

# A thing of beauty

## class 12

Prepared by- *Nootan Krishna Pandey*

*Lecturer in English*

*G.I.C Gaurihat*

## About the poet-

John Keats was born in London in the year 1795 and died in Rome in 1821 at the young age of 25 due to illness. He is a romantic poet and his poetry is characterized by sensual imagery in his most popular work which is a series of odes (a lyrical poem which is meant for a particular subject). Today, his poems are one of the most sought after creations in English literature. The above given poetry is an excerpt from his poem, 'Endymion : A poetic Romance'(1818), considered to be an epic poem.

# Explanation

“A thing of beauty is a joy forever Its loveliness increases, it will never Pass into nothingness;”  
The poet says that beauty is eternal, it is forever, never fades away but instead, our love for it enhances with the passage of time. As the saying ‘beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder’, it is the perception of one who looks at something that how he finds it. So, here the poet’s view about beauty is that it never ends.

“but will keep A bower quiet for us, and a sleep Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.”

Beauty acts like the soothing, relaxing shade of the trees which helps all the creatures to sleep peacefully and enjoy good health.

“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.”

Here, he says that at every moment our desire to live further is because we encircle ourselves with our love towards these beautiful things. As we get wrapped up in the beautiful flowery band, we get a reason to live further. Without beauty, the Earth, is full of gloom and sadness. There is cruelty all around and lack of good natured people. It is this

“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 ‘Against 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.”

The poet names some of the things whose beauty is eternal- the Sun, moon, greenery like trees whose shade is a boon for creatures like the sheep to rest under it, various flowers like daffodil, rivers full of clear waters which cool everyone in the summers, the thick bushes of forest fern where beautiful, fragrant musk roses bloom. Other than these things of nature, the poet says that the stories of brave men who sacrificed their lives are also beautiful. All these beautiful things are like nectar for us, God’s gift to us which help us to live further on this Earth.

# Word Meaning

- ⊠ Bower- a pleasant shady place under trees or climbing plants.
- ⊠ Morrow – the following day
- ⊠ Wreathing – covering or to encircle.
- ⊠ Spite - desire to offend or annoy someone.
- ⊠ Despondence – disheartened, hopeless.
- ⊠ Noble – of superior quality, having high moral principles
- ⊠ Pall – a cloud, here, a dark cloud of gloom and sadness.
- ⊠ Spirits – the soul where lie our emotions and character.
- ⊠ Sprouting – to develop suddenly in large numbers.
- ⊠ Shady boon – a shade which is helpful to someone.
- ⊠ Rills – streams of running water.
- ⊠ Covert – not openly known or displayed.
- ⊠ Grandeur – so as to impress.
- ⊠ Dooms – last day of existence.
- ⊠ Immortal – living forever.
  
- ⊠ Heaven's brink – the door of God's home.



# MESSAGE OF THE POEM

In the poem "A Thing of Beauty", John Keats conveys to us that an object of beauty gives us a perennial joy. He has in mind beautiful objects of nature. He admits that there is much sorrow and gloom in human life. People suffer from many other things in life. But despite this sorrow and suffering, there is a ray of hope for them. If they go to nature, they can remove the pall of gloom in their lives by observing the beautiful objects in nature. The poet refers to the sun and moon that shine brilliantly in the sky. He refers to old and young trees which provide us shade in summer. Daffodils spread beauty and charm in the green parks. Small streams of clear water flow in the area of thick bushes and trees and bring a cooling effect in summer. Roses spread fragrance everywhere. In fact, beautiful objects of nature are plenty on the earth and they are a source of joy forever.

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# Questions and answers-

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

It means that we get attached to the beautiful things around us and weave a pretty band which binds us with our life, it becomes the reason for us to live.

**2** What makes human beings love life in spite of troubles and sufferings?

The eternal beauty of various things gives us happiness and relaxation. It makes us love life inspite of life's troubles and sufferings.

**3** Why is 'grandeur' associated with the 'mighty dead'?

The noble deeds of the brave men who sacrificed their lives are an inspiration for us forever. The beautiful legacy of their bravery is the grandeur



which is associated with the mighty dead.

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

According to the poet, a thing of beauty is forever. Even if we see it for a few moments, it has a lasting impression on us and its beautiful memory stays with us forever. It inspires us to live, despite the ruthlessness of life.

**5** What image does the poet use to describe the beautiful bounty of the earth?

The beautiful bounty of the earth is described by 'endless fountain of immortal drink' which signifies that God bestows us with all his beautiful creations which help us live despite the sad, gloomy aspects of life.