

## Poetry Corner: Autopilot



# Autopilot

BY BEVERLY STUCKWISCH

*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.*

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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.*

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