

Ruby and Me - Justin Crockett
1st Place
Wayne Elementary School, Wayne County
Grades 3-4

When I was four years old, I had a dog named Ruby. She was the best coon dog you could ever ask for. She was my best friend. We would take long walks together. We would run and chase deer, coons, cats, and other dogs. She and I were like two peas in a pod. We had a lot of people who wanted to buy her, but I would have never sold her. She was too special to me.

I loved spending time with her. I adored reading to her in her doghouse. I did not mind the odor of her dog lot because I just loved Ruby that much. I also used to enter her into different competitions at the local coon club. Ruby won first place every time we competed. I owe a lot to Ruby. She showed me what true friendship was.

When we would go camping, I would beg and beg my parents to let her go with us. They thought about it and discussed for a couple of days. They had to say no because the campground rules wouldn't allow it. I had to say goodbye to my dog. "I love you Ruby, and don't ever forget it!" I gently kissed her on the head and waved good-bye. She licked me on the cheek and barked sadly. It was the way of telling me, "I will miss you friend."

Ruby celebrated her fourth birthday just three days after we came home from camping. A few months later, she became ill with cancer. My dad spent five hundred dollars to try to keep her alive. A month later, she went blind. It must have been scary for her.

After a couple of months had gone by, Ruby passed away. My heart was broken that day. No dog could ever replace her. I still love her. She was more than a friend to me—she was family. I did not want to bury her. I tried and tried to bring her back to life, but she was gone! I cried uncontrollably and I told myself it was not my fault. It was just one of those things. So I

buried her and thought of all the wonderful times we shared. I covered her up with dirt and said,
“Good-bye, Friend.”

A few years later, I got another Red bone coon dog and I named her Ruby “Too”
Because I thought Ruby would like that.