

Isabel

By Emma Redden

Leland and Gray Union High School, Grade 10

Sometimes, she's downstairs by herself,
Or so I had thought,
And she has conversations, dialogue
Sometimes I listen.
Wow, she has a vivid imagination.
Is it natural to talk to yourself
For such extensive amounts of time?
I look down the stairs.
She is by herself.
She comes up for dinner.
I ask her,
"Who were you talking to?"
I expect to hear
"Myself."
She looks at me,
Brows furrowed.
Had I asked a stupid question?
"Isabel"
A moment later she
Says "You didn't
See her?"
I shake my head no.

All around us

By Kacie Collins

Woodstock Union High School, Grade 10

You may not know about them,
even be aware of them, even think
about them, but boy oh, boy, do they
know about you. As you silently go
about the everyday business of
your ordinary life they're there.
Through the smiles, the laughter,
the gains, the losses, the begin-
nings, the ends you silently make
their home yours. You probably
don't even know a thing about
them, haven't even heard of them
and yet you're living the life the
same place they did theirs.

As your first date walks up the
driveway they remember the first
time theirs did. The hours getting
ready, the shiver of excitement as
the doorbell rings.

Someone in your family passes
away. Life is unbearable, sorrowful.
They remember when they were
sitting under that very window
thinking the same things you did —
how life is going to be unbearable.
And slowly you move on just as
they did.

They haunt your walls, explore
your home. Imprints of lives once
lived, virtually unnoticeable, but
still. Haven't you ever sworn you
turned a light off? Known you've
shut a door? You definitely left the
keys right there. Seen those small
flickers out of the corner of your
eyes, only to turn and see nothing's
there after all? You blame it on a
trick of light, a lapse of memory.
Maybe they are really noticeable
after all. Maybe they're right there
begging to be noticed and all we
have to do is believe.

Believe in ghosts.
Believe, believe, believe.

Everyday magic

By Sierra Hutt

Woodstock Union High School, Grade 10

Uncontrollable giggles
Singing out loud
Dancing to the radio
Listening to the sound
Of a bubbling brook
The voice of a friend
Falling snowflakes
On your nose
Kayaking on
A late summer lake
The rustle of the leaves
Hands intertwine
The smell of baked cookies
The irreplaceable times
Of everyday magic
The magic of every day

My magical world

By Miranda Shepard

Rochester High School, Grade 9

I lay my head down on my pillow,
And the world becomes a haze,
I open my eyes to see everything
different,
I smile with such a blaze.
This world is very different,
Too good to ever be,
It's almost magical,
All the differences that I see.
Alpacas speak English,
Pigs can fly,
Trees grow money,
Chocolate is our sky.
There's peace on earth,
There's no such thing as a war,
Murder is never heard of,
And it's impossible to be poor.
Stealing isn't necessary,
The air is always clean,
People never starve themselves,
And the grass is always green.
Sickness is unheard of,
Diseases never kill,
Food is always eaten,
Everyone gets their fill.
"Miranda!" my Mom yells,
I stretch and grunt out a yawn,
Reality snaps me back in place,
And my magical world is gone.

ZEPHYRTREES 07



Alicia Cerasoli, of White River Junction and an eighth-grader at Hartford Memorial Middle School says this about her picture: "When I made this piece, I didn't have much in mind. When you look at a fall tree, you see a blur of orange, red and yellow. I took those colors and made little marks and then blended them together. It turned out better than I thought it would."

An autumn hike

By Emily Patch Rutland High School, Grade 11

Have I ever seen a ghost? Of course I have. I see them all of the time. I'm not normal in that sense. There's a few that even live at my house, but they don't harm anything. They just go about their day like I do, and no one ever notices them, except me of course. They are like a see-through extension of my regular family. There was this one time though, that a couple of my friends and I saw a ghost. That's the story I'll tell.

