

## 'From Not Him' by Wopko Jensma

Read 'From Not Him' on page 228 of Seasons Come to Pass. Also, read the short biography of Wopko Jensma provided above the poem.

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1. *he forbids us to dance*
  2. *he always leads the church service*
  3. *he has a stable job*
  4. *he is always on time for work*
  5. *he never gets drunk*
  6. *he has respects for most people*
  7. *everybody respects him*
  8. *we love our daddy*
  9. *but sometimes i notice*
  10. *when a kwela blasts from the radio*
  11. *he wiggles his toes*
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### 1. From whose perspective is this poem written? Who is the poem about?

The poem is written from the speaker's point of view, first person. The speaker is observing his "father figure". The father figure can be presented as a priest or as a mentor. Or the speaker refers to this father as he says "we" in line 8 (his different personalities) "love our daddy". The title of the poem signifies that the poem was written by the one personality that respects his father and not the other personality.

### 2. Explain what the statements in lines 1 -7 suggest about this person.

In line one "he forbids us to dance" this shows that the father position of power as he forbids the child or speaker to dance or in the position to want to tell them what to do. The speaker tries hard to give positive qualities of his father as the tone lacking in emotion. The child or speaker portrays the father as an exemplary person who everyone respects. In line two it can suggest that the father is high or important in the church environment.

### 3. Lines 9-11 introduce a contrasting view about the poem. How is this achieved?

In line eight the speaker uses "but" which indicates a turning point in the direction in the tone and/or description of his father. In line 1-7 the speaker is more specific and writes in short sentences, but in line 8-11 the speaker uses three lines to get his ideas across. In line 8-11 the speaker uses more descriptive words than in line 1-7, changing the tone and giving more emotional context in the last lines.

4. This poem was written and published during apartheid, when people in South Africa were strictly segregated based on their race. If we read 'From Not Him' as a kind of protest poem, what comment do you think the poem is making about South Africa? Your answer should be informed by your analysis of the poem.

Due to the lack of emotion in the first seven lines the speaker does not respect the country and/or government. As the last few lines of the poem are filled with more emotion as the speaker describes something almost contradicting to the first lines it shows his anger, bitterness or negativity towards the country and/or government. The government and/or country is not portrayed as perfect as they would like to be and can be seen a hypocritical.