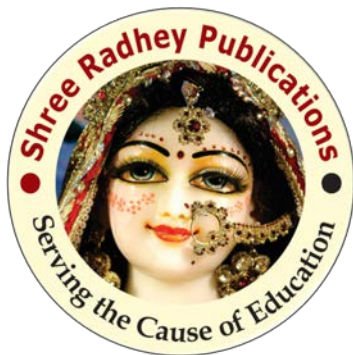


A Thing of Beauty

By John Keats



PPTs from the Divine Book
English XII (Core)

By Subhash Dey

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.





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.



Word Meaning

rills: small streams of clear water	brake: a thick mass of ferns	never pass into nothingness: does not come to an end; constant and eternal
wreathing: to cover/surround/encircle	quiet breathing: a feeling of mental peace and relaxation	morrow: the next day, or tomorrow
bower: a pleasant shady place for peaceful sleep, full of sweet dreams, health and quiet breathing	flowery band: beautiful memories	spite of despondence: discouraged, very sad, and without hope/hopelessness and disappointment
pall: the covering of sadness & hopelessness of our spirits.	gloomy: dark/depressing/sad	some shape of beauty: any manifestation of beauty of nature
inhuman dearth of noble natures: lack of human qualities of head and heart like compassion, love, generosity, etc.	grandeur: glorious/magnificent/splendour	mighty dead: those martyrs who have died bravely for a noble cause/for welfare of mankind <i>or</i> great men/warriors/writers /thinkers <i>or</i> our ancestors who have created beautiful objects for us <i>or</i> people whose achievements made them great and powerful, who inspire us through their sagas of their noble works.
immortal drink: the beauty of nature which is a gift from the Almighty to us	brink: an edge at the top/the point of onset	sprouting: start to grow; spring up



Theme

"Nature is an endless treasure of beauty, and a perpetual source of joy and happiness."

For Keats, the world of beauty was an escape from the dreary and painful life. He escaped from the political and social problems of the world into the realm of imagination. Poetry, for him, existed not as an instrument of social revolt, nor of philosophical doctrine, but for the expression of beauty. Keats believed a beautiful thing is a source of perennial joy and happiness. It leaves an indelible mark on people's mind and provides one with eternal happiness whenever one thinks about it. Joy increases, with the passing time, as one recalls a thing of beauty.



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Message

Beautiful things of nature are like a perennial fountain from where we draw the elixir of life.

Beautiful objects of nature are in plenty on earth. The sun, the moon, big and small trees, the daffodils in the world of green, the clear rills that quenches the thirst of the birds, the blooming musk rose in the forest that spreads its sweet fragrance, the grandeur of the mighty dead and their mighty tale are a perennial source of joy and pleasure which make life worth living. Man is inspired by beautiful things on earth to live happily, in spite of troubles and sufferings. Nature pours on us endless joys that dispels the gloom of pain and sufferings.



Poetic Devices/Figures of Speech

"An endless fountain of immortal drink, Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink."	Metaphor/ Hyperbole/ Imagery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "A bower quiet for us" • "sweet dreams" • "unhealthy and o'ver darkened ways" • "wreathing a flowery band" • "Some shape of beauty moves away the pall From our dark spirits." 	Metaphor
"Cooling covert."	Alliteration/Imagery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon For simple sheep" • "noble natures" • "some shape" • band to bind" 	Alliteration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "But will keep A bower quiet for us, and a sleep Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing" • "shady boons" • "clear rills" 	Imagery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Inhuman dearth" • "Some shape of beauty" 	Personification
"Unhealthy and o'ver darkened ways, Gloomy days"	Transferred Epithet
All the senses are involved – bower, flowery band, the sun, the moon, Trees old and young, green world, muskrose, etc.	Images and Symbols



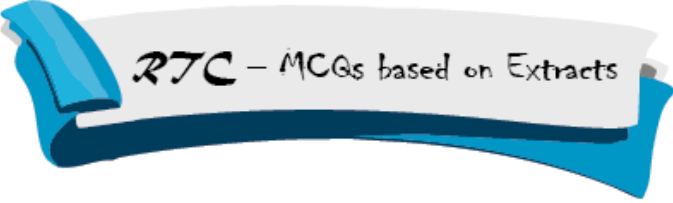
Synopsis

Detailed Summary

Beautiful things given by God are a source of immense joy and pleasure, bring peace and calmness of the mind, uplift our glooming souls, and provide hope, contentment and comfort. A beautiful thing never loses its charm but makes a long standing impression. It is a constant and everlasting source of happiness. We experience the divine feeling on seeing beautiful things. A bower provides a grove which is peaceful, healthy and close to nature, environmentally better; a sleep full of sweet dreams, health and quiet breathing. We are surrounded with the beautiful sights and sounds of nature that bind us to the earth to live happily.

