

**CLASS XII | ENGLISH | FLAMINGO
POEM: A THING OF BEAUTY**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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.

THEME

A thing of beauty is a source of constant joy. Beauty can be found everywhere. It is something that has the ability to transform lives. It also highlights the fact that beauty has a therapeutic quality, i.e. the ability to remove negativity. It can be any object, nature, tales or even noble deeds of our ancestors.

SUMMARY

'A Thing of Beauty- is a poem taken from the poem titled - "Endymion - a poetic romance' written by the famous poet John Keats. The poet says that a beautiful thing is a source of endless joy. It has eternal beauty which never fades away. A beautiful thing is like a shady shelter which gives us a sleep full of sweet dreams, good health and relaxation.

Our attachments to the Earthly things are like a flowery wreath. They are traps which bind us to the materialistic things and keeps us away from eternal happiness. The Earth is full of hatred, greed and negativity. According to the poet, the gloom and sadness caused by this negativity fades away with the positive vibes of the beautiful things that surround us.

The poet lists out some of the beautiful things that surround us. As the saying goes -"Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder. He says that the numerous creations of God like the Sun which gives us energy, the moon's beauty, the trees which give us shade are the natural beauties around us. The various animals like the sheep that surround us make our world lively. The pretty flowers like daffodils make the world green and lively. The flowing streams of water cool and refresh us in the hot summer season. The forests which are full of the pretty musk rose flowers are a beautiful sight to the eye. All these are the things of beauty. Also, the stories of the brave soldiers who laid their lives to protect their people are beautiful and inspiring. These beautiful things are like a fountain of immortality bestowed upon us by God. They inspire us to live on and maintain our faith in goodness.

WORDS/PHRASES AND THEIR CONTEXTUAL MEANINGS

Bower: A shady place under the tree
Morrow: The following day
Wreathing: surround, encircle
Despondence: depressed
Gloomy: sad
Boon: blessing
Rills: a small stream
Brake: a process to slow down
Grandeur: high rank or socially important
Mighty: enormous
Immortal: never dying
Brink: edge

POETIC DEVICES

rhyme scheme: Rhyming Couplets (aabbcc) (forever, never, keep, sleep, breathing)

Alliteration: Use of consonant sound at the start of two words which are close in series (Sleep-Sweet)

Metaphor: bower Quiet (calmness of the bower is compared to the calming effect of a beautiful thing)

Anaphora: Use of same word in two consecutive lines (of noble natures- Of all the unhealthy)

Alliteration: Use of consonant sound at the start of two words which are close in series ('b' in Band Bind, 'n' in Noble nature, 's' in some shape).

Metaphor: wreathing a flowery band (the beautiful things of our life bind us to the earth)

inversion: normal order of words is reversed (Are we wreathing a flowery band)

Alliteration: Use of consonant sound at the start of two words which are close in series ('s' in Sprouting Shady, Simple sheep, 'c' in cooling covert)

Antithesis: opposite words placed together (old and young)

Alliteration: Use of consonant sound at the start of two words which are close in series ('h' in have heard)

Metaphor: Immortal drinks (beautiful objects of nature are forever like a never ending portion of a drink)

Oxymoron: mighty dead

DO-IT-YOURSELF EXERCISE

THINK IT OUT (NCERT) page no. 99

1. List the things of beauty mentioned in the poem.
 2. List the things that cause suffering and pain.
 6. Do we experience things of beauty only for short moments or do they make a lasting impression on us?
(Do it in your notebook)
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QUESTION and ANSWERS (Ncert)

Q3. 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.

Q4. 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 in spite of life's troubles and sufferings.

Q5. 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.

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

The beautiful bounty of the earth is described by an 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.

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS (ADDITIONAL)

Q1. How is a thing of beauty a joy forever?

Ans. A thing of beauty provides everlasting joy. Its beauty never decreases but continues to increase with the passage of time. It never fades away.

Q2. What do you understand by a 'bower'?

Ans. 'Bower' is the shelter under the shade of trees. It provides protection from the harsh rays of the sun.

Q3. What are we doing every day?

Ans. Every morning, we are weaving a flowery wreath which binds us to the beauties of the earth or we are collecting things of beauty that connects us to other things of beauty and keeps us grounded.

Q4. Which evil things do we possess and suffer from?

Ans. Human beings possess qualities of malice, hatred and disappointment. There is a shortage of noble qualities and men continue to be evil and unhealthy.

Q5. 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.

Q6. 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 man to realize that these powers make life enjoyable and worth living. He tells us how a thing of beauty provides joy.

Q7. 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 as if in the form of nectar pouring on us from heaven.

Q8. . Keats feels that Nature binds us to the Earth. How does he justify this?

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

Q9. What rich bounty has heaven given us? [Delhi 2017]

Ans. John Keats sees beauty in all the natural things. According to him, everything of nature is a source of beauty. In the poem we can see, the sun, the moon, the trees, daffodils, green forests, clear rills, masses of ferns, blooming musk-rose, lovely tales, etc. These beautiful sources provide pleasure and joy to mankind. So do the many beautiful stories created by man.

Q10. What does Keats consider an endless fountain of immortal drink and why does he call its drink immortal?

Ans. Keats considers the joy provided by nature as a never-ending fountain which uplifts the spirits of human beings. The beauty of nature is a constant source of pleasure and delight to the human mind and is like an immortal drink from heaven.
