

Week 10: Writing Prompts — General and hunting

Fever now

By Rebecca Valley

ST. ALBANS TOWN EDUCATIONAL CENTER,
GRADE 8

(Note: This is only an excerpt of a larger story that the writer is working on.)

It was silent. Sun streamed in through the back window, falling across my face. I opened my eyes, rubbing the sleep drowsily away. I was in the back seat, sprawled out, head resting on my clothing bag. I wore warm sweatpants, Claudia's. Zachary slept in the passenger seat, head resting against the cool window. I shivered. The cold morning air crept in from outside, and I looked around the car for the keys.

Finding nothing, I hesitantly tapped Zachary's shoulder.

"Zachary?" I whispered. He twitched but didn't wake. "Zachary?" I asked, a little louder. Still nothing.

"Zachary!" I demanded. He was startled awake, shaking his head. He started coughing, a hacking cough, and I quickly started to pound against his back, trying to beat away the coughs.

Finally he fell silent. I looked at him, scared.

"I'm fine." Zachary said. "You just startled me."

"Zachary, you're sick." I said, the back of my hand against his forehead. "You're warm."

"I'm fine, Angela." He insisted.

I was silent. Angry. Why couldn't he just admit he was sick? Why couldn't he tell me, so I could help?

"Angela, I'm sorry."

"It's doesn't matter." I said.

"Yes. It does. I'm sorry. But, really, I'm fine. Don't worry about it."

"I'm not worrying." I lied, biting my top lip. He looked skeptical but said nothing.

"I just ruined our first morning in Boston, didn't I?" he asked.

I looked outside. We were on a vacant road, apartments ahead of us and small shops littered with closed signs. It was quiet, but something about it was beautiful. I'd missed the stoplights at every corner, the shops and glass windows filled with goodies, candy and shoes, clothes on mannequins with blank faces, plastic, but in their own sense, real.

"No. Nothing could ruin our first morning back in the city," I said, and threw open the door, letting the cold New England air engulf me, the wind whipping my hair around my head in tendrils of mousy brown. I opened my arms and breathed in the air, smoky and polluted. City air. My air.

"Zachary! This is amazing!" I cried out, running to the nearest shop and peering into the window, searching the shop like a hungry 4-year-old at a grocery store.

"You know, most people would feel this way in the fresh country air. But you're different. You're a city girl. I like that about you," Zachary said. I smiled, running back to him and throwing my arms open.

"This is amazing. Incredible.

Terrific!" I cried to the sky, hazy and gray with fog and the oncoming snow of winter. Nothing could ruin this day. I was back in the city! I was back home.

"Zachary, I don't need blue skies and open spaces. I don't need pastures and twisting dirt roads that lead nowhere," I said. "I don't need cows or horses, cats or dogs. All I need is a city."

"I can tell."

"I need skyscrapers and pollution, dirty air, smoke-stained stoops and small family-owned shops that barely get by. I need designer stores to gaze in the windows, and I need public schools to complain about."

"Believe me it doesn't have to be public to complain about it," Zachary laughed. I smiled at him. I couldn't help smiling in this city, in any city. It was just amazing to be back. It was almost as good as being home.

Almost, but not quite.

"So ... What do we do now?"

Zachary asked.

