

# CYWR

CHICAGO YOUNG WRITERS REVIEW

FALL 2022  
CONTEST



IMAGINE

CREATE

BECOME



Fall 2022

Contest

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## Table of Contents

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“The Story Worth Telling”	3	Contest Winners
“Pencil”	5	Elena Ambler
“Friendship is Magic”	6	Anika Narayanan
“The Giant and The Dwarf”	7	Jason Bae
“Sunset”	11	Miranda Chen
“The Tale of Two Hungry Best Friend Bears”	12	Amelia Wang
“Free Now”	13	Abigail Lee
“Ode to Sunflowers”	16	Yining Tian
“Wings”	18	Sierra Elman
“Insignificant Skies”	20	Allison Huang
“‘The Winds’ Gifts”	21	Haozhong Cheng
“‘My Happy Place”	23	Aiden Edwards
“Endeavor in the Ebbs”	25	Holden Ellis
“Change a World”	27	Jenna Harrod



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## “The Story Worth Telling” Contest Winners

### Grades K-5

#### 1st Place:

“The Giant and The Dwarf” by Jason Bae (4th grade)

#### 2nd Place:

“Pencil” by Elena Ambler (3rd grade)

#### 3rd Place:

“Friendship is Magic” by Anika Narayanan (3rd grade)

### Grades 6-8

#### 1st Place:

“Ode to Sunflowers” by Yining Tian (6th grade)

#### 2nd Place:

“Endeavor in the Ebbs” by Holden Ellis (8th grade)

#### 3rd Place:

“Change a World” by Jenna Harrod (8th grade)



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**“The Story Worth Telling”  
Contest Winners (continued)**

**Honorable Mentions**

“Sunset” by Miranda Chen (5th grade)

“The Tale of Two Hungry Best Friend Bears” by Amelia Wang (5th grade)

“Free Now” by Abigail Lee (6th grade)

“Wings” by Sierra Elman (7th grade)

“Insignificant Skies” by Allison Huang (7th grade)

“The Winds’ Gifts” by Haozhong Cheng (8th grade)

“My Happy Place” by Aiden Edwards (8th grade)



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“My Happy Place” by Aiden Edwards (8th grade)

## Pencil

By Elena Ambler  
3rd grade

I see you on the paper -  
As well as the news.  
Making lines and squiggles  
And ending in a straight and slender blur.

You say so much -  
Fiction and non-fiction  
Dragons and castles  
War and history  
But you always come to an end  
With that brave and bold dot.

## Friendship is Magic

By Anika Narayanan  
3rd grade

The magic is true,  
You don't have to be blue,  
Cause it's just me and you.  
Friendship is magic, it helps you every day and everybody.  
Friendship can help you when you're single and turn it into a double  
Whenever you're in trouble.  
If you have a buddy with you, you'll fly with your dreams soon.  
You will soar far across the sky, the stars and maybe the moon.

## The Giant and The Dwarf

A Folktale  
By Jason Bae  
4th grade

A long, long, long time ago, there was the happy town of Magiccreaturesville. It was a village full of magical creatures such as fairies, giants, dwarfs, and elves. It had enormous boulders, clear lakes, and generous bees! It was a friendly village where everybody was loyal to each other. (Except for the dragons who lived in the mountains. They ate the magical creatures!)

One day the shortest, loneliest, and oddest dwarf sent a letter to the town's most hilarious, friendliest, and smartest giant. It said:

*To whatever-your-name-is Giant,*

*I am so lonely. I could use some company. I think you could be a great friend because you have so many people always talking to you. You can crack jokes that can make the toughest elf laugh. Like I said, I'm really lonely. If I made friends with the dragons, they would just keep me for a midnight snack. Would you be friends with me?*

*- A dwarf who-doesn't-know-your-name*

The giant received the letter, and he felt compassion for the dwarf. So he pulled out his best quill and scribbled on a piece of paper:

