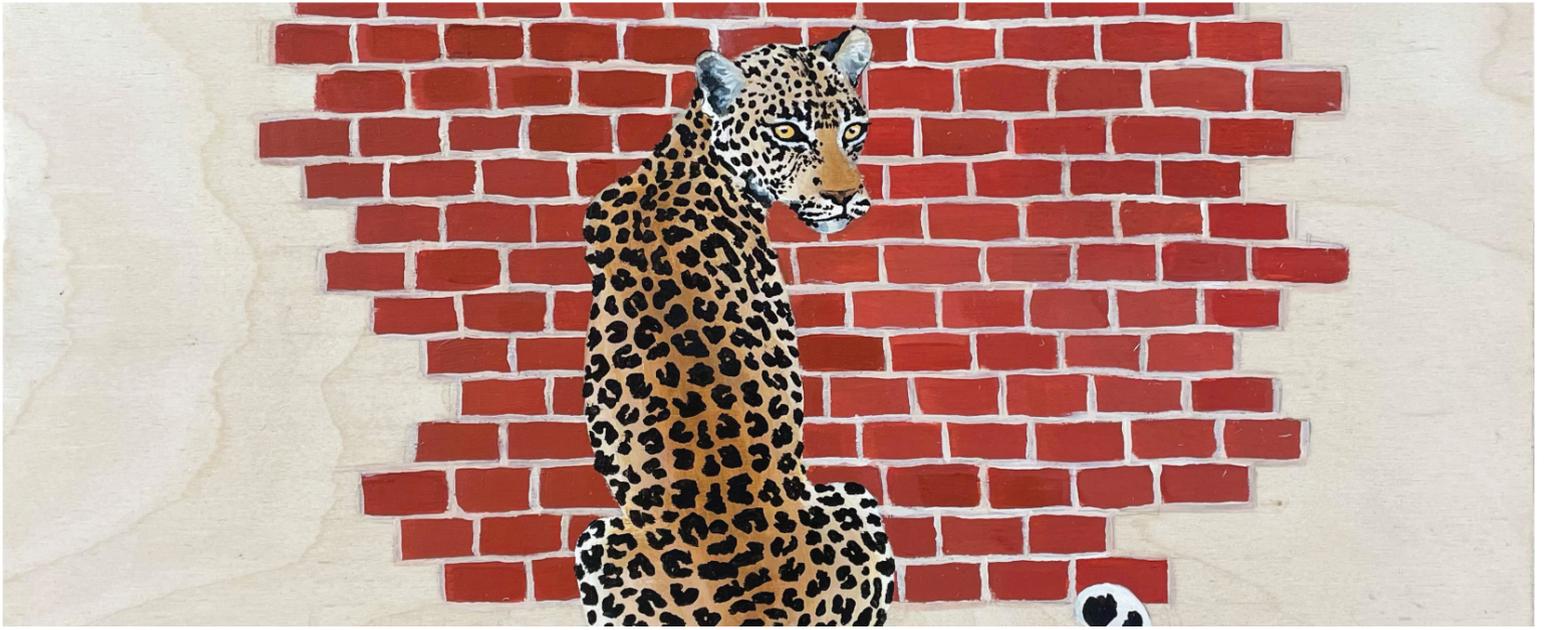


YOUNG WRITERS PROJECT



“Divided,” by Abrie Howe, 17, Stowe

Understanding

You will not understand me,
so don't begin to try.
I am as if the moon were square
and fish swam in the sky.
Don't try to understand me,
please do not raise my heart.
It will make it that much
harder when
it has to break apart.
You will not understand me,
I can see that when you bawl.
You still feel sorrow, still feel pain;
I feel nothing at all.
Your anger only bubbles.
It doesn't boil, but brews.
Mine scratches up inside my heart,
its claws are breaking through.
Your laughter is so merry,
so grounded and so bright.
I laugh, but my wings are unfurled.
I'm ready to take flight.
And when I speak, I'm rhyming.
My words do not make sense.
When I'm trying to compliment,
you tend to take offense.
My jokes you see as tragedies,
and my tragedies as songs.
All my sins are amplified,
and all my rights are wrongs.
You won't ever understand me,
you won't be able to guess.
Because however little
you understand,
I understand much less.

