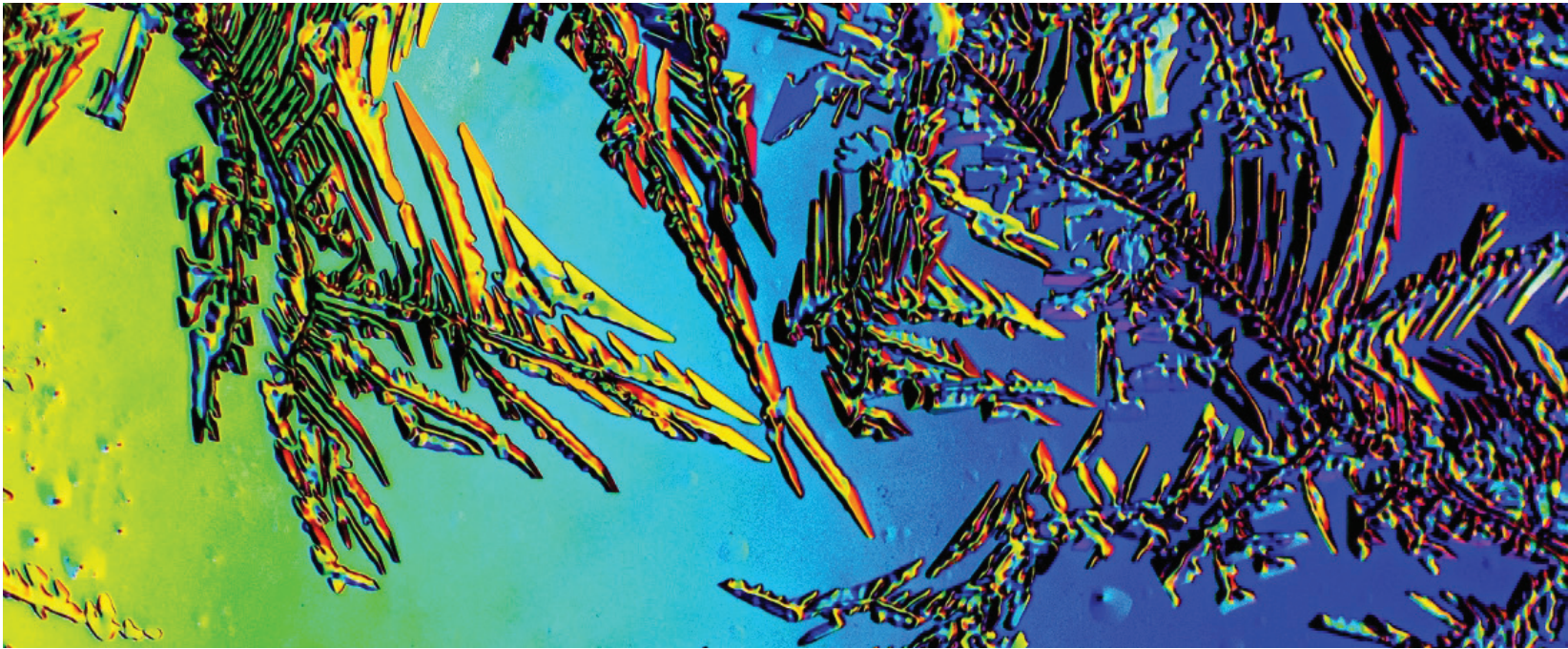


YOUNG WRITERS PROJECT



“Frost Colors,” by Lauren McCabe, 15, South Burlington

Dream Keeper

Soft in waves,
she comes down from the heavens,
tethered only by a fraying
strand of moonlight.
Caressing each memory
she holds in her hand,
your sleeping heart at night
still beating as it will within her
silken purse, she alights
on downy, pillowed stairs
to a land of subconscious
realizations.
Sometimes she begins
with a gentle smile
and a saddened gaze,
and leaves with a faded gesture
at the ringing of an alarm clock.
Other times she comes creeping,
teeth pointed
and eyes hardened
from too much to process.
She'll depart
as quickly as she came,
leaving you in a cold sweat
in the darkness of the early hours.
She is the Dream Keeper, who,
in tiny bottles made of star dew
collected in the nebula fields,
holds onto all the dreams
we forget, and beholds dear
each little memory,
each sliver of childhood innocence
we lose touch with
as we strive for maturity.
She is the mother of
the inner child.
And though she can be
cruel, cold-hearted, and blunt,
she loves each mind dearly,
as if we were all the little moons
to her sun.
With each forgotten piece
of our souls,
she has a safe place,
whether it be shelf, room, or hole,
and each passing day,
she collects more and more.
For she is the Dream Keeper,
mother to all,
who still keeps hold
of our childhoods,
whether in big ways or small.

– CALLYX O'DONNELL, 15,
HINESBURG

Once in a full moon

Once in a full moon,
a small sprout grows,
dreaming of life,
happiness, and sorrows.
It grows and it grows,
taking shape,
dreaming of heights
none have yet to reach,
high peaks snowy with life.
Once a small sprout,
the small tree grows,
higher and higher,
to the land where wind blows.
It blows so hard
as the small tree stands tall,
once dreaming of a friend,
but finding few at all.

