtable. Major contributors now include FairPoint Communications; A.D. Henderson Foundation; Amy E. Tarrant Foundation; Bay and Paul Foundations; Northfield Savings Bank; Oakland Foundation; Physician's Computer Company; Queen City Printers; Small Dog Electronics; Vermont Humanities Council; Windham Foundation; and Metz Family Foundation.

This year's prompts came from hundreds of ideas suggested by teachers and students. They are posted on youngwritersproject.org and include a special partnership with the Vermont Stage Company. More partnerships will be announced during the year.

Submit work at youngwritersproject.org by each Friday afternoon.

— Geoffrey Gevalt
Young Writers Project Director

The ocean

By Brandon Vaughn

CASTLETON VILLAGE SCHOOL, GRADE 7

The cool ocean breeze.
It's relaxing and soothing.
Listen to the breeze.