

**CBSE Class 12 English Core**  
**NCERT Solutions**  
**Poem 3**  
**Keeping Quiet**

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**Page No: 95 Before you Read**

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

**Answer:** The title of the poem suggests the importance of silence.

The poem shows the poet's concern about self-examination and introspection. It is also an appeal to universal harmony advocating tolerance and selflessness. It refers to Nature that never fails to exist and is a testimony to forbearance.

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**Page No: 96 Think it Out**

**1. What will counting up to twelve and keeping still help us achieve?**

**Answer:** Counting up to twelve takes very short time. Keeping still for this brief interval of time gives us a momentary pause to introspect and review the course of action. It is generally observed that most of the ills and troubles of the world are caused by our rush or hurry. The rush refers to competition that leads to all kinds of intolerance. Intolerance gives birth to anger and violence. Keeping quiet and still will give us necessary respite from this rush and ensure peace.

**2. Do you think the poet advocates total inactivity and death?**

**Answer:** No, he does not advocate either total inactivity or death. He makes it quite clear that 'stillness' should not be confused with 'total inactivity' or equated to it. Total inactivity brings death. But Neruda does not wish to get associated with death. His stillness means halting of harmful and hostile human activities.

**3. What is the 'sadness' that the poet refers to in the poem?**

**Answer:** The poet refers to the 'sadness' of failing to understand oneself in the monotonous every day existence. He also finds it sad that the humanity is moving towards its own ruin owing to its unanalyzed actions. He regrets the rush of outdoing others that has made us forget the values of humanity.

**4. What symbol from Nature does the poet invoke to say that there can be life under apparent stillness?**

**Answer:** The poet uses the symbol of the earth to illustrate the point that there can be life under apparent stillness. The earth refers to Nature. Nature never ceases to exist, but is still and quiet, tolerating everything. The earth seems silent, yet nurtures so much life in it.