

A ROADSIDE STAND

ROBERT FROST

Summary

A Roadside Stand is a poem written by American poet Robert Frost to portray the miserable living conditions of marginalised economic classes in the countryside. He puts the owners of road stalls in the spotlight to talk about their plight. They set up their small shops near the roads to sell their small produce of vegetables and fruits. The city people who pass by the roads in luxury cars do not want to spend their money on the frugal products. The poor roadside stall sellers desperately want to get a taste of some city money. But the ones who stop, only ask the price of the products on display, or to back up their car or for directions to their destination or some gas for their vehicles. They consider these shops as a blot on the scenic beauty of the landscape with their artless paint and the signboards with the N and S turned wrong. The poet looks at this behaviour with disgust.

The villagers pay a heavy price as they had to lose their land. The authorities fool them by promising a better life and good sleep. However, they are the ones who sleep peacefully while snatching the peaceful sleep of the villagers whose lives have become miserable. Work during the day and sleep during the night was the norm in ancient times. But this has been reversed as the villagers are not able to sleep at night. The poet is filled with empathy for the innocent rural people who are exploited by the government and other social agencies who make promises for their betterment but when the time comes to deliver their promise, they either forget them or fulfil them keeping in view their own benefits

SHORT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1 What is the 'childish longing' that the poet refers to?

The poet calls the countryside people's wish to elevate their living conditions through access to city money by way of their daily business of selling fruits and vegetables childish. 'Childish' refers to their innocent dream of finding happiness and prosperity in their lives that might never be fulfilled.

2 What is the theme of 'A Roadside Stand'?

The poem talks about oppression and unfavourable luck that become hurdles to the betterment of poor people in the countryside.

3 Why does the poet call the politicians 'greedy good-doers'?

The politicians portray themselves as people who want to work for the betterment of society. However, when it comes to fulfilling the promises of goodwill made to the poor people, these politicians simply turn away, once their self-interest is taken care of. That is why the poet calls them 'greedy good-doers'.

4 Why do the people who run the roadside stand wait for the squeal of brakes so eagerly?

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The "squealing of brakes" means that a car has stopped at their roadside stand. It raises their hopes that the city-folk have stopped there to buy something from their roadside stand and some city money will come into their hands.

5 Explain: "soothe them out of their wits" with reference to the poem The Roadside Stand'.

The powerful men approach the country folk with false promises of providing them with better living conditions and a better life. These innocent and simple rustics repose blind faith in their false claims and feel soothed and satisfied. They fail to see through their crookedness and selfishness.

6 Why does Robert Frost sympathise with the rural poor?

Robert Frost feels an unbearable agony at the plight of the rural poor who are ignored and neglected by the rich politicians. The Government and the party in power are indifferent to their welfare. They fool them by making false promises and then fully exploit them to suit their own selfish interests.

7 What was the plea of the folk who had put up the roadside stand?

The folk who had put up the roadside stand pleaded to the city dwellers to stop and buy their products so as to enable them to earn some extra money for a decent living. They wanted that the rich people who passed from there in their cars should stop there and buy some goods from them. The money that these folks would earn from the rich people would help them to lead a better life.

8 What is the 'childish longing' of the folk who had put up the roadside stand? Why is it 'in vain'?

The 'childish longing', refers to, the dreams and desires of the rural folk who expect that passers by from city will stop there and purchase the products that they have put up for sale. They have a child-like longing for a better life that they hope to get from the money earned from the city dwellers. Their longing is in vain because the city folk are not willing to help them. They ignore the roadside stand and so their 'childish longings' are not likely to be fulfilled.

9 Why didn't the 'polished traffic' stop at the roadside stand?

The 'polished traffic' conveniently overlook the roadside stand and do not stop there as their mind is focussed only on their destination. Moreover, they were critical of the poor decor of the stand, its artless interior and paint.

10. What news in the poem 'A Roadside Stand' is making its round in the village?

The news making its round is about the resettlement of the poor, rural people who will be resettled in the villages, next to the theatre and the store. They would be close to the cities and will not have to worry about themselves any more.

11 Why do people at the roadside stand ask for city money?

The rural people running the roadside stand are poor and deprived, unlike the people of the city. They thus ask for city money so that they too can lead a life of happiness and prosperity. This much-needed city money can give them the life that had been promised to them by the party in power.

12. What does Frost himself feel about the roadside stand?

The poet is distressed to see the interminable wait on the part of the shed owners for their prospective buyers. He is agonised at the 'childish longing in vain' of the people who have put up the roadside stand.

