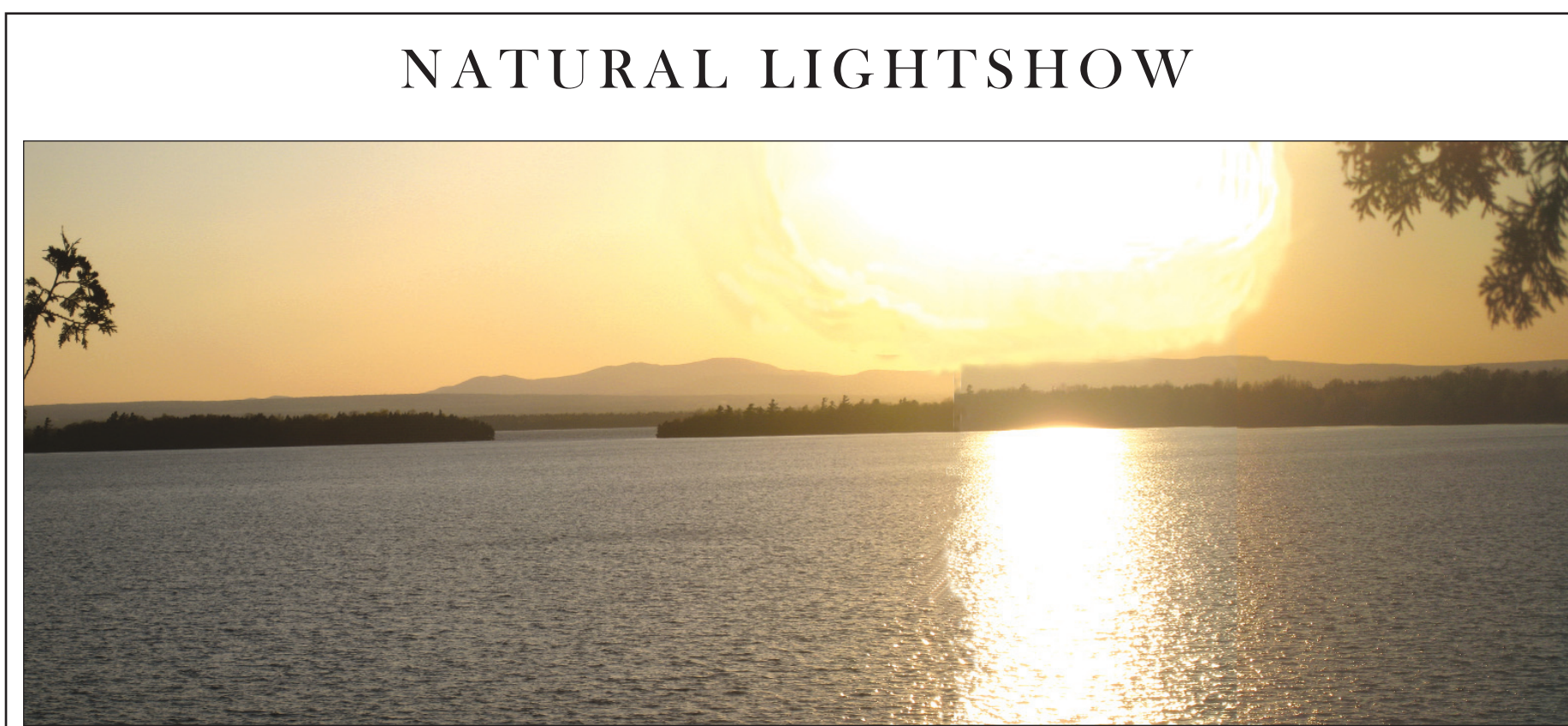


Week 6: Writing prompts — Expectations and listening in

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.



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 perfectionist 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 where 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 represent 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 seconds. I sighed. Of course. Every year I imagined a great crowd, shining new and fun rides, and a great deal of entertainment, 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 purpose 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 wanted 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 atmosphere that allowed us to have a lot of fun laughing and joking together. The night had gone way higher than my expectations.

Coming to the fair with such low anticipations, 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 fairgoing 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