*YES! Of course! Meet you at Bagels Bay on Saturday.*

**“It came to the dwarf's attention that the fairies  
were jealous of him.”**

After that, they met in other places and eventually got very close to each other. They eventually became best friends and had lots of fun. They hunted together, ate

together, and even traveled together! But, the fairies, who were fans of the giant, occasionally sprinkled eyelash powder in the dwarf's eyes. It came to the dwarf's attention that the fairies were jealous of him. The fairies usually ignored the dwarf, but now that he was hanging out with the giant, they treated him like their worst enemy. It was still better than being ignored because the dwarf was friends with the giant.

The merry days continued until one day, the giant wanted to learn magic from the mysterious witch from the north. The giant wanted the dwarf to be popular, so he decided to learn magic. Thus, he looked for the witch in the Frostlands. He found a giant mansion made of purple ice.

"Mrs. Wicked, can you teach magic to me? I want my friend to not have eyelash powder in his eyes all the time. I want him to be very popular!"

"Nope," said the witch, "I don't care about your friend. Now scram!"

**"Let's just say it wasn't very pleasant."**

After two whole hours of pleading and asking, the giant got the witch's approval. However, he had to agree to be the test subject for all of the witch's new spells. Let's just say it wasn't very pleasant.

Then, the witch finally said, "Fine, Giant. I will teach you some simple spells for your unintelligent friend." Throughout that evening, the witch taught the giant some charms and lots of transfiguration. After the tiring evening, the giant decided to teach the dwarf later. He was too tired that day. He trudged back to his giant house and made some dinner. He invited the dwarf to eat with him.

When he arrived, the giant announced, "This is something that'll change your life. You can be popular. I, *drumroll please*, I HAVE GONE TO FROSTLAND TO LEARN MAGIC AND TEACH YOU SO YOU CAN BE POPULAR!"

"Wait. What?!"

"I went to the Frostlands to obtain magic from the legendary witch, Mrs. Wicked. After hours of unpleasantness, I learned magic, and I can teach you! You won't be bullied by fairies anymore!"

“Wow! You are so awesome. You are the greatest friend I’ve ever had. Can you start teaching me tomorrow?” asked the dwarf.

“Sure! Come to Mansion Moore tomorrow. I’ll see you there. Oh, just to warn you it’s going to be tiring work. You’ll have to stand because you’ll need all your focus on the object you’re trying to enchant. And no offense, but also you’re short.”

After that day, the giant tried to teach magic to the dwarf. The dwarf tried and tried.

He tried to make a flower bloom.

He tried to make tomatoes grow.

He tried to make animals talk.

But he couldn’t!

“Please try to turn things into plants. It’s simple transfiguration.”

The dwarf was very annoyed about how he couldn’t do any magic, but the giant persuaded him to try one more spell.

“Please try to turn things into plants. It’s simple transfiguration.”

The dwarf tried, and on his third try... he could turn things into small little green blades! Why a small little green blade? Because the dwarf was small as a small little green blade of course! The dwarf was really delighted. He would transform twigs into some small little green blades, and he would put it in pots. He even started a plant shop!

After a while, he got pretty popular. But, being popular could be stressful. Since the dwarf became popular, he had to be with people all day!! The dwarf was losing his focus and was making mistakes with his magic. One day, a picky customer went to the dwarf’s shop.

“Hello. I would like to have a bright red small little green blade surrounded by bright yellow small little green blades. That shouldn’t be too hard. Right?”

The dwarf was already having lots of stress, and now this order! The dwarf was chanting spells all night. He didn't sleep. When he said the incantation again, his drowsiness caused him to say the wrong word. The dwarf accidentally turned himself into a small little green blade!

The next day, the giant went to hunt with his friend. However, the dwarf was nowhere to be seen. The giant checked their usual fishing place (the Salt Spot), the place where the only nice dragon lived (the Crisis Cave), and even the dwarf's shop. He checked everywhere!

