

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.*