



## 2026 EKPHRASTIC POETRY WINNERS – RUBY CITY

**Artwork:** *Norma*, Daniel Rios Rodriguez

### **Adult Winning Poems (in no particular order)**

#### **That Girl Norma / Might Act Like Me**

Norma got shades to settle with herself. Take precaution.  
At every angle there's somethin' beautiful, but ain't / no  
way she's normal from the straight away look

On ecstasy's horizon of hilarity and the dusty line of risin' fury—  
her eyeballs stay clear and got wings on 'em / a  
feral angel; that way she rolls 'em back with sweet glaze

She does too much with each notch of the hour, tryin' to lasso the sea,  
swingin' with the right wrist, while / the  
left hand balances blushin' cold champagne 'cuz she's cool like that

A confident tide, bubblin' in spik'd, sparkle boots  
runnin' along the kickin' current, she jumps! leaps! and kicks back! / yes,  
born in NYC, but raised *southern fried by the grease*—she hollers now, in Texan

That girl Norma gotta be a Gemini, double curves + two shots burning audacity,  
she'll only swim with her clothes off / takes  
her sun with the salty blues, while the earth checks her vitality making sure/her/heart/stays/free

*Zenobia*

## **The Prospect of Possibility**

From the start  
Norma's heart  
was on pins and needles.  
What she needed was  
a glimpse of the sun.  
Norma had a heart like flames  
on the horizon.  
She rode waves  
waiting for her wings.  
Norma was torn between duty  
and destiny.  
She used to hope  
the sun wouldn't shine  
until the clouds broke through  
to you.

*Luther Christian*

## ***Le Dedico Esto A Ti* I Dedicate This to You**

*Una ofrenda a la vida que se esconde* within a painting:  
In Norma, whose molten, midnight oil *se quema*  
beneath copper bending, bruising light, I extend  
*dos brazos* made of rope, ebbing and flowing to hold vivid memories  
tide-bound by time-keeping limestone, pale and stubborn as bone.

*Esto no es arte*, it is... a home... at sea... on a voyage.  
It is an envoy for immigrants' hopes and dreams, an unwavering longing for belonging.  
Wood juts, needles prickle, lines take flight while shadows flicker.  
Color, cosmic; folktales, enshrined. *Cuentos de ada* or secrets divine.  
Thus is the beauty of smiling through pain, persisting past flames.  
*Abre los ojos*. You will see,  
we are all connected, *juntos*, you and me.

*Sayda Valentina Mitchell-Morales*

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## Youth Winning Poems (in no particular order; age 13 and older)

### The Mirror's Frame

I've built you a shrine out of river stones and sticks,  
A halo hammered thin with rusted tacks.  
A memento mori for the girl I'll never be,  
I gild your shadow, it corrodes in me.

In the girls bathroom, tiled and dim,  
Fluorescent light turns holy, thin.  
I kneel between the sinks and shame,  
trace your outline in the mirror's frame.

I stole your angel wings of copper thread,  
They do not lift, they drag instead.

If hell wore lip gloss, it would shine like you.  
Pink lacquered mouth, venom sweet and true,  
Pleated skirt like folded flame,  
Pressed so neat it hides the blame.

It's holy how I rot for you.

*Celeste Simonsen*

### Mother Nature

She's Earth, and she's an ember,  
A waking dream found,  
in the heart of Southtown on sacred ground.

A cactus crown, a thorny grace,  
The weight of the world in her abstract face.

A rugged orbit of wood and wire,  
made from the nature admired.

Not the starlet of silver screens, nor Hollywood's sigh,  
but a landscape of spirit under a painted sky.

The frame is not a boundary, but a bone,  
to display Mother Nature on her throne.

*Ginny Lenz*