Then, the giant remembered that he hadn't checked the dwarf's house. When he got there, he saw a small little green thing on his friend's chair! He immediately knew it was the dwarf because the small little green thing had a little brown goatee. The giant cried for many hours.

He stayed at the dwarf's house for three days. The giant was depressed. He lost his best friend! The truth was that all the creatures the giant hung out with weren't actually his real friends. The dwarf understood him the best. When the giant had a bad day, the dwarf would bring him something to eat.

The giant was so sad, that he turned himself into a plant too! And since he was a giant, he got turned into a big brown thing with leaves. The rest of Magiccreaturesville felt sad for them (even the fairies). So in the honor of the village, they named the small little green blades 'Grass', and the big brown thing with leaves 'Trees' after the names of the dwarf and giant. After that, the village learned not to bully. They also learned that every creature in Magiccreaturesville was special.

Since every blade of grass and every kind of tree is descended from the dwarf and the giant, grass is short and trees are tall.

## Sunset

By Miranda Chen  
5th grade

A beautiful pink sky  
A place to fly,  
Or to  
Glide.  
A hot sun,  
Slowing down  
Like a spider  
In a drainpipe.  
The birds tweet, "Goodbye!"  
In the beautiful summer sky

## The Tale of Two Hungry Best Friend Bears

By Amelia Wang  
5th grade

Once upon a time, there were two bears. One bear was caramel colored while the other was the color of red beans. One day, they went out to eat. The caramel bear jumped onto the red bean bear's back. "It's my turn to ride!" it exclaimed. So they went into the woods and walked to the restaurant.

"Hmm... what should I get?" The red bean bear pondered. "I know! I will get the tiramisu."

"And I would like the chocolate macaroon," the caramel-colored bear finished.

The two bears nibbled happily on their food and lived happily ever after.

THE END

## Free Now

By Abigail O. Lee  
6th grade

I searched for my mother's car right after school ended. Once I finally found it, I got in and rummaged through my bag for my phone. My father was in the car too, which was strange because he wouldn't usually also come to pick me up. Instead of taking the usual left turn, she turned right and kept driving forward. "Where are we going? This isn't the usual route," I asked.

"We're taking a last-minute trip to visit your grandpa in the hospital." My father said, in a monotone voice.

"Oh, why last minute?" I said curiously. My parents turned to each other then quickly away, as I waited for an answer.

*"a soft tear slowly fell down my pale skin"*

"Well, you know he's very sick..." My mother began. I nodded, and fidgeted with my hand nervously. The pause seemed to last forever, and the silence struck the car like lightning. I knew the next words that were going to flow out of her mouth, and I didn't want to hear it. "He's dying, and this may be our last visit to him before his passing..." She exhaled slowly. My head started to ache, and the silence once returned. My head turned to the window, as a soft tear slowly fell down my pale skin.

I clenched my jaw as we pulled into the hospital, and walked through the doors. Greeted by pale walls, my dad walked in first and requested a visit to room 204. The front desk woman then typed on her computer before handing us passes and letting us go in.

When we arrived, I was surprised to be the last of the family to arrive. My aunt, uncle, and two cousins were already there. Wires were plugged all around grandpa, and monitors were looking at his status every second. He looked ill and tired, like a long day had been passing for a hundred years.

I walked over to grandpa's side, and cautiously waved at him. My eyes were fighting back tears, as he barely held up his hand and waved it using what looked to be all his strength. My heart sagged after the realization of how sick he really was, and I sat down and clamped his hands between mine. His hand was cold, but not like you were holding ice. It was a bare cold, like you forgot a blanket when watching a movie on a cold night.

“The quiet but kindest souled person there.”

My father and mother greeted the rest of the family, while I softly smiled a hello. I was now in no excited mood. This was the grandpa that I had grown up with. The quiet but kindest souled person there. He always had a soft smile, an unseen smile that was always overlooked. “How's he doing?” I asked, knowing the main answer already.

