

## **Keeping Quiet**

Now we will count to twelve and we will all keep still  
for once on the face of the earth, let's not speak in any language;  
let's stop for a second, and not move our arms too much.

It would be an exotic moment without rush, without engines;  
we would all be together in a sudden strangeness.

Fisherman in the cold sea would not harm the whales  
and the man gathering salt would not hurt his hands.

Those who prepare green wars, wars with gas, wars with fire,  
victories with no survivors, would put on clean clothes  
and walk about with their brothers in the shade, doing nothing.

What I want should not be confused with total inactivity.

Life is what it is about...

If we were not so single-minded about keeping our lives moving,  
and for once could do nothing, perhaps a huge silence  
might interrupt this sadness of never understanding ourselves  
and of threatening ourselves with death.

Perhaps the earth can teach us as when everything seems to be dead in winter and later proves  
to be alive. Now I'll count to twelve and you keep quiet and I will go.

**Pablo Neruda**