

# Week 18: Writing prompts — Big game; mistakes

## Mistakes

By Sabrina Russo

MAIN STREET MIDDLE SCHOOL, GRADE 8

A Mistake  
I think  
To live,  
To love,  
To die,  
To hate  
A mistake a feeling you feel  
When you think  
Something has gone  
wrong  
A mistake a state of mind  
A mistake to think you can  
only get the bad  
in the end  
it balances out for  
you would never  
learn  
with no mistakes  
am I mistaken?

## Up in a ball

By Shelby Miller

HAZEN UNION SCHOOL, GRADE 10

When they cry, When they weep, When they curl, Up in a ball, When they do this, You know you've done wrong, You know, You did something bad, Something unforgiving, Something you can't take back.	What's next? What's your next move? Say sorry, Promise, It'll never happen again, But you know, In your head, That won't happen.
When they cry, When they weep, When they curl, Up in a ball, When they do this, You come to your senses, You try to help them up, You try to apologize, But it's no use, The pain is done, There's no going back, You did, What you did.	When they cry, When they weep, When they curl, Up in a ball, When they do this, You know it's no use, You can't change, You've tried before, You hate, Who you are, But it is, Who you are, You aren't who you want to be, You are who you are, So give up now, Get out before, It's too late, Don't hurt anyone, Not anymore than you have.
When they cry, When they weep, When they curl, Up in a ball, When they do this, You fall apart, You leave the house, You go outside, Throw dirt, Yell, And scream, You hate yourself, You hate what you did, When you go back in, It's nothing you can face, It's too much, You can't do it, You hurt her too much, Now it's up to you,	When they cry, When they weep, When they curl, Up in a ball You walk away, She looks up, And she knows How you feel, She knows you're sorry, It'll never happen again, But it's too late for you, You can't face what you've done, You've hurt the one you love.

## Oops

By Emily Fariel

HARTFORD MEMORIAL MIDDLE SCHOOL, GRADE 8

Oops... made a mistake.  
Colored outside the line.  
Oops.  
Spelled a word wrong.  
Oops...  
Every little mistake,  
Adds up,  
Makes us imperfect,  
and human.

## Mistakes, mistakes

By Basundhara Mukherjee

FREDERICK H. TUTTLE MIDDLE SCHOOL, GRADE 6

Forgive and forget,  
fix your mistakes,  
or else you will always  
regret and shake.  
You will shake with guilt  
if you never forgive,  
but forgive and then the guilt goes away.

