

No Men Are Foreign (Poem)

Thinking about the poem : Solutions of Questions on Page Number : 81

Q1 : (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?

Answer :

(i) The poet is probably speaking about the uniforms that the soldiers wear at the time of war. The word "uniform" here could also mean the traditional dresses of a country.

(ii) Throughout the poem, the poet pin points the underlying similarity between all human beings. He says that though people may wear different uniforms, they all are same. Everyone walks upon the same earth, breathes in air, drinks water and is aware of the presence of the sun. Everybody feeds on the harvest produced and gets starved during an extended war. Our hands, the work we do, our eyes and even the fact that our strength can be won by love is similar. Moreover, we all understand and recognise 'life', which is common to all lands. Hence, the poet suggests that nobody is foreign and no country is strange.

Q2 : In stanza 1, find five ways in which we all are alike. Pick out the words.

Answer :

Words which suggest the five ways in which the poet draws similarity between all human beings are as follows:

"no men are strange"; "uniforms"; "single body breathes"; "land our brothers walk upon"; and "earth like this, in which we all shall lie".

Q3 : How many common features can you find in stanza 2? Pick out the words.

Answer :

There are five common features in stanza 2. These features are the sun, the air, the water, peaceful harvest, hands and the labour.

Q4 : "...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?

Answer :

Usually, we are told to hate our brothers (i.e. people belonging to other countries) at the time of war. Political leaders and powerful people, who work for their personal gains, ask us to do so. However, we should not act as a puppet in their hands and do as they say. We should understand that war is futile and analyse the situation before jumping to conclusions. The poet asks us to remember that by hating our brothers, we are dispossessing, betraying and condemning ourselves. When we take arms against each other, we pollute the human earth and violate the purity of the atmosphere.