



**Honorable Mention  
Adult Age Group**

**Abecedarian Poem For Ryan**

All this time, I've been shaping letters trying to  
break backs of adjectives and form a proclamation of love that isn't  
cheesy. But, all I've done is sever my fingertips. I'm  
downing lakes, my chest is swelling, and colors over  
earth have never pounded so vividly.  
Free my soul, when my skin is withered, if only to meet his.  
Gather your suns and gods, so I can show them  
his face. If I don't bite my lip,  
I'll spill everything that is unholy. Most lovers would've had me wire my  
jaw shut and held their ears until screams waned. But, he  
kicked out demons scratching at my throat. I'm getting  
lost again in the stomach of it all.  
Mirrors have never spoken to me, so I'm fine with turning to  
nectar dripping from the sky and tucking the  
orange of all our sunsets into my back  
pockets. When witching hour latches onto my body, I  
quiver for his limbs and skin to besiege me.  
Rural towns rituals, I'm done pleading to you. My lover  
seized the rattle in the back of my  
teeth. Screw *'til death do*  
*us* part. I'll love you to the heel of heaven.  
Vacant bones could become the talk of graveyard sideshows  
with an ounce of life from his veins.  
X-rays tell our daughter, granddaughter, and great-granddaughter that  
you revived me. When we are long dead, our love will be knitted at our  
Zenith.

By Kelli Lage