

- Summary of A Concrete Example

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"A Concrete Example" is a humorous poem by Reginald Arkell that describes the garden of Mrs. Jones, the speaker's next-door neighbour. The garden is unique because it is full of stones arranged in a crazy path, a lily pond, a rockery, and a sundial with a strange device. Mrs. Jones plants delicate little plants between the stones, which are so small that they seem insignificant. The speaker is puzzled about how she manages to plant them. When the speaker visits Mrs. Jones's garden and admires a flower, Mrs. Jones reveals that the flower is actually growing beneath the speaker's feet, cleverly hidden among the stones. The poem highlights the blend of nature and design in the garden and the subtle beauty of small plants growing in unexpected places.

Key Elements

- **Theme:** The poem explores the theme of nature's subtle beauty and the harmony between natural elements and human design.
- **Setting:** Mrs. Jones's garden, characterized by stones, a lily pond, a rockery, and a sundial.
- **Tone:** Light-hearted and humorous.
- **Imagery:** Vivid descriptions of the stone pathway, water lilies, fountains, and delicate plants.

Textual Evidence

- "A crazy path, a lily pond, a rockery and, just beyond a sundial with a strange device" – describes the garden's features.
- "They are so delicate and small, they don't mean anything at all" – refers to the tiny plants between the stones.
- "'Where is this lovely thing?' I cried. 'You're standing on it,' she replied." – the humorous revelation about the hidden flower.

Practice Set

Level 1 – Easy

- Who is Mrs. Jones in the poem?
- What are some features of Mrs. Jones's garden?

Level 2 – Moderate

- Explain the significance of the tiny plants in the poem.
- What does the poem suggest about the relationship between nature and human design?

Level 3 – Challenging

- Analyze the tone of the poem and how it contributes to the overall message.
- Discuss the use of imagery in "A Concrete Example" and its effect on the reader.

Answer Key

- **Who is Mrs. Jones in the poem?** Mrs. Jones is the speaker's next-door neighbour who has a unique garden full of stones and delicate plants.
- **What are some features of Mrs. Jones's garden?** The garden has a crazy stone path, a lily pond, a rockery, and a sundial with a strange device.
- **Explain the significance of the tiny plants in the poem.** The tiny plants symbolize nature's subtle beauty and resilience, growing delicately between stones.

- **What does the poem suggest about the relationship between nature and human design?** The poem shows that nature and human design can coexist harmoniously, creating beauty and function together.
- **Analyze the tone of the poem and how it contributes to the overall message.** The light-hearted and humorous tone makes the poem enjoyable and emphasizes the surprise and delight in discovering nature's hidden beauty.
- **Discuss the use of imagery in "A Concrete Example" and its effect on the reader.** The vivid imagery of stones, water lilies, and delicate plants helps the reader visualize the garden and appreciate the blend of natural and man-made elements.

Quick Reference

- **Author:** Reginald Arkell
- **Theme:** Nature's subtle beauty, harmony between nature and design
- **Setting:** Mrs. Jones's garden
- **Tone:** Humorous and light-hearted

Glossary

- **Rockery:** A garden area with rocks and plants arranged decoratively.
- **Sundial:** A device that tells the time by the position of the sun's shadow.
- **Pathway:** A route or track laid down for walking.
- **Lily pond:** A pond where water lilies grow.