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<p>Poetry</p> <p>Prose</p> <p>Winners of the 2011-2012 PEN New England/Naked Truth High School Writing Contest</p>	<p>5-18</p> <p>19-28</p>	<p>"Yeah?" I presumed. "You've always wanted to try out for a team?"</p> <p>"Yeah, but seventh grade also means breaky amounts of work. Math will be harder, science will be harder, oh, and don't even try to talk to me about American history. Plus, I'll have to read more books, and they'll be longer and harder, and if I don't want to fall class, the only time I'll be able to spend without a book or a notebook shoved in front of my face will be the time I'm in a practice."</p> <p>Seventh grade wasn't really that hard, I told myself. Jamie's just trying to scare me. He's just kidding. He's never been worried about anything in his life before. He can't really be worried about something that much.</p> <p>Jamie started talking again. "And honestly, there're so many movies coming out next year that look so good, and I really want to go see all of them with people, and maybe see some of them over and over again, if I really like them, and I'm sure the year after that they'll make even better movies, but it's like, when will I ever get to finish watching all of those even once though if I have all that stuff to do for school? I'll probably be thirty. And I want to read more than just books for English class..." he trailed off.</p> <p>"Like the ones with those guys going to Mars in a rocket but accidentally landing on Saturn and needing to find their way back home with the help of aliens and stuff?" Jamie loved those kinds of books. He'd always say that he wanted to meet some of the aliens in person too, or see Neptune up close. "Oh, and comic books," I added, because he loved those too.</p> <p>Jamie was looking up at the sky when he answered. In the setting darkness, his eyes were a dark, greenish-blue, although they were</p>
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### How Does It Make You Feel That You Think You've Lost Your Marbles Again? <sup>Ⓜ</sup>

by Steph Durwin

US 4

The kitchen smelled like a cinnamon-autumn afternoon. I sat at the smooth table, my glass of water leaving a sheet of thin condensation on my palm. The window above the sink was cracked open, inviting a breeze to rustle what was the start of Mark's winter hat. I felt the hair on my arms come to attention.

The skin on my arthritic hands hung loosely over the bone, a soft, deflated and dried up balloon. I dug the muscle with my thumb in an attempt to massage them.

Mark's tail was wagging. It thudded hard against the linoleum so that it became a damp heartbeat in the background of my thoughts. I guessed he saw a squirrel outside.

But I was wrong. I listened as the garage door hummed open.

"Dad! Are you up?" And in walked Sheila. Her heels clacked rhythmically on the floor, her very own cultural dance. She was chewing bubble gum. I could smell it. And hear it.

"Oh, there you are!" She touched my shoulder and slowly said, "Dad, I'm just grabbing some lunch. I'll make you some soup! How does that sound?"

"Thanks, dear." My voice sounded like a paper bag. It used to sound like water. I'm not sure if she thought my tone was laced with exhaustion, disappointment or frustration, but I couldn't tell either.

Sheila browsed through the refrigerator, pulling out something tasty. He slid across the floor, his grin and licked his chops, the way he always did when he ate the food.

She opened up a cabinet and took out a bowl. She emptied its contents into a bowl.

US 20

### The Static <sup>Ⓜ</sup>

by Steph Durwin

I remember seeing the static.  
When I was in middle school.  
I assumed it was normal.  
The way I assumed everyone liked ice cream.  
But in the next few years  
The pizza and needles  
Became me,  
Like my emotions were asleep  
And prickly.  
And I pounded my fists  
Hoping I could fix it myself.  
The doctor said he could fix it with a pill.  
I don't know why the EEG wiggles  
Were written to say "abnormal."  
I don't know why my mom became an abstract afterthought.  
Well, I guess nobody can relate  
To the superhero protagonist after all.  
Because they keep asking me about my thoughts  
But their replies are always distant.  
These days, the static returns  
But I can't find my ordinary medicine.  
Loneliness really is  
The most addictive drug.  
And it may not be healthy.  
But it's the only time

### Perfect Cookies <sup>Ⓜ</sup>

by Tom McGrath

Cups,  
Tablespoons,  
Teaspoons,  
Pinch this,  
Dash that,  
Try a scale,  
I guarantee it will be better.

You say, light,  
I say, dark,  
But who is to say  
Which brown sugar  
Is the best?  
Taste buds, that's who.

Why do you heat them?  
You measure,  
Those hand beaters  
Are so violent,  
Mix with love in a mixer,  
And they will  
Make love to your tongue  
In return.

Do not forget to flip,  
So many do,  
It's dreadful,  
Just think scrubbing,  
You don't burn,  
You're burned.

US 8 <sup>Ⓜ</sup>

### Winners of the 2011-2012 PEN New England/Naked Truth High School Writing Contest

30 "A Stop in Time" by Ashley Lee

36 "Reggae My Yesterday" by Cameron Akersokulu

US 29 <sup>Ⓜ</sup>