

Oh, to be mist

Oh, to be mist on a rainy day,
to embrace the mountains
and drift away,
to curl and float above a lake,
and revel in the rising sun's wake.
And oh, to sweep in silken waves
through untouched woods
and cities paved,
to kiss the treetops, soaring high, and
wreath the shoulders of passersby.
And oh, how sweet to simply be,
to set the scene for mystery,
to take a place once sad and dull
and make it seem more magical.

– ROSE LORD, 15, HINESBURG

The sun keeps shining through

Every day there is a time
when the sun is shining through.
The trees are green
and the day is new.
I love the light this time of day.
The morning sunrise
makes me feel a certain way.
My body is relaxed,
my mind is clear.
So there is nothing out there
for me to fear.
My day ahead
has a schedule that's full.
I am busy, so my day won't be dull.
Filled with school, homework,
and gymnastics too,
a long day ahead will make it
easier for me to get through.
Gymnastics takes time
and school takes more,
which makes my life one big chore.

– MIA SANTANIELLO, 12,
ESSEX JCT.

I will always remember

Dedicated to my dog.

*I will always remember
the way you would always
steal our clothes when
we went to take a shower.
I will always remember
your wet, sloppy kisses on our faces.
I will always remember
the white fur on your chest
in the shape of a heart.
I will always remember
you running and chasing squirrels,
and the time you almost caught one.
I will always remember
that you were there when I needed
someone to talk to
who wouldn't judge me – just listen.
I will always remember
the way you would smile
when you saw us.
I will always remember
your tail always wagging.
I will always remember
the happy times.
I will always remember you.*

– PENELOPE ZYGAROWSKI, 13,
BURLINGTON

Spring morning

As I lie here on the grass on this
crisp spring morning, I listen to the
birds chirping, to the train going by,
to the people talking in the distance
and the sound of the wind in my ears.
The feeling of the grass under me,
cold. The feeling of the sun on me,
warm. The mix of these things,
perfect. As I look around, I see a
sloping hill with trees bordering it.
My teacher calling me in the distance.
I go.
I love spring mornings.
Peaceful, the day warming up.
Lying on the grass.

– KOKO DANDO, 13,
NORTH FERRISBURGH

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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, for publication in this newspaper and with other Vermont media partners, and in our monthly digital magazine and annual anthology. This week, we present *General Writing* responses.

PHOTO OF THE WEEK



LILY MEYER, 12, MONTPELIER

Could it be true?

I look out the window from my desk.
The rain has finally stopped.
The wind has calmed down too
as the sun is tucked
behind the mountains in the distance.
A quiet hush spreads
like the world is on pause.
Click.
Clank.
Clunk.
I turn my head.
My bedroom door sways open.
Click.
Clank.
Clunk.
I tentatively walk
down the stairs.
Creeks echo around me.
I peer around the corner
just in case.
Spooky moaning noises emanate
from behind the door.
I step forward
and slowly extend my hand.
I quickly regret it,
jumping back;
the handle is blazing hot to the touch.
The whole door begins to shake.
It looks like it could *explode*.
My eyes go wide –
could it be true?
Yes,
my refrigerator is definitely haunted.

– EVEY SLAVIK, 14, BURLINGTON

Music on the ceiling

The girl couldn't sleep.
Not when there was
a party downstairs.
Not when there was music
that crept under her closed door
and whispered for her to stay awake.
The music seemed to sit at
the foot of her bed and watched her
as she tried to count her thoughts.
The girl looked at the shadows
that came and went across her ceiling.
Normally they frightened her.
However, tonight was different.
Tonight there was a party downstairs,
so the shadows on her ceiling
seemed to dance.
When she looked up,
all the girl could see
were dancers that twirled and spun,
waved and laughed,
illuminated by the spotlight
that shone through the crack
under her door.
The girl watched as the shadows
bowed and curtsied to one another,
and then all went around in a circle,
holding hands.
There seemed to be lots of joy
in the way the shadows danced.
They seemed to dance
to the music from downstairs.
The girl couldn't sleep.
Not when there was
a party on her ceiling...

