

*“I teach for the same reason that every teacher teaches.
The pebble doesn’t know how long the ripple’s reach is.”*

—Happy World Teachers’ Day!

I Teach for the Fire

I teach for the fire, the moment of ignition.

The spark, that light bulb of cognition going on in the dark over an adolescent’s head.

Oh beautiful incandescence dazzling the dead air all around my room.

He tries and he tries and he tries and—boom!—he gets it and you can see it in his eyes.

I teach for that moment.

I teach for the moment that the elephants all realise that they have wings and can rise above the gutter.

My room is a-flutter with a thousand hummingbirds all hovering in one place.

A rapt expression on every single face.

Hanging on every word for one wild minute as though they were wildflowers.

I teach for that minute.

I teach for the same reason that every teacher teaches.

The pebble doesn’t know how long the ripple’s reach is.

But I restart my heart each day and learn things about myself as though I were an empty wooden bucket and every student a wishing well.

They say those who seek to teach must never cease to learn,

So I teach for the moment everything catches fire and suddenly starts to burn.

Taylor Mali