

A Tiger in the Zoo

Thinking about the Poem (Page 30-31)

Question 1:

Read the poem again, and work in pairs or groups to do the following tasks.

(i) Find the words that describe the movements and actions of the tiger in the cage and in the wild. Arrange them in two columns.

(ii) Find the words that describe the two places, and arrange them in two columns.

Now try to share ideas about how the poet uses words and images to contrast the two situations.

Answer:

(i)

In the Cage	In the Wild
Stalks	Lurking in shadow
Few steps of his cage	Sliding through long grass
Quiet rage	Snarling around houses
Locked in concrete cell	Baring his white fangs, his claws
Stalking the length of his cage	Terrorising the village
Ignoring visitors	
Stares with his brilliant eyes at the brilliant stars	

(ii)

Cage	Wild
Few steps of his cage	Shadow
Locked	Water hole
Concrete cell	Long grass
Behind bars	Plump deer
Visitors	Houses at the jungle's edge
Patrolling cars	Village

Question 2:

Notice the use of a word repeated in lines such as these:

- (i) On pads of velvet quiet,
In his quiet rage.
- (ii) And stares with his brilliant eyes
At the brilliant stars.

What do you think is the effect of this repetition?

Answer:

This repetition used by the poet is a poetic effect in order to increase the intensity of the tiger's rage and his silent helplessness from the concrete cell of the cage. 'Velvet quiet' refers to the velvet pads of the tiger which are quiet and unable to run or leap. The tiger could do nothing but just walk around the limited space of his cage. The use of 'quiet rage' signifies the anger and ferocious nature of the tiger that is building up inside him as he wants to run out freely into the forest and attack a deer. However, the tiger's rage is quiet as he is locked inside the cage and is in a helpless condition. The repetition of 'quiet' has given a lyrical beauty to the poem. Similarly, the use of the term 'brilliant' for both the tiger's eyes and the stars also portrays the majestic nature of these lines. The tiger stares at the brilliant stars with his brilliant eyes as he dreams about how beautiful and pleasing life, he could have led in the forest. Thus, the repetition depicts a wonderful effect and brings magnificence to the poem.

Question 3:

Read the following two poems — one about a tiger and the other about a panther. Then discuss:

Are zoos necessary for the protection or conservation of some species of animals? Are they useful for educating the public? Are there alternatives to zoos?

The Tiger

The tiger behind the bars of his cage growls,
The tiger behind the bars of his cage snarls,
The tiger behind the bars of his cage roars.
Then he thinks.
It would be nice not to be behind bars all
The time
Because they spoil my view
I wish I were wild, not on show.
But if I were wild, hunters might shoot me,
But if I were wild, food might poison me,
But if I were wild, water might drown me.
Then he stops thinking
And...
The tiger behind the bars of his cage growls,
The tiger behind the bars of his cage snarls,
The tiger behind the bars of his cage roars.

PETER NIBLETT

The Panther

His vision, from the constantly passing bars,
has grown so weary that it cannot hold
anything else. It seems to him there are
a thousand bars; and behind the bars, no world.

As he paces in cramped circles, over and over,
the movement of his powerful soft strides
is like a ritual dance around a centre
in which a mighty will stands paralysed.

Only at times, the curtain of the pupils
lifts, quietly. An image enters in,
rushes down through the tensed, arrested muscles,
plunges into the heart and is gone.

RAINER MARIA RILKE

Answer:

A zoo is a place where several species of animals are kept. Some of these animals are of endangered nature and are on the verge of extinction. Likewise, even endangered tigers and lions are not safe in the forest due to poaching that is mainly done by poachers for illegal trading purposes. Therefore, zoos are necessary for the conservation and protection of such species. That way, zoos are a safe haven for animals and the public should be educated about the importance of wild animals and their key role in maintaining the ecological balance in the environment. Some other alternatives to zoos could be wildlife sanctuaries, forest reserves and national parks, etc. Having these options available will not just protect or conserve these species, but also provide these animals with a habitat in the midst of nature.

Question 4:

Take a point of view for or against zoos, or even consider both points of view and write a couple of paragraphs or speak about this topic for a couple of minutes in class.

Answer:

Activity to be done by yourself.