



**Honorable Mention  
Adult Age Group**

**Back When**

Back when you  
were a copper mine  
waiting to be realized  
and I was barely a penny.

Back when slushies sweated,  
gas stations birthed fire,  
and we shifted to lovers on the run.

Back when we saw our past lives  
through a telescope  
and you turned into a carnation,  
limbs and all.

Back when a writer in a back alley  
sold us prose to  
raise as our own.

Back when we called God  
from a christened telephone booth  
and saw the Tower of Babel  
filled with oranges.

By Kelli Lage