“Not the best, but he's here right now which is a blessing already.” My aunt replied, as the walls seemed to get closer and closer - the air getting thicker.

A sudden beeping went off in the vitals, interrupting all peace in the middle of the visit. It's time. A voice in my head said, repeating over and over again. A ringing went in my head, and tears started flowing rapidly down my face. Doctors started flowing in and pushing everyone out. We all sat in the waiting lobby, holding onto one another crying. My arms were shaking as we waited, and waited. Minutes turned into hours, before a doctor came out and led us into a room. There is a saw grandpa, laying rested but still and stiff.

The doctor stood for a minute, before saying “I'm truly sorry for your loss.” And heading out to give us space. Blood seemed to be rushing to my head, and I bit my lip stressfully.

Grandpa laid there, looking less uneasy. My mother whispered out in between

tears, “He’s happier now,” and tears rushed down like a waterfall. And she was probably right, he was no longer in pain now although he wasn’t here physically with us. Despite that, I once again held his hand and smiled because he was better now, and could look over us no matter what. He was happy, and that was the most important thing now. It mattered most that he could roam with no pain, and enjoy himself no matter what. As a tear rolled down my cheek, I felt a satisfaction deep down knowing he is okay now. Now he can be free, once and for all.

## Ode to Sunflowers

By Yining Tian  
6th grade

Oh sunflowers,  
Brilliant, dazzling, golden  
Gleaming, glistening  
Petals of the sun  
Silky, smooth to the touch  
Glittering like magic  
As I walk through rows and rows  
Your glory wraps around me

Your glory wraps around me

Munch  
Peppery, bittersweet and something more  
You fill my mouth with joy  
As I bask under the clear sky  
Oh sunflowers,  
You weave,  
You dance,

You swirl,

You whirl,

And when night comes you sleep,

Ready to shine the next day

## Wings

By Sierra Elman  
7th grade

I entered the boarding bridge, eager and energetic, yet weary and exhausted from the weeks of waiting I had endured for this moment. The intertwining scents of flaky, buttered pastries, sweat, and freshly-printed books vanished, replaced by heat that tickled my cheeks. My parents herded me down the stained carpet, marching along the walls that curved like arched birches in the wind. Anticipation fluttered in my stomach for the ride and the destination ahead, careening and flapping like a juvenile warbler.

I exited the tunnel, my gaze flitting like a hummingbird. The air conditioning whistled, cool air trickling out of the vents. The body of the jet overflowed with passengers perched on their benches clutching mugs of coffee, hoping the travelers crammed in beside them would not knock over their drink. I climbed onto my seat, the scabbed cushion groaning under my weight, and raised the shade covering the window. It was like opening my eyes to another world. Employees dressed in neon vests paraded around the chipped concrete, waving flags as yellow as petals of a sunflower. A car with blinking lights navigated the labyrinth of traffic, transporting baggage in a cart that rolled behind it.

“The sensation of soaring above where I had been  
just moments ago reverberated through my bones”

A flight attendant appeared, her uniform crisp and smooth. She described the safety rules, gesturing to diagrams she clutched in her fingers. When she returned to her bench tucked behind a velvet curtain, the engine began to whirl like a song forming in a chickadee’s throat. I clipped the belt around my waist as the tires squealed across the

pavement, the speed increasing. At an incline, we glided into the air, our bird balancing us on its sturdy back. The sensation of soaring above where I had been just moments ago reverberated through my bones, my perception of the universe at once forever altered. The world was shrinking.

The landscape outside transformed in time, cement and stubborn weeds giving way to sky, a vast blue sheet extending into the unexplored. I peered down. Roads formed ribbons, weaving between green ponds of grass and neighborhoods. Buildings were indistinct cardboard boxes, the flaps folded together to create roofs. Vehicles sailed down the streets. Pedestrians were indistinguishable. As the city drifted away, fields emerged, neat rows of crops lined up like soldiers preparing for battle. Even ferris wheels did not provide a perspective this fresh, this unexpected. A raven coasted with certainty through the clusters of clouds, feathers glittering violet under the sun's grasp. I felt like I was flying with it, confident that my wings would carry me.