13 State any two characteristics that can be inferred about the people from the countryside in The Roadside Stand.

Ans.

- The people from the countryside wait endlessly for the kindness of the people from the city, as shown by the poet. This demonstrates their patience/persistence.
- They have a desire to live an ideal/a perfect/a happy life like it is shown in the movies, which shows that they are hopeful/optimistic.

EXTRACT BASED QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS

**1 The little old house was out with a little new shed
In front at the edge of the road where the traffic sped,
A roadside stand that too pathetically pled,
It would not be fair to say for a dole of bread,
But for some of the money, the cash, whose flow
supports
The flower of cities from sinking and withering faint.**

1. Where was the new shed put up? What was its purpose?

A little house at one side of the road was extended and a shed was added to it to put up a road stand. It was set up to attract passersby to buy things from them so that they could earn some money.

- 2 Why does the poet use the word 'pathetic'?

By using the word 'pathetic' the poet emphasizes on the fact that the condition of the shed was most humble and that it presented a rather pitiable sight.

- 3 Explain: 'too pathetically pled'

It was as if by putting up the shed the owner was desperately pleading to the rich city folks to stop by at his roadside stand and buy things from there so that they could earn some extra money.

- 4 Who are referred to as 'the flower of cities'?

The flower of the cities' here refers to the rich and wealthy city-dwellers who can afford the best things.

**2 The polished traffic passed with a mind ahead,
Or if ever aside a moment, then out of sorts
At having the landscape marred with the artless paint
Of signs that with N turned wrong and S turned
wrong
Offered for sale wild berries in wooden quarts**

1. What does the poet mean by 'with a mind ahead'?

The phrase 'with a mind ahead' suggests that the people who pass the roadside stand in their polished cars conveniently overlook the roadside stand as their mind is focussed only on their destination.

2. What are N and S signs?

The N and S signs stand for the North and the South direction.

3. Why have these signs turned wrong?

These signs have turned wrong because they have been painted in the wrong way hinting at the illiteracy of the rural folk

**3 Or beauty rest in a beautiful mountain scene,
You have the money, but if you want to be mean,
Why keep your money (this crossly) and go along.
The hurt to the scenery wouldn't be my complaint
So much as the trusting sorrow of what is unsaid**

1. What attraction does the place offer?

The place offers a scenic view of the beautiful mountains

2. What should one do if one wants to be mean?

If one wants to be mean he can keep his money and move on ahead.

3. What does the poet not complain about?

The poet does not complain about the landscape which has been spoilt because of the artless painting done on the building.

4. What do you think is the real worry of the poet?

The poet's real worry is the unexpressed sorrow of the people who have put up the roadside stand.

**4 It is in the news that all these pitiful kin
Are to be bought out and mercifully gathered in
To live in villages, next to the theatre and the store,
Where they won't have to think for themselves
anymore,
While greedy good-doers, beneficent beasts of prey,**

1. Name the poem and the poet.

The poem is 'A Roadside Stand' by Robert Frost.

2. Explain why politicians have been called 'greedy good-doers' and 'beneficent beasts of prey'?

The crooked politicians, greedy people are pretending to be good, who only pose as beneficiaries. These powerful men are actually beasts of prey in the guise of beneficiaries who ruthlessly exploit the common people.

3. Why won't these poor people have to think for themselves any more?

These poor people are now in the hands of the so-called ‘merciful beneficiaries’, who will actually do them more harm than any good, so they will not have to think about themselves any more

**5 Sometimes I feel myself I can hardly bear
The thought of so much childish longing in vain,
The sadness that lurks near the open window there,
That waits all day in almost open prayer
For the squeal of brakes, the sound of a stopping car,
Of all the thousand selfish cars that pass.**

1. What cannot be borne by the poet and why?

The poet cannot bear the thought of how these country folks are lured with false promises which are never going to be fulfilled because he feels genuinely sad about so much deprivation to these innocent people.

2. What is the ‘childish longing’?

Like children, these country folk have many unfulfilled wishes and desires. So they keep their shop windows open expecting some prospective customers to turn up so that some good fortune can fall into their share.

3. Why the longing has been termed as ‘vain’?

The longing has been termed as ‘vain’ because it will never be fulfilled.

4. Why do the people driving in the cars stop sometimes?

The people driving in the car stop sometimes either to just enquire about the way to their destination or to ask for a gallon of gas if they ran short of it or to back up their car or to enquire about the price of the products displayed.

