

talk
to
me!

LET'S TALK EMPOWERMENT. LET'S TALK ENGLISH

Beehive

6: No Men Are Foreign

by

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1. Summary

The poet tells us that we are all one. No person is really strange and no country is different. Our bodies are the same. We all breathe the same air, drink the same water, and walk on the same earth. We all eat the food the earth provides during times of peace, and starve during war time. We all do the same kinds of work. We all understand the common language of love.

Since all people are the same, war is wrong because it is like fighting against ourselves. We should not hate one another because the "other" is truly ourselves. When we go to war, we harm the planet that we all live on.

Do you remember the Beatles? Listen to John Lennon sing 'Imagine'.
Click on the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZJoyUHMmQQ>

Watch this short but beautiful video, 'We Are All Connected'
The earth, the trees, the oceans, the animals, and the billions of human beings living on this planet are all connected in so many ways. We have a responsibility, together, to respect and care for our home, and those that share this beautiful place with us. Live in harmony with nature every day, by protecting its beautiful places and animals for the future. NEVER GO TO WAR!!!

Click on the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9fuu-Cujc0I>

2. Stanza By Stanza Explanation

Remember, no men are strange, no countries foreign
Beneath all uniforms, a single body breathes
Like ours: the land our brothers walk upon
Is earth like this, in which we all shall lie.

No men are strange, and there are really no foreign countries. The difference is only in the clothes we wear. Underneath these clothes, our bodies are the same, we all live on the same earth, and will eventually lie in the same earth when we die.

They, too, aware of sun and air and water,
Are fed by peaceful harvests, by war's long winter starv'd.
Their hands are ours, and in their lines we read
A labour not different from our own

They too live under the same sun, breathe the same air and drink the same water. They feed on the food that is harvested during times of peace. And they also starve during wartime, which is like winter, because nothing can be grown. Their hands are like ours, capable of the same kind of work as we are.

Remember they have eyes like ours that wake
Or sleep, and strength that can be won
By love. In every land is common life
That all can recognised and understand.

Remember that they have eyes like ours, eyes that wake up and go to sleep. And that love is a common language that everybody recognises and understands.

Let us remember, whenever we are told
To hate our brothers, it is ourselves
That we shall dispossess, betray, condemn.
Remember, we who take arms against each other

Remember that when we are told to hate our brothers, we are actually taking away something precious to us. We are betraying and condemning ourselves.

It is the human earth that we defile.
Our hells of fire and dust outrage the innocence
Of air that is everywhere our own,
Remember, no men are foreign, and no countries strange.

Remember, if we go to war against each other, we are polluting the earth that we all share. The hellish fire and the dust raised by war, ruins the purity of the air that we all breathe. So remember, no men are foreign, and no countries are strange.

3. Vocabulary

1. **Foreign** – from another country, different
I want to work for an airline so that I can travel to **foreign** countries.
2. **Harvest** – to collect crops or fruits when they are ready to eat
I am expecting to **harvest** a lot of mangoes from my orchard this year.
3. **Starv'd** – starved, to be without food (poetic usage)
The beggar was **starving** because he had no money to buy food.
4. **Labor** – manual work
Machines are gradually taking over hard **labour** from humans and animals.
5. **Recognise** – accept, identify
I **recognise** that smoking causes cancer.
6. **Dispossess** – to take something, usually property or land, from someone by force
Many people were **dispossessed** during the partition of India and Pakistan.
7. **Betray** – break someone's trust and be disloyal to them, deceive
The spy **betrayed** his country by giving away military secrets to the enemy.
8. **Condemn** – to criticise someone strongly, punish
The criminals were **condemned** to prison for 10 years.
9. **Arms** – weapons
Nobody is allowed to buy **arms** without permission from the Government.

10. **Defile** – to dirty something that is clean
You cannot **defile** a place of worship by talking loudly.
11. **Outrage** – shock
There was **outrage** in the city after the Nirbhaya gang rape.
12. **Innocence** – purity, lack of experience
Children are born with such **innocence**; I wish we could all remain so pure!

4. Questions

1.
 - (i) **“Beneath all uniforms...” What uniforms do you think the poet is speaking about?**
 - (ii) **How does the poet suggest that all people on earth are the same?**
2. **In stanza 1, find five ways in which we all are alike. Pick out the words.**
3. **How many common features can you find in stanza 2? Pick out the words.**
4. **“...whenever we are told to hate our brothers... ”When do you think this happens? Why? Who ‘tells’ us? Should we do as we are told at such times? What does the poet say?**

5. Literary Devices

1. **Rhyme Scheme of the poem:** The entire poem is written in free verse. There is no rhyme scheme in the poem.
2. **Alliteration:** The repetition of a consonant sound in two or more closely placed words is called alliteration. The instances of alliteration in the poem are –

Stanza 1

body, breathes -‘b’ sound is repeated

Stanza 2

war's, winter - 'w' sound is repeated

3. Metaphor**Stanza 1**

Uniform refers to the military of different countries

Stanza 2

War time is compared to the winter season

4. Repetition: It is used in the entire poem.

- (i) 'Remember' is repeated 5 times in this poem.
- (ii) 'Remember, no men are strange, no countries foreign' is repeated in stanza 1 and in stanza 5