## Insignificant Skies

By Allison Huang  
7th grade

Everyone's always talking about the sun and the moon  
How even though they're 93 million miles away  
That much of a distance can't stop their eternal love.  
They rarely come face to face, and always in the sky at different times.  
Yet the sun and the moon are still lovers.  
But I never hear anyone mention the sky and the clouds.  
They share the same space and are always together.  
So why, even though they're so close, there are no stories about their love?  
Maybe it's because day by day the clouds drift by, moving slowly past  
While the sky stays grounded at its post.  
Like how every day I pretend to have to tie my shoelace or look through my backpack  
At the same spot, hoping  
That you'd take notice whenever you walked by.  
But just like the clouds, you move on and pay no attention to the sky, even though  
Every day and night  
She waits patiently for you.

## The Winds' Gifts

By Haozhong Cheng  
8th grade

I knew it was special  
The chilly breezes of that afternoon  
The class of late summer  
Chatty and giggly

Trees swaying, bushes waving  
A gust of wind blows gently across my face  
And brings me away from the conversations and worries  
I had in my mind  
So distant and hollow as I reflect

I knew it was special  
The warm breezes  
Driving my mind away from the present  
Into an ocean  
Of the most comforting sensations  
Ones I collected throughout my life

The features of the school  
The calming scenery  
So reminiscent of an island  
The ones I visited years ago  
Where my treasures of nostalgia hide

I knew it was special  
As soon as I felt the winds  
The pleasant air of early fall  
The refreshing smell of vegetation  
The smell of life, vigor, happiness  
And serendipity

“Memories that have long been abandoned”

Overwhelmed by longing  
Memories that have long been abandoned  
All came back to me  
In a vibrant tsunami of joy and sorrow

I was not sure why it was so special  
Plain afternoon, normal proceedings  
But I knew, hidden inside that afternoon  
Along with the comforting, chilly breezes  
Were the most valuable gifts of my childhood  
Whispered into my ear  
Flowing away through the years

Savoring the moment  
I looked at the distant trees  
Remembering the past  
Cherishing the present  
I knew the winds were special

## My Happy Place

By Aiden Edwards  
8th grade

If you have a place where you are happy and feel safe, you are one of the lucky ones. Many people do have a place like that, but also many do not. And you will find out that having a place like that often gets taken for granted.

I am one of the people that do have a place like that. It is when I am with my grandma. During the summers, I basically live at her house. When I am there, we have a lot of fun. We love to do things and spend time together. When I am at her house, I also feel safe and protected. She never judges me for any of my decisions, and she pushes me to be brave and face my fears.

My grandma and I have a money spending problem. We love to go shopping anywhere and anytime we are bored. We love going to Walmart, online shopping, thrift shopping, garage sales, and many more different places. My grandpa does not like our money spending problem because he says we are eventually going to run out of money.

“We do not like taking the easy way out of  
problems”

When I am with my grandma, we are very creative. We love doing arts and crafts to occupy ourselves. When my grandma and I have a problem, we love to make a creative solution. One time we stained a white shirt with coffee and could not get the stain out, so we just stained the rest of the shirt with coffee so it would all be the same color. We do not like taking the easy way out of problems, we like to take a different approach to solve it.

My grandma and I are kind of hoarders. Since we have a problem spending money, we buy a lot of items we do not need, so after a while, things start to pile up and we begin to run out of space to put things. I try to keep things organized so we have more room to put things. But sometimes I think that is not the best idea because we need to stop getting unnecessary things rather than getting more. Eventually we have a garage sale to get rid of all the redundant things and what we do not sell, we donate.

