

I am the girl ...

By Sarah Staib

Leland and Gray High School, Grade 10

I am the girl from down the old dirt road,
with the smell of rain and the sound of birds.
From the green grassy fields,
with wild flowers in her hair.
From Speedy-Pup with Robin Hood,
when we were still young.
From ice cream in your belly,
or just all over your face.
From bright hospitals,
waiting to know what's happening.
From campfires at night,
sparks mingling with fireflies.
From Love Sick Lukey,
always by her side.
From sweet, loving Mickey,
the best friend there ever was.
From dreams and hope,
and sometimes sheer luck.
From Gram's worn kitchen table,
with Ashley and Kelsey.
From painted rock stands,
for lack of lemonade.
From clarinet and singing,
notes floating in the air.
From always being good,
at doing her whatever it is.
From hiking and biking,
with some stubborn friends.
From the chicken pen,
or even with the pigeons.
From being ready on the field,
in soccer and softball.
From the undying love,
of my family.
I am the girl who's lost her way,
and is slowly losing hope.
I am the girl who wishes she knew,
the way back to where she's from.

The willow weeps

By Melissa Soule

Leland and Gray High School, Grade 9

Sweeping, swaying skirts of pale celery brush
the ground,
Like a soft sigh in the wind.
Small leaves flutter, silver winking eyes alive
with movement.
Graceful arcs form in easy bent boughs,
Reaching like a child to touch their toes,
And gliding down to just kiss the ground.
Cool shade is found beneath the shifting
strands,
And looking out, the world is bathed in a light
green veil.
The vines dance, waltzing in a passing breeze,
And sing a sweet melody, proud but underlaid
with light sorrow...
And so the willow weeps.

Similies

By Sarah Levine

The Grammar School, Grade 8

Tears fall like rain
From my squeezed-shut eyes
As I think of you
Your warm lips
But they have kissed so many others
Your deep blue eyes
That looked at me
So many times
But they have also looked at so many others,
And in the same way
Your hard warm chest
That I pressed my cheek against
When we danced
And breathed in your smell
But how many others
Have done the same?
Rain falls like tears
Pounding, pummeling my corrupt body
The rain is trying to pound out
The sadness and confusion
But all it succeeds in doing
Is making me remember
My tears.