Keats lists the things that cause suffering and pain to human soul. It includes jealousy, disappointment, lack of human qualities of head and heart like compassion, love, generosity, etc., gloomy days, and our unhealthy and miserable ways in which humanity searches for meaning in life. In spite of all his troubles and sufferings, man still loves life and seeks joy from beautiful things of nature. Any manifestation of beauty dispels sadness and darkness from our lives, provides a soothing effect and lifts our spirits.

The sun, the moon, big and small trees that provide shade to all, the daffodils that spread beauty and charm in the world of green, the clear rills that quenches the thirst of the birds, the blooming musk rose in the forest that spreads its sweet fragrance, the grandeur of the mighty dead and their mighty tale are a perennial source of joy and pleasure which make life worth living. Keats considers 'lovely tales' of mighty dead an endless fountain of immortal drink and associates 'grandeur' with the 'mighty dead' because splendour of their deeds inspire us and exert divine influence like a fountain, springing from the edge of heaven.



RTC – MCQs based on Extracts

1. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

*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.*

- i.** The phrase 'immortal drink' refers to:
- (a) Blessings of our ancestors (b) The teachings of nature
(c) A life-giving force (d) The beauty of heaven
- ii.** 'All lovely tales' evoke the feeling of:
- (a) sadness and nostalgia (b) only nostalgia (c) inspiration & pride (d) only pride
- iii.** The rhyme scheme of the above extract is:
- (a) aabb (b) abab (c) aaab (d) abbb
- iv.** What is the poetic device used in the line – "An endless fountain of immortal drink, Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink."?
- (a) Personification (b) Allegory (c) Imagery (d) Synecdoche

2. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

*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*

- i. Keats celebrates trees as a "boon" in the poem A Thing of Beauty. With reference to this statement, which of the following options is not true?
- (a) Trees give us sustenance. (b) Trees provide relief from heat.
(c) Trees help keep the Earth clean. (d) Trees appear beautiful to the eye.
- ii. What is it that helps forget sadness and gloom around us?
- (a) The beauty created by man (b) The beauty created by God
(c) The comfort of materialistic things (d) All of the above
- iii. Which of the following causes suffering and pain to human beings on earth?
- (a) Days that are sad and depressing (b) Lack of humane qualities
(c) Disappointments or dejection (d) All of these
- iv. What is the poetic device used in the line – "Some shape of beauty moves away the pall From our dark spirits."?
- (a) Simile (b) Metaphor (c) Alliteration (d) Personification

Answer Key

1. i. (b) ii. (a) iii. (a) iv. (c)

2. i. (b) ii. (b) iii. (d) iv. (b)

1. Every morning we are:
(a) Passing into nothingness
(b) Searching for a quiet bower
(c) Wreathing a flowery band
(d) Thinking of darkened ways
2. What moves away the pall from our lives?
(a) Strong bonds
(b) Some shape of beauty
(c) Strong friendships
(d) Sprouting shady boon
3. What does a wreathing flowery band bind us to?
(a) Dark spirits
(b) Dreams
(c) The earth
(d) Noble natures
4. What does a thing of beauty provide us?
(a) Beautiful thoughts
(b) Flowery band
(c) Earthy life
(d) Sweet dreams
5. What does 'inhuman dearth of noble natures' refer to?
(a) Despair and despondence of life
(b) Darkened ways
(c) Selfish and self-centred behaviour
(d) Grandeur of the dooms
6. How do the clear rills create a cooling covert?
(a) Against hot season
(b) Against cold season
(c) Against rainy season
(d) Against autumn season
7. What does 'quiet breathing' imply?
(a) Sense of peace and serenity
(b) Sense of aggressiveness
(c) Sense of restlessness
(d) Sense of disappointment
8. Why is 'grandeur' associated with the 'mighty dead'?
(a) Because men are heartless warriors
(b) Because great men are remembered for their deeds
(c) Because they are dead
(d) Because they are able to leave behind a legacy

