



Father to Son



Elizabeth Jennings



Elizabeth Jennings

Elizabeth Jennings Poetry

For me, poetry is always a search for order.



Elizabeth Joan Jennings, poet, born July 18 1926; died October 26 2001.

Elizabeth was born in Boston, Lincolnshire, England in July 18, 1926. Her father was a respected Chief Medical Officer who moved the family to Oxford when she was six years old. She later discovered poetry while attending the Oxford high school.

After attending St Anne's College, Oxford, **Elizabeth** became a librarian at Oxford city library. Having more time to focus on her writing she published her first collection of poetry (1953) which drew the attention of Robert Conquest. Mr. Conquest would later publish her work with the likes of famous authors Kingsley Amis, Philip Larkin, Thom Gunn and others in his 1956 "New Lines Anthology", which would later become known as "The Movement".

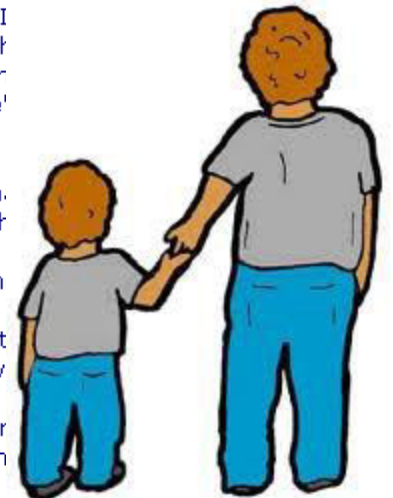
Throughout the 1960's, **Elizabeth** was one of the most popular poets in England. She never married and published a great number of works. **Elizabeth** once said, "I write fast and revise very little".



..... a lamenting father

Father to Son

I do not understand this child
Though we have lived together now
In the same house for years. I know
Nothing of him, so try to build
Up a relationship from how
He was when small. Yet have I
The seed I spent or sown it wh
The land is his and none of mir
We speak like strangers, there'
Of understanding in the air.
This child is built to my design
Yet what he loves I cannot sh.
Silence surrounds us. I would h
Him prodigal, returning to
His father's house, the home h
Rather than see him make and
His world. I would forgive him t
Shaping from sorrow a new lov
Father and son, we both must
On the same globe and the sar
He speaks: I cannot understan
Myself, why anger grows from
We each put out an empty hariu,
Longing for something to forgive.



FATHER TO SON

THE ONGOING CONFLICT BETWEEN FATHER AND SON



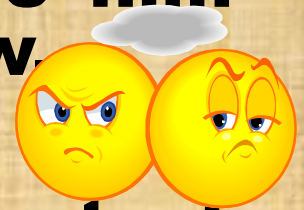
The poem revolves around a conflict between father and son who are in a serious communication gap. Though they live in the same house/globe, they are like strangers to each other. The father broods over this and this forms the centre of the poem.

...Contd





- **He introspects with an agrarian imagery where he feels he has sown his seed in a stranger's land that forbids him from owning it. He admits that he cannot share what his son loves and expects him to come back home like the Prodigal/lost son in the parable of Jesus in the Bible. He is ready to forgive him and develop a new love from sorrow.**



- **But his son feels anger growing out of sorrow and admits the vain efforts of both in understanding each other.**

