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Two Reflections on Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

When I was a wee girl - age 7, 8, 9ish - my mother used to read to me Longfellow poems. And I loved them!! I could recite many beginning lines; and I can still do that today!

I taught third grade for many years. One of my favorite activities in April was to have my class learn the first 23 lines of "Paul Revere's Ride". Once accomplished - given about a week - I would march the class from room to room; and, on my command of "ready begin", they would, in unison, begin to recite. It was a riot! And, I think they were very proud of themselves.

Well, I told the whole class if anyone could learn the WHOLE poem of over 200 lines, that I would give that person a prize. And wouldn't you know it, the very next day - in came Martha Drum and she stood up front, and said the WHOLE thing!! AND I didn't have any prize for her!! Can you imagine my chagrin??!! I had to think fast! -- to be continued...



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Responding to Longfellow is a partnership of the Maine Historical Society; Maine's Poet Laureate; and the Stonecoast MFA Program at the University of Southern Maine. For more information, please visit www.hwlongfellow.org

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