

YOUNG WRITERS PROJECT



“Through the Window,” by Emilia Williams, 15, Thetford Ctr.



“America the Beautiful”

I simply don't understand.
What ever happened to make us shatter like this?
Who ever let our nation crumble under its own weight?
America's name holds finesse and grace.
Brings to mind a united nation, strong and bold and swift.
“America the Beautiful,” they sing.
“America the Beautiful.” Really?
I sit here, fingers typing away, wondering:
How can we be so beautiful when we push immigrants away?
How can we be so beautiful when we shoot people for the color of their skin? Think about that.
The color of their skin.
Isn't that ridiculous? I ask you, how can we be so beautiful when the only thing in our vision is money and power?
How can we be so beautiful when we form prejudices around love?
Think about that, too.
No, you can only love people of the opposite sex.
Plus, you can't identify with any other gender.
Isn't that ridiculous? I ask you, are we really all that beautiful?
We hate, we hate, we hate.
It's the truth, and I ask you, are we really all that beautiful?
We are wrecked and torn and broken and bent and warped and shattered, like a glass someone dropped and didn't care enough to pick up.
Let everyone else cut their feet on the shards.
And that someone is America.
We don't have to be this way.
You don't even have to love everyone.
If you accept and respect people who have a different skin color, a different sort of love or identity than you do, who came from a different place, then you are already a light in the dark.
“America the Beautiful.”
Am I ridiculous in believing that maybe someday, someday, we can hold up to this title? Someday we can be proud of our finesse and grace?
Can our name bring to mind a united nation, strong and bold and swift?
We are wrecked and torn and broken and bent and warped and shattered, yes.
But there is hope, take a breath.
There is hope, and you are that hope.

– ELISE COURNOYER, 13, RICHMOND

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!

Autumn's embrace

A forest colored by fiery orange, yellow, and reds.
An avalanche of fog descending toward valleys.
The snowy peaks of grass shying away from the sun.
The chill breeze exhaled from the frost dragon's maw.
That indescribable smell of crispness in the air.
The hazy morning urge to rise in the early dawn.
The young nights beckoning sleep in the new dusk.
That time of year when brown, beige, and orange sweaters are donned.
The perfect temperature for lazing outside.
The appearance of pumpkin spice and cinnamon on the rise.
The spirit of Halloween present throughout the countryside.
The fondness of Thanksgiving flows gratefulness into bodies like mine.
Look out the window for a surge of joy.
Inexplicable comfort courses through veins at the view.
Fleeting season I wish would never leave.
You can find me enjoying fall's leaves.

– MADDIE THIBAUT, 17, DUXBURY

I'm trying, love

I still love you.
I wish I didn't, because it would make things so much easier, but I still love you.
I still love you, and as time goes on, though I thought I was okay, it turns out I'm not because—
Because you're not here and I still love you.
I still love you, and my heart hurts sometimes (often), and tears well up in my eyes sometimes (often), and I still love you.
I wish more and more that I hadn't let you go, because you still linger in my mind, and moments with you are still my favorite.
I wish those moments weren't memories, but I'm glad to have them.
I still love you.
I'm sorry.

– SIRI DUNN, 16, MORRISTOWN

Cherish your youth

Six years old and they told me,
Enjoy your youth.
But I didn't care what adults told me.
I played with dolls and went down sticky slides.
Ten years old and they told me,
Enjoy your youth.
I rolled my eyes and stole my mom's makeup when she wasn't looking.
Fourteen years old and they told me,
Enjoy your youth.
I ignored them and texted my friends about boys and makeup.
Eighteen years old and they told me,
Enjoy your youth.
I told myself I was enjoying my youth, partying every weekend and turning in assignments seconds before the deadline.
Twenty-two years old and they told me,
Enjoy your youth, it won't last much longer.
I laughed and said that I was still so young.
And yet I was stuck in an office with no natural light and crappy coffee.
Twenty-six years old and they told me,
Enjoy your youth, and don't waste these precious years.
I sighed, ringing up baby diapers that I could barely afford.
Thirty-two years old and they told me,
You wasted your youth.
And now I realize I did.
I find myself wishing I was young again, because time passed in the blink of an eye.

– PENELOPE ZYGAROWSKI, 15, BURLINGTON

Strings of my heart

You pull the strings in my heart, pull them so hard I can feel the tension.
You pull the strings in my mind, demanding my attention.
You pull the strings in my belly, butterflies dancing salsa all night long.

– AMELIA VAN DRIESCHE, 16, BURLINGTON

Messy mind

Sitting in a chair waiting for that feeling, waiting for that sigh of relief, when relaxation hits.
Where is it?
Where is the release that I have been expecting all day, all week, all year?
Is it even coming?
I've done my homework, but have I?
Yes,
for the fifteenth time, I have.
I've practiced my instrument, but have I?
Yes,
for the hundredth time, I have.
Why can't my mind take a break?
Why can't it give me a break?
What time do I get up in the morning?
What time do I leave for school?
What do I have to prepare for?
And when there's nothing, my mind is confused.
It is so used to being busy, to being constant, that it doesn't know how to take a vacation.
But it's okay to take a vacation.
It's okay to take some time to put your brain in a calm spot.
And it's possible.
It's possible to be hardworking, multitasking, while still controlled, organized.
It's possible to be strong while still vulnerable.
So sometimes, you'll find it's possible to slow your heartrate just a bit, take a breath, stop thinking, and still live your life, even better than it was before.

– SCARLETT CANNIZZARO, 14, ESSEX

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SPECIAL THANKS THIS WEEK

