

The Man in the Arena

Presidents aren't typically known for their poetry. I mean, between working with the Supreme Court, meeting with foreign countries, and handling other domestic issues, how would they ever find the time?

Theodore Roosevelt's poem "The Man in the Arena" doesn't really fit into the standard category of poetry because it has no meter or rhyming. It actually doesn't really resemble a poem at all. Nevertheless, many different forms of written word can be considered poetry or poetic. "The Man in the Arena" is actually an excerpt from a famous speech, but it is nonetheless eloquent and full of figurative language and meaning.

The gladiators of Roman times create the main imagery of this excerpt. The poem includes references to an arena and the description of men covered in dust, blood, and sweat. You can imagine the struggle in the ring between the warriors when you read the words on the page.

The speaker the president chose to use was someone much like himself. At the time, Theodore Roosevelt really knew a thing or two about having to get his hands dirty as he tried to better his country. The narrator of the poem is also someone who was not afraid to fail. He enjoys giving motivating advice to help others. This Roman warrior of a president felt that being afraid to succeed only ensured failure -- which is reflected in the piece.

The theme of the piece is pretty straightforward. It says that no credit should be given to people who don't try to do something great. It also implies that it's better to attempt something with all your heart and fail, than to be afraid and not try at all. Basically, it is saying that failure and defeat are acceptable if you have given it your all.

"The Man in the Arena" is about taking risks, daring to do the impossible, chancing defeat, and risking it all. It's an inspiring speech that continues to motivate writers, politicians, athletes, and anyone else who gives their best every day for what they believe in.