**6 Sometimes I feel myself I can hardly bear
The thought of so much childish longing in vain,
The sadness that lurks near the open window there,**

1. Why is the longing called childish?

Like children, these rural folk nurture many unfulfilled dreams and desires which might never be satisfied. They crave in vain like children waiting for prospective buyers but their wishes are not to be fulfilled.

2. Where is the window?

The window is a part of their roadside stand where they wait expectantly.

3. Why does sadness lurk there?

Sadness lurks there because no car halts there to buy anything from their roadside stand and the rural folk are unable to earn some extra money.

**7 The sadness that lurks near the open window there,
That waits all day in almost open prayer
For the squeal of brakes, the sound of a stopping car,
Of all the thousand selfish cars that pass,
Just one to inquire a farmer's prices are.**

1. Which open window is referred to? Why does sadness lurk there?

The open window is that of the roadside stand where they wait expectantly for a car to stop by. Sadness lurks there because no city dweller halts there and thus the hopes of the country folk are belied as no customer stops there.

2. What does the farmer pray for?

The farmer prays that the city folks apply the brakes of the car and halt at their roadside stand to buy something from there.

3. Is the farmer's prayer ever granted? How do you know?

The farmers' prayers are not granted. The poet tells us that even if city folk do stop at the roadside stand it is only to enquire about the prices of the goods, to ask direction to their destination, to back up the car or ask for gas for their car.

**8 The polished traffic passed with a mind ahead,
Or if ever aside a moment, then out of sorts
At having the landscape marred with the artless paint
Of signs that with N turned wrong and S turned wrong...**

- i. **The polished traffic in particular refers to the**

- a. sophisticated city dwellers in their vehicles.
- b. shiny cars that the poet sees on the road.
- c. extremely affluent people living in the neighborhood.
- d. civilized manner in which traffic is coordinated.

Ans. Option (a)

- ii. 'The urban and educated people have their minds ahead.' Choose the option suggesting the correct meaning behind this line.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. The people are well-educated and knowledgeable about the condition of the poor. | 2. The people are concentrating on the order to drive safely. |
| 3. The people are preoccupied only with the thoughts of their lives and nothing else. | 4. The people are focused on their goal |

- a. Option 1
 - b. Option 2
 - c. Option 3
 - d. Option 4
- Ans. Option (c)

iii. What do the urban rich feel about the S and N signs that have been painted wrong?

- a. Tolerant
 - b. Amused
 - c. Sympathetic
 - d. Annoyed
- Ans. Option (d)

iv. The passers-by find the sign artless but the landscape _____.

- a. animated
 - b. aesthetic
 - c. amusing
 - d. ancient
- Ans. Option (d)

a. Based on your reading of the poem, choose the option that correctly lays out the difference between the city dwellers and the countryside people.

City dwellers	Countryside people
1. • unaware • casual	• greedy • concerned
2. • indifferent • grumpy	• suffering • disappointed
3. • short-tempered • materialistic	• optimistic • savage
4. • stressed • dismissing	• protesting • objectionable

- a. Option 1
- b. Option 2
- c. Option 3
- d. Option 4

Ans. Option (b)

*vi I wonder how I should like you to come to me
And offer to put me gently out of my pain."*

The tone of the poem by the end, as depicted by the given lines is

- a. frustrated.**
- b. commanding.**
- c. Introspective.**
- d. emotional.**

Ans. Option (d)

9 No, in country money, the country scale of gain,
The requisite lift of spirit has never been found,
Or so the voice of the country seems to complain,
I can't help owning the great relief it would be
To put these people at one stroke out of their pain.
And then next day as I come back into the sane,
I wonder how I should like you to come to me
And offer to put me gently out of my pain.

- i. The 'country money' contextually here refers to
- money kept aside for rural development.
 - wealth accumulated by the whole country.
 - meager income earned by the countryside people.
 - riches collected by the ancestral farmers over time.

Ans. Option (c)

ii. Pick the option that mentions elements justifying the monetary aspect as the '*requisite lift of spirit*'.

- confidence
 - ego
 - self-esteem
 - status
 - fame
- 1, 2, 4
 - 2, 4, 5
 - 1, 3, 4
 - 1, 3, 5

Ans. Option (d)

iii Choose the correct option with respect to the two statements given below.

