

FAIL BETTER Prompt

On. Say on. Be said on. Somehow on. Till nohow on. Said nohow on.

Say for be said. Missaid. From now say for missaid.

Say a body. Where none. No mind. Where none. That at least. A place. Where none. For the body. To be in. Move in. Out of. Back into. No. No out. No back. Only in. Stay in. On in. Still.

All of old. Nothing else ever. Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.

First the body. No. First the place. No. First both. Now either. Now the other. Sick of the either try the other. Sick of it back sick of the either. So on. Somehow on. Till sick of both. Throw up and go. Where neither. Till sick of there. Throw up and back. The body again. Where none. The place again. Where none. Try again. Fail again. Better again. Or better worse. Fail worse again. Still worse again. Till sick for good. Throw up for good. Go for good. Where neither for good. Good and all.

~Samuel Beckett, from "Worstward Ho"

The bolded quote has become a famous mantra of sorts—for entrepreneurs, artists, scientists and more. We're going to use it for a simple writing prompt:

First: what does the bolded phrase mean to you? Think of instances from your life where you have "failed"—what happened? How was "failure" being defined?

Next, thinking of "trial and error" learning models, tell us about a time you "failed" but more importantly, tell us what you learned from that "failure"—what lessons did you take away? How did this failure cause you to rethink or change your ideas/attitude/behavior/etc.? What successes might have come as a result of this "failure"—that is to say, what are some positive things that came from this "failure," things that might not have happened, or have even been possible, without this "failure"?

This prompt can take any form you like—an essay, a story, a poem, a list, etc. Form and style are up to you. Have fun!