

The critic

BY LIZA DUCHESNEAU
Milton High School, Grade 11

I criticize
I analyze
I punctuate
I annotate
The words keep spinning
Something's beginning
I try to predict
But you keep on winning
I think to write
I write to think
The words spill out
As meaningless ink
I cease to exist
Because you're just too good
Too smooth
Too sly
Too undeniably
"Just the right guy"
I stutter
I sweat
I work up the nerve
I be the girl
With spunk and verve
But then you decide
To throw a curve
My helpless thoughts
Begin to swerve
Trying to find
A feeling of surety
A rhythm
Of purity
Those words
Of security
I dance
I slump
I'm in the dump
I look for what's missing
But I've hit a stump
I'm starting to realize
That I shouldn't care
Because what's missing
Is already there
You're everywhere
Your green eyes follow
They summon
And stare
And even though
They're very wise
I keep my stature
And criticize.

Shadow

BY LYDIA MAITLAND
Shelburne Community School, Grade 4

I am a swift shadow silently creeping
A silhouette from silver moon
I sleep with no light
I don't eat; I am never hungry
I can't see for I don't need to
You guide me
I follow in silver moonlight and in the bright
sun of day
I am a shadow following you



THIS WEEK: General writing

Each week Young Writers Project selects best work from students throughout Vermont. Students respond to prompts provided by YWP or send their best "general" work. A team of students helps select work for publication in this and eight other newspapers. For more go to youngwritersproject.org, a civil community of young writers.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

YWP is an independent nonprofit that engages students to write, helps them improve and connects them with authentic audiences for their best work.

YWP runs 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 go to ywpschools.net.

YWP NEWS

Win cash! Young Writers Project is partnering with Bookstock, the Green Mountain Festival of Words, to offer five \$100 awards to young writers. **Deadline is May 1** and the topic is:

Write a story, poem or essay about a vivid memory or experience involving a building — real or imagined. The building can be a character or a setting that is a key part of the plot, mood or theme. 750 words. More at youngwritersproject.org.

First love

BY MARISSA KELEMEN | Camels Hump Middle School, Grade 8

It all starts with interactions that you both experience together. You laugh, have fun, and learn about each other. As the friendship grows, the bond between you grows as well. You both smile at each other, just happy to see one another.

Time goes on, and you begin to notice that you long to be around each other. And when you're apart you miss your friend and you start to wonder, could we be more than just friends? You begin to see the possible life you both could enjoy and wonder if your friend has the same feelings. Your infatuation for this person grows, and you wonder if you should make a small gesture to show your feelings.

As a school dance approaches, you both wonder about asking the other if they would like to go with to the dance with you. Finally,

the day of the dance your friend approaches and casually asks,

"Do you think you're still going to go to the dance?"

Your friend asks so calmly you reply, "Yeah, are you?"

Your friend replies, "Yeah, I might — I'm not sure yet, though." After a long silence your friend asks, "Do you want to go to the dance together?"

You blush, smile and reply, "Yeah, that sounds good."

As your friend listens to your response he also begins to smile. You both sit there happy and excited, just waiting for tonight. You are both silent with anticipation and you realize, he likes me.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Vermont Humanities Council has given YWP a grant to hold in-person and online workshops with Vermont authors. NEXT UP:

Phoebe Stone, author of "All the Blue Moons at the Wallace Hotel," will be at YWP's headquarters, **Saturday, May 15. SIGN UP at youngwritersproject.org.** She will continue providing feedback online for several weeks following.

Surprise

BY WILL
Shelburne Community School, Grade 3

I had the surprise of my life when I opened the door and saw a fox! I was at my grandparents' house in Maine.

I stood there staring at the fox. He stared right back. We stood there for what seemed like forever. I started to inch closer but then he turned around. I thought he would never leave, then just like poof he left.
I will never forget that day.

All about Annie

BY CHELSEA WRIGHT
Rick Marcotte Central School, Grade 5
MY TEDDY BEAR.

When you're alone in a thunderstorm and when it's cold and dark in your room when the night light has gone out and and the fuses to the main hallway lights have been blown, sometimes all you really need is your teddy bear.

FRIENDS.

When they whisper I feel the burn
The burn that she warned me about
It hurts.

I ask them what they talk about but they just laugh and for the second day, in the sand box, I'm all alone.
And I wonder if they're actually my friends...

ASKING QUESTIONS.

I ask Miss Jane what she wanted to be when she grew up, if she wanted to be a firefighter, but she answers no. I wonder if she cares about all of us equally or if she just says that. When I ask Sydney what she thinks about pink she imitates some one barfing.
I wonder why she does that. I mean what's Wrong with pink?
Today's a lousy day and Mom's not going to be home after school so I ask questions.

BIRDS.

I see a baby bird out the window while Miss Jane Explains the number 1 and I watch it try to fly but it Falls. I watch it try again and again until it finally starts to fly.
It bursts away from the nest and comes nearer to the school.
It's going to hit our window — it's out of control!
I jump out of my seat and leap to the window. I open it wide, and the baby bird flies in, lands on the soft carpet.
It isn't hurt at all but everyone starts laughing at me. They say, "Why'd you do that?"
"You stink." "UGGG."
Miss Jane stares daggers at me and Picks up the bird. "You shouldn't do that," I say.
But she throws it out the window.
Luckily it flies away safely and discovers the world now by itself.
I'm a good person inside, really I know it.

NEXT PROMPT

Farming. Do you farm? Have you ever worked on a farm? Visited one? Write about it. Do you know a farmer? Talk to her or him and tell their story. Try not to romanticize. Tell a story that describes the reality of farming today. **Due Apr. 23.**

Submit at:

youngwritersproject.org