9. Why is nature called 'an endless fountain'?
- (a) It provides everlasting joy
 - (b) It provides a cooling covert
 - (c) It provides a source of darkened spirits
 - (d) It provides a vision of the green world
10. How are the rills beneficial to mankind?
- (a) Provide beautiful sight
 - (b) Provide elixir of life
 - (c) Provide a cooling covert
 - (d) Provide a shelter during hot season
11. What surpasses the lovely tales?
- (a) Tombs of mighty dead
 - (b) Beauty of nature
 - (c) The endless fountain
 - (d) The great deeds of mighty dead
12. According to Keats what can help one get rid of sadness?
- (a) A beautiful object of nature
 - (b) Refreshing sleep
 - (c) Contentment
 - (d) Beautiful thoughts
13. According to Keats what makes humans love their life ?
- (a) Constant troubles and sufferings
 - (b) Persistent unhealthy state of mind
 - (c) Intermittent phases of joy and happiness
 - (d) Never ending gloomy days
14. According to John Keats, why do our days become gloomy?
- (a) Success in the struggles of life
 - (b) Lack of understanding
 - (c) Hopelessness of life
 - (d) Unhealthy and over darkened ways
15. What does 'the green world' refer to in the poem 'A Thing of Beauty'?
- (a) The mid forest brake
 - (b) Meadows and pastures
 - (c) The musk rose blooms
 - (d) The blooming daffodils
16. What are the things of beauty mentioned in the poem?
- (a) Sun and Moon
 - (b) Young trees and streams
 - (c) Daffodils
 - (d) All of these

17. How is a thing of beauty joy forever?
(a) Because it is beautiful
(c) Because it is joyful
(b) Because it is nature
(d) Because its beauty never ends and leaves a lasting impact
18. What is the message of the poem?
(a) Beauty never fades
(c) Beauty is a joy forever
(b) Beauty lifts spirits high
(d) All of these
19. What does a thing of beauty do for us?
(a) gives hope
(c) removes pain and suffering
(b) gives happiness
(d) All of these
20. What is the 'endless fountain'?
(a) Moving streams
(b) The Sunlight
(c) A thing of beauty
(d) None of these
21. What is the concept of beauty?
(a) Beauty is a pleasure
(c) beauty is nothing
(b) beauty is cause of all happiness
(d) a quality which always gives happiness
22. Whose loveliness will keep on increasing?
(a) of rivers
(b) of mountains
(c) of nature
(d) of all beautiful things
23. Which of the following phrase means 'it is immortal'.
(a) it will never fade
(c) it will never cease
(b) it will never pass into nothingness
(d) it will keep giving happiness for a longer time
24. What is a bower?
(a) a river
(b) a stream
(c) a big tree
(d) a shady tree
25. Why do we need sweet dreams , health and quiet breathing?
(a) to have a healthy mind and body
(c) to have peace and happiness
(b) to have sound sleep
(d) All of these
26. Who are 'mighty dead' in the poem?
(a) dead people
(b) dead relatives
(c) dead plants
(d) great respect worthy ancestors
27. What is the endless fountain of immortal drink?
(a) rivers
(c) flowing streams
(b) sunlight
(d) things of beauty

28. What does 'brink' mean?
 (a) roof top (b) a rocky space (c) mountain top (d) an edge at the top
29. What does 'immortal' mean?
 (a) ever flowing (b) evergreen (c) forever beautiful (d) never ending
30. What image does the poet use to convey that beauty is everlasting?
 (a) a bower quiet for us (b) some shape of beauty
 (c) endless fountain of immortal drink (d) sprouting a shady boon
31. What is the effect of immortal drink?
 (a) no one is thirsty (b) everyone is happy
 (c) immense joy and happiness (d) beauty never moves away
32. What is the meaning of gloomy?
 (a) all unhealthy things (b) dark spirits (c) dull and depressive (d) None of these
33. Why are our spirits referred as 'dark'?
 (a) because of dark clouds (b) because of spirits around
 (c) because of shady trees (d) because of sadness and disappointments
34. What does 'morrow' mean?
 (a) morning time (b) present time (c) noon time (d) the next day
35. Why do we need a flowery band?
 (a) to look beautiful (b) to smile
 (c) to be joyful (d) to have strength and joy in spite of all sadness

