

Keeping Quiet (Summary)

“Keeping Quiet” is a peace poem written by the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda. The poet asks humanity to count numbers from one to twelve - twelve being the number of hours shown in a clock or the number of zodiac signs. He requests everyone not to speak because languages create barriers between people. The moment when everyone stops moving their body will be very special and different as we have never experienced such a moment before. The poet says that in this period of inactivity the fishermen would not 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, The men who are preparing for wars and victory based on deaths of innocent people will join their enemy and stand in unity with them, doing nothing. No one will harm himself or any other person. Everyone will unite and ponder upon his acts and realize the results of his deeds.

The poet clarifies his idea and says further that he does not want that people should stand idle. He wants that there should be no war because he does not want to see trucks laden with dead bodies of the soldiers. He is promoting Universal brotherhood and peace.

The poet says that everyone is working continuously, to achieve one's goals. People are threatened by death and the fear forces them to work endlessly so that they can achieve everything quickly. In this mad rush, they do not realize the repercussions of their acts. He wants us to pause and come out of the mad rush. He wants us to be happy about our achievements and celebrate them. He wants us to overcome the fear of death and to relax for a while. We should know the results of our deeds and celebrate our achievements.

When the people will remain quiet for a while, they will realize the purpose of their lives. Just like all the creations of nature undergo a rebirth with the change of seasons, similarly, keeping quiet will be a rebirth for the human soul. It will give a new meaning to our life. Again, the poet says that he will count till twelve and asks everyone to remain quiet while he leaves.

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