

**First Flight Poetry Chapter 3 A Tiger in the Zoo**

Thinking about the Poem (Page 30-31)

**Question 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.

Answer:

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

(ii)

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

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**Question 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?**

Answer: The poet uses repetition as a lyrical device to amplify the tiger's fury and his silent helplessness inside the concrete cell of the cage. The term "velvet calm" describes the tiger's velvet pads, which are motionless and incapable of running or leaping. The tiger had no choice but to wander aimlessly across the small confines of his cage. The phrase "silent rage" refers to the tiger's growing rage and fierce temperament as he prepares to run loose into the forest and attack a deer. The tiger's wrath is muted, though, because he is confined to the cage and is defenseless. The poem has a lyrical beauty thanks to the repeated use of the word "silent." The adjective "bright" is frequently used to describe the stars, which further emphasizes the majestic quality of these lines. The tiger imagines the lovely and enjoyable life he would have spent in the forest as he gazes at the magnificent stars with his brilliant eyes. As a result, the repetition creates a fantastic impact and elevates the poetry.

**Question 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,

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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

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is like a ritual dance around a centre  
in which a mighty will stands paralysed.  
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**

Answer: A zoo is a place where various animal species are housed. Some of these creatures are at risk of going extinct and are considered endangered. Additionally, due to poaching, which is primarily carried out by poachers for illicit trade, even tigers and lions that are on the verge of extinction are not safe in the forest. In order to preserve and maintain these species, zoos are required. In this way, zoos serve as a haven for animals, and it is important to educate the public about the value of wild animals and the crucial part they play in preserving the ecological balance of the environment. National parks, forest preserves, and wildlife sanctuaries are a few additional alternatives to zoos.

**Question 4: Take a point of view for or against zoos, or even consider both points of view and write a couple of paragraphs or speak about this topic for a couple of minutes in class.**

Answer: Students will do this activity by themselves.