

Week 6: Writing Prompts -- Expectations, listening in

Easy for you to say

By Emma Redden
*Leland and Gray
Union High School, Grade 10*

We read
“Don’t pay beggars.
There are places all
over where they can
go for help.”
Easy for us to say.
The mother of the boy
With the head
Of a caricature,
Needs my help,
She says.
Why would she want
My help?
Her son can get free
Help at the hospital.
It is only two hours away.
Easy for me to say.
“Are you crazy?”
She says,
“It would take me
A year to save that money.
It would mean I
Would have to
find the right bus
At the bus station.
That would mean
Someone would find out
I can’t read
When they tell me the schedule
Is on the wall.
That would mean I
Might get lost in
A big city.
That would mean
I would need to
Find the courage
To be strong
Enough to help
My baby.
That would mean I would need to
Realize I am worth
Helping.
You say that
There are lots
Of ways for me to get help.
That is easy for you to say.”

Listening

By Myrrhanda Wentworth
*Oxbow High School,
Grade 10*

I’m listening
I hear typical teenage laughter
“Ohhhh, he’s sooooo cute!!!”
“Shhhhhhh, I think he heard you.”
I’m listening
I hear toddlers shrieking and
throwing tantrums
“Why, mommy, why?!!!!”
“No!!!!”
I’m listening
I hear babies that need changing
cry
And mothers reassuring them
that it’s going to be OK
I’m listening
I hear a couple arguing about
how much money they can
spend
“We need to save money...”
“Ohhh, yeah, well we need
this, too!”
I’m listening
I hear an old, married couple
whisper
“I love you.”

Lunchtime

By Kristen Switzer
*Rutland Town School,
Grade 6*

Lunchtime is a good time to
catch up on the news,
A time to eat our sandwiches,
while we sit and schmooze.
Abby talked about the soccer
game we played in the rain,
The other team scored a lot,
the result was one of pain.
Courtney asked Baylee about
the homework for tonight,
Baylee just stared at her and
took another bite.
Ellie giggles easily and agrees
on most everything,
Caitlin mocked a song that she
wanted to sing,
Jessie smiled and Rachel
laughed, while Briann told a
joke.
Melanie and Marissa snickered
‘til they nearly choked.
Then I turned around to listen
to the boys.
At first it was hard to hear for
they make a lot of noise.
Tom and Greg said the Red
Sox lost Friday’s game,
Andy and Collin agreed the
Yankees were to blame.
Will begged BJ to help him
with his math,
Otherwise he would suffer Mr.
Redman’s wrath.
Quintin wasn’t worried, he
thinks the teacher’s nice,
But then again, it wouldn’t
hurt to re-check it once or
twice.
I turned back to my table and
thought how lucky could I be?
To have such wonderful
friends, all sitting next to me.
The lunch bell rang so now we
must be on our way,
Health, science and social
studies to finish up the day.
But we’ll be back tomorrow to
catch up on the news,
Eating our sandwiches while
we sit and schmooze.

NATURAL LIGHTSHOW



Connor Greenbaum, a student at Essex Junction High School, has this to say about his photography: “My dad got me my first camera when I was very young. I have always liked taking pictures of nature. I have found taking pictures to be very relaxing and peaceful. I have been most intrigued with lighting; a very boring or plain scene can be changed dramatically by certain lighting. My two favorite light times are sunrise and sunset. Both times have unique and powerful lighting.”

My hopes of you are very much dead

By Shannon Page
Oxbow High School, Grade 10

Do not look at me with pleading eyes
Do not beg for hand-woven lies
You cannot ask what I can’t do
You cannot will me to please you.
You ask so much that you can’t return
The pain and hurt will forever burn
Such simple things I beg you to do
And even those are too hard for you.
But then you turn and ask of me
What you expect just won’t be
Your voice still echoes in my head
But my hopes of you are very much dead.