– JESSIE TORNABE, 14,
BURLINGTON

ABOUT YWP



Young Writers Project is a creative online community of writers and visual artists, based in Burlington since 2006. This page features highlights of the writing, photos, and art submitted each week to YWP's website. We invite all youth, ages 13-18, to sign up for a free account on youngwritersproject.org. Youth who are 12 may also join with a parental permission form found on the site. Teachers of younger students are encouraged to open accounts and submit work on behalf of their students. Join us and experience the YWP community: Create and connect with other young writers and artists, be inspired, and get published!

Something I've wanted to share

Fifth-grade recess was a time of discovery. All around me, the bustling playground broke into groups; it was war, and we were picking sides. The self-appointed cool kids walked around while the stragglers followed. The nerds took over the plastic playground to have heated discussions. The sporty kids played football in the center, dirtying their clothes on the grass. I was somewhere in the middle, talking with my friends by the swings. It was perfectly sectioned, and I was supposed to be content staying inside the unspoken lines.

A single fact stands out to me about that year: Fifth grade gave value to quantity over quality. It was safer to stay in numbers than risk setting out alone with the outcasts (it was better to have 10 fake friends than one valuable one). The balance we had created remained righted as spring approached, but that was soon to change.

It is relevant that I now present an earlier scenario: the summer before fifth grade. My father was searching for ways to connect with his only daughter. In the end, it was football that stuck. After throwing our neon Nerf ball at dusk before dinner every evening and again in the morning, it seemed only fitting that my July birthday brought the gift of a real pigskin football into my arms.

When September rolled around, I was reminded that my school didn't have a football team. It also crushed me that the single spot of quarterback was never handed out lightly anyway, especially to a girl. It was only in the passing sessions in the graying dark that I found a place to store my passion.

That fall, the fifth-grade boys started playing football at recess. They would form two teams with the two most popular captains and section out across the soccer field. Fall to freezing winter, winter to melting spring, they would bring the fraying ball to every recess. I would watch from the swings...

– AVA ROHRBAUGH, 16,
CHARLOTTE

Excerpted; read complete essay at youngwritersproject.org/node/43340



Never really alone

If I had a spirit, I think it would take form as a little girl – a younger me, if you will. A ghost of who I used to be. The younger me who had dreams of being a queen or a dancer. She would follow me all of my life to see what we become. She wouldn't talk, just give me judgmental glares or slight nods. Never giving too much away.

I like that she'd always be there, making sure we still made snow angels in the winter and ate too much ice cream in the summer. Just because I'm older now, it doesn't mean that I have to abandon the child I used to be. I can still be her at times. Just because I have grown up slightly, it doesn't mean that I have to succumb to the idea that I can't be a kid anymore.

I think that's what a lot of people forget – that even though you may be 20, 30, or even 40, you can still play in the rain, have snowball fights in the winter, even have spontaneous dance parties until you can't dance anymore. And for the people who never got the childhood they wanted, this is your time. I'm not saying act like a kid all the time, but yes, if you want those two desserts, have them now. Have a big cup of hot chocolate with extra whipped cream.

That's who (at least I think) our spirits are – the children we used to be – and I think they are there to make sure that we never forget who we are. Who we used to be. We all have a part of us that never really grew up... sometimes it's good to let that side out. Be the kid that you used to be.

– ROMAE MARTONE, 14,
WILLISTON

Alone

I am a person who really does enjoy being alone, but, sometimes alone can get lonely. So I hold my own hand and picture his hand in mine.

– SYLVIA CHAPMAN, 16,
HUNTINGTON

Stories and plots unraveling

Fresh open pages,
a musty, old smell.
Etched into paper
lie stories unravelling.
Adventures untangling,
a break from reality.
A mirror to your life,
opportunities opening up.
New perspectives
being handed to you,
new lenses
you can look through.
All of these things
in a stack of paper,
bound with a thread,
being handed to you.

– MAELYN SLAVIK, 11,
BURLINGTON

YWP NEWS & EVENTS

WINTER 2022 CONTEST

Trees: Lifeline for our planet



The challenge:

Given the vital role of trees for moderating climate change, in words or visual art describe the importance of trees to you and the critical role they play in saving planet Earth.

Categories:

- 1. Writing** – Fiction, nonfiction, poetry, prose, songs, commentary
- 2. Visual art** – Photography, painting, drawing, comics

Contest deadline: Feb. 28, 2022

Submissions can be made at youngwritersproject.org/node/43222

Thank you to **Branch Out Burlington (BOB!)** for their sponsorship and support of this contest!

HOW TO SUPPORT YWP

Young Writers Project is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that relies solely on grants and donations for support.

If you enjoy this weekly feature, please consider donating online at youngwritersproject.org/support.

Or mail your gift to:
Young Writers Project
47 Maple St., Suite 216
Burlington, VT 05401.

Contact: Susan Reid, YWP Executive Director, sreid@youngwritersproject.org; (802) 324-9538

SPECIAL THANKS THIS WEEK

**GEORGE W. MERGENS
FOUNDATION**

