



**THE VILLAGE**  
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL  
"We Nurture Dreams"

**Grade 12**  
**Keeping Quiet**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q. 1. What would be an exotic moment for man?**

**Q. 2. What is the poet trying to convey through the images of 'the fishermen' and 'men gathering salts'?**

**Q. 3. How would man be together in a sudden strangeness?**

**Question 1.**

**Why does Pablo Neruda urge us to keep still?**

**Question 2.**

**Why shouldn't we 'speak in any language' and 'not move our arms so much'?**

**Question 3.**

**Pablo Neruda says: "we would all be together in a sudden strangeness."**

**When can we experience such a moment? Why will that be an exotic moment?**

**Question 4.**

**What does the poet ask the fisherman and the man collecting salt to do?**

**What does he exactly want to convey by this?**

**Question 5.**

**What alternative does Pablo Neruda suggest instead of indulging in wars?**

**Question 6.**

**How does the poet distinguish 'stillness' from 'total inactivity'? Why does Neruda say 'I want no truck with death' ?**

**Question 7.**

**Why does the poet feel that we should not be 'so single-minded'?**

**Question 8.**

**How might a huge silence interrupt the sadness of men?**

**Question 9.**

**‘Under the apparent stillness, there is life’. Justify this statement giving an example from the poem ‘Keeping Quiet’.**

**Question 10.**

**Justify the title ‘Keeping Quiet’.**



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**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q. 1. What would be an exotic moment for man?**

**A) The poet says that if man keeps quiet for sometime, and indulges in introspection, doing away with his progressive attitude, he would experience an exotic moment. In this exotic moment, he will enjoy the bliss of silence away from the chaos of life.**

**Q. 2. What is the poet trying to convey through the images of 'the fishermen' and 'men gathering salts'?**

**A) Through these images the poet is highlighting the harm man is causing to nature and himself in his efforts to add comfort to his life. The fishermen cause harm to the fish and the man gathering salts' hurt their hands in the effort to gather salt.**

**Q. 3. How would man be together in a sudden strangeness?**

**A) Man has become a stranger to his fellow beings owing to his excessive involvement in the chaos of modern living. In the moment of introspection, he will realise the power of mankind and in that sudden strangeness the strength and togetherness of his race.**

**Question 1.**

**Why does Pablo Neruda urge us to keep still?**

**Answer:**

**Stillness is essential for calm reflection and quiet introspection. We hear the voice of conscience in moments of silence. The poet is convinced that most of human ills and miseries are caused by man's hurry and rush to do things. The poet wishes that we may withdraw ourselves from our undesirable actions and keep still for a moment.**

### **Question 2.**

**Why shouldn't we 'speak in any language' and 'not move our arms so much'?**

**Answer:**

**People of the world speak in different languages. They indulge in unnecessary debates and disputes. Most of these arguments lead to destructive wars. The poet urges people to stop speaking in any language. They must speak through their hearts. So far men have moved their arms only to harm others. Therefore, the poet wants that they should not move their arms so much. Let these arms rest for once. Let a feeling of mutual understanding, be created among human beings.**

### **Question 3.**

**Pablo Neruda says: "we would all be together in a sudden strangeness." When can we experience such a moment? Why will that be an exotic moment?**

**Answer:**

**Non-stop activity, unnecessary rush and noise have made our lives unpleasant and full of misery, pain and troubles. We must stop rushing, hurrying, worrying and running. Even the noise of engines and machines must stop for once. Then all of us will enjoy the sudden strangeness of that moment. It will be a unique moment. In that exotic or fascinating moment, we shall feel totally relaxed, physically as well as mentally.**

### **Question 4.**

**What does the poet ask the fisherman and the man collecting salt to do? What does he exactly want to convey by this?**

**Answer:**

**Pablo Neruda is against any kind of violence. He addresses the fishermen and asks them not to harm whales living in the cold seas of the polar regions. He is also against any kind of self-torturing. The man who is gathering salt has hurt his hands. He asks this man to look after himself and take care of his injured hands.**

### **Question 5.**

**What alternative does Pablo Neruda suggest instead of indulging in wars?**

**Answer:**

**Instead of indulging in wars, the people must come out in their best dresses with their brothers. They should go out for a walk under the shady trees and enjoy themselves doing nothing. This would bring the feeling of togetherness among them.**

**Question 6.**

**How does the poet distinguish 'stillness' from 'total inactivity'? Why does Neruda say 'I want no truck with death' ?**

**Answer:**

**Pablo Neruda is in favour of stillness or silence. We remain still and quiet for some time. On the other hand, total inactivity is a permanent suspension of work. It is just like death. 'Stillness' should not be confused with 'total inactivity'. Life goes on as usual. There can't be anything like total inactivity. The poet refuses to associate with death or deal with it.**

**Question 7.**

**Why does the poet feel that we should not be 'so single-minded'?**

**Answer:**

**People are generally single-minded. They want to focus on only one thing. They want to keep their lives going. They are ever busy in their pursuit. The poet wishes that they should not be so much absorbed with always remaining on the move. They must have some respite or rest. They too need peace or silence.**

**Question 8.**

**How might a huge silence interrupt the sadness of men?**

**Answer:**

**Men never understand themselves. Nor are they ever sure of their actions. They face another tragedy. Due to their own actions, they are threatening themselves with death. This realisation makes them helpless and sad. Only a huge (long) silence might interrupt this sadness and do them some good.**

**Question 9.**

**'Under the apparent stillness, there is life'. Justify this statement giving an example from the poem 'Keeping Quiet'.**

**Answer:**

**Neruda does not equate stillness with total inactivity. He believes that under this apparent stillness there is life. We can learn it from the earth. When everything seems dead, the earth still remains alive. The earth is never dead. The life on the earth goes on as usual under the apparent stillness.**

**Question 10.**

**Justify the title 'Keeping Quiet'.**

**Answer:**

**The title of the poem is quite appropriate and logical. It suggests the necessity of quiet introspection. The people of the world are overactive and**

**always on the move. Their activities have caused untold troubles and sufferings. Keeping quiet will do them a lot of good. It will save them from many harmful and violent activities' Moreover, it will help in reflecting over the fate of man and help in creating a feeling of mutual understanding among human beings.**