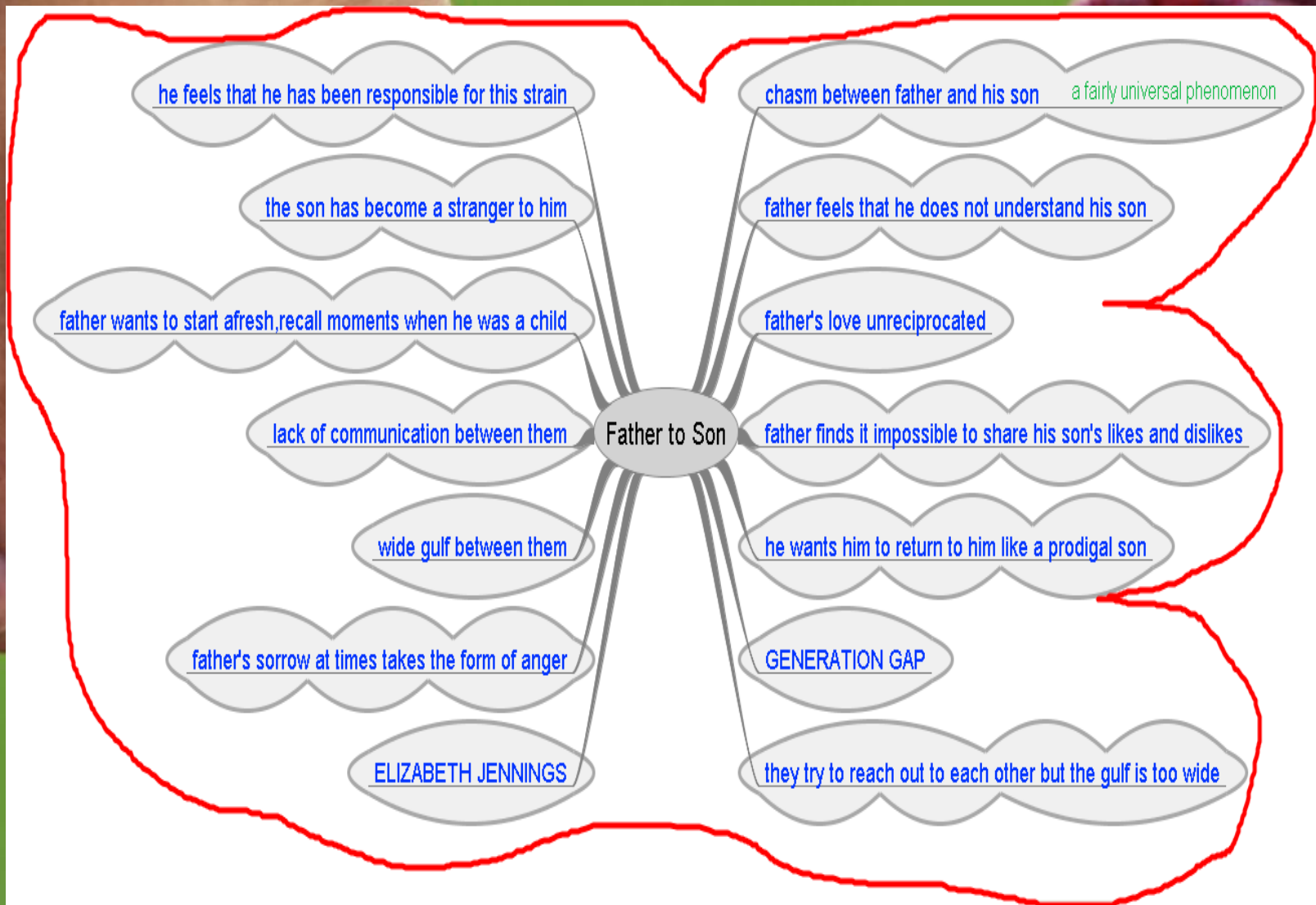
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- A photograph of a middle-aged man with a distressed expression, looking towards a young man whose back is to the camera. The man in the foreground has a furrowed brow and a slightly open mouth, as if in the middle of a difficult conversation. His hand is raised with fingers spread. The young man is wearing a light green shirt. The background is blurred, suggesting an indoor setting.
- No communication between the father and the son.
 - Father wishes the return of his son.
 - Mutual desire to come close.
 - A vacuum exists between them.



LITERARY DEVICES USED IN THE POEM:

- Irony
- Alliteration
- Metaphor





Let Us Revise:

- How is the father's helplessness brought out in the poem?
- Why is the father angry?
- Explain: "The land is his and none of mine".