I am glad to say I have a place where I feel happy and safe. Although having a place like that often gets taken for granted, I now know to make sure I do not take that for granted. If you have a place like that, make sure you appreciate it.

## Endeavor in the Ebbs

By Holden Ellis  
8th grade

In the glare of daylight shining,  
Through the ebbs, whilst slowly rising,  
Lingered at a shallow depth of only twenty-three,  
A sudden wail of deep displeasure  
Shook the seas, creating pressure  
In my mind and in my body and in my submarine.

Waves of rapid, instant worry  
charged my views through endless flurry  
And as I gazed upon the fiend that made the dreadful screech,  
Approaching slowly but still surely,  
Out of darkness, very blurry  
I pondered over whether it indeed ate human meat.

“It hovered hidden in kelp meadows”

It hovered hidden in kelp meadows  
Tough to spot behind dark shadows;  
Shadows of the lively fish that darted by to flee,  
For darkness grew among us quickly  
And a breeze urged the reef chilly  
As the water glowed up with bioluminescent beasts.

Now on the glass came it a tapping,

Forming cracks as it stayed laughing,  
Looking like a demon as it flaunted lethal teeth,  
I hastened for the sub's pod dockings  
Whilst the spook prolonged its stalking  
And then I climbed into the pod thinking I could retreat.

“why wouldn't it leave?”

A button tap; the capsule's whizzing  
Another one and now it's hissing  
But try as I might, the escape pod simply wouldn't leave,  
and as the eldritch fiend drew nigher  
The situation swelled in dire  
Until I broke and cried my query; why wouldn't it leave?

At that moment come heavy bellow  
Followed by the word of hello  
And finally a request that my birthday be happy.  
I turned to see the demon smiling  
And even though he was reviling  
He's the only one that remembered in the entire sea.

## Change a World

By Jenna Harrod  
8th grade

When I began to write, I kept in mind a big thing. My words could very well change a world. My feelings that are held in black and white could bring someone out of darkness or intrigue them. So, without further ado, I dove into writing. Not as easy as it seems. My first attempts were mediocre. My second, marginally better. Without a doubt, I enjoyed writing, the feel of the keyboard, and the flow of creativity. I loved the times when the words just came to me. I felt like stopping when they refused to, but stubbornly forged on.

When I felt like I was ready, I started a novel, which quickly turned into a need for a series if it was going to be understandable and interesting. I needed a prequel and a sequel. The middle story was lacking, but I had already finished the first draft of it. I was really attached to my characters and liked the story line, but I knew that it needed to change. Thus, I left it as it was and started on the prequel. I altered the story and hoped for the best. The things I learned? A lot. First, if I intended to succeed, I needed deeper plot. Next, a writer's profession isn't just putting down words in an understandable way. There has to be feeling behind the words, prompting the reader to keep reading. The list goes on and on.

**“They struggle, fail, try again, and keep going.”**

I did find something that I really hadn't expected. My work could literally change me. The accomplishment of finishing the first draft of my book had an amazing feel. I had conquered annoyance and the want to completely give up when things got difficult. It encouraged me. Look at what you did already! Sure, the book is unfinished and still waiting to be enhanced, but I had times when even finishing that much looked

impossible. I have written better, learned from several writing mistakes, and have acquired a deeper gratitude for all those family members who have cheered me on.

The words of a writer might never get published. They could write for a long time and never seem to get anywhere. They struggle, fail, try again, and keep going. In the end, that hard work could change a world, but maybe not the one you'd imagined. It could be you or someone who sees your struggle and perseverance. Or your work could touch a person unexpectedly.

This keeps me going. My words could change a world, even if it is only mine.



## Upcoming Issue

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Submissions are now accepted for CYWR's upcoming issue.

We're very excited to see all of your short stories of any genre, personal narratives, poems, song lyrics, as well as screenplays, scripts, and book excerpts. To read the submission guidelines and submit your writing for publication, go to:

[cywr.org/submit.html](https://cywr.org/submit.html)

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