

"A Thing of Beauty" by John Keats

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.

"A Thing of Beauty" Explanation:

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.

Bower: A shady place under the tree

The poet says that beauty stays forever. It never fades away. Rather, it increases with the passing time. The perception of the poet regarding beauty is that it never goes off with the passing time, rather it beautifies more and more. For the poet, beauty is like a beautiful shady tree under whose shade all the creatures can 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.

Morrow: The following day

Wreathing: surround, encircle

Despondence: depressed

Gloomy: sad

The poet says that every day, it is the beauty which fills us with the spirit to live. It is the beauty which builds the desire in us to live though there are sad moments and cruel people around us. So here the poet wants to say that without beauty the earth will be full of cruel people, sad and gloomy moments. It is the beauty which is created by god which helps us to remove the sadness from our hearts.

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

Boon: blessing

Rills: a small stream

Brake: a process to slow down

Here the poet describes the beautiful things which are present on earth. These are the sun, moon, trees, flowers (daffodils) and the rivers. Poet says that all these things are like a blessing bestowed on all the creatures by earth. He further describes that the trees provide us with their shade, flowers with their beauty and rivers with their coolness during the hot summers. All of these are the beauties of nature which are like a boon for us.

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

Grandeur: high rank or socially important

Mighty: enormous

Immortal: never dying

Brink: edge

The poet further carries on with the description of the more beautiful things present on earth. such as the beautiful musk roses which have such a nice fragrance. Then he describes the tales of the mighty warriors who laid their lives for their countries or for humanity. He says that these beautiful things are the gifts from god for all of us. They are like a nectar given by god to us and these are those beauties which are immortal and give us a reason to live on this earth despite having so many sorrows in our life.