I expect that I would

By Kelly Davis
*Woodstock Union High School,
Grade 10*

My parents always expect the best
Whether with friends or on a test
I must work hard to achieve what I can
On my own not a helping hand
Sometimes I wish I could fly away
To a land where I could laugh and play
Where school is not a worrisome fright
With just me, myself, and I in sight
I would sit by a river or climb up a hill
I could do anything I wanted at my own will
The days would be long and the nights
would be short
I could stay and observe without writing
a report
With so many expectations filling my
head
It’s no wonder I’d rather sleep instead
How nice it would be to lay my head
down
Not worry about keeping my feet on the
ground
I would expect myself to do what I could
To not do the bad things and accomplish
the good
But life has proved to not be so plain
I must study hard and ride home on the
gain
I think you should know I’m a perfection-
ist yet
But if I could, I would, and this you can
bet

They float right in

By Matteo Bjornsson
Woodstock Union High School, Grade 10

Knees buckle
The stairs catch me
The railing beside me
Holds my head
The walls of my life
They crumble
That nice safe feeling
Gone
Funny, what
A few words
Can do to your world
Sadly, you can’t
Close your ears
To the words you
Don’t want to hear
They float right in
It hurts inside,
Right were it counts
To hear her cry
All she wanted to do
Was protect us
But even Mom can’t
Keep us safe
From everything
Sometimes life
Takes an unexpected twist
For the worst
Just hope you
Make it through
Okay
And when
You get a chance
Build those walls
Back up again

Expecting a lot

By Chloe Dickinson
*Woodstock Union High School,
Grade 10*

“Work until you drop
Do your homework and complete
my expectations.
Do it because it is right, do it
because it will help you
Follow my directions.
Because I expect you to.
It’s time to learn what’s out there.
Nothing in the future will be easier
than this.
Expect that.”
That was the teacher,
And expect them to do that.
Fulfill their expectations no matter
what is going on in your life
Because it will make you better.
“Give me some help, you’re older now
Time to learn the expectations of life
Time to open your eyes
Learn the rules of the big world
Embrace your citizenship and act
mature
Make good choices
That’s all we expect.”
Those were the parents.
They love you a lot
Everything’s for your own good
Help them when they need it
Family expectations come before
school.
Right?
“Come play with me!
Down by the brook,
Teach me to be just like you.
I expect your love
I expect you to always set me a good
example.
I expect you to be the best big sister
in the world
Is that hard?”
That was the Sibling.
Of course
And you love them so much
But they’re younger
And hard to carry around
It’s easier to just push them aside
But you could never do that
Because they expect your arms to
be there whenever they need you.
“Stand out, be cool and never bend
for someone else
Have your own personality
But have fun, have friends, be there
for them.
Go to that party Friday.
NO DON’T!
Make mature choices that help you
in life.
Stand up for your family and repre-
sent them.
Play with your little sister until
evening
Spend all your time helping your
family.
NO DON’T!
Remember the teacher
The teacher
Get that poem in on Expectations
Tomorrow!
Remember your duty for your future
Because everything they tell you to
do will benefit you
Forever
And Expect that.”
That was you or me, or anyone else
That was every teen who tries to
have a balanced life.
Emotions flying
Desires
Turmoil with no end.
Personal feelings mixed up with
everyone else’s
Impossible to remember which ones
are which.
Who did they come from?
Where did they come from?
Why did they come?
To keep us striving for ever and ever
To give us something more to
remember and live up to
Because expectations are endless
Expect that.

Fair assessment

By Melissa Werle
*Woodstock Union High School,
Grade 10*

It was the same old, same old at the fair.
Carnival rides that looked like they were
about to break any second, trash already
strewn over the ground though the fair
had just barely come to town. Greasy,
sweet-smelling fried dough stands at
every corner, mixed in with countless
other fast food stands piled on top of each
other. Con artists promising goodies to
the gullible people falling for their rip-off
games, and flashing, multi-colored lights
that would make a person dizzy in sec-
onds. I sighed. Of course. Every year I
imagined a great crowd, shining new and
fun rides, and a great deal of entertain-
ment, only to be met by this sorry sight.
Now I remembered how it really was.
Why could I never commit to memory
that the fair was always a disappointment
that never met my expectations? I was
two steps and five minutes into the fair,
and already I was ready to leave.

