

# POEM – 3

## 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.



### Enrich your vocabulary

Bower	:	A pleasant shady place under trees
Morrow	:	The following day
Wreathing	:	Surround / encircle.
Spite	:	Desire to offend / annoy someone.
Despondence	:	Disheartened/ hopeless/ depressed
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/ never dying
Heaven's brink	:	The door of God's home.
Gloomy	:	Sad
Boon	:	Blessing
Brake	:	A process to slow down
Grandeur	:	High rank or socially important
Mighty	:	Enormous
Brink	:	Edge

### GIST OF THE POEM

- Based on a Greek legend, the poem is an excerpt from 'Endymion'
- According to the poet a beautiful thing is a constant source of joy. Its loveliness never ends but increases forever.
- It gives sweet dreams and peaceful sleep, fine breathing and good health. Hence, a boon to all.
- We are surrounded by jealousy and disappointment.
- The ignoble qualities make our life gloomy and miserable resulting in suffering and pain.
- A thing of beauty removes the gloom (sadness) from our spirits.
- The sight of nature such as- clear streams of water, daffodils (a flower), musk-rose and forest thickets -make our lives sweet, soothing and happy
- This beauty is also experienced in grandeur of the dooms that we have imagined for our powerful dead forefathers - Doom-refers to the ruins of the great deeds of the legendary heroes.

- Lovelier than lovely tales, the incessant beauty of nature is pouring unto us like an immortal drink through an endless fountain from the heaven meaning that nature's beauty acts as an elixir for humanity.

### **THEME OF THE POEM**

The theme of the poem rests in the opening line of the poem. A beautiful object is treasured in our mind because it provides us eternal and everlasting joy. This happiness never fades into nothingness but multiplies manifold whenever it flashes on our mind.

### **CENTRAL IDEA OF THE POEM**

Beauty is a heavenly tonic/drink – an endless fountain of nectar. This beauty comes in different forms– a tale, a poem, a play, a lovely object of nature or the heavenly bodies. It soothes our spirits and gives us good health, sound sleep and mental peace. It removes sadness from our lives and gives an everlasting joy.

### **MESSAGE OF THE POEM**

Keats, an ardent lover of nature, in his poem refers to the powers of nature. He urges mankind to realize these powers and make his life enjoyable and worth living. He tells us how a thing of beauty provides perennial joy to us.

### **TITLE OF THE POEM**

The poem 'A thing of beauty' is written by John Keats. It is the poem where poet described about the importance of life and the beauty of life. It is like a romantic poetry. The poet picked up here the beauty of life like if we don't do anything wrong life will be colourful. We can get limitless happiness in life. Corruption, greed, murder these are not the quality of life. John Keats is a famous poet. He has perfected this poem by its title, figure of speech, inner meanings, rhythmic words.

**Answer the following questions in 30 to 40 words.**

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

**Ans.** John Keats is a great Romantic poet. He creates images that soothe our senses. Nature bestows us with things of rare beauty. It keeps the shade of trees ready for us to be comfortable and peaceful in it. Beautiful things also provide peace and security so that we can enjoy sound sleep. We are able to enjoy sweet dreams, good health because of them.

**2. What spreads the pall of despondence over our dark spirits? How is it removed?**

**Ans.** Man makes his life miserable and full of suffering because of his own actions. The pall of despondence is the sadness that is a result of one's own actions. A thing of beauty works wonders for man and removes the cover of gloom from his dampened spirits.

**3. How do the 'daffodils' and 'clear rills' enrich our environment?**

**Ans.** Daffodils are lovely white flowers that bloom in green surroundings. The "clear rills" or clear streams of water create cooling comfort or passage for themselves as they pass through the thick bushes and ward away the heat of the sun.

**4. What is the 'grandeur of the dooms' and 'endless fountain of immortal drink'?**

**Ans.** The "grandeur of the dooms" is a reference to our mighty and dead ancestors who have created beautiful objects for us. On the other hand, the "endless fountain" is the everlasting joy provided to us by the bounties of nature in the form of nectar pouring on us from heaven.

**5. What makes human beings love life in spite of all troubles and sufferings?**

**Ans.** Human beings love life because nature is the best healer and brings beauty and joy to our life. The memory of beautiful experiences helps us to bear our sorrows.

**6. How is a thing of beauty a joy forever?**

**Ans.** John Keats, a great Romantic poet, considers that a thing of beauty is a joy forever. It is a constant source of happiness and pleasure. Its loveliness increases every moment. A thing of beauty is never devalued. It never passes into nothingness.

**7. How do we bind us to the earth every morning?**

**Ans.** Like all the Romantic poets, Keats stresses the unbreakable bond of man with nature and the earth. The beauties of the earth fascinate man. Every object of nature is a source of beauty and happiness. Every day we are weaving a wreath through these beautiful things. This flowery band binds us with the earth.

**8. Why does Keats associate 'grandeur' with 'the mighty dead'?**

**Ans.** The 'mighty dead ' were people of great power, authority and grandeur. They were wealthy, brave and awesome people. They are dead in their grave but their grandeur and glory survives. It is believed that they will be handsomely rewarded on the dooms day.

**9. How is the pall of despondence moved away from our dark spirits?**

**Ans.** Man makes his life miserable by his own nature and actions. He faces miseries and pains. Amid these miseries and sufferings, a thing of beauty provides the only hope to humanity. A thing of beauty works wonders. It is a joy forever. It removes the pall of despondence and sadness from our 'dark spirits'.

**10. What is the message that John Keats wants to give through 'A thing of Beauty'?**

**Ans.** The very first line of the poem conveys the message of the poet. John Keats was a worshipper of beauty. A thing of beauty is a joy forever. Beauty never fades. Nor is it devalued. It never passes into nothingness. A thing of beauty removes the pall of sadness and sorrows and gives us joy and pleasure.

**11. Mention any two things which, according to Keats, gives us pain and suffering.**

**Ans.** According to Keats man suffers from pain and suffering due to the inhuman dearth of noble natures on earth and due to the inhuman and hostile attitude that makes our days sad and darkness our ways with distress and wretchedness.