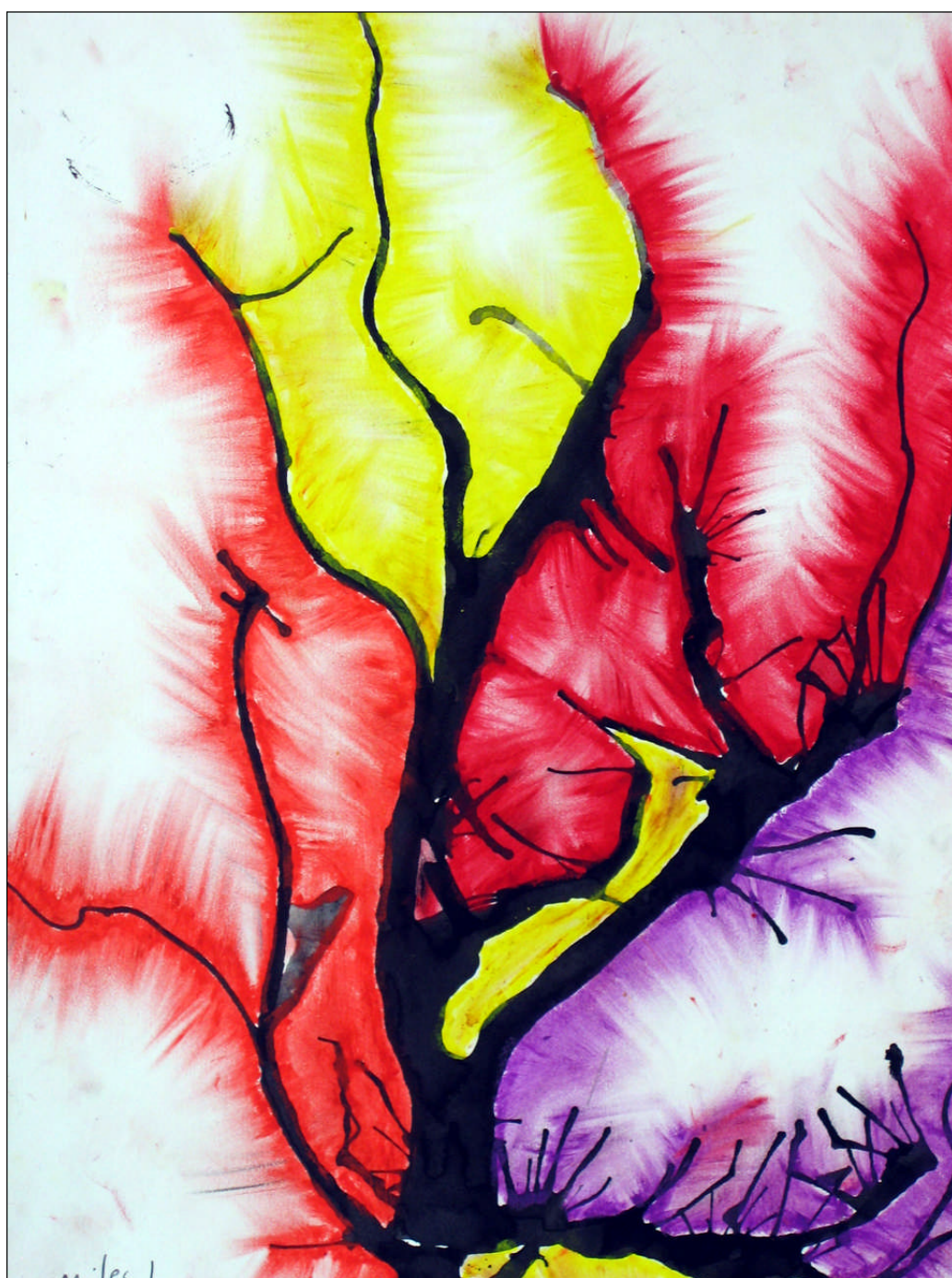
## Let it slip

By Tyler Colvin

CHAMPLAIN VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 12

Mistakes I have made,  
Too many to count.  
It seems it's unavoidable,  
your inner troubles let out.  
Starts with a note,  
a secret,  
a nudge.  
Caroming quickly,  
into thin air.  
One off hand comment,  
blown out of proportion,  
leads to your silence,  
my questions,  
no answers.  
Jaded and scarred,  
awkward silence,  
painful passing.  
Tumbling toward greatness,  
I blindly reach out,  
for a hand that isn't there.  
And I realize,  
How little I regret.

## THE RAINBOW TREE



Miles Latham, an eighth-grader at Hartford Memorial Middle School, wrote this about his artwork: "When I made this tree, I intended to incorporate some of the shapes and colors of fire into the design. But as I continued, I realized that it would look far more interesting to use many colors of the rainbow. I find that this brings far more life to the plain black tree, lighting it up like a multicolor light show."

## Almost perfect pass

By Sossina Gutema | ESSEX MIDDLE SCHOOL, GRADE 7

People cheered. The occasional loud voice cut through the mull of the others, and words became decipherable. Go get it! I toyed distractedly with my mouth guard, the slightly wet plastic smooth where my teeth had worn it down. Half time had passed ages ago, I didn't have a watch, they weren't allowed, but the game couldn't possibly continue much longer.

"Angie!" My coach bellowed at me. "Center front." I nodded and obliged, smiling at the tilt his Scottish accent gave the words. I wiggled my toes. If you listen really hard you can hear the blades of grass breaking under the protruding stubs on the soles of your cleats. But I couldn't listen like that, the roar from the heated soccer match was too loud. I waved my fellow player off the field, she winked at me, exhausted and ready for a drink. You don't get timeouts in soccer like you do in basketball; I'd play till the final whistle. I slid the purple plastic guard between my lips, clamping down my jaw. I was ready.

I chased the ball across the field; like everyone else there I yearned to have the ball at my feet, but it was yards ahead of me, a black and white blur, spinning treacherously close to our heavily guarded goal. I poured on the speed, willing my legs to move faster. I was playing offense, but I still needed to help, the goalie couldn't protect the goal all by herself. The dribbling girl weaved across the grass, leaving bewildered defense behind, her single red jersey foreign among all the blue.

I pushed ahead.  
She leaned.  
The goalie dived,  
too early.  
She kicked. High corner.  
Goal.

It really was too bad. Our goalie stood, rubbed smudged dirt off her shirt. She looked up, her face red with what could have been embarrassment, or anger. She grinned sort of nonchalantly, or apologetically. We all nodded back, made our way back to our places for the kickoff, it really was OK. But now we were tied. Their team was all smiles, we

leaned with more focus.

The midfielder tapped the ball; it moved the demanded seven eighths and I shot forward. Years of practice must have shown, I cradled the ball between my feet. It bounced off my ankles, rolling ahead, but each time I was there to tap it again. I felt the bodies of other players brush past. The other team was just like ours, they were junior high girls with a love of a sport. But now they were enemies. People rushed at me and blew past; I was on a roll. Their goal leered in front of me. Victory ready for the taking, revenge so near. I could see the line, the sweat on the goalie's brow. My frantic eyes caught even the distraught defense almost behind me, unsettled by their own victory being outshined. I felt a grin coming on, but I pushed it back. Focus time.

