



## A THING OF BEAUTY – JOHN KEATS

The theme of the poem, 'A Thing of Beauty' is that one can find beauty anywhere, and when one is grateful for it, it can be used as a means to joy in times of despair.

- John Keats says that beautiful things will never become 'nothing' as they will continue to hold us in their spell and sooth our soul.
- Every beautiful thing is like a band that ties us to this earth as it makes us want to live and enjoy these things of beauty.
- These things of beauty, according to the poet, are the things that give hope to human beings and make them want to live, in spite of all the sorrow, ill-health and unpleasant experiences that we face on earth.
- Some of the beautiful things on this earth that have such an effect on us are the sun, the moon, trees, streams, flowers, forests, beautiful monuments that we have erected for the dead, all the lovely tales that we have heard or read.
- Finally he compares all these beautiful things to an immortal drink or nectar given to us by God.

Thus he states his firm belief in the Divine.

### Solved Questions- Reference to Context

1. *"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."*

#### (a) What proves a blessing for the sheep?

Trees, young and old provide a green covering which proves to be a blessing for the sheep.

#### (b) Where do daffodils bloom?

Daffodils bloom among the green surroundings.

#### (c) What prove to be pleasant shelters in summer?

The small streams with clear water prove to be cooling, pleasant shelters in summer.

#### (d) Name the objects of beauty referred to here.

The sun, the moon, trees, daffodils and streams of clear water are the objects of beauty mentioned here.

#### (e) What according to Keats are the things that cause suffering and pain?

Answer: The poet says that a scarcity of good-natured people or in other words the wicked people outnumber the good people. The source of all our sorrow is either ill-health, hopelessness, dejection and the scarcity of noble people.

**(f) What makes human beings love life in spite of all the suffering?**

Answer: The poet says that the beautiful things on earth lift the pall off our spirits and make life worth living. Each beautiful thing is like a link that forms a chain or wreath that binds us to this earth.

**(g) Why does the poet say ‘mighty dead’?**

Answer: Monuments are erected in memory of people who were mighty or great when they lived. Physically mighty as in mighty warriors or mentally mighty as in great poets, writers or philosophers. Their tombs provide inspiration for the living. The tombs of warriors and martyrs who sacrificed their lives for their people, are also a source of joy.

**Questions for practice – Reference to Context**

1. “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.”

- a. What is the special virtue of a beautiful thing?
- b. How does it bless us?
- c. Explain the expression “A bower quiet for us”.
- d. What do we do everyday?

2. “the mid forest brake,  
rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms;

and such too is the grandeur of the dooms  
who 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.”

- a. What do you mean by ‘brake’? Where does it grow? What makes it all the more beautiful?
- b. What do you mean by ‘the grandeur of the dooms’?
- c. “All lovely tales that we have heard or read” Explain
- d. What is the source of the beauty of nature? What is its effect on us?

3. “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 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”

- a. What removes the pall from our dark spirits?
- b. What sprouts a shady boon for sheep and how?
- c. How do ‘daffodils’ and rills enrich the environment?
- d. What makes the mid-forest brake rich?

### Short answer Questions

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

Ans. The things of beauty are the sun, the moon, old and new trees, daffodils, clear rills, musk roses that bloom among the thick forest ferns.

2. List the things that cause suffering and pain.

Ans. The things are dark phases of our life, adverse circumstances, gloomy days, death of noble people and bad health.

3. What does the line ‘Therefore are we wreathing a flowery band to bind us to earth’ suggest?

Ans. As a result of all the beautiful things around us, every morning we are weaving a flowery wreath to bind us to the beauties of the earth despite all the sadness.

4. What makes human beings love life in spite of all troubles?

Ans. In spite of all the sufferings, a beautiful thing helps us to remove the cover of gloom or darkness from our lives.

5. Why is grandeur associated with the ‘mighty deed’?

Ans. Grandeur is associated with the ‘mighty deed’ because they will always be remembered for their noble and splendid deeds and creations. They have left behind a legacy for us to enjoy. Keats finds beauty in decay and death also.

6. Do we experience things of beauty only for a short time?

Ans. No, these things of beauty have lasting impression on us. It never passes into nothingness. In fact the joy we experience, keeps on increasing with time.

7. What image does the poet use to describe the beautiful bounty of the earth?

Ans. The poet draws out the image of ‘an endless fountain of immortal drink’ that pours on us joys from the brink of heaven. These are the beautiful things in nature or man-made objects that he calls ‘immortal drink’.

8. What is the cause of our ‘gloomy days’ and ‘dark spirits’?

Ans. Our own acts of unkindness, cruelty and malice towards others, make our days sad and gloomy. We also get disappointed due to the lack of human values and nobility around us.

9. 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 are able to enjoy sound sleep. We are able to enjoy sweet dreams, good health because of them.

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

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

11. What is the message of the 'A Thing of Beauty'?

Ans. 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 joy to us forever.

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

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

13. 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. 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.

14. What makes human beings love life in spite of 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.

15. Keats feels that Nature binds us to the Earth. How does he justify this?

Ans. Keats feels that man has a strong bonding with nature. Despite the gloom and suffering, man is connected to the earth. A flowery band ties us to the earth. This band is of flowers and is pleasing and brings joy. There is affinity between things of beauty in nature and mankind.

Additional Short Answer Questions:

1. How do we wreath a flowery band?
2. Why do human beings suffer or what depresses the human soul?
3. What does Keats mean by the 'grandeur of doom'?
4. Mention 4 things of beauty listed in the poem?
5. How do we bind ourselves to the earth every morning?
6. Why and how is 'grandeur' associated with the mighty dead?
7. What is the source of the 'endless fountain' and what is its effect?
8. What is the message of the poem?

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