

## 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.

## 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

## For a friend

BY JULIE BOYD  
Woodstock Union High School, Grade 10

I'm sitting alone at a table in the library staring at the book I'm supposedly reading, but not taking in a word because my mind has wandered away from English and onto a friend. My mind stays on this friend for so long that I completely forget where I had stopped in the text. I gaze back at the wordless letters floating on the page and suddenly they no longer resemble letters or words of any sort. They've formed a picture of a soft, gentle and loving face. The face of a friend, and once again my mind has wandered upon an unwanted territory including a friend I love.

Trying harder this time I look back at the paper and attempt to make words and sentences from the jumbled letters, which my mind simply won't take in. The words have become a black and white movie featuring my friend and me. I want to stay in the moment being played in the movie my thoughts have created, but I know that it's not worth it. I finally make out words on the page but know that they aren't the correct ones.

"When you love someone, it's magical, make the feeling last." And with those few words I allow my thoughts to wander about thinking only of my friend and how, someday, I hope he will be more than a friend.

## YWP Special Projects New deadlines

We've extended the deadlines for two special prompts, don't miss out!

**SYMPHONY POEMS.** Write a poem in response to "The Skater's Waltz" by Emil Waldteufel. (Listen to piece on [youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org).) Selected poems will be read at the Holiday Pops concerts in **Barre, Burlington** and **Rutland** on Dec. 7, 8 and 9 respectively. **Deadline Friday, Nov. 2.**

**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](http://youngwritersproject.org)

## ZEPHYR TREES



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." The media used: India ink and pastel.

## 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 beginnings, 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.

## 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.

## 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, there 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"



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-sproject.org](http://www.youngwriter-sproject.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.



## Magic land

BY BRIANA PATTEN  
Mount Saint Joseph, Grade 9

It was the middle of the day and class is a bore. Jimmy Jones is entertaining but I wanted more! My attention span was running out and drool ran down my face. The next thing that I knew I was staring into space. My mind wandered aimlessly like a bum without a cause. It drifted from place to place like a bandit breaking the laws. Soon it made a final stop to a place called 'Magic Land'. As cheesy as the name was I decided to try my hand. I entered through the arches and splendor I did see lollipops and sugar plums and loads of other candy!

In the courtyard sat Santa, and the Easter bunny, too discussing matters over tea what an extraordinary crew!

Civilians of this land flew through the air with glee.

Captain Hook was taking a stroll with his loyal companion, Smee.

The cats and dogs discussing the weather and politics.

Even the birds and butterflies were doing funny tricks!

Suddenly, an alarm rang out, but why I could not tell.

And then I came to my senses, "Oh no! That was the bell!"

## We want your submissions!

for more info and more student writing:

[youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org)

## 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.