Stella

By Emily Brooks

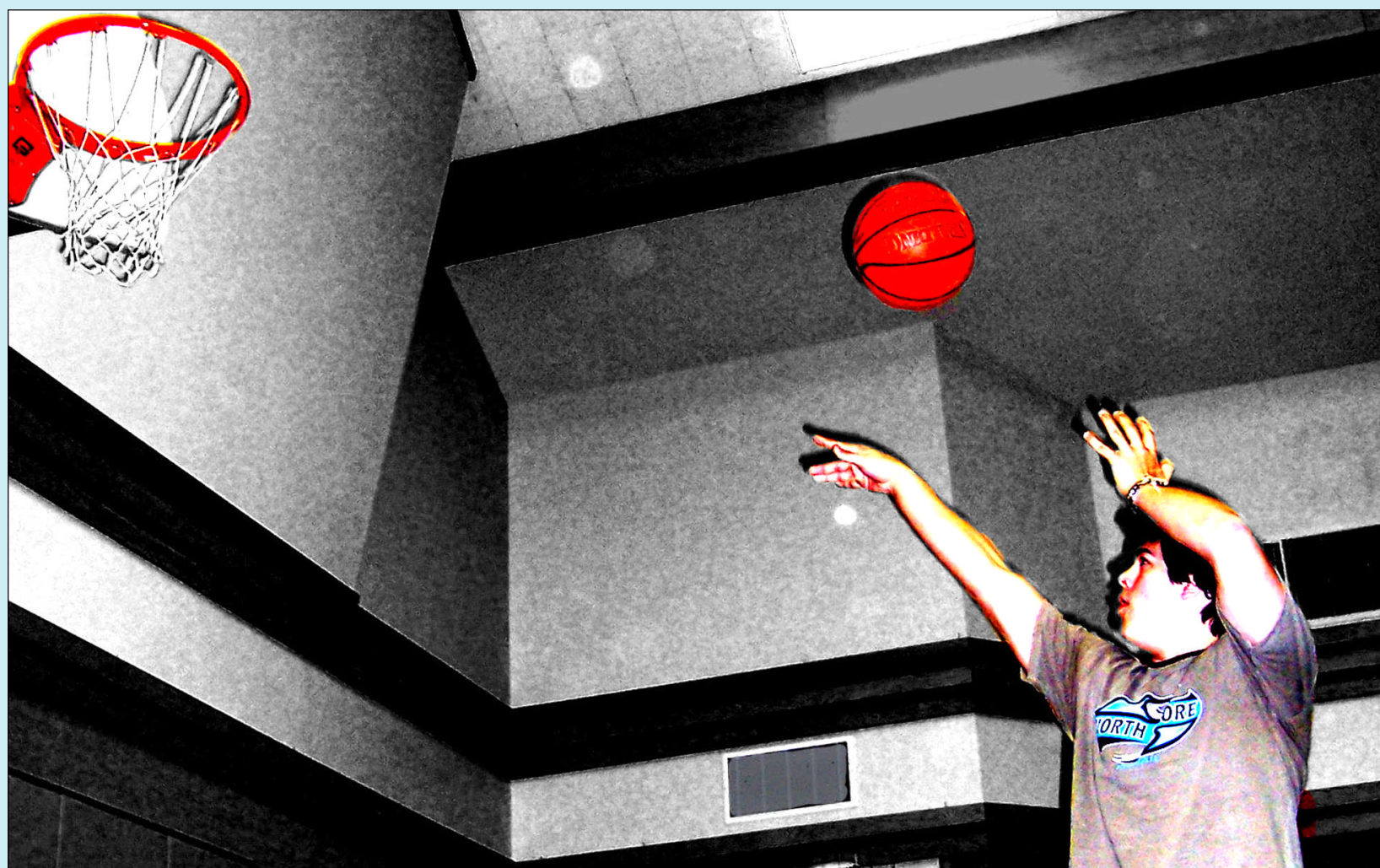
SHELburne COMMUNITY SCHOOL,
GRADE 5

Your sneaky cat feet
Scampering across the floor.
I'm lying on my bed.
You meow. It makes me jump.
You hop on my bed with a thump!
I pet your soft furry body.
You purr. You are very happy.

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."

My name

By Bea Woodruff

CHARLOTTE CENTRAL SCHOOL, GRADE 5

There I was, upstairs in my playroom, sweating like crazy. It felt like a volcano was erupting inside of me, a volcano of frustration!

Learning to write my name was one of the hardest things I'd ever done, probably in my whole entire life. It didn't make sense: Forming the letters, the silent "e." I thought the whole thing hogwash! I was absolutely sure that I couldn't do it!

"Come on, Bea!" I urged myself on. I made a 'B.' "One down, two to go! Yes, Bea you did it!" I congratulated myself. I was proud, probably as proud as a fox with its prey.

Then I forgot what came next. Fierce tears burned and glittered in my eyes, like boiling water.

I finally crossed out the 'B' then wholeheartedly wrote another 'B,' then an "e." "Go Bea!" I cheered.

Then in all my excitement I forgot how to make an "a." More tears fell onto the paper, ones of disappointment and exasperation. "Maybe I should give up? Should I? In kindergarten I'll learn it, why do it now?" I tried to convince myself. "No! Before I went to kindergarten I wanted to write my name. My whole name! Not just the "B," not just the "e," but the whole thing!"

