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Cooperation through Dancing

When I first read the poem “My Papa’s Waltz,” published in 1948 by Theodore Roethke, I thought it was simply about a young boy who is dancing in their kitchen with his dad before bedtime, as his mom looks on disapprovingly. The speaker is a young boy, whose tone stays the same throughout the poem. However, after reading further, I realized Roethke was talking about more than just a dance with a dad. From my research, I learned that Roethke often had a difficult relationship with his dad, who he both feared and loved. In “My Papa’s Waltz,” there are many literary tools being used in the four rhyming stanzas. Roethke creates a vivid picture of a father and son relationship by using word choice, imagery, and a simile.