

## Graveyard on the hill

By **Bridget Iverson**

*Mount Mansfield Union High School, Grade 11*

I place not flowers but a feather, blue, plucked like grass from the dust-to-dust packed with funerary footprints and I wonder whether you, too, traced the hollows of this mossy stone, red-stained fingers striped with rust from the screeching gate, used not since the newest day of somber songs and prayer to the splendid majesty of the unknown and a truth unaltered but by point of view; whether you decided death was no more fair than life, in the end; whether you, too, arrived, haunted, placed a feather, left alone.

## White House Halloween

By **Josiah Parker**

*Champlain Valley Union High School, Grade 9*

*(Excerpt: Full story at [youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org))*

... I aimlessly wandered the White House. The moon shone through the window for a moment before a cloud came and covered it. I considered breaking a window to get out, but hesitated. I couldn't desecrate the home of the President! Besides, it would probably set off an alarm and bring the police, the FBI, the Secret Service and who-knows-who-else over and end with me getting arrested.

I walked into the Roosevelt Room. There was a skylight but no windows. On the mantel were busts of Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt, along with Theodore's Nobel Peace Prize. ...

Suddenly, I felt there was someone else in the room. I turned around but couldn't see anything. Just then, the moon peeked out from behind a cloud. In the light, I saw that there was someone else here. He was tall, with dark hair and a mustache, and wore an eyepiece, frock suit and tie.

“Ah, company!” he declared. “Finally! It's very lonely, walking around with the same old company, night after night.”

I looked at the at the bust of Theodore Roosevelt then back at the man. He raised an eyebrow. I looked back at the mantel, then at the man again. He tilted his head to one side, looking at me curiously.

Wow, he looks a lot like Teddy R., I thought. That's when I noticed something. The man was semi-transparent. I could see the wall behind him!

Something in my mind clicked. This man was the ghost of Theodore Roosevelt! I stood there and gaped at him. ...

### Next Prompt

**General.** Submit your best non-prompt general writing. *Alternate:*

**Hunting.** Share your favorite hunting stories, or tell us how you feel about hunting. **Due Friday.**

Submit at:

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

## The little girl at the window

By **Jenna Rickson** | *Essex High School, Grade 12*

My body is restless as I flop over onto my right side for the fourth time. The clock's red digits shine meekly in the darkness of my small room. It's nearly midnight and still the sandman has not come to visit. It's colder this evening, Jack Frost's breath bringing goose bumps to my exposed arms.

BUMP!

I sit up quickly and look around. My eyes see nothing but the shadows cast by streetlights and the moon's faint glimmer peeking through the blinds on my window. It was probably just the wind, I tell myself, trying not to jump to conclusions. It's an old house, the wind makes it rattle, makes me think something is here. I lie back down and stare at my ceiling, wishing the eerie feeling would go away. The chill you get when you catch a pair of eyes creeping around the corner of an abandoned doorway. I shut my eyes tight and shake my head.

BANG!

This time the sound is louder and comes from the room next to mine. My sister had moved out a few years before; now her room was used mainly for guests and the times when she visited. I flip my feet over the side of my bed and creep toward her room. The window is open and the curtains are dancing elegantly with the breeze. It's then that I realize her lamp has fallen from the nightstand, causing the great commotion. I close the window and turn the lock. I then reposition the lamp on the table before returning quietly to my room. I crawl back under the warmth of

my comforter and find myself restless again.

CRASH!

I leap from my bed and go into my sister's room once again. The window is open, the table tipped over and the lamp broken on the floor. I let my eyes drift back to the window and feel them widen as I see a shady, misty figure standing beside it. I blink a few times, but it's still there, taunting me with its cold, gray eyes and innocent smile. It's a little girl, no more than eight, with a torn and tattered dress, a cloth bandanna around her head, hair braided into two long ponytails. Every part of my being tells me to move, shut the door and run downstairs, but I can't, I'm too enchanted by the little girl at the window. She spins laughter in my direction, sending another ripple of goose bumps down my spine. Then she turns to look at me and takes a step toward me.

