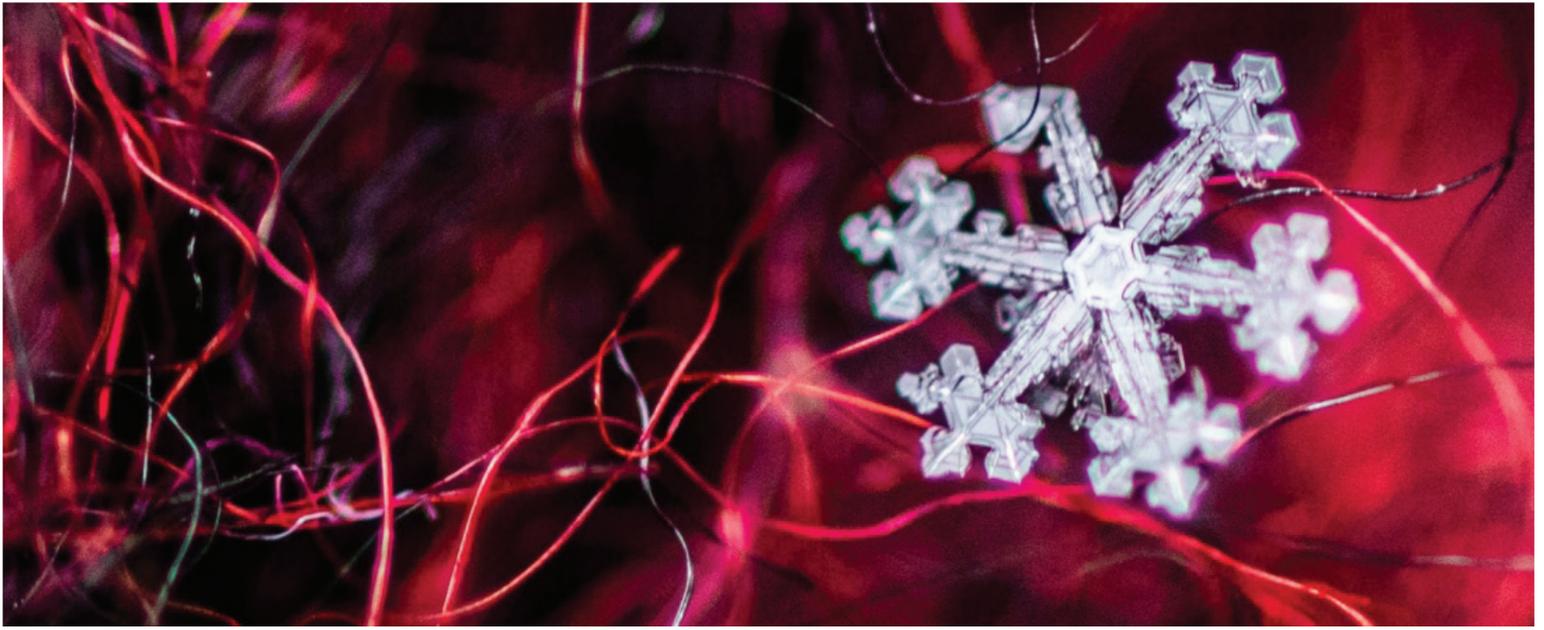


# YOUNG WRITERS PROJECT



“Snowflake,” by Lauren McCabe, 15, South Burlington

## Oh, bird!

Oh, bird, tell me how does it feel  
to float on wings of ivory and gold?  
What is it like to have the world  
at your fingertips?  
Tell me of the world  
beyond these acres,  
of the thrilling adventures  
in which you sing.  
Oh, bird, tell me why,  
after the beauty and wonder  
you have seen,  
you sit perched on my window,  
reminiscing.  
Tell me if there is such comfort  
in familiarity.  
Why do I long to see the world  
beyond the bounds of normalcy?  
Oh, bird, I cannot ignore  
the queries that pull  
at my heartstrings,  
begging for resolution.  
Tell me, if you do not have  
all the answers, then who does?  
Oh, bird, bring me with you  
as you fly away.  
You leave unanswered questions  
in your wake.

– GRACE BOLTON, 15, LINCOLN

## Missed waves

Hello.  
You wave at me,  
gently, like a swaying blade  
of grass.  
Seconds drag on  
and moments pass  
before I can think  
to lift my hand in reply.  
The regret will now linger,  
crawling in a hot, shameful,  
many-legged entity  
up my spine  
and across my cheeks.  
Because before I could think  
to lift my hand in response,  
you had already passed me.  
And I was too deep in my own  
frustrations to pay mind  
to the fact  
that to socialize fully  
would mean to wave back.

