

11th Standard- English

Hornbill-Father to Son Summary

This poem highlights a universal problem—the generation gap and the lack of communication between father and son. The poem begins with a father’s lament that he does not understand his child though they have been living together in the same house for so many years. He confesses that he knows nothing of him. In order to understand him, he tries to build up a relationship from what he knows about him when he was small.

However, the thread connecting the two is missing. He seems to have missed the link somewhere. Either he has destroyed this seed or misplaced it somewhere in an area which does not belong to him. The result is loss of affinity and closeness. They speak like strangers and there is no sign of understanding between them. The lack of communication between father and son highlights the growing chasm between the two generations. The father admits that the child’s physical shape is according to his own desires but their interests differ. He cannot share what the son loves.

The lack of common interests results in lack of communication. The son is busy in searching new avenues for himself and moving away to his own world. The father wishes that his son might return to him as the proverbial prodigal son. He would prefer his return to the place he is so familiar with rather than risk adventure to unknown and unfamiliar lands. Like the father in the old story about the prodigal son, he would also forgive his son.

He hoped to build a new love from the sorrow of losing material wealth as a result of his son's ventures.

A realization dawns on the father at last. He and his son must live on the same earth and on the part of land. Now when the son speaks, the father fails to understand it. It seems as if he cannot understand himself as the son is the image of father himself. The grief of separation causes anger. They make no special effort to make up the loss. The hand they extend is empty. However, there is a strong desire for something to help him in forgiving and forgetting the bitterness.

