

Frantically Seeking the Nearest Exit

By Marilyn Reeves

Her name was Mrs. Griffith. Tall, erect, she walked like a dancer. She was to become my teacher, my mentor, my friend. But as I entered my 7th grade English class, upon seeing her for the first time, I found her utterly terrifying.

She came to our little mountain town by way of the big city. Her beauty was honed by 37 years of intense living and severe self-discipline. Her deep brown eyes spoke of fiery depths barely held in check as they penetrated your soul. Think Barbara Stanwick. Ann Bancroft. Viola Davis. Her gaze conveyed that much power.

Our first assignment was to bring a work of poetry for the next day's class. My fellow classmates came bearing famous poems such as *Leaves of Grass*, *The Song of Hiawatha*, *The Road Less Traveled*. And works by Shelley. Byron. Keats.

And I? Well, I brought a carefully rendered copy of *Little Bo Peep*.