I see nothing but black

By Miranda Shepard

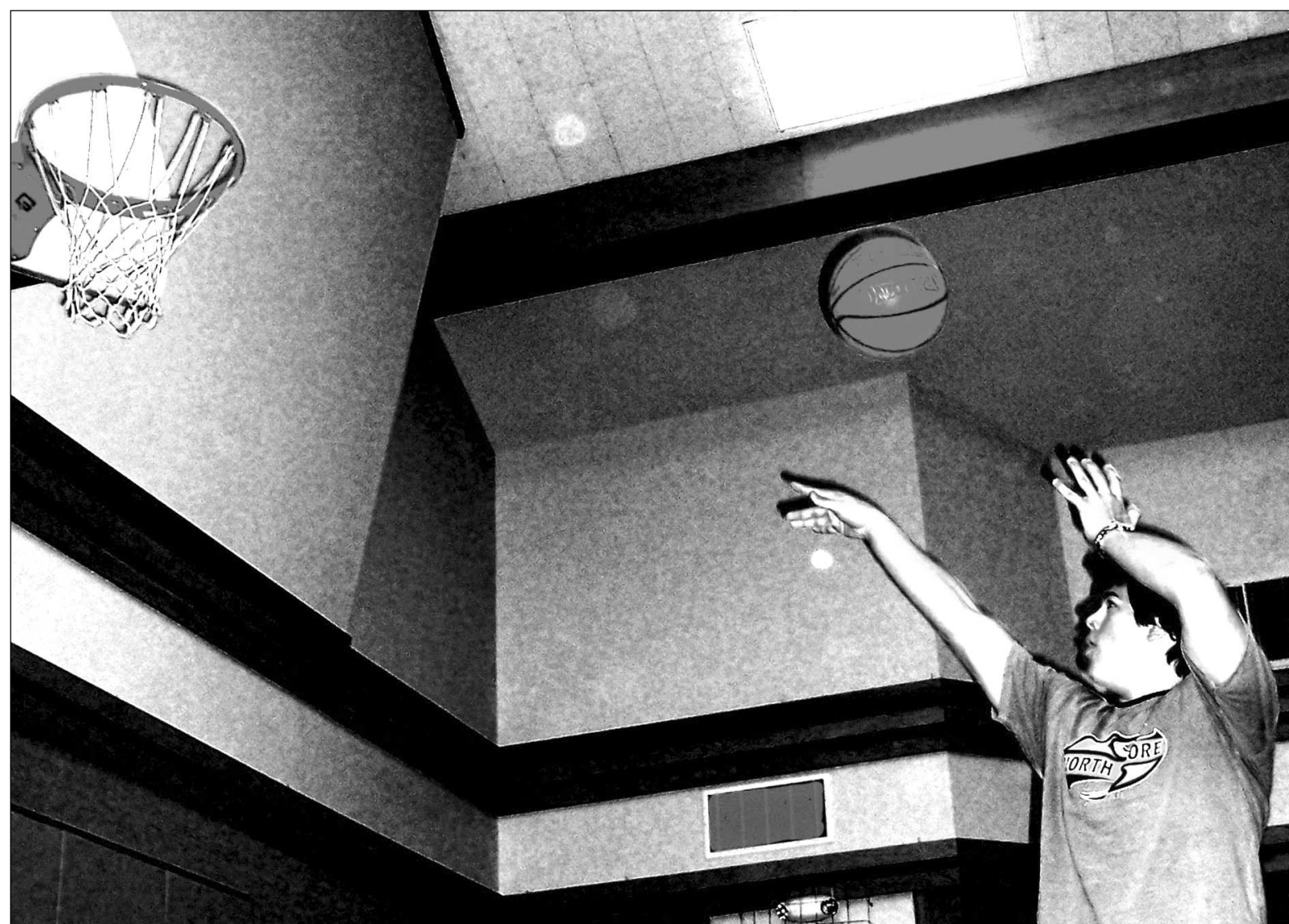
Rochester High School, Grade 9

I can't see them,
I don't know if they notice me,
They talk of brightness, and different colors,
But black is all I see.
I want to see what they talk about,
The colors and the light,
I want to once see the day,
Instead of always seeing night.
You see, my life is filled with darkness,
My eyes they cannot see,
And not many people realize,
What the world doesn't look like to me.
I have never seen a flower,
I have never seen a tree,
I've never once looked at a cat or dog,
Nor have I watched a honeybee.
It's hard for people to understand,
What it is that I go through,
Close your eyes for just one moment,
And you'll see life from my point of view.
My world is dark and lonely,
Always very black,
But I guess that's how life is supposed to be,
When it's vision that I lack.

Published yet?

One of the goals of the Young Writers Project is for students to get published, either online or in our partner newspapers. The work can be in response to our prompts or general writing; writing can be fiction, nonfiction, essays, poetry — any genre. We are also looking for art — photos or scanned drawings. To submit work, go to: youngwritersproject.org, register or log in, select "create content" and create an "entry."

SNAP THE WRIST



Devin Larsen, a student at Mount Mansfield Union High School, talks about how he created this photograph: "An action shot taken, desaturated then recolored. The person in the photo is Dan. The recoloring with the high contrast gives it a rather cartoony feel while the selected color brings focus on the important points."

Deer hunting gone wrong: When guns attack

By Stefanie Baker

Fairfield Center School, Grade 8

I was in the emergency room. I kept shaking and I couldn't stop crying. I was so nervous; my heart was beating so fast I felt like I was going to pass out. Hang on, let's start from the beginning — youth hunting weekend 2006, I was hunting with Dad and my sister when something terrible happened.

It was 4:30 a.m. and I was just waking up to head out into the woods. My dad, sister Jackie, and I went out with flashlights and guns in hand. I had been waiting for this day all year, especially after seeing a nice 8-point buck on a motion detector camera in the area where we were hunting. A few hours passed, and we saw our first deer. The deer was moving so I followed it with my gun, then it decided to stop behind a tree. I had a choice here, the head or the hind leg. I chose the leg and missed.

To calm myself down, I looked at the scenery around me. Then out of nowhere I saw a doe jump the brook; it was a beautiful thing to witness. I decided to take the shot. I missed the deer, but the kick-back from the rifle sure got me. The rifle scope hit me directly between the eyes. My dad, keeping his eyes on the deer, yelled at me to shoot again. I couldn't even speak I was so dizzy. Ignoring me, he turned to Jackie to get her ready to take the shot. Finally, he noticed the "Oh My God" look on her face, and looked at me. He flicked on the safety, lowered the gun, and we were out of the woods in a matter of minutes.

When we got to the house, my mom was just getting up. She had heard our gunshots and thought we had gotten something. Little did she know that instead of inspecting a kill, she would be taking one of her daughters to the hospital.

We sat in the waiting room for what felt like forever, even though the clock only showed 10 minutes had passed. Finally, a nurse came and called my name, and my mom and I followed her into a room. It was determined that I needed stitches. The doctor came in and immediately freaked me out. He had a name I couldn't even begin to pronounce. As he was giving me the numbing shot, he asked, "Now, what do we do if the doctor passes out?" I didn't know what to say, but I was thinking 'Oh, my God, are you serious?' Instead I gave him a sort of nervous laugh. I guess the doctor freaked my mom out, too, since the whole time he was stitching me up his hands were shaking very badly. I had no clue until after the fact; my eyes were glued shut the whole time. After he was done, I was left with three ugly stitches and a pile of paperwork on how to care for my wound.