- Statement 1: The poet is agitated and depressed.
 - Statement 2: The poet realizes the futility of his thought about giving up.
- Statement 1 can be inferred but Statement 2 cannot be inferred.
 - Statement 1 cannot be inferred but Statement 2 can be inferred.
 - Statement 1 and Statement 2 can be inferred.
 - Statement 1 and Statement 2 cannot be inferred.

Ans. Option (b)

Iv Choose the option that correctly paraphrases the given lines from the above extract. "I can't help owning the great relief it would be To put these people at one stroke out of their pain."

- The poet wants to kill the impoverished people.
- The poet feels that death is better than living such a miserable life.
- The poet wants to eliminate poverty from society.
- The poet states that it is important that these people become rich.

Ans. Option (b)

**10 It is in the news that all these pitiful kin
Are to be bought out and mercifully gathered in
To live in villages, next to the theatre and the store,
Where they won't have to think for themselves anymore,
While greedy good-doers, beneficent beasts of prey,
Swarm over their lives enforcing benefits
That are calculated to soothe them out of their wits,
And by teaching them how to sleep they sleep all day,
Destroy their sleeping at night the ancient way.**

i. What is the tone of the poet in the above lines?

1. aggressive
2. tolerant
3. sarcastic
4. resigned
5. sentimental

Choose the most appropriate option.

- a. Only (1)
- b. (2) and (3)
- c. (1), (4), and (5)
- d. Only (3)

Ans. Option (d)

ii. Identify the phrase from the extract, that suggests the following:

No one bothers to take 'their' consent before pushing the promise of a better life, their way.

Ans. Enforcing benefits

iii. What quality of the villagers can be inferred through these lines?

- a. gullible
- b. futuristic
- c. hypocritical
- d. Ambitious

Ans. Option (a)

iv. Complete the following analogy correctly. Do NOT repeat from the used example.

greedy good doers: alliteration :: _____: Oxymoron

Ans. beneficent beasts of prey

v. On the basis of the extract, choose the correct option with reference to (1) and (2) given below.

1. The city dwellers make promises for the betterment of the villagers.
2. The city dwellers have ulterior motives.

- a. (1) is true but (2) is false.
- b. (2) is true but (1) is false.
- c. (2) is the reason for (1).
- d. Both (1) and (2) cannot be inferred from the extract.

Ans. Option (c)

vi. Fill the blank with an appropriate word, with reference to the extract.

‘... *calculated to soothe them out of their wits*’ implies that ‘them’ are being _____.

Ans. manipulated/fooled/duped.

vii) Pick the option with the slogan that is likely to be used by a person selling at the roadside stand.

Slogan 1	Slogan 2	Slogan 3	Slogan 4
Men and women inequality; a road to dignity.	By the people and for the people.	I see humans but no humanity.	Corruption, corruption That’s all I pray!

- a. Slogan 1
- b. Slogan 2
- c. Slogan 3
- d. Slogan 4

Ans. Option (c)

viii) Choose the option that correctly categorizes the given literary devices as per the given analogy.
selfish cars : _____ :: _____ : metaphor

- a. personification; polished traffic
- b. transferred epithet; trusting sorrow
- c. metaphor; pitiful kin
- d. oxymoron; greedy good-doers

Ans. Option (b)

ix Choose the option that correctly mentions the complaints made by the poet through this poem.

- 1. The rich people drive carelessly on the road hitting the poor people on purpose.
 - 2. The city-dwellers remain highly insensitive and offhand towards the poor people.
 - 3. The urban people are unable to understand the struggles of the impoverished people.
 - 4. The goods are not being bought by wealthy people even at discounted rates.
- a. 1, 2
 - b. 2, 3
 - c. 3, 4
 - d. 1, 4

Ans. Option (b)

**11 The little old house was out with a little new shed,
In front at the edge of the road where the traffic sped,
A roadside stand that too pathetically pled..**

i. Why had a new shed been put up?

Ans. To make a living out of the city money.

ii. Which traffic is referred to here?

Ans. The cars and other vehicles speeding towards the city.

iii. Why is the stand's existence said to be 'pathetic'?

Ans. Because their expectations are never fulfilled as the rich men are not considerate of them/ Because their very purpose is destroyed as city money does not flow into their hands.

iv. '*That too pathetically pled*'. Name the figure of speech used.

Ans. Personification

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1 Though money holds the same value everywhere, the poet draws a distinction between city money and country money. Elaborate.

