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.

The first book of “Endymion” by John Keats consists of three stanzas which can be split into smaller sections for a simpler analysis. The poem is constructed with a consistent and ever-present rhyme scheme of aabbccddeee… etc. This rhyme scheme was chosen by Keats in order to sustain a sense of forward momentum in the poem. The pattern carries the reader from one line to the next as they become accustomed to what will come next.

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.

"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.

As indicated by the title, the poem’s subject is **Endymion**, the mythical shepherd is in love with so amazingly gorgeous **Diana**, the chaste goddess of the moon. In ‘Endymion,’ Keats explores ideas about nature and our relationship to it; about myth and history; and about melancholy and desire. He also expresses in it—not just in the opening line—his deep belief in the importance of beauty for its own sake.

**Summary of Endymion**

The first book of “Endymion” by John Keats details the speaker’s beliefs regarding the power of beauty and his intentions to tell the story of Endymion. The poem begins with the speaker describing at length the power he believes that 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 the beautiful object.

**Analysis of ‘Endymion’**

*A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:*
*Its loveliness increases; it will never*  
*Pass into nothingness; but still will keep*  
*A bower quiet for us, and a sleep*  
*Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.*

**Meaning:**

*Bower:* A shady place under the tree  
*Bower:* A shady place under the tree

**Stanza Summary:** 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.

**Literary devices:**

*Rhyme scheme:* aabbc (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)

**Question 1:**
How does a thing of beauty remain a joy forever?

**Answer:**
A thing of beauty gives us eternal and everlasting joy. The joy it gives us keeps on increasing with time.

**Question 2:**
Mention any two sources of joy which a thing of beauty provides to us.

**Answer:**
A thing of beauty gives us a quiet bower to rest peacefully and blissful sleep full of pleasant dreams.

**Question 3:**
Explain ‘never pass into nothingness.’

**Answer:**
The joy that a thing of beauty gives is eternal. It never ends; instead it only increases with time.

**Question 4:**
What is meant by’bower’?

**Answer:**
‘Bower’ refers to a peaceful place under the shade of trees.

---

**Stanza II**

> 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.

**Meanings:**

Morrow: The following day  
Wreathing: surround, encircle  
Despondence: depressed  
Gloomy: sad

**Stanza Summary:** 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.

**Literary devices:**
- 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)
- Imagery: creating a sensory effect of beautiful things lined up in a string (A flowery band to bind us)
- inversion: normal order of words is reversed (Are we wreathing a flowery band)

```
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
```

