Teacher Marla knows very well that she is not getting any younger. She has been a teacher for almost 24 years and if not for the fact that she is the only one getting in money for the family, she would have left the profession at any moment’s notice. In this one unfortunate story, the character is just like the many thousands chained to their chosen careers waiting for whichever comes first- retirement or death.

Putting all her worries behind, Teacher Marla leaves her home and goes to school seemingly refreshed because of a good night sleep. About 50 meters from her classroom she sees her Grade 3 pupils already gathering in front of the locked room and they all seem so full of energy that they can shuttle a spaceship to Mars and back. Considering her length of service, she must have handled about 24 years times 45 pupils per class equals 1080 pupils where about half of them may already have their sons and daughters of their own.

Just right about the end of the morning prayer, Allan, the boy sitting in row 3 chair number 4, begins laughing hysterically while Patricia, the girl in pink blouse, turns red because of embarrassment as Allan laughs again after announcing that she is wearing unmatched slippers. Bernadette then begins her morning routine of making paper airplanes and throwing them off the air. All of a sudden Peter storms out of the room chasing a white dove that comes from nowhere. Meanwhile, Jack and Gil, brothers they are not but they are inseparable, begins drawing on each other faces. Gil by the way, is one of Ms. Carol’s pupils who, interestingly, are staying at the room at the end of the hall.
This is almost her daily routine and many would say that she is very good at it but deep down inside she knows and she feels that she is so full of it. It is not that she does not like to teach. It is not as if she does not love her pupils. She would have given her life to each and one of them without hesitation. However, she is old and her physical prowess is waning.

Teaching is a rewarding career and simultaneously a challenging profession and teachers are the persons who choose to dedicate their lives to meet its challenges. Teacher Marla is just one of many who live each day to face the daily struggles inside and outside the school environment. They come in with passion, crawl in full of energy and aspirations to change the world one child at a time. Yet, they are no super humans and eventually they will tire out. Eventually, they will feel and will submerge to the different pressures imposed upon by the department, the school and the community. Students’ behavioral problems, feelings of isolation not to mention the existing personal problems place heavy burden to teachers and soon they will feel exhausted.

At the 4 o’clock bell the pupils rush outside the door. Little Alissa does not want to go until all have left the room because she wet her skirts and is too afraid that everyone will notice. Teacher Marla picks the sweet girl, cleans her in the restroom and puts in a pair of clean shorts. A teacher is nothing short of a spectacle or a puzzle if that would very well fit. Teacher Marla is tired. Yes. She is exhausted. Absolutely. She wants a job which pays more. Undeniably. She wants to get rid of heavy paper works, too many bosses and ear-breaking noises. Yes, yes, and yes! Yet she manages to pull up the strings to come out of bed and face the new day not with lesser burdens but with a renewed hope. Wherever the source of such dedication comes, however, is another story.

Teacher Marla cleans her desk and locks her classroom with heavy shoulders, and she walks home with a smile.
References: