

## I am from...

I am from the cold of the true north to the warmth of the land of the free. From the Ottoman Empire to the Egyptian pharaohs.

I am from the beautiful sights and sounds from my balcony. The sound of rustling leaves from deer to the wakeup call from the birds, to the squirrels fighting.

I am from the long, long hikes on sizzling summer days to the frosty winter nights wrapped around in the heaviest blanket.

I am from wearing shorts and sandals over in the Mediterranean to wearing two coats, snow pants, winter boots, and a scarf, hat, and mittens in the cold, freezing winters of Vermont.

I am from the beautiful foliage and snow on the trees in the Green Mountains to the dead trees over in the Sahara.

I am from the days to weeks to months when I would travel to Egypt to the days, weeks, and months when I could only travel around my home.

I am from the long road trips that take 10 hours to the summers where we can't travel at all.

I am from the days when I see my friends every day to the days when I see a small box with their names on a tiny screen.

I am from being an early bird to go to school to being a late owl, because every day I work from home.

I am from the loud, crowded streets of Egypt to the calm, quiet streets of Vermont.

I am from big, big supermarkets like Costco to the tiny store with sweets under Titi's apartment building.

I am from going to dozens of Alexandrian "farmers' markets" each day to going to a small, quiet farmers' market just on Saturdays.

I am from the loud sound of the athan coming from all the minarets to having to go to the masjid to hear the athan.

I am from the mango trees of Gedo Harraz's farm to the maple trees all over Vermont.

I am from watching long soccer games with Gedo Shousha to playing short soccer games with my friends.

I am from the amazing smell of mulukhiyah to the even better smell of my mom's chicken panne.

I am from being the loudest family in my neighborhood to being one of the quietest in meetings. This is where I'm from.

– **HAMZA HARRAZ, 10, BURLINGTON**

## The wall

We walk one way,  
the way forward.  
Along the x-axis,  
time is the only way  
for us.

The past lies beyond a glass wall  
clear in memory,  
unbreakable,  
for we cannot walk backward.

*She did something  
she wishes she hadn't done.  
She hates the way it pulls at her  
when she tries to sleep.  
She hates the way she can always  
see it*

*when she's ordering black coffee,  
when she's driving her car through  
the grid-like streets.*

*It's always there, beyond the wall,  
unreachable through the glass.  
She wants to hit the barrier,  
break the clear face,  
grasp the cold black hand and spin it  
counterclockwise.*

*Say  
you're  
sorry.*

– **NORA GAUTSCH, 17, JERICHO**

## HOW TO SUPPORT YWP

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Special thanks this week to  
**CHROMA TECHNOLOGY**



## YOUNG WRITERS PROJECT

Young Writers Project's mission is to inspire, mentor, publish, and promote young writers and artists. We select the best writing from hundreds of submissions to our website, [youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org), for publication in this newspaper and with other Vermont media partners, and in our monthly digital magazine and annual anthology. This week, we present responses to the challenges, *Weather. Write a poem about weather in a grave or reverent tone*; and *General Writing*.

## PHOTO OF THE WEEK



RUTH KNOX, 12, ESSEX JCT.

## Sealed for delivery

I step through the door  
into the dark of the night's chill.  
My feet crunch when they meet  
the soft gravel of the driveway.  
As I walk, my fingers trace  
the edges of the envelope I hold  
in my right hand.  
The wind swirls quietly  
through my hair.  
Out of curiosity, I let my eyes  
climb the treetops  
to the darkened sky,  
where a smattering of shining stars  
are misted, pricking  
through the navy blue canvas.  
The blinking red light of a plane  
throbs as it inches across the sky,  
closing in on its destination.  
An owl hoots from somewhere  
deep in the woods.  
My feet hit pavement and  
I've suddenly reached  
the end of the driveway.  
The stars shine bright enough  
to illuminate the yellow lines.  
I cross in four strides  
and walk up to the mailbox,  
where I slip my envelope inside,  
sealed for delivery.

As I pop the red flag up,  
headlights shine against  
the skinny black wires  
that hide during the day  
against the trees.  
I cross the street to my driveway,  
and as I look back,  
a small car drives by,  
its headlights beaming  
through the night.  
Whispers of wind follow it  
as it is lost from my view.  
When my feet have  
carried me to the door,  
I am filled with longing –  
I have reached the end.

– **ADDISON SCHNOOR, 14, WEYBRIDGE**

## Tupperware poetry

The back of my mind is a freezer.  
You never know  
what you'll stumble upon:  
cake left from the perfect birthday,  
frozen dumplings for nights when  
cooking feels like drowning.  
It's fun, if you're in the mood.  
Pluck out three things and  
find their meaning,  
try for a meal.  
I try for poems  
mix-and-matched with moments  
and metaphors,  
frozen peas and leftover fish,  
taking inventory  
in spiral-bound notebooks.  
Do words ever expire?  
Do feelings grow stale?  
Poems have no ingredients lists;  
they come from everywhere.