I couldn't write my name. It always ended up with my attempts crossed out. As you probably know, that can be extremely aggravating!

I ran downstairs, frustrated with my unaccomplished task. I sat down on the sagging green couch and watched my older sister write. Truly, I was jealous. Though I was only in pre-K and she was in first, I was jealous. I was jealous of her curves and twists. They were like little butterflies dancing as they moved along the paper.

Why couldn't I do that? I could. I ran upstairs again and took out the mostly-covered piece of paper, all the black cross-outs reminding me of ants on a piece of watermelon. An ugly sight to be sure! No, I couldn't use that! I picked up a new piece of paper. Then I looked at the smeary-black marker. "That's not one of my possibilities!" I thought. I tossed the marker across the room and picked up a newly sharpened pencil. Then I wrote a "B." I wasn't going to cheer myself ... shouldn't get my hopes up. Then I wrote an "e," then an "a." I looked at the piece of paper like it was a diamond, a beautiful diamond.

I carried that piece of paper around for so long that all the rips and tears started to embarrass me, but I was more than proud then. Just that little sequence of words made my day.

I write my name a billion times now, but the first time made me feel proud — that beautiful proud. When I write my name now, I don't feel that same feeling, but I can look back on that day when I did feel that amazing feeling of being proud. That little word that I wrote on that small day made me know that even me, at that time when I was so little, when writing my name was a really big deal, I could feel proud.

Taps

By Tyler Hogstrom

WOODSTOCK UNION HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 10

A breath of cool, sharp air enters into my lungs as I am waiting under a canopy of coniferous trees. My trumpet rapidly cools after each of my failed attempts to keep it warm; out of sheer impulse I keep blowing warm air into it. I can see His family talking, but I cannot hear what they say. I can see their looks of disbelief in what has happened, though from the age of the widow, surrounded by a comforting couple considerably younger than her, it was not completely unexpected. The crowd organizes, and suddenly seems to become more respectful. Their inner conversations stop, and the groups congeal into one mass. I look down to check my valves, warm my now cold mouthpiece, and straighten my dull tie.

A man steps in front of the crowd, and they stiffen so as to not allow any more emotions run wild. The Speaker talks for a length of time, speaking of His life. He must point out many of the good things in His life, His good deeds and His relationships. The man walks into the crowd, with his head down. He has no more to say. Another man steps up, dressed in a uniform, and he looks to have been in the army in his younger days. He

makes no eye contact with the crowd, and talks. I imagine he is talking of a war. He was best friends with Him, was in every foxhole with Him and never left His side. It looks as if he can almost see the time he spent with Him. I look down at my shined leather shoes, empty my spit valve, and yet again blow into my polished instrument.

The flag that is draped over His coffin is folded by a pair of uniformed men and handed to His widow. My cue is three shots. I hear the first, then the second. I take a breath as five men reload blanks into their wooden rifles. The third rings through the air, and my tone hits the group. First I play to Him and to His family; my echo is played to His memory and His accomplishments; and my third time through I play for every man whom He ever loved, that He will always love and who died so He could have a longer life in this world. I don't know His name, but I feel like I know Him, I know His life and His family. My last ringing note bounces off the mountains, never stopping, in a constant remembrance of what love He brought to his family, and to the world.

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.

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.



One more moment

By Julie Elizabeth Curran

MAIN STREET MIDDLE SCHOOL, GRADE 7

I'm here before you,
But don't look away,
Or I won't be there.

I'm staring into your eyes,
But don't blink,
Or I won't be gazing back.

I'm holding your hand,
But don't let go,
Or I'll be lost once again.

I'm holding you tight,
But don't pull away,
Or the moment will be lost.

On the dark cliffs

By Meghan Hamlin

MONTPELIER HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 10

On the dark cliffs full of shadows
The river is rushing, the water crashing
Headed towards the inevitable fall

On the dark cliffs full of shadows
No creatures are seen, no creatures are heard
All have left so long ago

On the dark cliffs full of shadows
The river is rushing, the water crashing
Always on a devious course

On the dark cliffs full of shadows
The sunlight is hidden, the sunlight is in repose
The darkness rules the cliffs

On the dark cliffs full of shadows
The river is rushing, the water crashing
Indifferent to which way it flows

On the dark cliffs full of shadows
The cliffs are steep, the cliffs are virulent
Few live to tell their tale