

THIRD PRIZE WINNER

High School Charms

Billy Talent and blackberry citrus gum;
biology textbooks and half my homework done.
Ninety bucks for a cruise on a boat;
reading aloud in class and I hope I don't choke.
Sharpies on lockers and notebooks and faces;
space to hide in—so many places.
Doing each other's homework during lunches and spares;
ride your longboard in the hall—if you dare.
Weekend parties and last night crams;
pop quizzes and never-ending exams.
Lazing on couches with strangely spiced fries;
doing laps around the track under wide-open skies.
Messages in the bathroom stalls;
secret classrooms and memories on theatre walls.
Band hoodies and brand names;
square-dancing and football games.
The secret in being a teenager lies—
in being a child and an adult, all at the same time.
Cafeteria noise;
girls and boys.
Friends and teachers we can't live without;
permanently experiencing emotional drought.
Out of tune hormones and fire alarms;
the same old usual high school charms.

Taryn Pearcey

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