

A THING OF BEAUTY

About the poet

John Keats (1795-1821) was a British Romantic poet. Although trained to be a surgeon, Keats decided to devote himself wholly to poetry. Keats' secret, his power to sway and delight the readers, lies primarily in his gift for perceiving the world and living his moods and aspirations in terms of language. The following is an excerpt from his poem 'Endymion; A Poetic Romance'. The poem is based on a Greek legend, in which Endymion, a beautiful young shepherd and poet who lived on Mount Latmos, had a vision of Cynthia, the Moon Goddess. The enchanted youth resolved to seek her out and so wandered away through the forest and down under the sea.

Before you read

What pleasure does a beautiful thing give us? Are beautiful things worth treasuring?

A thing of beauty is a joy forever

Its loveliness increases, it will never

Pass into nothingness; but will keep

A bower quiet for us, and a sleep

Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.

Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing

A flowery band to bind us to the earth,

Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth

Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,

Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways

Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,

Some shape of beauty moves away the pall

From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,

Trees old, and young, sprouting a shady boon.

For simple sheep; and such are daffodils

With the green world they live in; and clear rills

That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season; the mid forest brake,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms;
And such too is the grandeur of the dooms
We have imagined for the mighty dead;
All lovely tales that we have heard or read;
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

LISTEN TO THE POEM

Click on the link below to hear the poem being read. Pay attention to the pronunciation of various words.

[Class 12 | A Thing of Beauty | John Keats | Audiobook](#)

BEAUTY IN NATURE BRING JOY AND CALMNESS



SUCH THE SUN, THE MOON, TREES OLD, AND YOUNG, SPROUTING A SHADY BOON



SUMMARY

The poem **“A Thing of Beauty”** (from *Endymion*) celebrates the idea that beauty has a lasting and inspiring effect on human life.

Keats says that anything beautiful—whether it’s nature (like the sun, moon, trees, or flowers) or noble human actions—brings joy that never fades. Such beauty acts as a soothing force, helping people deal with sadness, despair, and hardship.

The poet explains that even though life is full of difficulties, negativity, and suffering, beautiful things create a “bower” (a shelter) that protects us from these troubles. They inspire hope, peace, and positivity.

He also describes various examples of beauty in nature, such as clear streams, forests, and blooming flowers, as well as the inspiring stories of great heroes. All these are like a continuous source of happiness.

In the end, Keats compares beauty to an endless fountain from heaven that pours joy into our lives, emphasizing that its impact is forever and life-enriching.

In short:

The poem conveys that beauty—found in nature, art, and human deeds—has a permanent, healing influence that fills our lives with joy and comfort and helps us tolerate life’s struggles.

VOCABULARY

1. **Bower** : a pleasant,shady place under trees, climbing plants, or leafy branches in a garden or woods. They stopped for a picnic under a shady **bower** of roses.
2. **Morrow** : is a literary and archaic (old) term that means 'the next day' or 'tomorrow'. They agreed to meet on the **morrow**.
3. **Wreathing** : refers to the act of twisting, interweaving, or forming something into a ring. The women were sitting in a circle **wreathing** beautiful flowers.
4. **Spite** : the desire to hurt or annoy somebody. He stole her letters out of **spite**.
5. **Despondence** : a state of feeling downcast, disheartened, and utterly lacking in hope. After months of unsuccessful job interviews, she sank into a deep **despondence**.
6. **Dearth** : a lack of something; not enough of something. There is a **dearth** of young people in the village.
7. **Pall** : dark covering (like a cloud of smoke) that creates a gloomy atmosphere. His rude behaviour cast a **pall** over the party.
8. **Sprouting** : to begin to grow. The seeds are **sprouting** .
9. **Boon** : a thing that is very helpful and that you are grateful for. High-speed internet has been a **boon** to remote workers.
10. **Covert** : done secretly. The intelligence agency conducted a **covert** operation to uncover the smuggling ring.
11. **Grandeur** : the quality of being large and impressive. The **grandeur** of the Himalayas is breathtaking.
12. **Dooms** : an avoidable, terrible fate, death or destruction. The Bible talks about the **doomsday** in detail.
13. **Immortal** : living or lasting forever. Nobody is **immortal** - we all have to die someday .
14. **Brink** : the edge of a steep place or the point where a new, or an important or dangerous situation is about to begin . The scientists are on the **brink** of a major medical breakthrough .