My two friends and I spent an absurd
amount of money on tickets for the rides
and I tried to act excited as we climbed
onto the first ride, which looked like a
sideways hamster wheel and whose pur-
pose was to make people dizzy and sick.
On the ride, we saw another group of our
friends, and decided that we would stay
together for the night. We all agreed that
we would go on a few more rides before
getting our fill of fair food for the night.

As we climbed off the last ride, another
stomach and nerve scrambler, I could
feel my stomach growling, but I wasn’t
looking forward to eating the food that
the fair had to offer. We bought a couple
of slices of greasy pizza and were still
hungry when we saw a pickle stand. It
was a strange little booth to have
squished between the fried dough, cotton
candy and ice cream stalls, but a couple
of my friends and I decided that we want-
ed to buy one of these pickles, claiming it
was because we wanted “healthy” fair
food. We were served by a man who was
almost as greasy as the pizza we had
eaten earlier, but he scooped out the
largest pickle in the barrel for me and my
friends to eat. My friend went to take a
bite of the strangely soft pickle. As he bit
into it, the pickle made an otherworldly
squelching noise that probably could
have been heard by people on the other
side of the fair. All of us starting laughing
hysterically, and the general mood of our
group lightened considerably. As the
night went on, we went on many more
rides, which didn’t seem as bad as they
had before, and we laughed over and over
about our squishy pickle. By the end of
the night, there was a carefree atmos-
phere that allowed us to have a lot of fun
laughing and joking together. The night
had gone way higher than my expecta-
tions.

Coming to the fair with such low antici-
pations, I managed to have a great time
with the simplest form of entertainment.
Just being with people who were fun to
be around lightened up the whole fairgo-
ing experience, and caused my night to
go above and beyond my expectations.

No expectations

By Nikko Malerba
*Woodstock Union High School,
Grade 12*

There is no such thing as expectations.
We are all that we make ourselves.
Our focus determines our reality.
Our determination defines our lives.
Our lives are what we make them.
The expectation is in your mind.
Let go, live your life.
Die your death.
Expect nothing from others
And you shall never be disappointed.
Be as yourself
And you will never be disappointed.



YWP is a grassroots non-profit that helps students write better and gain an audience for their best work. YWP offers writing ideas or prompts, special projects and a safe Web site, www.youngwritersproject.org, where students can share their writing, comment on 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 the YWP’s core work for the second year.



Talk to me

By Veronica Kovacs
*Woodstock Union High
School, Grade 10*

Me:
I want to help because I care.
Understand?
I promise, I’ll always be
there.
You:
But who will help you
If my problems
Become too big for two?
Me:
I can handle myself.
And anyway
Right now you need the help.
You:
You have problems of your
own.
Does that mean
You’ll cry all alone?
Me:
I’ll depend on you and you me
We’ll cry together
It’ll all work out, see?
You:
But what happens if we both
fall?
Who will help us
Hear us when we call?
Me:
We’ll conquer that obstacle
when it comes time.
Now tell me
C’mon, what’s on your mind?

YWP Special Projects

SYMPHONY POEMS. The Vermont Symphony Orchestra is seeking poems written in response to “The Skater’s Waltz” by Emil Waldteufel. (Download or listen by going to youngwritersproject.org and clicking on Publish and Special Projects.) Selected poems will be read at the Holiday Pops concerts in **Barre, Burlington** and **Rutland** on Dec. 7, 8 and 9 respectively. Only students in the general area of these communities are eligible. The poems should be about skating and, if possible, about sleep dreams, another theme of this year’s concert. **Deadline Oct. 26.**

For specific details on all the projects: www.youngwritersproject.org