– ZOE BERNSTEIN, 17, JERICHO

Seen

I observe him as he stirs the big pot, murmuring to himself. The smell of sausages and red sauce wafts out into the air, making the whole house smell like home. His voice carries through the air lightly, as though it does not dare disturb the space around him. He chooses his words carefully, taking his time to analyze if they're actually important enough to say, to put out into the world. He moves in smooth and calculated motions, muscle memory helping him along.

In these moments, our words are only for the two of us. We are each other's safes, open to getting but oh-so-hesitant to give. We can talk about everything or nothing. A weight is lifted, just knowing that we have that option. The hands that are always wrapped around my throat, keeping me from sharing too much, release, and I feel I can breathe again. I sit on my stool and just listen, knowing that if I want to speak, I will be heard.

How many times have I watched him make this dinner? How many times have we talked about the same things in the same spots? The familiarity runs much deeper than just that – it comes from the smell of onions coming off the shirt he wears to work, and the understanding in his eyes when he observes me back.

– ROMAE MARTONE, 14,
WILLISTON

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!

Evergreen

Evergreen sprigs line
the path I take down the river
and past the old sawmill.
Here birds sing in shrill cacophony,
and my heart beats in tune
to each whistle.
Faster, faster.
My thick-skinned feet sing,
and urge me forward.
Faster, faster.
I've come to the water
to silence all that you have left
lying desolate inside my head.
Your voice haunts my dreams, lover,
and your face follows me
through my days.
I've come to the water
to silence all that you have left.
O, lover, there is an empty space,
one no amount of filling can ever fix.
It lies gaping inside of me,
swallowing up all it can.
O, lover mine, you left it here,
and hungry it gnaws deeper.
These evergreen trees,
so green amid winter's
unforgiving sleet,
watch me flounder
through the snowfall.
I do not keep growing,
and I eye them with greenest envy
for living in ways I cannot.
River water cool against me,
ice melting in my warm palms,
I let your touch wash away,
and for once I do not cry.
For now, that is enough.

– SYD CLEVELAND, 17,
HINESBURG

The night

Now that the sun is at rest
and the moon has taken her place,
maybe I can talk to the stars,
the stars that are staring at me
nearly more than I have ever
stared at them.
Now that the city lights
have vanished, and the streets
are quiet, far too quiet,
maybe I can follow the path
the moon has made for me
with its treasured light.
Maybe, just maybe,
now that the sun has set, and
the moon is the new face of the sky,
I will lie down on the cold grass,
stare back at those
prepossessing stars,
and let the night swallow me whole.

– ELLA BEERWORTH, 17,
CHARLOTTE

My magical creature

Her scales flash and glitter as she wags her bejeweled tail, reflecting the sun on the water. The fluff on her underside now drips with the saltwater. Everywhere except her face, belly, and legs is covered in iridescent blue, green, and purple scales, while the rest is covered with pink, fluffy fur.

She wades back into the ocean until only the multi-colored horns that rest on the top of her head are visible. But when she jumps up and plunges down to the depths, she is out of sight. As she can breathe underwater, she could stay down there as long as she wants. But a few minutes later she twirls 10 feet out of the water, with the sun behind her, making it look as if she were lit from within. The water that comes with her spirals back into the ocean, landing with little ripples.

She comes here every evening to play and watch the sun set.

She goes beneath the surface again, swimming with the exotic fish that spawn here every summer, but soon loses interest and breaks apart from the pod. She swims back to shore and lies on the sandy ground.

After a while her slight snores drift up to the twinkling stars.

– CAILIN FITZGERALD, 11,
SOUTH BURLINGTON

Her

They told her,
*You will never be great.
Your brain is not that way.
You will never understand.
You're a girl.*
But they did not know her.
They never tried.
And she did not care.
Her dreams were bigger
than they could ever imagine.
Her mind was a jungle
that they could never get through.
She climbed the mountains
that stood in her way.
The mountains that they had built.
The mountains
they thought she could not travel.
Her hopes were as strong
as a thousand swords, and
they were pointed at the world.
Her power was stronger
than theirs ever could be.

– AMELIA VAN DRIESCHE, 16,
BURLINGTON



Burlington Pride Parade



Photojournalism by Lauren McCabe,
16, South Burlington

YWP NEWS & EVENTS

YWP BOOK CLUB



Check out the YWP Book Club under “Community” at youngwritersproject.org for reviews and recommendations.

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