Suddenly the enchantment is gone, replaced by sheer terror. I slam the door and run downstairs. My mother's room is at the bottom of the landing and I prance toward its door, beckoning me to enter and find the refuge and security within its walls. I pounce onto the mattress and cover myself with the blankets. She stirs, “What's wrong? What's wrong?”

“I had a bad dream!” I lie, trying to convince her and myself that I wasn't crazy, that I hadn't just seen a ghost, that my mind wasn't playing cruel and unusual tricks on me.

She sighed and rolled back over, away from me. “Don't you think you're getting a little old for this?”

## Ghosts

By **Maddy Smith**

*Vergennes Elementary School, Grade 3*

One night, when I was sleeping in the tent, my dad was telling a tale about old creepy things living in Vermont. Even GHOSTS! When he turned off the flashlight I stayed awake. I heard a clanking noise in the barn nearby. I froze. Then I heard a rustling sound in the closest bush. Then you'll never believe what happened: A green glow was right outside our tent! I pulled the blanket over my head. I heard a faint sound that said, “Maddy ... Maddy ... Maddy.” I fell asleep. I forgot all about it in the morning.

The next night we were driving home, and we pulled over to rest. There was a big forest next to us. I stayed awake again. I saw a white blob of glow coming closer and closer! I heard a screaming sound. Then I was home again.

## Over the baby monitor

By **Isabelle Vansuch**

*Champlain Elementary School, Grade 4*

This is a story about Avon. She is the wife of Mr. Housekings, the people who lived here before us.

One dark and stormy night my dad and I were in the kitchen when all of a sudden we started hearing, “Goodnight. I love you. I love you. Go to sleep. I love you,” over the baby monitor. From that night on, my dad and I thought that Avon was here because she wanted to see the people who were living in her old house and because she loved children so much.

Also, when I was little I saw a woman planting seeds in my room. Now my mom always plays tricks on us and says, “I love you,” in the monitor to scare us after that first dark and stormy night.



Young Writers Project is an independent nonprofit that engages students to write, helps them get better at it and connects them with authentic audiences for their best work. YWP provides writing prompts for this newspaper series;

maintains [youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org) — a supportive online community for students; trains college mentors to provide students with feedback and builds Digital Writing Classrooms for schools. For more: [ywpschools.net](http://ywpschools.net).

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## Cinderella meets reality

By **Alex Shea Gardner**

*Colchester Middle School, Grade 6*

“But Charming,” Cinderella cried. “Why must I attend this ‘UVM’ you speak of? You're the *prince* for crying out loud! You are rich, and you live in a CASTLE!” Cinderella was angry, but she noticed that when she said “You're rich,” Charming frowned. What she did not know was that Charming was no longer rich and they could no longer afford to live in the castle, but he was afraid to tell her this.

“You see, Cinderella, we are not rich anymore, and we can't live in the castle. The townspeople like us, but they have started speaking of this thing called democracy. It is hard to explain but, long story short, they had a ‘vote,’ and they are having us leave the town and move to a place called ... er ... Vermont, so we don't get in the way or try to take over ... again.”

Cinderella was speechless. She tried to understand what Charming was saying and had many questions, but the first ones that popped out of her not-so-royal mouth were, “But what is UVM? Where is this Vermont you speak of?”

“UVM is this thing called a college where people your age go to school.” He looked nervous. “See girls your age — you are only 18 — usually are not married yet and are in college.”

Cinderella sighed, “Well then. We had better finish packing.”

*Two weeks later*

Cindy, for that was her new American name, was riding in the passenger side of her “limo” (a red 1980s Volvo) to UVM. Wearing her new day clothes (a pink T-shirt and pink mini skirt) she walked up the big steps. She walked through the big wooden doors and into her new fate.