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Parking Spaces

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Parking Spaces

Karin Freed

Walking down the refurbished stairs
With thick yellow trim that makes each step
resemble a parking space.
There is a stretch of cigarettes from teachers
during their free period.
Suddenly crowds of students enter,
Charging to their destinations like beasts in a
horde,
Shoving each other aside without turning back,
Pushing their way through the masses
recklessly.

People are conversing with each other as they
press forward up and down the stairs,
But each individual conversation is blended into
a single distinct sound
That can be heard only in a high school
stairwell:
The sound of blurred voices,
Of shuffling feet,
And backpacks slamming against each other.

Finally, after a seemingly endless three minutes,
With my head tipped downward and my body
tensed together in efforts to get by faster,
The doors come into view.
I reach the newly painted dull doors

And glance briefly at the rectangular window.
All this time I feel as if I have been traveling
upstream,
I am relieved to grasp the metal handles at last.
I swing the door open,
And lift my head,
To face the next challenge...
The Hallway.