FATHER TO SON

– Elizabeth Jennings

Father to son is a poem describing the troubled relationship between a father and his son, in the present times. The poem emphasises the generation-gap between the father and the son and expresses the father’s pain and helplessness in failing to ‘understand’ his child. The father realizes the distance between them and wishes to bridge the gap.

The father remarks that though they have been living in the same house for years now, he does not understand his son. As he knows nothing about his son, he tries to build the same relationship that he enjoyed when his son was a small child.

The father wonders if he is responsible for destroying the basic personality of his son or if his son now belongs to a world to which his father does not. He regrets their talking like strangers and lack of understanding. The son is much like his father in appearance but they do not share common interest or taste.

‘Silence’ is what surrounds their relationship and there is a complete lack of communication between them. The father wishes his son to return to him in his own surroundings rather than see him move out to make his own different world. The father is ready to forgive his son for everything and rebuild the relationship to have a new start.

The father feels that they should live together. He admits that he himself is unable to understand how his grief gives way to anger. They wish to resolve their differences but it seems difficult to live together in harmony.