Ans. In the poem "A Roadside Stand," the poet Robert Frost draws a distinction between city money and country money. He implies that while money may have the same value everywhere, the way it is earned and spent in the city differs from how it is earned and spent in the country. In the city, money is acquired through complex and impersonal transactions, whereas in the country, it is earned through hard work and personal connections. The poet suggests that city money lacks the genuine human touch and simplicity found in country money.

2 The roadside stand and the moving cars are a contrast around which the entire poem is woven. Expound.

Ans. In the poem "A Roadside Stand," the contrast between the roadside stand and the moving cars is a central theme. The stand represents a fixed, simple, and traditional way of life in the countryside, while the moving cars symbolize fast-paced, modern, and impersonal city life. This stark difference highlights the clash between old and new, tradition and progress, and reflects the poet's contemplation on the changing times and the loss of rural simplicity.

3 Comment on the significance of the symbol of the car in the poem.

Ans. The symbol of the car in the poem "A Roadside Stand" represents urbanization, modernity, and progress. It contrasts with the traditional rural life depicted by the roadside stand, emphasizing the impact of urbanization on the simplicity and authenticity of the countryside.

4 Does the poet reach a conclusive solution for the issue at hand? Discuss.

Ans. No, the poet Robert Frost does not provide a conclusive solution for the issue at hand in the poem "A Roadside Stand." Instead, he presents the contrasting images of the roadside stand and the moving cars to provoke contemplation on the impact of urbanization and modernization on traditional rural life. The poem does not offer a definitive answer but encourages readers to reflect on the complexities of societal changes.

5 *'The cry of not having money to do anything except carry on the business of making bangles, not even enough to eat, rings in every home.'*

(The Lost Spring)

'...far from the city we make our roadside stand and ask for some city money to feel in hand'.

(A Roadside Stand)

Create a conversation between a bangle maker and the owner of a roadside stand with reference to the above extracts.

You may begin the conversation like this:

Owner of a roadside stand: Your bangles are pretty. Tell me about your experience in this business.

Ans. Owner of a roadside stand: Your bangles are pretty. Tell me about your experience in this business.

Bangle Maker: Thank you. Well, it's a tough life being a bangle maker in Firozabad. We have been doing this work for generations, but it doesn't pay enough to meet our needs. We barely have enough to eat, let alone educate our children. The lack of education keeps us trapped in this business, and we can't find better job opportunities. It's like a vicious cycle of poverty that never ends.

Owner of a roadside stand: I can understand. We, too, struggle to make ends meet here at the roadside stand. We wait all day for city people to stop by and buy something from us. We depend on their city money to get by.

Bangle Maker: It's sad to know that we all face similar financial difficulties. In Firozabad, we fear the police, bureaucrats, and sahu-kars who exploit us and prevent us from forming a collective to demand our rights.

Owner of a roadside stand: Here, in the countryside, people are misled by promises from the government and other agencies pretending to help us. But in reality, our situation remains the same.

Bangle Maker: It seems like there's no easy solution for either of us to improve our financial positions. Poverty is a constant shadow, and it's disheartening.

Owner of a roadside stand: Yes, it is. We can only hope for a better future, but for now, we must carry on with our struggles.

Bangle Maker: Indeed, we must keep going. Thank you for listening and understanding our plight.

Owner of a roadside stand: Thank you for sharing your story. Let's continue to support each other as we try to survive in this harsh world.

6) Imagine a car stops and actually buys from the roadside stand.

Keeping in mind the reaction you think the peasants would have, write a diary entry as the farmer describing not only your immediate experience but also your after-thoughts on being able to earn "city money".

You may begin this way:

Wednesday, 2nd March XX 9 PM

We had an unexpectedly good day today!...

Ans. Wednesday, 2nd March XX 9 PM

We had an unexpectedly good day today! As the scorching sun slowly set behind the horizon, a miracle occurred - a car actually stopped at our humble roadside stand. My heart pounded with excitement and nervousness as a well-dressed city dweller stepped out and looked at our handmade crafts.

To my amazement, the city visitor admired our work and purchased a few items. The joy in our hearts was immeasurable, and a sense of pride swelled within me. We exchanged a few words, and I noticed how different our lives were - the way we dressed, the way we spoke, and the worlds we came from - so contrasting, yet connected at that moment.

As the car drove away, leaving behind a trail of dust, I couldn't help but reflect on the significance of this encounter. Earning "city money" felt like a triumph, a glimmer of hope amidst the endless struggle for survival. With a hint of optimism, I thought about the possibilities this could bring - perhaps a chance to provide better opportunities for my children, to break free from the chains of poverty that bound our family for generations.

