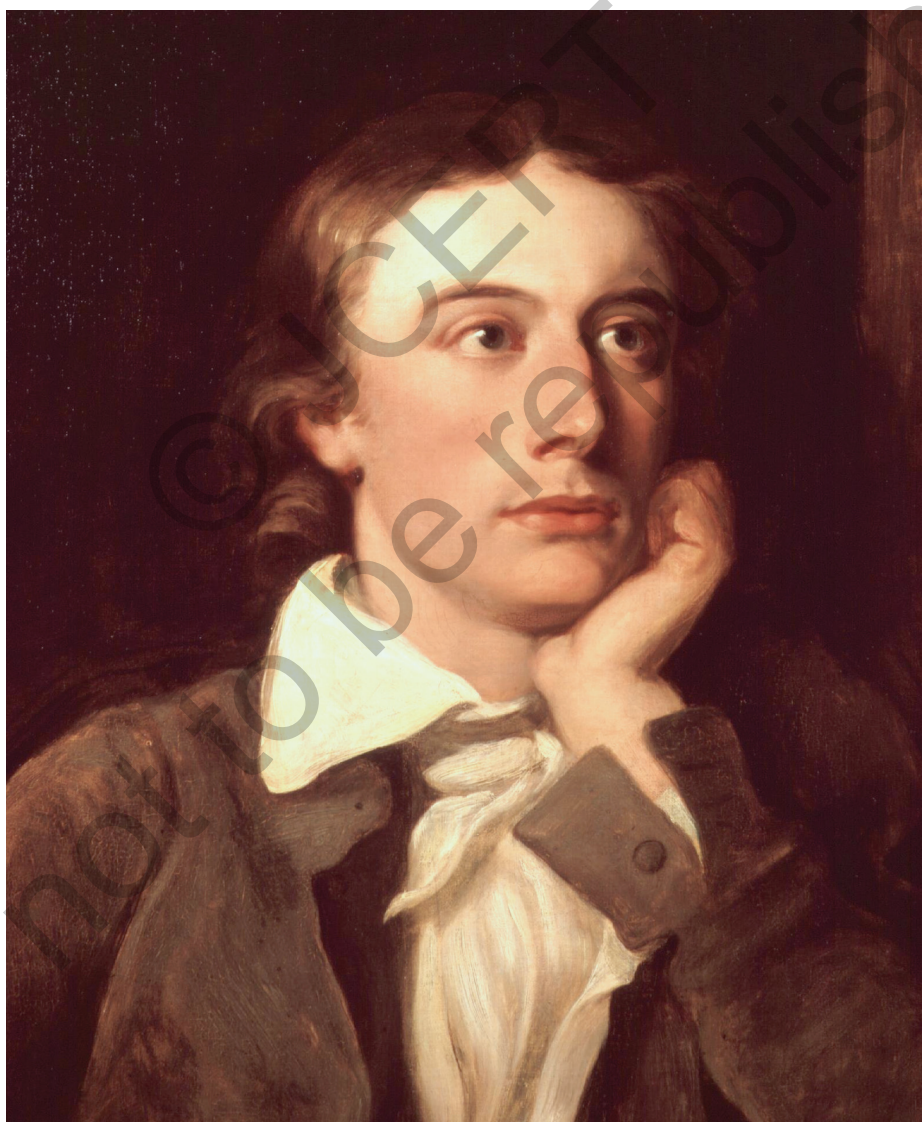


## A Thing of Beauty



**John Keats**

## 1.1 ABOUT THE POET -

- John Keats was born in Moorgate, London, on 31 October 1795, to Thomas and Frances Keats (née Jennings).
- **John Keats** (31 October 1795 – 23 February 1821) was an English poet of the second generation of Romantic poets, with Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley.
- He died of tuberculosis at the age of 25.
- Today his poems and letters remain among the most popular and analyzed in English literature – in particular “Ode to a Nightingale”, “Ode on a Grecian Urn”, “Sleep and Poetry” and the sonnet “On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer”.
- John Keats died in Rome on 23 February 1821. His body was buried in the city’s Protestant Cemetery.
- 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.
- John Keats was a romantic poet and his poetry is characterized by sensual imagery in his most popular work which is a series of odes.

## 1.2 SUMMARY OF THE POEM IN ENGLISH -

The poem begins with the speaker describing, at length, the power he believes beauty holds over human life. He sees it as a guiding force that, when accepted and appreciated, enters into one’s heart and helps to clear one’s path through life. Once one fully knows beauty, it will never leave. It transforms the onlooker into a beautiful object.

The second half of the poem describes the speaker’s plan to tell the long story of *Endymion*, a character from Greek mythology. He announces his intentions, primes the audience for a long story, and sends out a “herald” to tell the world what is about to happen.