This story doesn't start at night, and there is no thunderstorm involved either. It starts on a beautiful October day. The leaves were just changing and the weather was perfect; it wasn't too hot or too cold. That's the reason that my friends suggested going on a hike. I didn't really want to go, but they insisted, so I went.

One of my two friends, May, insisted that we explore something she found on a previous hike. She didn't exactly tell Bernard, my friend, or me what we were going to explore, but she insisted that it would be amazing. May would say that we had a wonderful hike. I would say that it was grueling. She happens to enjoy hiking uphill for hours on end, as I prefer more gradual or even flat hikes, but that's beside the point.

We came to an open area. There was a field with extremely thick grass with a house in the middle. It looked like the previous owner had abandoned it a long, long time ago. I knew once I saw it that we shouldn't go in. I tried to tell May and Bernard, but they were really excited. I guess the only reason that I finally decided to go with them was that the peer pressure was too much. That, and I didn't want to be alone.

We walked up to the door and knocked on it, not expecting to have anyone answer us, but somebody did. A man that looked to be about 70 opened the door. He was relatively short and had a long white beard. He smiled at us, probably because he saw how shocked we were that there was someone living there. The man asked us in, and so we did. It was almost as if we were in a trance because none of us would walk in a house if a stranger asked us in.

The inside of the house was completely different than any of us would have thought. It was brightly lit, and it had beautiful blue wallpaper. There was even a piano in the parlor. He beckoned us to sit on the couch just as a woman came in the room. She was introduced as his wife. She asked us if we wanted any tea, but by that time our senses had mostly come back to us, and we politely declined her offer. Then they asked us if we would like to talk.

Apparently, their names were Candice and Cedric. They moved there a while ago when they retired to get

away from the busy city. They wanted to live their lives quietly in the depths of the forest. They didn't have any children to keep them company; they only had themselves.

Candice and Cedric were very happy to have us there, and when May, Bernard and I decided that it was time to take our leave, they didn't want us to go. When we said that it would be a bad idea to hike in the dark, they rethought and decided that it was for the better. Before we went, they handed us each a little present in a brown paper bag. We told them that it wasn't necessary, but they insisted. We took off in the direction of home while they waved goodbye. They shut the door just as we got to the forest. That was also the time that May realized that she forgot her sweater on the couch.

We all went back to the house. May knocked on the door as Bernard and I waited, but no one answered. She knocked again, and there still was no answer, so she opened the door. When she went in, she almost fainted. Bernard and I went to see what was wrong. We were shocked when we went inside. The place was dark and run down, and there was nothing but dirt and dust everywhere. It looked completely different from what it just was a little while ago. It looked like no one had been there in years.

May grabbed her sweater from the couch and insisted that we get out of there as fast as we could, but I noticed something and decided to stay for a second longer. On the other side of the room, Candice and Cedric walked up to the piano. They had the familiar whitish glow that I had become familiar with so long ago. They were ghosts. Cedric started to play the piano, which seemed to scare May more than the experience before. She literally dragged me out of the house, and Bernard followed close behind.

We got back to my house almost as fast as we could. I will say that the downhill running was much better than the uphill part, but that's not the point. We went up to my room, with the paper bags still clutched tightly in our fists. Bernard was the first one to notice them, for we had forgotten about them in the panic. May, Bernard and I decided that we should open them carefully. In my bag, there was a little silver ring. It was small, so small that the only finger it would fit on was my pinky. In May's bag was a gold necklace with a small cameo on it. In my opinion, Bernard had the most interesting thing of all. He had a compass and a letter that said,

"Come visit us again. The compass will show the way.
Yours truly,
Candice and Cedric"

Lights out at the lighthouse

By Adam Allegretta CHARLOTTE CENTRAL SCHOOL, GRADE 8

John Abraham got up every morning for work at 4 a.m. sharp for his shift at the lighthouse. He worked for 15 hours and lived in a one-room house on the beach near the lighthouse with his wife, Sharon. They had no kids because it would probably be too crowded. The day started like every other day. John got out of bed, walked four steps past his 2-by-2 table, and started his coffee. He rubbed his eyes and let out a loud yawn. His wife stirred in the bed and he reached for yesterday's paper and read: "Ghost Sightings Reported All Across Town."

