***I was feeling just a bit first-gradish.***

Paraphrase: I feel like a new comer, silly, unconfident and naïve.

***Adding to my distress was the distinct impression that everyone on campus was watching me.***

Paraphrase:　What makes me more upset was the noticeable feeling that …

***It took everything I had not to stare when I caught my first glimpse of a real live college football player.***

Paraphrase:　I could not help staring at him when I saw a real college rugby player.

***I only hoped his attention was drawn to my air of assurance rather than to my shaking knees.(humorous)*** 主动态：…my pretended confidence drew his attention

Paraphrase: I only hoped he paid attention to/noticed my pretended confidence rather than my timidness.

***and this flailing of my feet was doing no good:*** no matter how she adjusted herself and tried to keep balance, it was of no use

***Just as I decided to try another maneuver, my food tray tipped(become askew) and I lost my balance.***

Just when I wanted to try another skillful movement, my food tray slanted.

***For three days I dined alone on nothing more than humiliation, shame, and an assortment of junk food from a machine strategically placed outside my room.***

For three days I had not been to the cafeteria due to my feeling of humiliation and shame. Instead, I stayed alone in my room and ate junk food of various kinds from a vending machine placed outside my room.

***Where I collapsed in relief:*** where I sat down in relief as no one had noticed her or she had not slipped again

***My heart went out to him:*** I feel a lot of sympathy towards him

***What I had interpreted as a malicious attempt to embarrass a naïve freshman had been merely a moment of college fun.*** ---I had thought that those students laughed at me in order to embarrass an inexperienced newcomer, yet in fact it was only a moment of college fun.

***Popularity was not so important, running with the crowd was no longer a law of survival.***

Paraphrase: It didn’t matter whether or not you were widely accepted or admired, following what the majority of people do was no longer crucial to your success.

***Be one’s own man/woman- if I could get past my preoccupation with doing everything perfectly.***

Paraphrase: To make independent decisions without being influenced by other people, if I could give up the attempt to do everything perfectly.

***Once I recognized that I had no one’s expectations to live up to but my own, I relaxed.***

Paraphrase: After I realized that I did not have to live up to other’s expectations, I relaxed.

***The shackles of self-consciousness fell way:*** I no longer felt embarrassed.