To sit with, Brian Zhao, Second Place
To sit with

They couldn’t get a clean cut, that space between abdomen and gut-feeling. A year to live or four—they cannot say.
You are incandescent with unknowing. How hard it is to be human in the thrown shadow.
Like everyone else, you once dreamed of falling asleep forever. But even this peace eludes you now.
What can I do but sit with you.

Uncle, at night you had no teeth. Your tongue stuck out like a parched nub of sunflower. What did we talk about during those hours, when there was only my crisp American and your gum sounds and the soft slur of electricity. Perhaps at the end you knew enough, my touch unfelt against your swollen fingers when I asked you to wake up and the machine cried out.