

Please Don't Take My Air Jordans
By Reg E. Gaines

my air jordans cost a hundred with tax
my suede starters jacket says raiders on the
back
i'm stylin . . . smilin . . . lookin real mean cuz
it ain't about bein heard just bein seen

my leather adidas baseball cap
matches my fake gucci backpack
there's nobody out there looks good as me
but the gear costs money it sure ain't free

and i gots no job no money at all
but it's easy to steal fresh gear from the mall
parents say i shouldn't but i know i should
gots ta do what i can to make sure i look good

and the reason i have to look real fly
well to tell ya the truth man i don't know why
i guess it makes me feel special inside
when i'm wearin fresh gear i don't have to
hide

but i really must get some new gear soon
or my ego will pop like a ten cent balloon
but security's tight at all the shops
everyday there are more and more cops

my crew's laughin at me cuz i'm wearin old
gear
school's almost over summer is near
and i'm sportin torn jordans and need
somethin new
there's only one thing left to do

cut school friday catch the subway downtown
check out my victims hangin around
maybe i'll get lucky and find easy prey
gots to get some new gear there's no other
way

i'm ready and willin i'm packin my gun
this is serious bizness it sure ain't no fun
but i can't have my posse laughin at me
i'll cop somethin dope just wait you'll see

come out a the station west 4th near the park
brothers shootin hoops and someone remarks
HEY HOMES . . . WHERE'D YOU GET THOSE
DEF NIKES
as i said to myself. . . i likes em . . . i likes

they were q-tip white bright and blinded my
eyes
the red emblem of michael looked as if it
could fly
not one spot of dirt the airs were brand new
had my pistol knew just what to do

followed him very closely behind
waited until it was just the right time
made a left turn on houston pulled out my gun
and screamed
GIMME THEM JORDANS . . . and he tried ta run

took off fast but didn't get far
i fired (POW) he fell between two parked cars
he was coughin/cryin/blood dripped on the
street
and i snatched them air jordans off a his feet

while layin there dyin all he could say was
please . . . don't take my air jordans away . . .
you think he'd be worried about stayin alive
as i took off with the jordans there were tears
in his eyes

the very next day i bopped into school
with my brand new air jordans man was i cool
i killed to get them but hey . . . i don't care
cuz now. . . i needs a new jacket to wear



Name: _____

Teacher: _____

Period: _____

Date: _____

“Please Don’t Take My Air Jordans” Questions

1. What is the speaker’s motivation for what he does?
2. Provide some evidence to support what you stated in question 2. Directly quote at least two lines in two places in the poem:
3. What does the speaker see as his only choice?
4. Why does he think it’s his only choice?
5. Do you agree with the speaker? Do you think what he’s wearing is really that important?
6. Do you think that what the speaker did was right to do what he did? Why or why not?
7. How do you feel about the last stanza? What does this stanza reveal about his attitude?
8. Do you think the speaker’s original dilemma was moral or amoral? Why did it become the type of decision that it became?