

Power Hitter

by Clara Silverstein

From the bench, I stopped daydreaming when Miss Stokes stepped up to the plate in her collared dress and heels. I hushed with the other fifth graders. Tapping the bat once on the asphalt, she faced a pitcher just learning the curveball.

The fielders moved back as Miss Stokes swung and missed, swung and missed, losing her footing. Then she hit a fly ball that soared past everyone's gloves. We all clapped. Her pinch runner dashed like she did in gym class but what was the hurry?

Miss Stokes pushed back her glasses and smiled in a way she never did in class, when she kept her brown face blotted with powder, her voice clipped, sent me out in the hall if I doodled in the textbook, adding moustaches to the out-of-date

faces of the first U.S. Presidents. Who cared if George Washington had false teeth? I wanted to read about Hank Aaron and Willie Mays, each with 3,000 hits and counting. Miss Stokes had to play by the book, but when she batted, I glimpsed where I wanted to go.