– ANNIKA GRUBER, 16,
CHARLOTTE

Walking through the woods

She loved to walk through the woods.
It was calm.
All her stress would fade away,
lift up and float away
through the leaves.
She felt as though
she could finally let go,
she could breathe.
The clean air had a different effect,
scientifically proven to calm one
and lower blood pressure.
“I love the light this time of day,”
she would say, tilting her head back
to look through the sunlight
slanting through the branches
of the various kinds of trees.
In all seasons, the light still shines.
In the crisp, fresh air of winter.
The green hue cast from the leaves
in summer and spring.
The way it shines through
the multicolored leaves of autumn.
It's still there.
As are the trees, grass,
a multitude of plants.
Birds, squirrels, rabbits, foxes.
They stay.
She took a deep breath,
closing her eyes.
Letting the feeling of nature
surround her.
Drowning out and
enhancing her senses
at the same time.
Letting the air fill her lungs
before she breathed out again,
a small cloud
forming from the cool temperature.
She shifted her jacket,
pulling it tighter around her,
opening her eyes
before turning around
and walking away.

– LEAH KOWALSKI, 12,
ESSEX JCT.

We, you, or I

We say *I*,
yet we never see.
Our eyes eternally shut.
Our mouths wide open.
We say *I*. Over and over again.
Hoping for it to take on
a different note,
wishing for our hopes not to choke.
I, I want to know...
We never ask.
I, I want to see the world.
We are still blind to it. And
the question of why hangs in the air.
Without an answer,
yet with mouths wide open,
we seem to have nothing to say
to answer them.
Instead, we say *I*.
I... stutter. I... am searching.
I... Finally, words suspend.
I am merely my own perspective.
I look through my own eyes
without being able to recognize
who is staring back at me.
We forget that as much as we say *I*,
we say *you* just the same.

– MARIA BEAULIEU, 15, MILTON



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

It's been a year

Maybe it's been a year.
I know this house like
the lines of my mother's face now.
My life is contained
inside four walls, five rooms,
and three bathrooms, specifically.
A projector in the basement
that we made exactly a year ago.
I don't know what else to tell you,
except that my cat likes to
sleep next to the couch
in a cardboard box with
glittery purple tissue paper
inside it.
Please know that this is not
a metaphor
for my loneliness.
I don't need metaphors
to make my loneliness palatable now.
I just want to tell you
that I am sick of my bed
and the glow of my computer screen.
I bury myself under my old interests
like a worn-out blanket,
hoping against hope
there's some joy that I can pull out
of this threadbare garment.
Blankets used to keep me warm,
but now I'm just using them
to keep the cold out.
I want you to know
that this poem is not a metaphor
for the complexities of my soul.
I want you to know
that I am past metaphors.
I want you to know that my soul
is not complex anymore,
it just craves faces and people.
And in my room there are sweaters
strewn across the floor.
My favorite one is a burnt
beige color. I wear it so often
that I'm sure it's rubbing off,
and I swear
that every social media site I check
makes me a little more
nauseous by the end of the day.
But I want to tell you
that is not a metaphor
for societal expectations.
It just means that my stomach turns
when I see another video
of a death on Instagram. It just means
I am tired of seeing the same graph
go up and up.
Could you imagine holding someone?
Sometimes I claw at my own arms
just to find something
to hold on to
that isn't unmoving, that isn't air.
And maybe it's been a year,
but the breath in my lungs is still
struggling
to find its way back home.

– NARGES ANZALI, 15,
WEYBRIDGE

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Thank you!

The sweet taste of my past

I still remember most of it.
The happy weekends
when we'd drive to the sugarhouse
past banks of snow taller than me.
I still remember most of it.
Letting the syrup run on the snow,
sweeter than any candy,
laughing with my family
as warm smells filled the air.
I remember it like it was yesterday.
With the feeling of happiness
running through me like
the syrup in my stomach,
the treat tasting like
pure pleasure on my small tongue.
I still get that feeling
when I laugh with my family,
or while coaching my little brother
as he plays checkers with my dad.

– SOPHIE MORTON, 11,
HINESBURG