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Think It Out

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

Answer:

Counting up to twelve takes a short time. Staying still for this duration of time provides us with a momentary pause to review and introspect the course of action. It is normally seen that most of the troubles and ills of the world are caused due to our hurry or rush. Violence is often the result of anger. Keeping still and quiet ensures peace and provides us with necessary respite.

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

Answer:

No, he does not advocate death or total inactivity. He says that 'stillness' shouldn't be equated to or confused with 'total inequality' which brings death. Neruda has 'no truck with death'. His stillness indicates the halting of hostile and harmful human activities.

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

Answer:

The sadness of a man is formed by his own thoughts and actions. It is ironic to notice that a person who can understand so much fails to understand his actions and himself. Rash actions are always disastrous and harmful. All disasters are created by man. He is threatening himself with death through his actions and thoughts. This is the disaster of his life.

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

Answer:

The poet wants to show that under apparent stillness, life can still exist. To prove his point, he invokes the earth as a living symbol. The earth will never attain total inactivity. Nature remains at work at all times, even under apparent stillness, and keeps the earth alive. This idea is illustrated beautifully in the following lines – "as when everything seems dead and later proves to be alive".