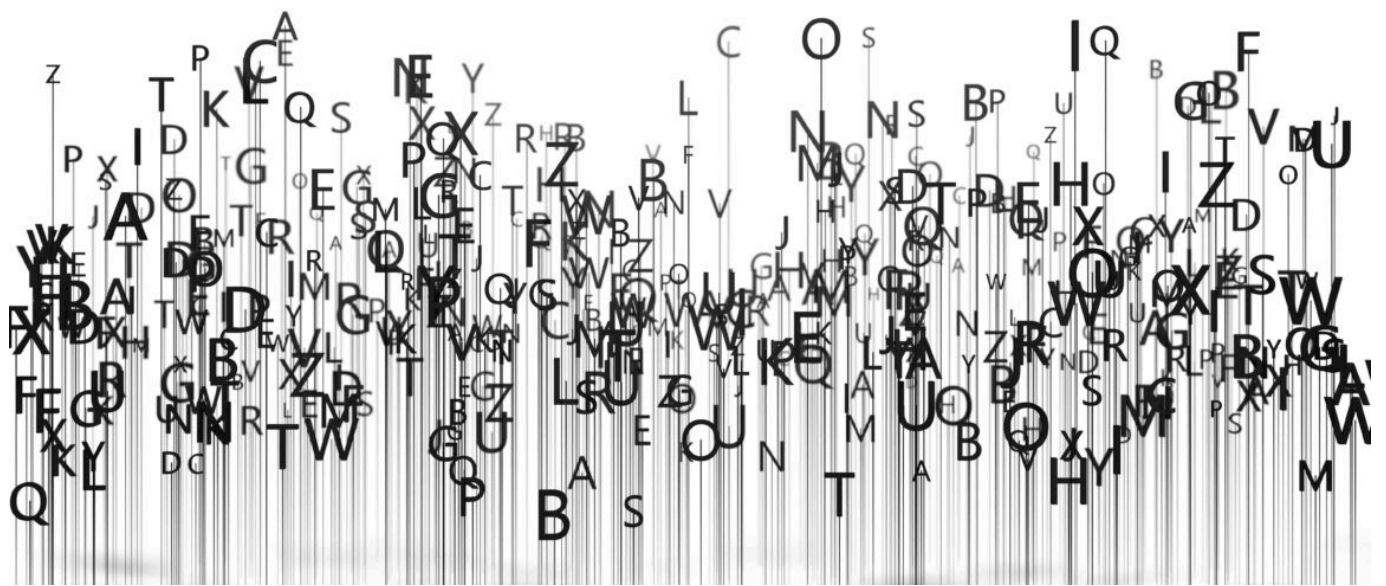


Poetry Corner: Autopilot

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BY:



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Explore the hardship and beauty of teaching through poetry.

I wrote this poem after having a particularly rough patch in January of 2024. Living in the Midwest and having quite literally 40 consecutive days without sunshine certainly didn't help. That being said, I think most teachers can relate to having felt like they were in a rut—or on autopilot—at some point in their career. I definitely don't feel like this all of the time, or even most of the time, but when I do it can feel all-consuming. Writing about these feelings helps me to process and work through them, and I hope that reading this can help others do the same.

Autopilot

No excitement.

No vigor.

How can I expect my students to be enamored with the lesson when I don't even want to teach it?

Stagnation is contagious—or something like that.

They're on their phones again.

They tuned me out a long time ago.

Headphones in. Screens up.

I should redirect them, but I can't bring myself to do it.

Pick your battles—or something like that.

I love teaching,

Don't I?

I definitely have loved teaching. It's just hard when you can't

Remember your "why"—or something like that.

When I finished college, I felt like I had a dozen possible paths laid before me.

For several years, those paths still felt like options.

Not so much anymore.

Sometimes, I feel stuck.

Those who can't do, teach—or something like that.

Present at a conference to try to reignite something.

Only 6 come to my session, 3 leave early.

A woman talks loudly through the presentation I most wanted to hear.

Teachers are the worst students—or something like that.

Push myself.

Pursue leadership opportunities.

Have my merit questioned; question it myself.

Fake it till you make it—or something like that.

Have a moment that resuscitates me a bit.

Get excited again—about trig, of all things.

Remember that it used to feel like this a lot.

If I've changed, then I can change back; but

Change is hard—or something like that.

CITATION

Stuckwisch, B. (2024). Autopilot. *Kaleidoscope: Educator Voices and Perspectives*, 11(1). <https://knowlesteachers.org/resource/poetry-corner-autopilot>.