QUESTIONS FROM TEXTBOOK SOLVED

Q1. List the things of beauty mentioned in the poem.

Q2. List the things that cause suffering and pain.

Q3. What does the line, 'Therefore are we wreathing a flowery band to bind us to earth' suggest to you?

Q4. What makes human beings love life in spite of troubles and sufferings?

Q5. Why is 'grandeur' associated with the 'mighty dead'?

Q6. Do we experience things of beauty only for short moments or do they make a lasting impression on us?

Q7, What image does the poet use to describe the beautiful bounty of the earth?

EXTRA QUESTIONS

Q1. Read the following extracts and answer the questions :

*A thing of beauty is a joy forever
Its loveliness increases, it will never
Pass into nothingness; but will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.*

(i) Which of the following themes is best represented in the given extract?

- (A) Beauty provides security and peace.
- (B) Beauty lies in possession of expensive things.
- (C) Beauty is synonymous with power and riches.
- (D) Beauty lies in our rich heritage and palaces and temples.

(ii) Complete the following sentence appropriately.

A thing of beauty never passes into nothingness because it is _____.

(iii) 'Quiet bower' means a pleasant, shady, quiet place under trees or in the woods. This creates a sense of _____.

(iv) State whether the given statement is True or False with reference to the extract.
The quality of a thing ensures that its beauty lasts forever.

v) The use of the word 'health' in the extract suggests that beautiful things will give us a happier and more wholesome life. It creates a powerful image of _____.

- (A) rejuvenation
- (B) attachment
- (C) long life
- (D) eternity

Q2. Read the following extracts and answer the questions :

*Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways
Made for our searching :*

(i) Which of the following themes is best represented in the given extract?

- (A) The beautiful things in nature
- (B) Things that cause unhappiness
- (C) The immortality of human beings
- (D) The early morning fragrance of flowers

(ii) State whether the given statement is True or False, with reference to the extract.
The paths we follow are often not worthy of our noble nature.

(iii) Complete the following sentence appropriately :

'We wreath for ourselves a flowery band every morrow because _____.

(iv) The use of the word 'dearth' creates a powerful image of _____.

(v) The lack of punctuation at the end of line 3 in the extract is to :

- (A) creates a sense of continuity and flow that connects it with the fourth line.
- (B) encourage the reader to understand grammar.
- (C) forewarn the reader of gloomy days ahead.
- (D) keep us connected to this earth.

Q3. How is a thing of beauty a joy forever?

Q4. How does a thing of beauty provide us shelter and comfort?

Q5. What are the things that cause miseries, sorrows and sufferings to man ?

Q6. What is the message for the theme) of the poem 'A Thing of Beauty'?

LITERARY DEVICES

. Alliteration

Repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words.

- *"**b**eauty is a **b**alm"*
Creates a soothing musical effect and emphasizes key ideas.

2. Metaphor

A direct comparison without using "like" or "as."

- *"A thing of beauty is a joy forever"* → beauty is compared to a lasting source of happiness.
- *"bower quiet for us"* → a peaceful shelter representing comfort.

3. Simile

Comparison using "like" or "as."

- *"cooling covert like a sleeping infant"*
Highlights calmness and innocence.

4. Imagery

Descriptive language that appeals to the senses.

- Visual: *"flowery band," "clear rills," "daffodils"*
- Sensory: gives readers vivid pictures of nature's beauty.

5. Personification

Giving human qualities to non-human things.

- *“the sun, the moon... are shaping a sleep”*
Nature is presented as actively caring for humans.

6. Enjambment

Continuation of a sentence without pause beyond a line.

- Many lines flow into the next without punctuation, creating a natural, fluid rhythm.

7. Anaphora

Repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of lines.

- *“Some shape... / Some shape...”*
Builds emphasis on the variety of beautiful things.

8. Symbolism

Objects represent deeper meanings.

- **“Flowery band”** → connection of humans to beauty/nature
- **“Endless fountain”** → eternal source of joy and inspiration

9. Hyperbole

Exaggeration for emphasis.

- *“joy forever”*
Stresses the everlasting impact of beauty.

10. Assonance

Repetition of vowel sounds.

- Adds musical quality and harmony to the poem.