

# Since u went away

[Literature](#), [Poetry](#)



An Explication of James Weldon Johnson's Poem, Since You Went Away The poem, Since You Went Away (Sence You Went Away), depicts James Weldon Johnson as one who reckoned with the fact that the one person (or object) that someone loves most can make everything seem so beautiful when they are around and so out of order when they are gone. All through the poem, James Weldon Johnson paints images that would, in normal occasions, be used to express an air of contentment in someone's life.

However, he goes on to turn the tables around by giving all these images some faults; for example, there are stars but they no longer shine as bright as they used to, the sun is present but it has lost its light, the sky is blue but part of it is dark (Johnson 1). He gives readers the impression that he had it all in life; but, the loss of a special person or object seemed to fault all that he had. This paper seeks to examine this particular poem so as to understand it better after this brief insight into the general picture that is portrayed.

To begin with, let us examine the title of this poem, Since You Went Away. On hearing it, one quickly gets the impression that the author could be talking about his loss of someone or something that was very dear to him. The phrase " to go away", could, however, be used in different contexts to communicate a variety of meanings. From the Macmillan Dictionary, the phrase go away could be used to mean " to move or travel away from a person or place", or " to leave your home for a period of time, especially for a holiday" or " to stop existing or being noticeable" [" Go away"].

So, it would mean that the dear person who has gone away from the author could have moved to a different place for a while or had stopped existing

(meaning, the person could be deceased). Therefore, this is a sentimental poem where one longs for the person or the object that they loved so dearly. Taking a stanza by stanza approach to see how the poem unfolds, the first stanza paints a picture (or, an image), of there being a deep sense of darkness in the persona's life since the person he speaks about went away. The author uses terms such as the stars not being able to shine so brightly and the sun losing its light.

Being the "light of someone's life", according to Macmillan, is a phrase used to mean "the person that someone loves most" ["Light"]. Indeed, the person or object that left was dearly loved by the speaker. The author even adds that nothing seems to be going right without his special person or object (the meaning of right, according to Macmillan, is "as would be normal" ["Right"]). This image goes a long way in showing the readers how much the departure of this person or object has affected the author's life. Things are no longer going on as they used to normally.

The second stanza only goes on to describe this image in more detail. The persona says that the sky seems only half as blue (Johnson 1). This could be explained by the fact that the persona has already expressed the lack of light in his life. The meaning of sky, according to Macmillan, is "the space above the earth that you see when you look up into the air" ["Sky"]. The author may have used the line, "Seems lak to me de sky ain't half so blue" to mean that the speaker's life is partly covered with darkness (Johnson 1).

He has lost a section of his life since the departed, who provided light for this portion of his life, was gone. From here, the speaker says, "Seems lak to me dat eve'ything wants you" (the meaning of want, according to Macmillan, is "

to feel that you would like someone or something to be in a particular place" [Want]. ) This tells us that the persona and the departed shared a great part of their lives and did most things together; and, now in order to keep doing these things, the speaker feels that the departed ought to be present.

The persona completed this stanza by telling us that he does not know what to do, showing us how much of a dilemma he is in. In the third stanza, the persona emphasizes the point that everything seems to be going wrong. He adds that the days are twice as long and the birds have forgotten their song. This only shows us that the persona probably experiences sleepless nights and awaits for morning with much eagerness - the birds seem to take longer to announce that morning has come by their singing (Johnson 1).

To collaborate this with the idea that everything reminded the persona of the departed, it seems that the persona spends his days and nights thinking about the dear person or object. The fourth stanza begins by collaborating the third stanza where the persona tells us that there is nothing he can do to better his situation; therefore, he only sighs. As we go on to the second and third lines of the fourth stanza, we see that the persona's life is disoriented. He uses the description of his physical functions to show how altered they have become.

His throat, which should be wet, is dry while his eyes, which should not be full of tears, are welling up with tears (Johnson 1). This shows us that the departure of the special person or object has not only affected his external life (as the other three stanzas suggest), but also his very inner being. In conclusion, we will all realize that the persona does not say that all this is

actually happening; he is keen to say that it just "seems like to me" (Johnson 1). All that is happening is in the persona's mind.

This helps us all conclude that the persona is struggling with a psychological problem. Unfortunately, it a problem over which he has absolutely no control whatsoever. All in all, at the end of the poem, we have no idea who or what the persona has lost could be. We just know that this person or object was very dear to the speaker. We also do not know whether or not the departed person or object can back. The poem leaves us with a sense of deep loss and uncertainty.