

POETRY

Emotions and Themes



First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist.
Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a trade unionist.
Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.

—Martin Niemöller

Poetic Device: Repetition

"Baa Baa Black Sheep"

Baa Baa Black Sheep

Baa, baa, black sheep,

Have you any wool?

Yes sir, yes sir,

Three bags full.

One for the master,

One for the dame,

And one for the little boy

Who lives down the lane.



Can you think of other nursery rhymes that use repetition?

A yellow sticky note is pinned to the right side of the slide with a red pushpin. The note contains text about Martin Niemöller's line.

Martin Niemöller's line
"First They Came..." is
an example of
repetition.

Assignment

Write a poem inspired by the style of Martin Niemöller's "First they came for..."

This poem should reflect how silence in the face of injustice can lead to personal consequences when no one speaks out.

- Choose a social, political, or environmental issue that is important to you.
- Start each stanza with "Then they came for..." and describe groups or individuals affected by this issue.
- End with a powerful statement about the consequences of staying silent or indifferent.
- Use repetition, similar to Niemöller's structure, to create a rhythm that emphasizes the growing impact of the issue.