

KEEPING QUIET

Details of the poet Pablo Neruda

- Name – Pen Name – Pablo Neruda
- Real Name – Neftali Ricardo Reyes Basalto
- Born on July 12, 1904
- Notable works
- A Song of Despair (1924)
- Crepusculario (Book of Twilights) (1923)
- Nuevo Canto de Amor a Stalin Grads" (1943)
- Ardiente Paciencia (Ardent Patience) 1985

Back-drop of the Poem:

In this poem, the Nobel Prize winner poet aims to appeal to the readers to take a little time out of their busy schedules and life for a little introspection and retrospection. The title, "Keeping Quiet", is symbolic to stop all the activities, keeping quiet in the mind, not doing anything, but to question and understand the purpose of the world that humans have created around themselves.

(Line by line explanation of the poem)

***Now we will count to twelve
and we will all keep still.***

Explanation:

- The poet asks everyone to count to twelve, and calm themselves down, and be still after the counting.
- The number twelve represent the hours of the day or the months of a year

***For once on the face of the Earth
let's not speak in any language,
let's stop for one second,
and not move our arms so much.***

Explanation:

- The poet intends to dissolve the boundaries of cultures by prohibiting them from speaking any language.
- He asks them to be still for a while, and not make any movements at all.
- He wants people to let their thoughts flow free without any rush or hurry

***It would be an exotic moment
without rush, without engines,
we would all be together
in a sudden strangeness.***

Explanation:

- The poet says that it would be a different feeling, or a different experience to see the world come to a halt, where everything stops, and everyone comes together in strangeness, a sudden moment of inactivity, which the world has not often seen.

***Fishermen in the cold sea
would not harm whales
and the man gathering salt
would look at his hurt hands.***

Explanation:

- The poet means to bring brotherhood not only amongst humans but also a unity amongst nature and human beings, where the hunter becomes kind to the prey.
- People stop hurting others in this while and try to understand them and reflect on their actions.
- The oppressors would forget to hurt the oppressed, and the oppressed would forget their pains, and these two classes of people would come together in brotherhood.

***Those who prepare green wars,
wars with gas, wars with fire,
victory with no survivors,
would put on clean clothes
and walk about with their
brothers***

in the shade, doing nothing.

Explanation:

- By green wars, here the poet means exploitation of nature for the selfish reasons of human beings.
- By “wars with gas, wars with fire”, he means to speak about the wars that humans had fought against each other in the past and present.
- He puts forward the irony of the wars, where everyone experiences a loss, and the victory becomes a result for the sake of ending the wars.
- Neruda asks them to put on clean clothes, and walk with their enemies like they are their brothers “in the shade”, which means peace and love towards nature, doing no violence by clean clothes he means to say that people should adopt a new perspective.

***If we were not so single-minded
about keeping our lives moving,
and for once could do nothing,
perhaps a huge silence
might interrupt this sadness
of never understanding ourselves
and of threatening ourselves with death.***

Explanation:

- The poet here says that the basic purpose of all human beings is to stay alive, and hence they work towards it.
- This single-minded perspective about survival has led to a mad rush to finish all the targets in life.
- If people slow down and ponder about them, a huge silence would come between the sadness of never being able to recognise or appreciate ourselves our achievement which might interrupt this mad rush and give us happiness.
- He says that death is a threat to us as we fear that we might not be able to accomplish our tasks of survival.

***Perhaps the Earth can teach us
as when everything seems dead
and later proves to be alive.***

Explanation:

- These lines provoke humans to learn from nature, as what is seen dead rejuvenates and lives again.
- The winter covers the tress with cold and it appears as if there is no life left in the environment.
- But as the cycle of climate turns, the environment comes alive.

***Now I'll count up to twelve
and you keep quiet and I will go.***

Explanation:

- Here, the poet tries to maintain the third person viewpoint towards the entire poem and thoughts, and he tries to quietly leave the scene, as he has initiated the thought process and passed the message.
- Maintaining a third-person viewpoint to the entire dilemma, the poet leaves us on a train of thought. Now that he has passed on the message, his work is done and he quietly leaves the scene.

POETIC DEVICES:-

- We will - Alliteration (line 1 and 2)
- Countstill – Antithesis
- Once on – Alliteration
- Arms – Pun Meaning one – hands
 Meaning two – Arms (weapons)
- Withoutwithout – Repetition
- We would – Alliteration.
- Sudden strangeness – Alliteration
- Cold sea – imagery symbolised as the polar region
- His hurt hands – Alliteration
- Wars with – Alliteration
- Wars with – Repetition
- Clean clothes – Alliteration
- deadalive – Antitheses

Drilling of Words and linguistic expressions as supplements to vocabulary:

Still- quiet and motionless-Face- surface-Exotic- unusual and exciting-Rush- hurry-Engines- machines-Strangeness- something unusual or surprising-Cold sea- sea near the polar regions Green wars- wars against nature or environment,Survivors- people left alive after a war,In the shade- under the trees,Confused- misunderstood,Inactivity- not doing anything,Want no truck with-

refuse to deal with, Single-minded- thinking about or focusing only on one thing, Interrupt- stops or disturb, Threatening- endangering, causing trouble or threat

Message by the poet:

"This poem is a lyrical reminder to break the momentum of being busy that fuels "the sadness of never understanding ourselves"

Poet : Pablo Neruda

"No poet breaks the silence with silence, nor slices through its vitalizing, clarifying, and transcendental power, with more piercing elegance than **Pablo Neruda** (July 12, 1904–September 23, 1973) in a poem titled "Keeping Quiet," written in the 1950s and posthumously published in the 1974 bilingual collection *Extravagaria*, translated by Alastair Reid."

Central Idea(Theme)

The poem "Keeping Quiet" by Pablo Neruda is a unique blend of introspection, retrospection, universal fraternity and

KEEPING QUIET

Lesson Contents

- Poet's proposition for converting the miasmic world into holistic one, by momentary maintenance of silence
- Specification of who will be the Participants in the process -
- Code for participants