

# YOUNG WRITERS PROJECT



“Jet Ski Polygon Portrait,” by Lauren McCabe, 15, South Burlington

## Enough

The cold morning air hugged my damp skin. All you could hear were heavy footsteps, our heavy breathing, and the sounds of the mountain. Light started to filter through the canopy of thick, green leaves. There was no one but us, just the way we like it. It was different, the feeling of being utterly alone in nature. Surrounded by the breathing trees, and the awakening ground. We walked through streams, climbed over rocks, and tripped over roots. We bantered in quiet, hushed voices, not wanting to break the peace.

That was the hike when I got my trail name, “Pequeño Pollo,” which translates to “Little Chicken.” I was scared of everything – the rustling of trees, the big rocks we had to climb, even the little snake we met on our way up. It was nice though, because it was never just us in the past. Now it was, and I liked it.

As we got closer to the top, the trees fell away. We became very much exposed to the harsh winds and beating sun. As I looked at my dad, I was ready to say I wanted to go back down. I wanted to say that it was too daunting, that I just couldn’t. But before I could say anything, he took my hand and said, “You can do this, I know you can.” In that moment, just knowing that he thought I could do it was enough for me. I pushed myself to climb up the rocks and over the ridges.

We had the time of our lives that day on top of Camels Hump. That was the hike when I learned that it’s okay to be scared but also that you shouldn’t let your fears hold you back. Yes, I’m a “Pequeño Pollo,” but I will never let that stop me, because my dad believes in me, and that’s enough.

– ROMAE MARTONE, 14, WILLISTON

## Spring is...

Spring is the season of wind and light, and for stargazing up into the bright night. Spring is the season of weeds and seeds, and for flowers to bloom and bleed. Spring is the season of happiness and love, and for all the trees to shake up above. Spring is the season of new beginnings and wet grass, for ice cream and smiles to last. Spring is the season of rain and mud, and for all the leaves to start to bud. Spring is the best season.

– PENELOPE ZYGAROWSKI, 14, BURLINGTON

## 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!

## The phoenix

A single flower emerges from a forest of burnt wood, like a phoenix rising from the ashes. The background is charcoal gray, stretching as far as the eye can see. A forest of pointed, black toothpicks. Though, out of all the dead, little is alive. Even weeks after the fire, only a few lichens and mosses live. But one flower, a fire poppy, begins to bloom, bursting upward and outward, reaching for the sky. The autumn sun bounces off the ground, shining off the fire poppy, a spotlight on a stage. I sit there on the burnt front porch of the house of someone I never knew. For hours I sit there, never moving, watching the flower in the ever-waning sunlight – a beacon of hope for tomorrow.

– WILLCOX ELLIOTT, 13, HINESBURG

## Fingers crossed

Sitting at this old, rickety wooden table, I can see the sunshine flickering off the burbling brook below my house. The fall-deadened trees sway and rustle in the sweet spring air as fat, gray squirrels tumble and climb and nose around the underbrush. A breeze lifts the pastel blue sheets drying out on a clothesline that seems just on the brink of snapping and falling to the green-brown-red ground. Pale, paper-thin leaves float over the new grass-blades as chicken feet scratch up muddy flowerbeds and peck over pine needle-laden roots. On the calendar, spring happened almost a month ago, and Vermont never seems to make up its mind, but I think this time the warm breeze of spring will stay. (Fingers crossed.)

– ADDISON SCHNOOR, 15, WEYBRIDGE



## Burning home

Upon the rising of the flaming sun, glowing and blowing, spinning ‘round a hole. And around this giant ball of pure flame? A little blue one with a tad of green. Let us zoom closer to this little ball, little critters move around and cover all. They thrive, chitter, think of life as a game. Now let us move away, into the forest, where a lonely man stands straight and tall. He watches the sun, down on Earth, consuming and burning, and in its path? Nothing. As the man watches what used to be warmth, a silver tear falls from his once clear eye. Do you cry? You may have lit the flame.

– ETHAN HUANG, 13, NORWICH

## Breathing bubbles

Isn’t it lovely to walk upside-down and see all the smiles that were meant to be frowns. Isn’t it great to take yes from no, to take roses from thorns, to take “closer” from “fro.” Isn’t it lovely to breathe underwater, to spend time in the cold and not freeze, but get hotter. Isn’t it swell to make fish out of plastic, to hear waves out of thunder, to hear nice from sarcastic. Isn’t it fun to never hear mocking, to assume everything and not spend time just chalking. Don’t you just love seeing out of your ears? To make pendants from teardrops, tiptoe around fears. Isn’t it great to never feel sad, to never see pain, to never get mad. Isn’t it great to never have knew, to live in the lovely, to ignore the true.

– ZOE BERNSTEIN, 16, JERICHO

## The island

In the middle of the Pacific Ocean, there is an island. The island is covered in a forest of tall pine trees. The pine trees’ bark is very light brown, because it’s springtime. The base of the trees grow tall, and the branches don’t start until nearly the tops of the trees. The pine needles are a dark green color. The grass in the forest is soft and mossy. When you step on it, it feels squishy but dry. The grass tickles your feet and it smells like soil when you lie on the ground. The island’s forest is abundant with roses, but no other flowers. There are animals on this island that are the typical species of animals you would find in a forest, such as foxes, chipmunks, deer, and rabbits. But even with the animals all throughout the island, there is a constant, deafening silence.

On the island, there are two seasons, no matter what time of year it is. It snows in the usual wintertime, but the rest of the year is spring. There is no summer or fall. During the spring, the weather is always temperate and agreeable. During the spring, the flowers bloom and the foliage of the forest grows. All the baby animals born during the winter grow up in the spring. In the spring, the sun is shining... always shining!

There is no nighttime on the island. There are a few hours in the day when the sun is about to set, but then it resets high in the sky. The animals of the island rest during those few hours when the sun is about to set. In the middle of the island there is a mountain...

– WALDEN OLMSTEAD, 11, WINOOSKI

*Excerpted; read complete story at [youngwritersproject.org/node/44245](http://youngwritersproject.org/node/44245)*

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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

THE  
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