Paradox

Charlene Fredricksen*
and silent, running her hand along the lockers, keeping a careful eye on the blackboard.

At exactly ten-thirty, the freckled, red-headed messenger boy came running out of the officials' office, and raced up to the blackboard. A crowd gathered, and Nan was jostled behind a six-foot fellow who seemed a yard wide. Peering over his shoulder, she could see that the red-headed boy was slowly spelling out the ratings—Superior, Excellent, Good and Fair, one under the other. The she saw the boy write under Superior, CRESTON, FAIRFIELD. Nan waited, not daring to breathe while he let his hand linger over the letters, turned to grin at his spell-bound audience, and lowered his hand to write the Excellent rating.

Nan turned to Genera, taking her limp hand. She was searching for the right words when she saw her mother and sister craning their necks to find her in the crowd. She squeezed Genera's hand, and hurried back to her folks before she lost them in the crowd.

Nan meant to find the right words and to go back to say them to Genera, but the crowd kept pushing her away, toward the door. Just at the exit, she turned, hoping to wave, but Genera's back was turned. She was alone in front of the blackboard, head down, arms limp, staring at her tiny, high-heeled blue pumps. The funny red-headed messenger boy was staring quizzically at her, wondering why that pretty dark-haired girl was crying.

Paradox

Charlene Fredricksen

When others said you were untrue,
I tried to close my ears.
Excuses that I made for you
Allayed their fears.

Strange that I could make them see,
That I would take your part.
I had no power to still for me
My doubtful heart.