**Meanings:**
Boon: blessing
Rills: a small stream
Brake: a process to slow down

**Stanza Summary:** 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.

**Literary devices:**
- 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)
- Imagery: Trees giving shade (sprouting shady boon), growing process of daffodils (daffodils with the green world they live in), Clean river streams (Clear rills)
- Antithesis: opposite words placed together (old and young)

```
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

Meanings:
Grandeur: high rank or socially important
Mighty: enormous
Immortal: never dying
Brink: edge

Stanza Summary: 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.

Literary devices:

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)

Rhyme: Rhyme scheme is used in every stanza of the poem (forever; never, keep; sleep, dead; read etc.)

Imagery: Bushes full of musk roses (sprinkling of fair musk rose blooms), books describing valour of fighters (grandeur...mighty dead), god providing us with best things (pouring from the heaven’s brink)

New words
Bower- a pleasant shady place under trees or climbing plants.
Morrow - the following day
Wreathing - covering or to encircle.
Spite - desire to offend or annoy someone.
Despondence - disheartened, hopeless.
Noble of superior quality, having high moral principles
Pall a cloud - a dark cloud of gloom and sadness.
Spirits - the soul where lie our emotions and character.
Sprouting - to develop suddenly in large numbers.
Shady boon - a shade which is helpful to someone.
Rills streams of running water.
Covert - not openly known or displayed.
Grandeur - so as to impress.
Dooms last - day of existence.
Immortal living forever.
Heaven's brink - the door of God's home.

**List the things of beauty mentioned in the poem.**
The Sun, The Moon, Shady trees, Beautiful daffodil flowers, Streams of water, Dense green bushes of forest ferns where fragrant musk roses grow, Tales of heroic men who sacrifice their lives.

**List the things that cause suffering and pain.**
Desire to offend others, Hopelessness, Lack of noble men, Bad health, Unhappiness, Gloom, Darkness

**Questions and Answers**

1. **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.

2. **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 inspite of life's troubles and sufferings.

3. **Why is grandeur associated with the œmighty 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.

4. **Do we experience things of beauty only for short moments or do they make a lasting impression on us?**
   According to the poet, a thing of beauty is a joy forever. Even if we see it for a few moments, it has a lasting impression on us and its beautiful memory stays with us forever. It inspires us to live, despite the ruthlessness of life.

5. **What image does the poet use to describe the beautiful bounty of the earth?**
   The beautiful bounty of the earth is described by œendless 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.

6. **What are the flowery bands that bind us to Earth?**
   **Answer:**
   Flowery bands refer to beautiful and pleasant things. The memory of these things remains in our minds and helps us strengthen our bond with Earth.

7. **What message do the above lines convey?**
   **Answer:**
The above lines convey that life is full of hopelessness and sadness. There is lack of noble feelings amongst men. In spite of all this, some beautiful things help us to shed our sad and grim thoughts.

Question:
What is meant by ‘spite’ in the above lines?
Answer:
Spite here refers to malice. It means that in spite of despair and gloom, a beautiful thing or a flowery band can make us happy.

Question:
Describe the evil and bad things that we possess in us.
Answer:
We suffer from disappointments, lack of noble ways and noble qualities.

III. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.
“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”

Question:
Name the poem and the poet.
Answer:
The poem is ‘A Thing of Beauty’ and the poet is John Keats.

Question:
Why are we despondent?
Answer:
Human life is full of trials and tribulations. We add to our troubles and make our lives more difficult by following evil ways. We hurt others as well as ourselves. This makes us despondent.

Question:
What removes the pall from our dark spirits?
Answer:
The various objects of beauty around us remove the pall from our dark spirits. Beautiful things have the power to make us happy.

Question:
Explain the inhuman dearth of noble natures’.
Answer:
The poet here means that the world lacks men of noble nature or qualities. There are few people who are noble in character; most of the people are self-centered and pursue evil ways.

Or
Question:
What are we doing every day?

Answer:
The memory of beautiful things remains in our minds and strengthens our bond with Earth every day. The poet says that every day we prepare flowery wreaths to make our life beautiful and to remain connected with nature.

Question:
Which evil things do we possess and suffer from?

Answer:
We suffer from hopelessness and sadness and our style of living makes us grim.

Question:
What are the circumstances that contribute towards making humans unhappy and disillusioned with life?

Answer:
Hopelessness, sadness and lack of noble ways are a part of human life. We do ourselves harm by following unhealthy and wicked paths. These circumstances contribute towards making humans unhappy and disillusioned with life.

Question:
What removes the pall from our dark spirits?

Answer:
Any beautiful object or a thing of beauty removes the pall of sadness from our hearts or spirits.

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

“Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits.”

Question:
How does beauty help us when we are burdened with grief

Answer:
Whenever we look at a beautiful object, we are filled with comfort and joy. When we are burdened with grief, a thing of beauty comes as a ray of hope, and makes us forget our sorrow and suffering, at least for some time.

Question:
Explain ‘Some shape of beauty.’

Answer:
Beauty is an abstract idea and has no specific shape. The poet here means beauty in some form or some beautiful object which pleases us.

