

CBSE Class 10 English Language and Literature
NCERT Solutions
First Flight Poem 3
A Tiger in the Zoo

Page No: 30 Thinking about the Poem

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.

Ans: (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 a concrete cell	Baring his white fangs, his claws
Stalking the length of his cage	Terrorising the village
Ignoring visitors	
Stares at the brilliant stars	

(ii)

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

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?

Ans: This repetition is a poetic device used by the poet in order to increase the intensity of the tiger's rage and his helpless silence. 'Velvet quiet' refers to the quiet, velvet paws of the tiger, which cannot run or leap. They can only walk around the limited space in the cage. The use of 'quiet rage' symbolizes the anger and ferocity that is building up inside the tiger as it wants to run out into the forest and attack a deer. But the rage is quiet because it cannot come out in the open as it is in the cage. This double use of 'quiet' has brought immense beauty to the poem. Similarly, the use of 'brilliant' for the tiger's eyes as well as the stars also brings out the magnificence of these lines. The tiger has dream of being free in its 'brilliant' eyes. It sees the stars (that have also been described as brilliant) with the same eyes. It stares at the brilliant stars with its brilliant eyes thinking about how beautiful its life could be in the forest. The repetitiveness of these words gives a wonderful effect to the poem.

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 center
in which a mighty will stands paralyzed.
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

Ans: The Zoo is very necessary place for some animals to stay safe as they could be hunted down, poisoned by some wild food, or could drown in water in the forest. They also create awareness among the public about the nature of animals and make people friendly with animals. However, a zoo is not the correct substitute for a forest. In a zoo, an animal would feel caged, bound, and not free to roam about in the wild. It is for this reason that wildlife sanctuaries and national parks have been instituted in order to conserve several endangered species. These places provide protection as well as natural surroundings to these species. They can roam about freely in their habitat and are safe too. The public can visit these parks and get educated about the animals and their lifestyles. The parks and sanctuaries are run

using a strict set of rules, the most prominent being the ban on hunting. Since the animals are in the open, visitors are not allowed to feed them and would not misbehave or try to play with them as they are under strict guidance. Such incidents have been recorded in zoos where people irritate and tease the animals. Hence, a wild life sanctuary is a good alternative for animals to be safe as well as to live freely in their natural surroundings.