The ground swirled and tilted. The grass slicked beneath me and my gripping soles failed. My vision faltered as I hit the ground, my butt slammed the hard earth, my eyes shot protectively closed. I bounced and rolled to the side. My spastic legs swung, flailing, bumping something smooth and round. My back dropped down, more calmly as the momentum dispensed, and I lay for a moment, eyes open. Whistles blared; first one from the ref, behind me, then another joining the first from across the field. Two solid notes, like the high voices of a choir, signaling the end.

The clouds were peaceful and slow, inching across the sky. I didn't want to rise, in a split second, an amateur's mistake, I had lost my chance and let down my team. A shadow crossed my face. Ali was standing above me, leaning over, smiling. Why was she smiling? Ali hated to lose more than anyone; she said ties were just as bad. Ali stuck out her hand. I took it and she pulled me up.

"Great pass," she said, almost glowing. "You set me up for the perfect goal, thanks!" She waved toward the tangled net hung between the goal posts. The ball was caught inside, a goal made. I looked back, the ref was smiling, my coach was smiling. I remembered knocking into the ball. Everyone seemed to think I had made a miraculous pass. Oh well, it had been pretty miraculous. I grinned.

## The Stowe duals

By Conner Gorman

CHARLOTTE CENTRAL SCHOOL, GRADE 5

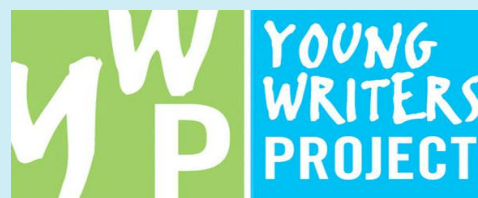
I'm in the gate. I'm so nervous my goggles are fogged up. The clock counts down, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, go! I'm off. All I can think about is, "Skate, skate, skate, glide." Here comes the first gate, "Crack, shhh-wissshhh! I hit the gate and glide around it. Now here's the second gate. As I go by, I see the crowd, and it fuels me to finish. The third and fourth go by just like the first two. I hit the jump and get really nervous. Am I going to make it? Yes!! I make it. Now, only eight more gates. It looks really icy, can I do it? Will I fall? Will I win? Then I see my friends and think, "It really doesn't matter about my time because I'm new to the sport, and I'm having fun. It doesn't even matter if I fall, I can get back up and finish." I summon up all my strength and finish. In the end, all that really mattered was that I tried and I had fun.

## The sack

Nathan Tyler Barcomb

BRATTLEBORO AREA MIDDLE SCHOOL, GRADE 7

Every Friday night I suit up  
Wondering how I will do.  
As I stare into the dark eyes of that left tackle,  
I know he is the only thing standing between me  
and my glory.  
Silence for a moment.  
The ball is snapped,  
I hear nothing but pads and helmets bashing together.  
I throw my man down and see my goal  
I dive after him and get the sack.  
I stand up,  
And as I glare into the stands  
I see the fans cheering  
I stand under these Friday night lights.  
And it feels,  
Wonderful.



YWP is a grassroots nonprofit that helps students write better and gain an audience for their best work. YWP offers writing prompts, special projects and a safe Web site, [youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org), where students share their writing, comment on the news and each other's work, participate in group discussions and work on projects. YWP is indebted to the generosity of the Vermont Business Roundtable which is funding its core work for the second year.



## On the Web

at

[youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org)

**NEW 2008 Prompts.** Check out the YWP's weekly prompts that are scheduled through the rest of this year. Go to the Web site, click on "Publish" in the top menu bar and follow the "Prompts" link.

**High School Book Blog-In.** If you're a high school student who likes books, to YWP's Web site — [youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org) — to participate in forums on the 15 finalist books for the Green Mountain Book Award. Site contains book summaries, study guides and more. Find links on top of the front page of the site.

## The big game

By Tim Lyons

RICE MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 9

Some love the game  
While others do not  
Some get to play  
Others are just onlookers  
Some just follow what they are told  
By the leaders that give orders  
On offense some do best  
Others are always defending  
Some try to win  
And some only play to look good  
With all their dazzle and flash  
They try to hide that they're just trash  
Most of the rule-breakers get caught  
Yet some are never punished  
Everyone's goal is to win  
And not enough people just try to have fun  
Sometimes the opposition will be a pushover  
And then there are times  
When your team gets crushed  
But giving up is never the answer  
There will be times  
When you just can't score  
So then you've just got to  
Try some more  
Life is like basketball  
Because the object's the same  
You've just got to play hard  
That's the point of the game.

## A look ahead

Look for more submissions on the prompts "Losing weight" and "Backyard" on next week's page.

## Weight

By Julie Curran

MAIN STREET MIDDLE SCHOOL, GRADE 7

Building. Up. Up. Up. Too much To carry. Too much To hold. I can't Bear This pain. I can't hide This Burden.	In the world. There's nothing More to Do. No One can Hold you Down. Weight. Dropping. Down Down. Down.
You Comfort me. There's nothing	You are FREE.