## 1.3 SUMMARY OF THE POEM IN HINDI -

कविता की शुरुआत वक्ता द्वारा उस शक्ति का वर्णन करने से होती है, जिसके बारे में उनका मानना है कि सुंदरता मानव जीवन पर हावी है। वह इसे एक मार्गदर्शक शक्ति के रूप में देखता है, जिसे स्वीकार और सराहा जाने पर, किसी के दिल में प्रवेश कर जाता है और जीवन के रास्ते को साफ करने में मदद करता है। एक बार जब कोई सुंदरता को पूरी तरह से जान लेता है, तो वह कभी नहीं छोड़ता। यह देखने वाले को एक सुंदर वस्तु में बदल देता है।

कविता का दूसरा भाग ग्रीक पौराणिक कथाओं के एक पात्र एंडिमियन की लंबी कहानी बताने के लिए स्पीकर की योजना का वर्णन करता है। वह अपने इरादों की घोषणा करता है, दर्शकों को एक लंबी कहानी के लिए प्रेरित करता है, और दुनिया को यह बताने के लिए एक “हेराल्ड” भेजता है कि क्या होने वाला है।

## BACKGROUND OF THE POEM -

Based on Greek mythology about a shepherd named Endymion, his quest for his love Diana and how in his quest, he falls in love with an Earthly maiden, who later turns out to be Diana herself.

## MAIN THEME: A THING OF BEAUTY

The summary of the poem **A thing of beauty** is based on a Greek legend where a young shepherd named Endymion had a vision of the moon goddess, Cynthia. He made a commitment to go after her and seek her. In his quest, he wanders into the woods and under the sea.

Here, the poet tells us that beautiful things bring pleasure and happiness and give us an abundance of good reasons to feel happy and energetic. Beauty is like a tonic and an endless fountain of nectar, resulting in everlasting joy. It also takes away our sadness and gives us many happy reasons to enjoy.

## MYTHOLOGY USED IN THE POEM A THING OF BEAUTY -

“*Endymion*” is named for the Aeolian shepherd and king of Elis in Greek mythology. He was said to rule at Olympia and is best known for the love he bares Selene, the moon. This had led many, including Pliny the Elder, to cast Endymion as an astronomer or at least as one who is quite familiar with celestial movements.

In the mythological account of the life of *Endymion*, he asks for and is given eternal life. This blessing, and curse, are only possible if he remains in perpetual sleep. In this state, his lover, Selene, the Titan goddess of the moon, can visit him forever. Together they have 50 daughters.

## STRUCTURE AND FORM OF THE POEM -

The first book of “*Endymion*,” ‘*A Thing of Beauty is a Joy Forever*,’ by John Keats, consists of three stanzas that can be split into smaller sections for simpler analysis. The poem is constructed with a consistent and ever-present rhyme scheme of AABBCDD and so on. This rhyme scheme was chosen by Keats in order to sustain a sense of forwarding momentum in the poem. The pattern carries the reader from one line to the next as they become accustomed to what will come next.

## LITERARY DEVICES USED IN THE POEM -

Throughout this poem, the poet makes use of several literary devices. These include but are not limited to:

- **Metaphor:** a comparison between two things that does not use “like” or “as.” Metaphors state that one thing “is” another. For example, “A thing of beauty is a joy forever.”
- **Alliteration:** the repetition of the same consonant sound at the beginning of multiple words. For example, “band” and “bind” in line seven.
- **Imagery:** the use of particularly interesting descriptions that should inspire readers to imagine a scene in great detail. For example, “A bower quiet for us, and a sleep / Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.”
- **Caesura:** an intentional pause created either through the use of punctuation or a natural pause in the meter. For example, “Of noble natures, of the gloomy days.”

1. John Keats (i) born on October 31, 1795  
(ii) Died on February 23, 1821, at the age of 25.
2. Background - based on the Greek mythology of Endymion, the shepherd who lived on Mount

Latmos, dearly loved by the moon goddess Cynthia.

3. Taken from the poem titled - “Endymion: A Poetic Romance”, is a long narrative in four books about the relationship between a goddess and her lover.
4. Use of Allegory: The story of Endymion’s pursuit of Cynthia is an allegory for man’s quest of ideal beauty.
5. Theme - nature is an endless treasure of beauty and a perpetual source of joy.
6. Message: A Thing of Beauty is a joy forever; its beauty increases and it never passes into nothingness’. Our earth is replete with innumerable natural objects full of beauty.
7. Genre - it belongs to the Romantic genre.
8. Rhyme Scheme - First published in 1818, the poem is written in rhyming couplets and the rhyme scheme is aabb. The poet has used the iambic pentameter in the poem.
9. The Setting - The poem starts by a portrait of a countryside scene of trees, rivers, shepherds, and sheep. The poem talks about how nature and its wonder captivate us and take away all the sorrow that surrounds us from time to time.



