



**About the Poet :** *Pablo Neruda (1904-1973) is the pen name of Neftali Ricardo Reyes Basoalto who was born in the town of Parral in Chile. Neruda's poems are full of easily understood images which make them no less beautiful. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in the year 1971. In this poem Neruda talks about the necessity of quiet introspection and creating a feeling of mutual understanding among human beings.*

### Before you read

What does the title of the poem suggest to you? What do you think the poem is about?

कविता का शीर्षक आपको क्या संकेत (सुझाव) देता है? आपको विचार से एक संकेत किसके बारे में है?

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

अब हम बारह तक गिननें  
और फिर सब शान्त हो जाएंगे।

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.

एक बार इस पृथ्वी के धरातल पर  
हम किसी भी भाषा में न बोलें,  
आजो हम एक सेकेंड के लिए रुक जाएं,  
और अपनी बांहों को ज्यादा न हिलाएं।

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

यह एक विलक्षण क्षण होगा  
बिना किसी भीड़-भाड़ के, बिना इंजनों के शोर के,  
हम सब इकट्ठा हो जाएंगे  
एक आकस्मिक अजनबीपन में।

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

ठंडे समुद्र में मत्स्यारों  
केवल मछलियों को कोई हानि नहीं पहुँचाएंगे  
और इंसान नमक को इकट्ठा करते हुए  
अपने कटे-फटे हाथों की ओर देखेगा।

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.

जो लोग इन मूर्खतापूर्ण युद्धों का निर्माण करते हैं,  
गैसों से युद्ध, अग्नि के साथ युद्ध करते हैं,  
ऐसी विजय प्राप्त करते हैं जिसमें कोई जीवित न बच पाए,  
वो साफ-स्वच्छ वस्त्र धारण करेंगे  
और अपने बन्धुजों के साथ धूम्रगंध  
छाया में, कुछ भी न करते हुए।



What I want should not be confused  
with total inactivity.  
Life is what it is about;  
I want no truck with death.  
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.

मैं जो चाहता हूँ उसे पूरी तरह से उदासीनता नहीं समझना चाहिए।

जीवन यही है जिसके बारे में यह होता है

(अर्थात् जीवन जीने के लिए है)

मैं मृत्यु के साथ कोई समझौता नहीं करना चाहता,

यदि हम इतनी संकीर्ण मानसिकता वाले न होते

अपने जीवन को गतिशील बनाए रखने के लिए,

एक क्षण के लिए कुछ भी न करते,

शायद एक लम्बी शांति

शायद उस उदासी को बाधित कर दे

जो अपने आपको कभी न समझ पाने और मृत्यु से

भयभीत करने से बनी हुई है।



Perhaps the Earth can teach us  
as when everything seems dead  
and later proves to be alive.  
Now I'll count up to twelve  
and you keep quiet and I will go.

शायद पृथ्वी हमें सिखा सकती है

कि जब प्रत्येक वस्तु मृत प्रतीत होती है

और बाद में जीवित साबित होती है।

अब मैं बारह तक गिनुंगा

और आप सब शांत हो जाना और मैं चलता जाऊँगा।

### WORD MEANINGS

Exotic - introduce to foreign country (विदेशी)। Survivors - one who lives another (अतिजीवी)।  
Interrupt - to obstruct (रोकना)। No truck with - refuse to tolerate (सहन करने से मना करना)।

## EXERCISE

### THINK IT OUT

- 1. What will counting upto twelve and keeping still help us achieve?**  
*Ans.* By doing so, we will do quiet introspection of ours. It will help us to start our activities in a better way. It would also help in creating a feeling of mutual understanding among each other.
- 2. Do you think the poet advocates total inactivity and death?**  
*Ans.* No, I don't think the poet advocates total inactivity and death. He says that what he wants should not be confused with total inactivity. He refused to associate or deal with death. He very well knows that life is what it is about.
- 3. What is the sadness that the poet refers to in the poem?**  
*Ans.* The 'sadness' that the poet refers to in the poem is that human beings become single-minded about keeping their lives moving. They have no understanding and threaten themselves with death.
- 4. What symbol from Nature does the poet invoke to say that there can be life under apparent stillness?**  
*Ans.* The poet invokes the symbol of the earth. He says that in winter, the earth seems dead and still but in spring it proves alive. Thus, the poet proves that there can be life under apparent stillness.
- 5. What does the title of the poem suggest to you? What do you think the poem is about?**  
*Ans.* The title of the poem suggests the necessity and importance of quiet introspection. I think the poem is about understanding between people. It wants to create a feeling of mutual understanding among human beings.

### TRY THIS OUT

Choose a quiet corner and keep still physically and mentally for about five minutes.

Do you feel any change in your state of mind?

- Ans.* Yes, I feel a great change in my mind if I choose a quiet corner and keep still physically and mentally for about five minutes. I come to know about the necessity of quiet introspection. It creates a feeling of mutual understanding among human beings. I develop a feeling of protecting our environment through afforestation and protecting wild life. I also realise the futility of the war.



## Keeping Quiet (Pablo Neruda)

### SUMMARY

"Keeping Quiet" is a beautiful poem written by Pablo Neruda with a hope of natural understanding among human beings. The poet starts his poem by asking entire humanity to count "twelve" and remain motionless. He appeals everyone to remain in peace and claims that this body posture will be very special and different as we have never experienced such a moment before.

He further proclaims the fishermen not to harm the whales, the salt gatherers will not hurt their hands, those who are busy destroying the nature will adopt a new approach towards life. There must not be any war, enemy or death. No one will harm anyone at this particular moment. The poet supports the universal brotherhood of mankind. He appeals for human's self realisation, their goal & achievements. Thus, the poet asks to remain still and count twelve with a hope of positivity.