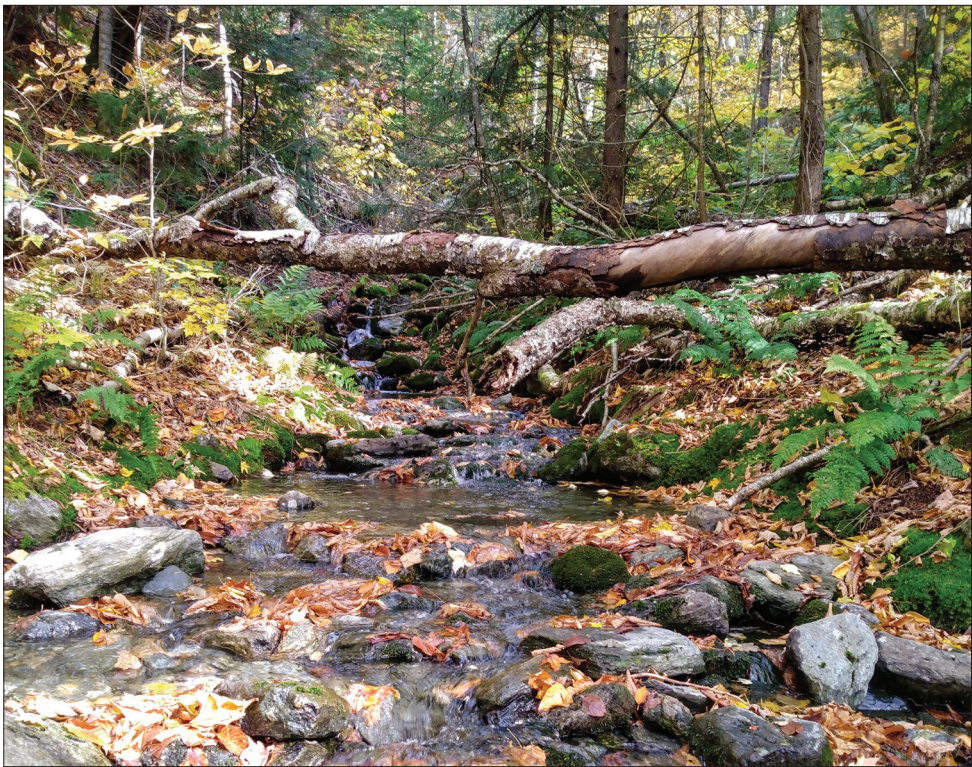


# YOUNG WRITERS PROJECT



“Vermont,” by Penelope Zygarowski, 14, Burlington

## The witching hour

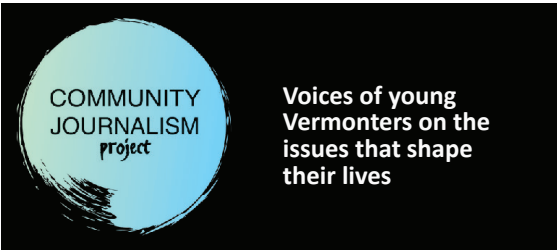
It is the witching hour.  
All the good little children  
are tucked into their beds,  
and only the crooked ones remain awake.  
The ones who stay up  
under the covers with flashlights,  
whose lips are sewn shut or glued open.  
Who warble like songbirds  
and screech like records  
and whisper like nails on cellophane.  
The little girls who don't comb their hair  
and who talk back to teachers  
and lead schoolyard attacks.  
The little boys who lend out all their hands,  
polish their spectacles, and limp to and fro.  
It is the witching hour, and magic creeps in  
through the open windowsills of odd children.  
They wait in beds wrapped in cotton  
or in kitchens surrounded by cookie crumbs  
or lying on hardwood floors,  
breathing the soft song of lumber.  
Magic stirs their restless bones  
and licks their hair  
and prickles the soles of their feet.  
And then they are all swept up in the magic,  
like a child with a toy she cannot let go of.  
The writers write whole novels  
and the singers hit the high Cs  
and the commanders plan invisible troops  
and the readers sink into cushions  
and fall through rabbit holes  
and fly broomsticks far away.  
And for a bit, the witching hour  
brings them home,  
waters them like sun-starved flowers  
and pulses them through  
with vitamins of understanding  
and minerals of inspiration.  
But it cannot always be the witching hour,  
and they must trudge back to school  
to fight with more teachers  
and protest more rules  
and refuse to write dull essays  
and draw pictures of fruit and sunsets  
instead of enchanted castles  
and how autumn tastes.  
And they wait at their scuffed desks  
and do their work indignantly  
until night falls and they rise...  
For the witching hour will come again.