## WORD-MEANINGS -

1 Bower	कुटी
2 Morrow	सवेरा
3 Wreathing	घेरना
4 Despondence	निराशा
5 Brink	किनारा
6 Boon	वरदान
7 Rillsa	एक छोटी सी धारा
8 Brake	ब्रेक
9 Grandeur	शान
10 Mighty	विशाल
11 Immortal	अमर

## QUESTION BASED ON THE POEM -

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

Ans - It is nature's beauty, which Keats considers an endless fountain of immortal drink. According to him, the drink is immortal because of the joy and delight it provides, it never passes into nothingness; the joy is forever and its loveliness ever-increasing.

2. How does a thing of beauty provide shelter and comfort?

Ans - A thing of beauty is present in the nature and brings us eternal joy whenever we need it. It keeps a quiet bower for us to take shelter in

and comforts us so as to provide us a sound sleep full of sweet dreams, health and quiet breathing. A thing of beauty present in the nature comforts us also by removing the gloom and misery from our lives.

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

Ans - A thing of beauty is a joy forever because its loveliness increases and lasts long. It never passes into nothingness and moves away the pall from our dark spirits.

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

Ans - In spite of troubles and sufferings, human beings love life because one is able to derive pleasure from the nature as well as one's surroundings. The things of beauty, which nature provides take away all the gloom and fills one with hope.

5. Describe any three things of beauty mentioned in the poem, 'A Thing of Beauty!'

Ans - Everything in nature is a thing of beauty and a source of pleasure. Some of them are the sun, the moon, old and young trees, daffodil flowers, small streams with clear water, etc

## OBJECTIVE TYPE QUESTIONS

1. The phrase immortal drink refers to

(a) Blessings of our ancestor

- (b) The teachings of nature
- (c) A life-giving force
- (d) The beauty of heaven

**Ans - C**

2. 'All lovely tales' evoke the feeling of-

- (a) Sadness and nostalgia
- (b) Only nostalgia
- (c) Inspiration and pride
- (d) Only pride

**Ans - C**

3. The literary device used by the poet in the following lines.....  
An endless fountain of immortal drink, Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

- (a) Personification
- (b) Allegory
- (c) Imagery
- (d) synecdoche

**Ans - C**

4. Name of the poem-

- (a) An Elementary School
- (b) My Mother at Sixty-Six
- (c) A Thing of Beauty
- (d) Keeping Quiet

**Ans - C**

5. How does a thing of beauty remain a joy forever?

- (a) It has a long-lasting impact
- (b) It has forgettable impact
- (c) It has a breath-taking impact
- (d) It has no impact

**Ans - A**

6. What does 'never pass into nothingness' mean?

- (a) It is internal
- (b) It is external
- (c) It is sentimental
- (d) It is eternal

**Ans - D**

7. What is the role of the clear rills?

- (a) Heat the surrounding area
- (b) Cool the surrounding area
- (c) Cause rainfall in the surrounding area
- (d) Provide oxygen

**Ans - B**

8. Who are the 'mighty dead'?

- (a) Persons who fought battles
- (b) Persons who ruled the country
- (c) Brave men who sacrificed their lives

(d) None of these

**Ans - C**

9. Whose loveliness will keep on increasing?

(a) A realistic thing

(b) A fictional thing

(c) A beautiful thing

(d) A pleasurable thing

**Ans - C**

### **SOME EXTRA QUESTION – ANSWERS FROM THE POEM**

Question 1. According to John Keats, what is a thing of beauty?

Answer: John Keats, in the poem A Thing of Beauty says that nature's creations [like the Sun, the Moon, trees, sheep, daffodils, flowing streams and bushes of musk roses are all things of beauty. He also says that the tales of the brave men are also equally beautiful.

Question 2. What do you understand by the term 'a thing of beauty'?

Answer: A thing of beauty means a beautiful and loving creation of God which gives immense pleasure and happiness to everyone. All creations like the Sun, the Moon, the flowers, trees, flowing streams, animals and birds, etc. are things of beauty for various reasons. They provide light, heat, shelter, food or are just good to look at. Also, the tales of brave men are things of beauty because they make us proud and inspire us.

Question 3. What is the theme of the poem A Thing of Beauty?

Answer: The poet conveys that a thing of beauty is a source of immense joy and its beauty remains forever. With the passage of time, its loveliness increases and this thing of beauty binds mankind to the Earth. It is due to such beautiful things that men survive in this otherwise cruel world.