



**'The Aptitude Test Kid' by Nadia Lines | Orwell Youth Prize Winner 2019 (Senior Prize)**

The aptitude test kid knows  
that if she cannot remember  
the conjugation of être  
her parents will sell their home.

The aptitude test kid knows  
she holds her brother's fate  
in the pen in her palm.

What alphabet is Russian written in?  
She sounds out the answer,  
finger by finger.

How many tenses are there in French?  
What's the rent in the school's catchment area?  
What are the differences between Punjabi and Gujarati?  
How many zeros in a mortgage?

The aptitude test kid knows.  
The aptitude test kid spent her summer  
reciting the answers by heart.

She knows how to decode language-  
which endings  
mean what:  
the parents is a plural noun and the child is singular.



She sat at a desk  
and learned  
te amo, je t'aime  
but has never heard them said  
since the letter that gave her  
the words she wished she was allowed to forget.

The look on her parents' faces was untranslatable.  
The aptitude test kid  
knows every word for sorry  
but pronounces each one of them  
wrong.