The next day, my dad tried to get me to shoot a gun again so I wouldn't be afraid. You know how the saying goes: If you fall off the horse, get back on. But I couldn't do it. I kept thinking, what if it happens again? If it does will I be injured even worse than

before? My thoughts weren't helping the slightest bit. Every time I cried I felt like I disappointed my dad.

Then came Monday, the day I had been dreading. School. I swear I told my story a million times that day. I had a lot of people pick on me. My fellow students had a great time coming up with nicknames for me, such as Scarface. I had a hard time doing classwork without getting a headache, and I kept having that "uh-oh, I better sit back down" feeling when I stood up.

About five days later, I had my stitches out. I went to my regular doctor and told the story — again. When she asked if I wanted to pull the stitches out myself, I said, "Um ... I think I'm all set, thanks."

Now, almost a year later, I still get picked on for the careless error that I made that Saturday morning. Most people say I'm the girl who "shot myself" in the head, but I don't care; they don't hunt or know how to shoot a gun.

I think my dad was really hoping I'd be able to shoot a gun again because it was something that he, my sister and I could do together. In June 2007, I applied for a moose permit. I really didn't want to, but I also didn't want to tell my dad that I didn't want to. I knew that I would get a permit because I wasn't sure about hunting anymore. Guess what? I was right. I knew I would have to fire a gun again so that July I stood with my dad in the driveway to do some target practice. The first shot after the "accident" was the hardest. My dad was holding the barrel of the gun so that made me feel safer. I didn't aim; I just closed my eyes and pulled the trigger. After I did that a sigh of relief went over me. I shot a couple more times with my dad holding the barrel. Then I began shooting on my own! I was so excited to be shooting again that I told everyone I saw. My papa even commented, "I heard you and guns are back together."

A few weeks later we did some target practice to sight in our guns. I noticed every time I flicked off the safety, I would hesitate. I go back to that moment, and remind myself to be careful.

This fall, when I go moose hunting, I hope to follow in my sister's footsteps and get a big bull the first day. I'm really happy that I brought myself to shoot again, otherwise I wouldn't be able to get the thrill of the experience I'm going to have. My scar is barely noticeable now, but every once in a while it seems to really stand out. One night my father looked at me and said, "It broke my heart to see you hurt." It made me cry when he said that.

This season I'm going to be hunting again, and hopefully the only thing I'll hit hit this year is what I'm aiming at.

Escape

By Rachel Buhler

Woodstock Union High School, Grade 10

The leaves rustle
and the deer takes note
Looking all around
To see
Who's near.
A trigger is pulled

And a shot is fired
But the deer
Runs.
Away.
And survives a terrible fate
Escaped.



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, 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.



Turkey hunting

By Dylan Pratt

Rochester School, Grade 9

It was a Saturday morning at 4:45 a.m. on youth weekend. My hunting partner, Arty, and I were getting ready to go turkey hunting. We drove to Tunbridge and parked at the end of a back road. I put on my coat and loaded up my 12-gauge shotgun.

We walked out through the field where we had been seeing a couple of turkeys come to feed under an apple tree. We sat down under a big pine tree where there was good cover.

We started calling with a box call. Arty called first. It's not easy to call turkey because you have to get just the right pattern of sound. After about a half hour of calling we heard a turkey gobbling over the hill behind us. We called a couple of more times and each gobble from the turkey got louder and louder. We knew he was getting closer.

I asked Arty if I should move to another tree where I could get a better shot. He pointed out a small pine tree to the left of us and I got up and moved quickly to sit under it. I wanted to get there before the turkey came up over the hill. Arty stayed where he was and he called a few more times, and said, "Get ready."

I picked up my gun and a turkey came walking over the hill. I was trying to breathe slower because I was breathing really heavy, and I could hear my heartbeat. I knew it was a Tom because it was strutting, and I could hear it gobbling. I put my sights right on the Tom's head and pulled the trigger praying that I would get it. It rolled over. I ran up to it and started stomping on its head. That's what you have to do to totally kill it. Then we checked it out. We estimated how big we thought it was. We thought it was about 16 pounds with a six-inch beard, but we tagged it in it was actually 18 pounds with an eight-and-a-half-inch beard. I was really excited and spent the day driving around showing family and friends.

Then we went home to clean the turkey. That's the worst part because I had to skin it. You have to put a slit in the skin down the chest and slide your hand between the meat and the skin and rip the skin off. I cleaned off all the meat and bagged it up and put it in the freezer. We saved it to deep fry when we had our friends over.