



Summary

"Failure" is a poem written by Amos Russel Wells, an American poet and educator. The poem is a meditation on the nature of failure, and the ways in which it can be both devastating and transformative. The poem was published in 1963.

Short Answer type Question

1. What is failure compared to in the first stanza?
 - Answer: Failure is compared to a rocky hill.
2. What advice does the speaker give for dealing with failure compared to a broken bone?
 - Answer: The speaker advises to set the broken bone, grin, and not groan.
3. What is the comparison made for failure in the third stanza?
 - Answer: Failure is compared to a tangled string.
4. How does the speaker suggest one should navigate failure compared to a swift river?
 - Answer: The speaker suggests swimming against the current and not drifting along.
5. What is the metaphor used to describe failure in the fifth stanza?
 - Answer: Failure is described as a black morass or swamp.

Long Answer Type

1. How does the poem "Failure" use extended metaphors to convey its message of resilience and perseverance?

Answer: The poem employs extended metaphors by comparing failure to various physical obstacles and challenges. For example, failure is likened to a rocky hill, a broken bone, a tangled string, a swift river, and a black morass. Each comparison emphasizes the difficulty and complexity of failure, but also offers a solution or course of action for overcoming it. These metaphors serve to illustrate the multifaceted nature of failure and the diverse ways in which individuals can confront and navigate through setbacks.

2. Discuss the role of optimism and determination in the speaker's approach to failure as depicted in the poem.

Answer: The poem emphasizes the importance of maintaining optimism and determination in the face of failure. Despite the daunting challenges presented by failure, the speaker encourages resilience and perseverance. For instance, when failure is compared to a broken bone, the speaker advises setting it, grinning, and not groaning. This suggests that a positive attitude and resilience are essential for overcoming adversity. Similarly, in other stanzas, the speaker urges the reader to puzzle out knotted things, swim against swift rivers, and scramble out of treacherous pits. These actions require determination and a refusal to succumb to despair, highlighting the transformative power of optimism in the face of failure.

3. Examine how the poem portrays failure as both a hindrance and an opportunity for growth and transformation.

Answer: The poem presents failure as a formidable challenge that can impede progress and cause discomfort. However, it also portrays failure as an opportunity for growth and transformation. For example, failure is compared to a tangled string, suggesting confusion and difficulty. Yet, the speaker encourages the reader to puzzle out the knotted thing, implying that overcoming challenges can lead to greater understanding and personal development. Similarly, failure is likened to a black morass or swamp, symbolizing danger and uncertainty. Despite this, the speaker urges the reader to cross it, highlighting the potential for resilience and growth in the face of adversity. Overall, the poem suggests that while failure may present obstacles, it also offers opportunities for learning, resilience, and personal growth.

4. How does the poem "Failure" challenge conventional notions of success and failure?

Answer: The poem challenges conventional notions of success and failure by reframing failure as an inherent part of the journey towards success. Rather than viewing failure as a final outcome or a sign of inadequacy, the poem presents it as a temporary setback that can be overcome with resilience and determination. By using metaphors to depict failure as various physical obstacles, the poem emphasizes the tangible nature of setbacks and the need to actively navigate through them. This challenges the notion that success is achieved effortlessly and encourages a more nuanced understanding of the process of achievement, which often involves facing and overcoming failure along the way.

5. Discuss how the poem "Failure" conveys a message of hope and optimism despite the challenges presented by failure.

Answer: Despite the daunting nature of failure, the poem conveys a message of hope and optimism by emphasizing the power of resilience and perseverance. Throughout the poem, the speaker offers practical advice for confronting and overcoming failure, such as setting broken bones, swimming against swift rivers, and scrambling out of treacherous pits. These actions require a positive attitude and a refusal to succumb to despair, highlighting the transformative potential of optimism in the face of adversity. Additionally, the poem concludes with the metaphor of transforming failure into a diamond soul, suggesting that setbacks can ultimately lead to personal growth and resilience. Overall, the poem conveys a message of hope and optimism by presenting failure not as an insurmountable obstacle, but as a challenge to be confronted with determination and resilience.