

NO MEN ARE FOREIGN

JAMES KIRKUP



ABOUT THE POET

- ▶ **James** Falconer **Kirkup**, FRSL (23 April 1918 – 10 May 2009), born **James** Harold **Kirkup**, was an English poet, translator and travel writer. He wrote over 30 books, including autobiographies, novels and plays. ... He became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 1962.



THEME

- ▶ The theme of the poem 'No Men are Foreign' is the oneness of mankind underneath the superficial differences of colour, race, nationality and faith. It presupposes that all human beings are brothers and sisters. Those who spread hatred and wage wars are criminals and deserve to be condemned. The poem also deals with the supremacy of love, accord, friendship among all the people in this world.

TITLE

- ▶ *'No Men are Foreign' is an apt title for the poem, because it deals with the theme of universal brotherhood. Human beings all over the world have identical behaviour and the differences based on the manmade concepts of caste, creed, barriers etc. are unnatural. Every human being responds positively to love. Hence no human being is a foreigner or an outsider.*

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.

- ▶ The poem begins by asking us to constantly remind ourselves that no human being is strange or different. Beneath the superficial surface of our bodies, all human beings have hearts, minds and souls. The same earth is present everywhere. And the people of all countries will be buried in to the same earth one day.

**They too aware of sun, 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.**

- ▶ Each and every land like each and every human being is nourished by sun, air and water. People may have adapted to different conditions and situations, but we are all one in the spirit. We are all able to sustain our lives during peace time and would starve to death if wars disrupt on earth. Moreover, they have hands like us and all do the same work. Thus we are the same and the entire world is our home.

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

- ▶ We all wake up each new day with hope and then take rest. It is only love that can really keep humanity going. With love and looking at each human being with kindness, we can truly create a paradise-like situation on earth.



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

- ▶ The poet then reminds us that by trying to hate and even exploit others and their lands, we will be betraying and condemning ourselves. The poet reminds us that taking 'arms against each other,' that is war, is in fact futile. The poet ends with the refrain 'no men are foreign, and no countries strange.' We need to constantly remember that we are all one in the spirit and encourage mutual respect, discussion and dialogue for a truly humane, just and sustainable world in the future.

- ▶ **RHYME SCHEME**

The poem doesn't have any specific rhyme scheme. It is written in free verse