Q&A Poetry

**“Did I Miss Anything?” By Tom Wayman**

1. What strategies do you notice the poet using in this poem? Write down at least 3 things.
2. What would you say the tone or feeling of the poem is? Explain.
3. What is the poet’s point or message?

**“Why Are We Doing This?” By Kristin Smith**

1. What strategies do you notice the poet using in this poem?
2. How are these strategies similar to “Did I Miss Anything?”
3. How are these strategies different from those used in “Did I Miss Anything?”
4. What is the poet’s point or message?

**Your Task:** Please write a poem of your own using the question and multiple answers format. Be prepared to share your poem with a small group.

**Did I Miss Anything?** By Tom Wayman

Nothing. When we realized you weren't here  
we sat with our hands folded on our desks  
in silence, for the full two hours  
  
        Everything. I gave an exam worth  
        40 per cent of the grade for this term  
        and assigned some reading due today  
        on which I'm about to hand out a quiz  
        worth 50 per cent  
  
Nothing. None of the content of this course  
has value or meaning  
Take as many days off as you like:  
any activities we undertake as a class  
I assure you will not matter either to you or me  
and are without purpose  
  
        Everything. A few minutes after we began last time  
        a shaft of light descended and an angel  
        or other heavenly being appeared  
        and revealed to us what each woman or man must do  
        to attain divine wisdom in this life and  
        the hereafter  
        This is the last time the class will meet  
        before we disperse to bring this good news to all people  
                on earth  
  
Nothing. When you are not present  
how could something significant occur?  
  
        Everything. Contained in this classroom  
        is a microcosm of human existence  
        assembled for you to query and examine and ponder  
        This is not the only place such an opportunity has been  
                gathered  
  
        but it was one place  
  
        And you weren't here

**Why are we doing this?**

By Kristin Smith

Because your teachers like to torture you.

They meet after school, you know.

It’s not to discuss ways to improve the school

Or how to help you succeed.

It’s to devise ways to make you miserable.

Or it could be because this is fun.

You might feel a little bit silly while we’re doing it,

And possibly somewhat uncomfortable.

Learning is stretching, reaching, taking even a baby-step

Outside of your comfort zone,

And learning is why we’re here.

No, that’s just inconceivable.

I can see you all shaking your heads at me now.

You know we’re doing this because

It

Will

Be

On

The

Test.

That’s the only reason you ever do anything.

If it won’t be on the test, then why are we doing it, anyway?

Because knowledge is intriguing in and of itself.

There is just so much to know in the world,

So much you could come to learn in one lifetime.

Could anyone ever know everything?

It’s not likely, but I’ll die trying to find out.

What is life without curiosity?

A blank canvas that will never be filled.

A question left unanswered for eternity.

A story with no resolution.

So, you ask

Again,

Why are we doing this?