

**Excerpt from 'Birdbone' by Ash Shirvinton**

**Winner, 2024 Young Writers Award**

On Thursday, Jelly finally answered.

“It’s easier for both of us this way.” He pointed his camera at the underside of the canopy, through the skylight that was really just a hole. She couldn’t see what he was photographing.

He was right that things weren’t exactly easy right now. The difference between them, though, was that people liked Jelly. He was funny, in an offbeat sort of way. Or at least that was the current consensus. For the first time in his life, he had a reputation to uphold. Myra, on the other hand, was just plain unpleasant.

“People only think you like me cause I look like a boy.”

“But you’re not a boy.”

Girls. Boys. Birds. It was a lot to keep track of.