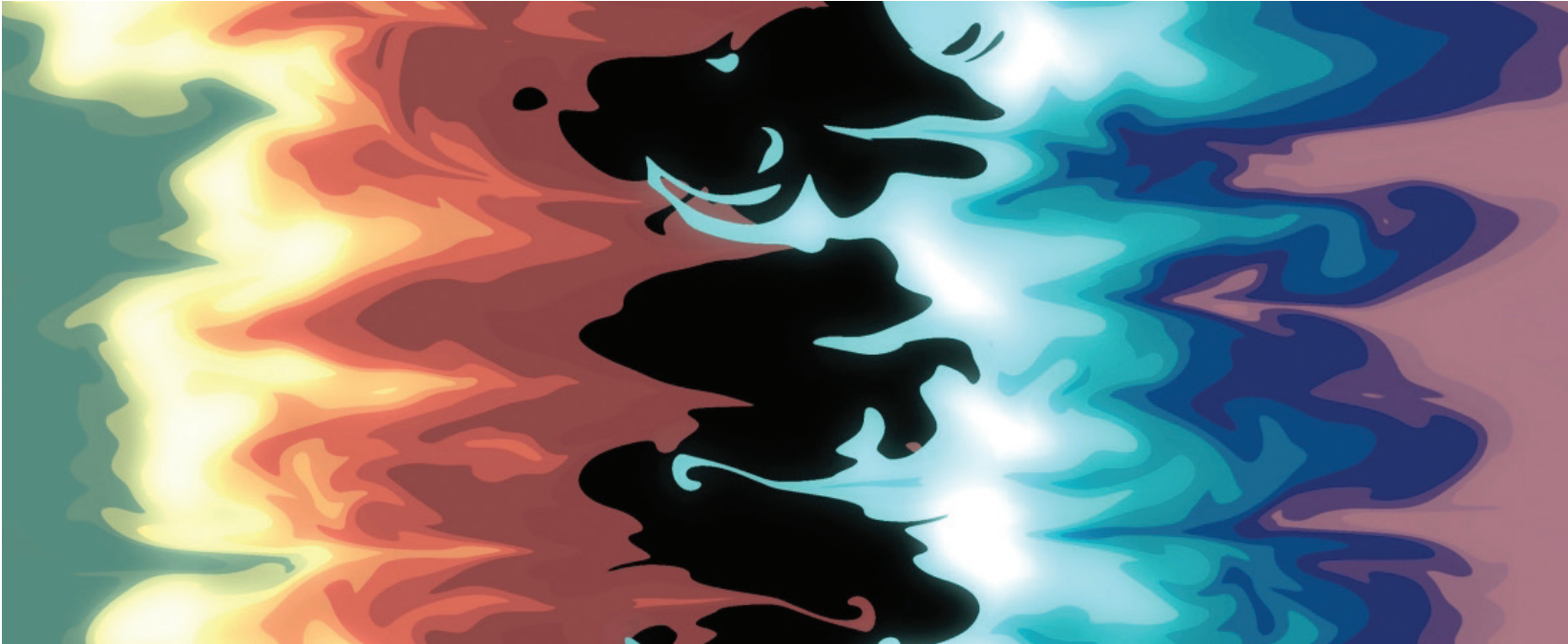


YOUNG WRITERS PROJECT



“Fight Fire with Fire,” by Evie Crowell, 12, Burlington

The graveyard and the gardener

Each spring, the tombstones of Ettenmoor Manor crown themselves in colors older than kings. Stern stone figures trail trains of creeping phlox, and ancient etchings are smothered in thick vines. Blood-red poppies reach through cobbled stone and soft petals bloom outward in downy ripples, circling and circling, as the air is filled with a sickly sweet perfume.

If you walk among these tombstones in springtime, you will forget the damp gray that fills graveyards in autumn, or the aching chill that sweeps through them in the dead of winter. You will linger, heady with perfume. You will wonder when it was that you came here last, and why it was that you thought to leave.

Eventually, you will decide to stay.

That is, in all likelihood, the reason for the chains that are wrapped around the manor’s sharply ornamented gates. The canine barbs and imposing shadow of a monstrous house fallen into disrepair are not enough to keep the sweet scent of flowers and honey from drifting between the bars of that vast gate. Intoxicating aromas of roasting meat and tobacco leaves, fresh bread and aged wine. It takes wanderers in, and too few of them seem to mind the gate.

