
Poem - 3
Keeping Quiet

- BY PABLO NERUDA

GIST OF THE POEM

The poet talks about the need of silence and quiet introspection and the importance of quietude and calmness. He also talks about creating a feeling of mutual understanding among human beings. The poet asks us to keep still and count up to twelve. He also asks us to sit still. For a moment we should not speak any language. We should not move our arms so much. It will be a moment of complete silence without rush or worry. This would be an exotic moment.

Then a sudden strangeness will prevail which we will all enjoy. It will be bliss. The fisherman would not harm the whales on the cold sea. Even the man gathering salt would stop working and look at his hurt hands and reflect at the pain and harm his strenuous task has caused him.

All kinds of wars must be stopped at once. The green wars against the environment, wars with poisonous gases, firearms, must be stopped at once. People who are all the time preparing for wars leaving no survivors behind ought to find time to wear clothes and walk around with their brothers strengthening the message of peace and brotherhood.

At the same time the poet cautions not to confuse stillness with total inactivity. Life is an ongoing process and should not be associated with death. It is to be lived with positive attitude. He does not want us to ruminate over death. But he feels that if for once we do not focus ourselves single-mindedly to keep our lives moving but do some introspection or spend some time in silence doing nothing, we can understand ourselves better and escape from the threatening calls of death.

The earth can teach us a lesson how everything comes to a dead end and comes to life again. In the same manner a quiet introspection can bring all evil thoughts to an end and bring in a new life of peace and tranquility. Now the poet will count up to twelve and they should keep quiet and he will go.