But even in my excitement, a part of me feared that this could be a fleeting moment of relief. The reality of our harsh lives gnawed at me, reminding me of the uncertainty that still lay ahead. Would the car return tomorrow? Would others like them to come by? Or was this just a temporary stroke of luck in an otherwise unchanging landscape?

As I lay under the starry sky, I felt gratitude mixed with apprehension. The taste of "city money" was sweet, but I knew that true change required more than occasional encounters. It demanded resilience, unity, and a collective effort to break free from the cycle of poverty. Until then, I would cherish this day as a glimmer of hope and a reminder that amidst the struggles, there still exists a chance for a better tomorrow.

7) Imagine a child from the farmer's family migrates to the city for their education. As the child, write back to your family telling them whether you would or would not want to turn into a city person.

Use the context of the poem "A Roadside Stand" in mind to pen down this letter.

You may begin this way:

12, Davidson County

23 January 'XX

Dear mom

I have been thinking about the roadside stall lately. Now that I find myself surrounded by city-people all the time, I think.....

With love

Jennifer

Ans.

12, Davidson County

23 January 'XX

Dear mom,

I have been thinking about the roadside stall lately. Now that I find myself surrounded by city people all the time, I think about our little stand in the countryside. The memories of our hard work, the simplicity of life, and the genuine connections we shared with our customers flood my mind.

Living in the city has its perks, and I cherish the opportunity to pursue education and explore new horizons. But amidst the bustling streets and fast-paced life, I can't help but miss the tranquility of our village and the warmth of our community.

In the city, I witness both the wonders of progress and the harsh realities of urban life. The city people are always on the move, seemingly chasing something elusive. While the glittering lights and towering buildings are captivating, I see the struggles and loneliness that often lurk behind the facade.

As I navigate through this new world, I yearn for the simplicity and authenticity of our roadside stand. The city money may offer comforts and possibilities, but it cannot replace the value of genuine human connections and the sense of belonging we had back home.

For now, I am grateful for the chance to learn and grow in the city, but my heart will always carry a piece of our countryside. I hope to return someday, not as a city person, but as someone who brings back the knowledge and experiences to uplift our community and preserve the essence of our humble roadside stand.

With love,
Jennifer

8) Imagine you are Pablo Neruda, the poet of *Keeping Quiet*.

What advice might you offer to Robert Frost, the poet of *A Roadside Stand*, in the context of his conflicted emotions, as displayed in the given lines

*The requisite lift of spirit has never been found,
Or so the voice of the country seems to complain,
I can't help owning the great relief it would be
To put these people at one stroke out of their pain.
Pen down your advice, in a letter to Frost.*

You may begin this way:

Dear Robert

I recently read your poem, "A Roadside Stand," and...

You may end this way:

I hope this advice is helpful to you. Please let me know if there is anything else I can do to support you.

Warmly,

Pablo Neruda

Ans. Dear Robert

I recently read your poem, "A Roadside Stand," and was struck by the conflicting emotions that you expressed towards the end. I understand that it can be difficult to make decisions when we are overwhelmed by our emotions.

In my own experience, I have found that taking a moment of stillness and reflection can be very helpful in gaining a deeper understanding of the situation and connecting with our own humanity and that of others. This is the message that I try to convey in my poem, "Keeping Quiet."

I would advise you to take a moment to be still and contemplative before making any decisions about the fate of the people at the roadside stand. By quieting your mind and being present in the moment, you may be able to understand their struggles and pain objectively and gain a new perspective about your own place in the world too. I also feel that by breaking from your routine and taking a moment of stillness and reflection, you might gain a deeper understanding of the situation and make a more functional decision.

I believe that this moment of reflection could help you to see beyond your conflicting emotions. We are all human, after all, and before connecting with others, and resolving their issues, we must try to connect with our own selves to advice from a place of balance and calm.

I hope this advice is helpful to you. Please let me know if there is anything else I can do to support you.

Warmly

Pablo Neruda

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1 "You see us here, day in and day out, by the side of the road, offering our wares. We are the ones who provide you with fresh produce, hand-crafted goods, and a glimpse into a way of life that is far removed from your own. But what do you really know about us? Do you ever stop to think about the lives we lead, the struggles we face, the dreams we hold?." Write a letter from a farmer to a city dweller keeping in view the theme of the poem "A Roadside Stand" offers.

2 Have you ever stopped at a roadside stand? What have you observed?