– CALLYX O’DONNELL, 15,  
HINESBURG

## Multidimensional solace

I know  
I’m mooted,  
an insignificant dot,  
a speck in the timeline  
of the cosmos.  
But the pain I feel  
transcends reality.  
There has to be a plan,  
a *fate*.  
If no one will  
remember me,  
why am I so desperate  
to be loved?  
Am I the center  
of someone’s universe?  
Or will this yearning  
last a lifetime?

– ZOE MUI, 15, SHELBURNE

## 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](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, be inspired, and get published!

## Thrive on the sea

My bike glides through  
the glistening reflection  
of the trees in the puddle.  
I push my legs down  
with all my strength.  
I can feel my mind drifting  
through the sea of my thoughts,  
questioning if I will make it.  
My thoughts are like a current  
pushing against me.  
All I need is the motivation  
to keep going;  
even that has started to sink  
into the void of my mind.  
All I hear is my bike bumping  
against the rocky path.  
The wind drifts up my nose,  
spreading oxygen  
deep into my brain,  
filling it up with life,  
with energy.  
I can see the lake inside my mind.  
The oxygen I breathe  
releases over that lake.  
The lake seems sad,  
plaintive even –  
like something has happened here,  
something has corrupted it forever.  
I don’t know if someone died  
or it just aged wrong.  
Whatever it is,  
I can feel the sorrow.  
Then I remember:  
My mind is the sea.  
All the boats that have sailed on it  
in the past few years have sunk.  
Some of my soul has sunk,  
buried by the sand of my smiles.  
All I have left  
is my writing,  
the words that sail  
across the storms  
through the darkest nights  
when I can’t sleep.  
I lie awake in the boat  
that is my home  
and my words come gushing out  
onto the paper.  
My feelings,  
my dreams,  
my fears...  
For this is how I live,  
this is how I keep my balance  
on those rocky waves –  
I don’t give in.  
I put up the sail and thrive  
on the wind.  
My boat is strong and so am I.  
I just need to believe in the boat,  
and I need the boat  
to believe in me.

– ANNA O’REILLY, 15,  
SOUTH BURLINGTON

## A walk in the woods

A walk in the woods  
with rises and falls,  
roadblocks,  
peaks and gorges,  
a boulder  
you climb over  
and triumph as you reach the top.  
The summits you touch  
along the path  
have views of green hills  
silhouetted against distant  
snow-capped mountains.  
The lefts and rights you could take  
lead to new ranges  
that seem like new worlds  
full of things  
you didn’t know existed.  
People you meet in passing  
might be lifelong friends  
or strangers by the fire.  
You get lost  
but you could be found,  
in yourself  
or someone else.  
The sounds in the trees  
let you know  
that you’re being watched,  
kept safe by the flora and fauna.  
You’re not alone;  
you’re surrounded by  
a place that seems like home.  
A walk in the woods  
brings out the best  
and worst  
in everyone.  
On the steep up-hills  
that shine with morning light,  
past where the average person  
decides to give in  
to the winding downhills  
that follow the streams  
and seem to go on forever,  
there are the people who  
don’t just look out  
but also in.  
And when you’re finally  
all by yourself,  
which in life  
seems to happen often,  
the trail might start to end  
into the stars  
you stare at  
in the long hours  
after dusk  
before the animals  
finally reawaken.  
And then, only then,  
you too might belong  
to this place you can call home...

– BENJAMIN WETHERELL, 15,  
MONTPELIER

Excerpted; read complete poem at  
[youngwritersproject.org/node/43664](http://youngwritersproject.org/node/43664)

## Skipping dreams

That’s the magic of dreaming:  
Having nothing, needing nothing,  
like the carefree summers  
of childhood.  
We stand on the banks  
of tomorrow,  
throwing out our dreams  
like stones over a pond,  
watching intently as they graze  
the glassy world –  
*plink, plink, plink* –  
until finally they fall  
and plunge into the icy blue.  
We sit back and laugh  
without regret.  
For life is longer when you laugh,  
so why not skip a stone or two?

– EMMETT JARVIS, 16,  
MONTPELIER

## 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](http://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](http://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](mailto:sreid@youngwritersproject.org); (802) 324-9538

## SPECIAL THANKS THIS WEEK