But the manor was not always so empty. Once, the Ettenmoor family hosted wealthy guests in these halls, drinking and feasting in the finest silks and furs. Once, these cobblestone paths brought in merchants boasting lavish wares from places as far as Verda and Untaman, and musicians of the highest caliber. Once, there was a gardener with a rough voice and an uneven gait. ...

– AURORA SHARP, 18, MORETOWN

Excerpted; read complete story at youngwritersproject.org/node/44524

When everything goes quiet

Sometimes there are no words, merely a hollow sort of pain, and you can’t just stay still, so you have two choices: either stay quiet and hurt, or speak your mind and make everything worse. Oh darling, you are going to end up hurt no matter what, so—*What to do, what to do?*

– MYRRH PITKIN, 13, VERGENNES

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!



Can’t

The sagging of her shoulders and delay of her footsteps showed what her voice would not, because her mother told her that complaining is for the weak; that she has never and will never bear a weak child. His words come out of his mouth like sweet, sticky nectar, but he can’t mingle with the butterflies he attracts, because his brother told him that butterflies are for girls.

– DAHABO ABUKAR, 17, ESSEX

I took the candle

I took the candle from my postage stamp-sized nightstand, cradling it between my hands and letting it guide me into my sister’s empty room. There was a better view of the stars from her window than mine, and I could see the reflection of the candle flame in the window, all orange and hot and repeating the same silly dance over and over again. But now the heat has disappeared. It snowed today, in the early morning – the first snow, which brought such a fullness to my heart that I fear I could not explain it without bursting into tears (the kind of winter tears that fall slowly). I look back out the window. The stars are always much clearer when it’s cold out, I think. The air thins itself to make space for them. I sigh. Giving the stars one last reconciliatory look, I scoop up the candle and allow it to guide me once again, this time back to my own bed.

– CHARLOTTE DODDS, 17, BURLINGTON

And we wait

Press your palms against your eyes hard enough, and from the bright, blue beams obscuring your vision, little lilies and lavenders will blossom from the depths of darkness. Happiness is woven between paisleys and daisies. Meandering between beige and blue and bicolored blossoms. Maneuvering through fields of wildflowers. Intangible. Invisible. And we wait. Happiness is sprinkled into veins of fallen beech leaves that will return just as strong come summer. It sprouts from bright buds along with dainty greens. Intangible. Invisible. And we wait. Happiness is in unrelenting tears, freed from their excruciating cage. Soon enough, it bubbles into the air in clouds of laughter. Intangible. Invisible. Why wait any longer? Happiness is hidden in desires and whispers and honesties that are held back only by choice. We could slide into the shadows of never, or we could initiate what we know is the key to find it. Perhaps the choice of “supposed to” is clear. *Well, if only courage would visit more often.* Yet consider, perhaps the truth is that we’ve been blocking it out. Nevertheless, which path to choose?

– ELISE COURNOYER, 13, RICHMOND

Book

How can a rectangular, purple prism contain an entire world, and an entire population of people? It’s small enough to hold in my hand and light enough to toss, but it contains a world. I open it. How can a soft sheet of dried tree pulp covered with ink-black symbols let me into a world in which I don’t exist, but fictional characters do? I don’t know the answer to any of these... but at least I ask the questions.

– NATALIE LEWIS, 15, NORWICH

Priorities out the door

Every time you think you’re totally in, your priorities will change, and they’ll end up in the bin. If you think you’d do anything to be buried in a book, suddenly all you’ll need is to be locked on a look. When all you want is to make fantastic food, soon you’ll be more concerned with the way you’re seen and viewed. If you have large dreams and would do anything to play the flute, your priorities will morph into wearing a suit and looking cute. If you only wish to be a star at soccer, soon you’ll plot to meet a boy at his locker. If you want something so badly you’re on the floor, whatever you wish for will soon be out the door.

– MAELYN SLAVIK, 11, BURLINGTON

YWP NEWS & EVENTS OH SNAP! Online Open Mic



MAY 21, 1 PM – Join us every month to share your words, snap your appreciation, and hang out with other YWPers from across the country. All events are FREE for YWP members. To sign up, go to: youngwritersproject.org.

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SPECIAL THANKS THIS WEEK

