

YOUNG WRITERS PROJECT



“Happiness Is...,” by Amelia Van Driesche, 15, Burlington



My monster

There is a monster following me, constantly lurking in the shadows where no one else can see. I stare right into its eyes and sometimes must turn away because I am so scared and disgusted by what I see. My monster likes to keep me company, even when I'm surrounded by friends, and when I'm all alone. It whispers in my ear, telling me to stop, to change – that I'll never be good enough. My monster forces me to stand in front of my reflection, then continues to point out every flaw and imperfection it can find. My monster screams at me to finish my homework, taunts me when I make a mistake, and brings tears to my eyes when I have no reason to cry. My monster is mean and ugly, and never takes a vacation. Through all the months and seasons, it follows me. My monster is a part of me, and I'm scared that the monster I now know so well will never let me be free.

– ASHLYN FOLEY, 17, BURLINGTON

Love again

I fell, slowly at first. I was the snow at the top of the mountain that had been softly piling up and waiting for its moment to all come crashing down. I was the wood that smoked and turned until it finally caught, glowing brightly. I was the oak tree that was planted as a seed and grew for many years into a strong, old oak tree, thriving. I was the rain, slowly forming into raindrops, and bringing the flood. But snow melts. And fire sizzles and burns out. Old trees that used to be beautiful shrivel and die. Even rain evaporates into thin air. Just like our love. Our love – it was slow at first, until the avalanche came and went, and the wood burned out, the once-beautiful tree died, and the rain evaporated. But I know the snow will pile up again. And the wood will catch flame. New seeds will be planted. And it will rain again. So I have hope.

– PENELOPE ZYGAROWSKI, 15, 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. 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 storm before the benefit

The rain slashing against the windows, the rumble of thunder, the crack of lightning washed together to create a brilliant and magical storm. We were all together in our classroom, some playing games, a few relaxing, and a couple people reading like me. We opened the windows to let in some air, only to quickly realize our wet mistake. The rain immediately started slamming into the windows, spraying cold water onto our nice concert clothes. Almost as soon as it had started, it was over. The rain stopped and the storm moved on. We hurried outside to our now-wet seats at the edge of the tent, and began to tune and settle down for the Spring Benefit Concert.

– WILLCOX ELLIOTT, 13, HINESBURG

Opinions of a book

My fingers flip through thin, white sheets as I begin to wonder: Do books ever get tired of being manipulated, or are they proud of the way they inspire? Do they want to keep their stories to themselves and self-reflect for days? Do they ever wonder what a bad ending looks like, and do they ever feel neglected when they are left on the shelf for a while? Do the pages feel sore from getting moved and flipped, and feel injured when they are ripped? What do books feel when they inspire and are praised, or judged, or are torn and left alone and need the comfort of making their own decisions? How do the books feel when they are read?

– MAELYN SLAVIK, 12, BURLINGTON

Buoyancy

Floating is sunset, a perfect fall day, leading my horse back to the barn, red and orange leaves in my hair. Sinking is being unable to do my homework. I don't know why, so I can't explain why to my parents. I just sit, staring at the screen. Floating is heading backstage to eat Oreos with my friends in an abandoned dressing room, a standing ovation still ringing in my ears. Sinking is watching my mom or my sister cry, curse, complain, or scream, knowing I'm powerless to help. Floating is pulling brownies out of the oven, warm, gooey, and good-smelling, and serving them to my family and my neighbors. (And eating the biggest one myself, fresh from the oven.) Sinking is a Sunday night, closing my eyes to sleep, knowing that the next time I open them it will be Monday, and the weekend will be over. Floating is holding a baby on my hip while another one grabs two of my fingers. Talking to them, singing to them. Marveling at how it is possible to make money, feel useful, and have this much fun, all at the same time. Sinking is trying to sit at a table and being unable to. There's already someone at every table. I can't sit with anyone, so I just stand there. Floating is playing a boardgame my sister invented, on the screen porch just after sunset, coming in at a close second, and ice cream afterward. ...

– NATALIE LEWIS, 15, NORWICH

Excerpted; read complete poem at youngwritersproject.org/node/44659

She was

She dreamed of someone who couldn't quite be placed. Someone who didn't quite belong with the background of light blues and greens and purples. Someone she'd never seen before. But how was that possible? You can't dream of someone you've never seen before... She was. She was dreaming in such color that it was an almost unbearable combination of neons and pastels. The someone was sitting on a large, chair-like form of silk and flowers: dahlias, zinnias, begonias, hydrangeas, and orchids. It was an endless seat of pure nature, nothing that could ever become real-life. It was obviously a dream, yet she felt awake... And she fell, fell into the roses, and she was gone.

– ILONA PARRISH-RUSSELL, 15, COLCHESTER

What's left behind

Shadows in the shape of a person, falling to the tenderness of bruised knees. Tears, just water that you can hold, the palms chafed dry with salt. To love is always to forget to cherish water in the rain, clutching teardrops as if they were flowers crumpling into shadows.

– EMMETT JARVIS, 16, MONTPELIER

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SPECIAL THANKS THIS WEEK

