

[Home](#)

[Back to Memories](#)

[Back to Thoughts](#)

**Miss Marek:** I started the 7th grade at Bryant Elementary School, one block north on Kedvale at 14th Street. Ms. Marek was my teacher for every class except gym.

On the first morning in Ms. Marek's classroom, I sat in the fourth seat in the row on the door side of the room, along the wall that held the blackboards. Ms. Marek asked us to recite our names going in order, starting with the first seat in my row.

When my turn came, I said in a clear voice, "Teddy Dunn."

"What is your name," said Ms. Marek, in a somewhat threatening tone, it seemed to me.

"Teddy Dunn," I repeated.

*"What is your name?"* clearly threatening tone this time.

"Teddy Dunn," I said for lack of any other answer.

"You are now in the 7th grade!" she announced. "You are grown up! Your name is Theodore Dunn. What is your name?"

"Teddy Dunn," not in defiance, but petrified.

My next experience with Ms. Marek came a couple of weeks later. Each student in the class was required to stand at the piano one at a time and sing, as Ms. Marek played. When my turn came, I stood at the piano. Ms. Marek played. I opened my mouth, and nothing came out -- not a sound. I returned to my seat.

The next act occurred some weeks later during math period. Four of us were at the blackboards at the same time. Each one had an arithmetic problem to be solved (addition, I seem to recall, though that sounds too elementary for 7th grade). She reviewed the work of each of the two before me. When she came to me, I guess she thought I owed her some pain I had not yet suffered. She looked over my answer.

"Is your answer correct?" she asked.

"Yes," I said.

"Is your answer correct?" she repeated. The form was familiar to me by then.

"Yes," I said again, again for lack of anything better to say.

"Are you positive?"

"Yes, I'm positive."

[Home](#)

[Back to Memories](#)

[Back to Thoughts](#)

"Only fools are positive."

"Are you positive?"

After that, Ms. Marek and I had a mutual understandoff