

# Keeping Quiet

by Pablo Neruda

*Now we will count to twelve  
and we will all keep still.*

*This one time upon the earth,  
let's not speak any language,  
let's stop for one second,  
and not move our arms so much.*

*It would be a delicious moment,  
without hurry, without locomotives,  
all of us would be together  
in a sudden uneasiness.*

*The fishermen in the cold sea  
would do no harm to the whales  
and the peasant gathering salt  
would look at his torn hands.*

*Those who prepare green wars,  
wars of gas, wars of fire,  
victories without survivors,  
would put on clean clothing  
and would walk alongside their brothers  
in the shade, without doing a thing.*

*What I want shouldn't be confused  
with final inactivity:  
life alone is what matters,  
I want nothing to do with death.*

*If we weren't unanimous  
about keeping our lives so much in motion,*

*if we could do nothing for once,  
perhaps a great silence would  
interrupt this sadness,*

*this never understanding ourselves  
and threatening ourselves with death,  
perhaps the earth is teaching us  
when everything seems to be dead  
and then everything is alive.*

*Now I will count to twelve  
and you keep quiet and I'll go.*