Answer Key

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|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|------------|---------|
| 1. (c) | 2. (b) | 3. (c) | 4. (d) | 5. (c) | 6. (a) | 7. (a) | 8. (b)/(d) | 9. (a) |
| 10. (b) | 11. (d) | 12. (a) | 13. (c) | 14. (d) | 15. (b) | 16. (d) | 17. (d) | 18. (d) |
| 19. (d) | 20. (c) | 21. (d) | 22. (d) | 23. (b) | 24. (d) | 25. (d) | 26. (d) | 27. (d) |
| 28. (d) | 29. (d) | 30. (c) | 31. (c) | 32. (c) | 33. (d) | 34. (d) | 35. (d) | |

Q.1 Bring out the theme of love and beauty in the poem "A Thing of Beauty".

Ans. Keats, an advocate of beauty, discusses how the beauty of the nature brings about joy and drives away sorrow. Despite human misery on earth, man is inexplicably tied to this world. Keats also discusses how the legends and stories of martyrs instill inspiration in people. The various things of beauty, love and inspiration that the poet celebrates through his poem contribute to the pleasure; he calls these 'divine influence' that, like a perennial fountain, is bestowed upon man.

Q.2 "A thing of beauty is a joy forever." Explain.

Ans. Beautiful things given by God are a source of immense joy and pleasure, bring peace and calmness of the mind, uplift our glooming souls, and provide hope, contentment and comfort. A beautiful thing never loses its charm but makes a long standing impression. It is a constant and everlasting source of happiness. We experience the divine feeling on seeing beautiful things.

Q.3 Keats feels that nature binds us to the earth. How does he justify this?

Ans. According to Keats, man has strong relationship with nature. Man is bound to the earth despite the gloom and misery on earth. Beauty relieves man of gloom and misery. The beauty that man sees around him, brings him joy and respite; it is a joy forever because of the bond he forges with nature. Keats is a believer in the healing powers of nature. He talks about the different elements of nature that surround man and overwhelm him in their magnificence.

Q.4 What are the things that cause suffering and pain to human beings? (NCERT)

Ans. Keats lists the things that cause suffering and pain to human soul. It includes jealousy, disappointment, lack of human qualities of head and heart like compassion, love, generosity, etc., gloomy days, and our unhealthy and miserable ways in which humanity searches for meaning in life.

Q.5 What does the line, "Therefore we are wreathing a flowery band to bind us to earth" suggest to you? (NCERT)

Ans. In spite of misery and gloom, one is inspired to stay connected to the earth and live happily owing to the delicate and fragile moments of beauty. Keats praises nature and believes that man's connection with nature is essential in contributing to his happiness.

Q.6 What makes human beings love life in spite of troubles and sufferings? (NCERT)

Ans. Keats elaborates through the poem "A Thing of Beauty" that the delicate and fragile moments of beauty help in overcoming one's problems and miseries. In spite of all his troubles and sufferings, man still loves life and seeks joy from beautiful things of nature. 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.

Q.7 List the things of beauty mentioned in the poem. (NCERT)

Ans. The things of beauty that provide happiness to the soul are the sun, the moon, big and small trees that provide shade to all, the daffodils that spread beauty and charm in the world of green, the clear rills that quenches the thirst of the birds, the blooming musk rose in the forest that spreads its sweet fragrance, the grandeur of the mighty dead and their mighty tale.

Q.8 What image does Keats use to describe the beautiful bounty of the earth? (NCERT)

Ans. Keats uses the images of nature to describe the beautiful bounty of the earth. He specifically refers to bower, flowery band, the sun, the moon, trees old and young, shady boon, daffodils, green world, clear rills, cooling covert, mid forest brake, fair musk rose, images of sense and smell. The poet also illustrates a connection with nature – "flowery band to bind us to the earth".

Q.9 Why is 'grandeur' associated with the 'mighty dead'? (NCERT)

Ans. The mighty dead are those martyrs who have died bravely for a noble cause or great writers /thinkers or our ancestors who have created beautiful objects for us. The word 'grandeur' is associated with the 'mighty dead' because they inspire us through their sagas of their noble works. They will always be remembered for their noble and splendid deeds and creations. They have left behind a legacy for us to enjoy.