EXERCISE 6–3 Paragraphing

Here is a teacher's first draft of an introduction of herself. It is written as one paragraph. Turn it into a five-paragraph essay by putting a paragraph marker [¶] in front of each word that should start a new paragraph.

I've been a fire-tower lookout, a salesperson, a waitress, a singer for commercial radio, a professional writer, and a check girl in a bingo parlor—but none of these jobs held my interest very long. The job I have enjoyed most in my life is teaching. Whether I was pretending, volunteering, or earning my living, I've done some kind of teaching for most of my life. As a child, I did a lot of make-believe teaching. I used to line up my dolls and stuffed animals on the side porch and "teach" them whatever I was currently learning, like the ABC's or numbers. I would "read" stories to them too, trying to sound just like the teacher who read to us at school. When the neighborhood kids played school, I always wanted to be either the bad kid or the teacher. My friend Billy would play school only if he could be the bad kid, so I usually ended up being "teacher." I've done a lot of volunteer teaching, too. I started teaching church school when I was about thirteen—not babysitting in the nursery, but teaching a class of eight-year-old girls. By the time I finished college, I had taught unruly ten-year-old boys, lovesick adolescent girls, and even an adult class or two. When G.I.'s started coming back to my college after World War II, I tutored some who had trouble with freshman English. Later, when displaced persons from World War II immigrated to the United States, I organized, recruited teachers for, and taught night school classes in English. The most unusual volunteer teaching I ever did was at the University of Hawaii dolphin tanks, where two beautiful sleek dolphins were learning grammar. I've taught as a professional for many years. My first salaried teaching job was at the University of Pennsylvania. For four years I taught freshman composition while I worked on my graduate degrees. In the late 1960s, I came to Prince George's Community College, where I've taught English for more than twenty-five years. What job comes next? I don't know, but I'd be willing to bet on one thing: Whatever it is, I'll find some way to turn it into teaching.

—Wanda Van Goor