– **JULIA TODD, 13, SOUTH BURLINGTON**

## To be mistaken

We make mistakes.  
I do, you do.  
Our entire world does.  
But a mistake  
is more than what simply  
meets the eye.  
A mistake  
could be a misunderstanding.  
A mistake  
could be unspoken truths.  
It is to be wrong,  
it is to be mistaken.  
To be mistaken is to be questioned.  
To be mistaken is to be changed.  
It is to have to speak to others,  
to have to use words, actions,  
and explain.  
Explain how this happened,  
explain why.  
To be mistaken is to be taught  
about right,  
about wrong,  
about differences and similarities.  
To be mistaken is to be helped  
through good or bad,  
through smiles or sorrow.  
To be mistaken  
is to be so many things –  
excluded, explained,  
and eventually, forgiven.

– **SCARLETT CANNIZZARO, 13, ESSEX**

## The storm

Thunder rolls,  
lightning strikes.  
Rain beats down hard,  
trying to drown everything out.  
Powerlines rattle in the harsh wind.  
The thunder gets louder and louder,  
demanding attention.  
Cars slide on the wet road.  
Trees sway in the strong wind.  
The storm gets stronger and stronger.  
The sky turns a dark gray,  
angry and sad,  
then suddenly it all stops.  
Rain falls softly  
as the sun shines.  
The sky is a soft, happy blue  
as the clouds clear away  
and a rainbow appears.

– **KATIE LADIEU, 12, ENOSBURG FALLS**

## Tomorrow comes

Rain splatters the windows,  
lightning licks the sky.  
I really love this weather,  
but I simply don't know why.  
Soon darkness overwhelms the day,  
turning it to night.  
But still the storm continues,  
causing quite a fright.  
Tomorrow comes after  
the lively night.  
The sun peeks out brilliantly,  
the sky is blue.  
And I know just what to do:  
Play outside!

– **SUZANNE BRUBAKER, 9, SHELBURNE**



SHARING THE VOICES  
OF YOUNG VERMONTERS  
ON THE ISSUES THAT  
SHAPE THEIR LIVES

## Flashback

I have a flashback  
back a year and a half.  
I was at a protest.  
No masks because it was  
September 2019,  
COVID was not a thing.  
We sang chants,  
standing up for the Earth,  
shouting for a change.  
Then they asked for volunteers,  
volunteers to go up on the steps,  
with thousands watching,  
and speak the truth,  
speak for the Earth.  
"You should do it!"  
my friends said to me.  
I did not know what to do –  
what would I say?  
People spoke,  
and when I'd worked up the courage,  
it was too late.  
How can you be an activist  
if you never act?  
I may never get that chance again  
to speak to such a crowd,  
to speak the unfiltered truth,  
because I had my chance.  
And I lost it.

– **LILY MEYER, 11, MONTPELIER**

*The Community Journalism  
Project is supported by  
Lisa Chamberg and Patrick Robins,  
the National Life Group Foundation,  
and the Windham Foundation.*

**Thank you!**

## My future

The gentle breeze of the sea  
kisses my cheeks in a red glow.  
My body is heavy, the weight  
of the world pulling me down.  
I can hear it all, the birds  
in their morning call  
and the wolves who howl  
their cries to the moon,  
too far to be heard.  
It all feels so real,  
yet I know that this is  
all in my head, pounding thoughts  
like the rattles of a railway station.  
I must be dreaming, be it day  
or night, I can't  
snap out of it.  
It's such a weird feeling,  
to know I'm different.  
My mind is my whole world,  
where the waters  
are warm to the touch  
and where ice cream never melts.  
Where pancakes are served  
on Saturdays, where the smell  
of lilacs is ever-stronger.  
Sometimes, I wish to be  
rid of my mind, to act like  
my peers. It's self-defense  
in a way, hiding who  
I truly am while riding  
in someone else's shadow.  
I hide myself for years,  
through my high school years,  
soon through adulthood, hide  
from my children, who don't know  
their real mother. But soon, I change,  
and they can't recognize me.  
My mind was put to rest for too long,  
and with all those years of hiding,  
my mind has gone weak.  
Soon, I am on my bed, my body light,  
my voice hushed.  
My family crowds around me,  
their faces wet with tears,  
and the room is filled with sorrow.  
But amid the sadness  
and stern faces, I smile.  
My body is old, my mouth  
toothless, my blond hair  
gone pure white. I don't see myself,  
and I don't care.  
I still smile at my family,  
at the ceiling, at what is to come.  
"I have lived a fulfilling life  
the younger me wouldn't have ever  
known to come true. I am  
happy"...

– **ELLA POSTON, 17, ST. ALBANS**

*Excerpted; read complete poem at  
[youngwritersproject.org/node/39786](http://youngwritersproject.org/node/39786)*