**KEEPING QUIET by Pablo Neruda**

Reference to context.

1. *“It would be an exotic moment  
   without rush, without engines.  
   we would all be together  
   in sudden strangeness.”*
2. Which moment is referred to here and how will it be?
3. How would we feel at that moment?
4. How will it bring us together?
5. What will we achieve by being together?
6. *“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.”*
7. Why are wars wasteful?
8. Who would put on clean clothes?
9. What does ‘clean clothes’ signify?
10. Who would walk with branches?
11. *“What I want should not be confused  
    with total inactivity.  
    Life is what it is about;  
    I want no truck with death.”*
12. What is it that shouldn’t be confused with total inactivity?
13. What is the life about?
14. Explain ‘no truck with death’.
15. *“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.”*
16. What does the earth teach us?
17. What does the poet aim to achieve by counting up to twelve?
18. What is the significance of ‘keeping quiet’?
19. Who does ‘I’ refer to in the above lines?

Short Answer Questions.

1. What will counting up to twelve and keeping quiet help us achieve?
2. What kind of wars does the poet talk about?
3. What is the difference between total inactivity and Keeping Quiet?
4. Which natural symbol does the poet cite in order prove that there can be life under apparent stillness?

**ANSWER KEY**

Reference to context.

1. a. The moment when everyone is keeping quiet is referred to here. The moment will be exotic.  
   b. We would feel integrated and bound by a common link of peace and quiet.  
   c. it will bring us together by helping us introspect during the time of quiet.  
   d. We will achieve universal brotherhood by being together.
2. a. Wars are wasteful because they destroy the environment and leave no survivors to celebrate the victory.  
   b. Soldiers at the warfront would put on clean clothes.   
   c. Putting on clean clothes signifies wearing clothes that aren’t tarnished with the blood of the enemy. It means to rid yourself of the hate coloured views.  
   d. Enemies will reconcile, get rid of their mutual hate and work with each other as friends.
3. a. ‘It’ is the act of keeping quiet. It shouldn’t be confused with total inactivity as even though we are still on the surface, there are a lot of changes being made underneath through introspection.   
   b. Activity is the essence of life. Life is about being active and engaged in different work.  
   c. The poet doesn’t want his suggestions to be confused with death.
4. a. The earth teaches us how life springs from dead remains and how there is life under apparent stillness.  
   b. The poet wants to achieve peace by counting up to twelve. He wants human being to introspect in a moment of silence.  
   c. Keeping quiet doesn’t mean being idle. It means that human beings should avoid all such activities, which are hurting nature and, in turn, us.  
   d. ‘I’ refers to the poet, Pablo Neruda.

Short Answer Questions.

1. Keeping still will give us time for introspection. It will create an exotic moment of togetherness. It will save the world from disasters and wars and will give us an opportunity to understand each other and save ourselves from death. In this way, we will be in harmony with nature.
2. The poet, Pablo Neruda, talks about wars against nature, wars between different countries using gas and fire and the wars that are so destructive that they don’t leave any survivors to celebrate the victory.
3. The poet doesn’t advocate total inactivity which means death. He simply advises deep introspection and asks us not to indulge in activities that are mindless and might lead to destruction of the ecosystem. That stillness is required in order to understand each other and to maintain the balance that should exist between man and nature.
4. The poet uses the apparent stillness of the winter season to illustrate his suggestions. When the world is covered with snow and all seems dead, there is life brewing underneath, preparing for the upcoming spring when all will be alive again.