"People are making up a whole bunch of baloney just to get attention," John thought to himself. He grabbed his coffee and a cruller from the cabinet and headed down the path to the lighthouse munching along the way.

Once he got to the lighthouse, he felt a cold breeze.

But something seemed strange about it. He entered through the front door and started his long ascent toward the top of the large spire. He felt the odd breeze again as he reached the top and entered the cavernous room. As he looked out the window, he realized the oddity of the wind; the trees outside didn't sway with it. John pondered this fact for a few seconds, shrugged it off, and continued to stare out of the window. Something caught his eye though: a cold lifeless body and the remains of a battered rowboat lying on the shore. He gasped and attempted to sprint through the door as it slammed shut in front of him and all of the light in the lighthouse darkened. John took out his lighter and felt it be pulled out of his hand. He heard a metallic click as it bounced along the floor somewhere far away. A face appeared in front of him ... then everything went black.



YWP is a grassroots nonprofit that helps students write better and gain an audience for their best work. YWP offers writing ideas or prompts, special projects and a safe Web site, www.youngwriter-project.org, where students share their writing, comment on the news and each other's work, participate in group discussions and work on projects. YWP is indebted to the generosity of the Vermont Business Roundtable which is funding the YWP's core work for the second year.



The breath of the wind

By Caitlin Bernard

Woodstock Union High School, Grade 10

A simple touch and the air steals her breath
she is falling
gone from existence, from love and home
I hear her calling, but her smile I see not
"Shhhhh," it's the wind, and it carries her ghost.
Alone, afraid, concealed
just under the wind's light breath
that was once her own.
Fly away, dear love, fly away.

Teko and the ghost

By Teko Wilson

J.J. Flynn Elementary School, Grade 2

Once upon a time, there was a ghost. The ghost's house was scary. A little girl named Teko came to the ghost's house, and she was scared. She screamed because a ghost said, "Boo!" Then she ran home. Then a thunderstorm came and scared everybody at Teko's house. They locked the door so the water wouldn't come in their house. The ghost was scared, too! The ghost ran to Teko's house and knocked on the door. He asked if he could come in to hide with them. They were not scared of him anymore so Teko said, "Yes, you can hide with us." Then the ghost said, "I know how to stop the thunderstorm!" He went to the thunderstorm and threw ice cream on it and then the sun came out. Teko said, "Do you want to play with me?" The ghost said, "Yes, I do want to play with you!" So they went to the park and played hide-and-seek. Teko was not afraid of ghosts anymore!

Tiny ghosts

By Jessy Davenport

Woodstock Union High School, Grade 10

Hovering bed sheets in the dark night air linger like fog,
one night a year, regular sheets are transformed, to a masterful disguise.
Cloaking, giggling children.
Jagged, sagging holes revealing the tiny ghosts inside.
Arms held upright, with bags full of cherished treats.
Some show bare ankles and wrinkled socks,
while others' sheets drag on the cold, damp ground,
changing white to brown, tearing with each step.
Tiny feet patter, as sheets swoop and plunge through the crisp evening air to keep up.
Fluttering and rustling, as the wind blows crinkling leaves around toes.
Shrieking, suspended cloaks flee, and tiny ghosts disappear into the night.

YWP Special Projects New deadlines

We've extended the deadlines for this special prompt, don't miss out!

WINTER TALES. The Vermont Stage Company's professional actors give dramatic readings to selected student winter tales. VSC's shows will be in early December. This year additional presentations will be made at First Night in Burlington. The prompt: Tell a story about winter; it can focus on the holidays or the season – the weather, the outdoors, the emotions. **Deadline: Friday, Nov. 2.**

For more:

youngwritersproject.org