– ZOE BERNSTEIN, 16, JERICHO

## Snow White

I saw an apple  
that looked like Snow White,  
but still I closed my eyes  
and took a bite,  
thinking it was all a dream for a time.  
I saw Rapunzel in her tower, I started to climb.  
I saw Snow White in the woods, starting to run,  
in a time when there was no more sun.  
I saw an apple  
hiding from her Prince Charming.  
I recall he had three princesses  
all in grand ball gown dresses  
that they have to wear  
so someone will pay attention.  
And sometimes Snow White wishes  
the prince did not kiss her  
in her coffin, nearly dead,  
waiting for someone to save her,  
when she just wanted to save herself.

– LILY MEYER, 12, MONTPELIER



## My eyes

For so long,  
I have listened to others –  
others' opinions,  
others' words.  
I have heard them speak,  
I have heard them debate,  
and I have only  
wished a single thing:  
to be able to know  
what I agree with.  
In this world,  
I am realizing that  
there are many, many struggles –  
there are things that so many  
people feel strongly about –  
and I am finding that  
I truly don't know  
how I feel about these topics.  
What is my opinion?  
For a while,  
I would listen to those I  
know closely,  
and I would nod  
as they talked about  
their thoughts on something.  
I would immediately think,  
*This must be the right decision  
if it's coming from them.*  
However,  
if there is anything I've learned  
from experiencing this pandemic,  
it is that not everyone agrees.  
Not everyone agrees,  
even if they are friends,  
even if they are family,  
and that is alright.  
I no longer feel like my opinion  
has to depend  
on the opinions of those  
I trust,  
those I have gotten to know.  
I want to find my own opinions,  
I want to have my own strong feelings,  
and I want to know how to share them in  
the right way,  
in a respectful way,  
in a civilized way.  
I want to look at the world from my eyes –  
not from others',  
but mine.

– SCARLETT CANNIZZARO, 13, ESSEX

## Busted

I now sit lonesome  
in the red brick stairwell  
where our lips once met.  
Time after time,  
secrets slipping through our stained teeth.  
Concrete stairs lining my peripheral,  
reminding me of how far I once fell,  
busting my grimy teeth face first.  
Diving into what I once thought was meant  
for me.

– ELISE LAVIGNE, 16, HINESBURG



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 an account on [youngwritersproject.org](http://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, attend online workshops and events, be inspired, and get published! It's free!

## YWP NEWS & EVENTS

### OH SNAP! Online Open Mic



**NOV. 20, 1 PM** – Join us every month to share your words, snap your appreciation, and just hang out with other YWPs from across the country. All events are FREE for YWP members. To sign up for this online event, go to: [youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org).

## Hidden by the rain

Rain pattered down on her window. Every drop hit the window with its own tone. Its own story. She peered out, watching. There was a single tree, its leaves bright and green against the gray sky. This tree stood tall. Its leaves fluttered and whipped in the wind and rain, but no matter what hit them, they stayed attached. They were strong. Her gaze shifted. Her eyes gazed across the field, long, beige, and soaking wet. They flew over the pond, the cows, and the stable, a red mass against the coming darkness. But no matter where they went, they always came back to that one tree. For some reason, it was captivating. The leaves weren't perfect. They had holes from bugs, some were weather-worn, and each was a different color. But that was how it was.  
She squinted now, as the rain dumped its last bucket of water. It hammered over her roof, beat down on the stables, and lashed out at the tree, but somehow, somehow it kept its poise. It stood there. As the clouds fell away, wisp by wisp, she ran out. The night was as still as any other. Her bare feet thudded against the ground. Her T-shirt whipped against her side. But she ran. She jumped into that tree. She launched herself into the leaves, the holey, wet, worn, colorful leaves. She had never seen anything as magnificent in her life.

– EMMELINE BREWER, 12, WILLISTON

## HOW TO SUPPORT YWP

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If you enjoy this weekly feature, please consider donating online at [youngwritersproject.org/support](http://youngwritersproject.org/support). Or mail your gift to:  
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## SPECIAL THANKS THIS WEEK