Question:
Identify the figure of speech in the above lines.

Answer:
The given lines present an example of metaphor. Our souls are steeped in sadness and disappointment which are compared to a pall or shroud covering the dead.

Question:
Why are our spirits referred to as dark?

Answer:
Our spirits are dejected due to extreme sadness and disappointment, which may be the result of our own evil actions. So, the poet refers to them as dark, because of the hopelessness we feel.

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

“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.”

Question:
List the things that give us joy. Which of these provide respite in the hot season?

Answer:
The various objects of nature, like the sun, the moon, old and young trees in forests, daffodils and clear water streams give us joy. Clear water streams, green surroundings and the shade of trees in forests gives us respite from the heat.

Question:
Name the poem and the poet.

Answer:
The poem is ‘A Thing of Beauty’ and the poet is John Keats.

Describe the role of daffodils and clear rills.

Answer: Daffodils bloom in green surroundings. Clear rills are small streams which make a cooling shelter for us.

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

“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.”

Question:
Name the poem and the poet.

Answer:
The poem is ‘A Thing of Beauty’ and the poet is John Keats.

Question:
What is the thing of beauty mentioned in these lines?

Answer:
The thing of beauty mentioned in these lines is the lovely stories celebrating the glory of our powerful ancestors, which we have read or heard about.

**Question:**
What image does the poet use in these lines?

**Answer:**
The poet uses the image of an ‘endless fountain’ coming down to us from heaven. According to him, nature and other beautiful things around us are like a gift from God, which give us infinite delight and joy.

**Question:**
What is the effect of this ‘immortal drink’ on us?

**Answer:**
The immortal drink gives us immense joy, a joy that is everlasting and one that will never come to an end.

**Question:**
Who are the ‘mighty dead? How do we know about them?

**Answer:**
Our forefathers, who were great in their own ways, have been referred to as the ‘mighty dead’. We come to know about them by reading and learning about the tales of their glory.

**Question:**
What images does the poet use to convey that beauty is everlasting?

**Answer:**
An endless fountain of joy is the image that has been used to convey that beauty is everlasting. A thing of beauty makes a deep impression on our mind. It gives us infinite pleasure.

**Question:**
What is the effect of that immortal drink?

**Answer:**
The immortal drink that nature’s endless fountain pours into our hearts is a source of immense joy and pleasure to us.

**Question:**
Point out the words from the extract which mean Stories, magnificence

**Answer:** “Tales”, “grandeur”

**Question:**
Mention any four things of beauty that add joy to our life.

Or
List the things of beauty mentioned in the poem.

**Answer:**
Four things of beauty that add joy to our life are clear streams, daffodils and the greenery surrounding them, old and young trees and the forests.

**Question:**
Mention any two things which cause pain and suffering.
Or
List the things that cause suffering and pain.

**Answer:**
Things which cause pain and suffering are sadness, hopelessness, a lack of noble qualities and an unhealthy and wicked style of living.

**Question:**
Which objects of nature does Keats mention as sources of joy in his poem, A Thing of Beauty’?

**Answer:**
The objects of nature mentioned by Keats are clear streams, musk-rose and daffodil flowers, the greenery surrounding them, old and young trees, the forests, the Sun and the Moon.

**Question:**
What does a thing of beauty do for us?

**Answer:**
A thing of beauty adds endless joy to our life and helps us to overcome our sadness and hopelessness. The memory of such a thing gives us everlasting happiness.

**Question:**
What makes human beings love life inspite of all the troubles they face?

**Answer:**
Human beings love life inspite of all the troubles and sufferings they face because of all the things of beauty which surround them. These things remove our despondent state and allow us to enjoy the beauty of nature.

**Question:**
How do beautiful things help us to live a happy life?

**Answer:**
We derive comfort and happiness when we look at objects of beauty, and the lasting impression they leave on our minds is a source of permanent joy. They provide us relief from our every day trials and tribulations and help us live a happy life.

**Question:**
What does Keats consider an endless fountain of immortal drink and why does he call its drink immortal? All India 2013

**Answer:**
Keats considers nature’s beauty as an endless fountain of immortal drink. He calls its drink immortal as the pleasure and delight given by it never diminishes. It only increases with time. Beauty is like an elixir of life.

**Question:**
According to Keats, what spreads the pall of despondence over our dark spirits? How is it removed?
*Or*
What spreads the pall of despondence over our dark spirits? How is it removed?

**Answer:**
Keats says that pain and suffering are a part of life which spread the pall of despondence over our dark spirits. But still, we can find hope. The hope and motivation comes from nature and it removes this covering of despondence.

**Question:**
How does a thing of beauty provide shelter and comfort?

**Answer:**
A thing of beauty provides shelter and comfort in many ways. It is like a bower, a place under the shade of a tree where we can rest. It gives us a sleep full of sweet dreams in the hot weather, the small streams of cool and clear water and the green forests around making a shady place for us.

**Question:**
What does the line, *Therefore are we wreathing a flowery band to bind us to the Earth’* suggest to you?

**Answer:**
This line suggests that every day we appear to weave a wreath of flowers because it is beautiful and keeps us attached to the beauties of the earth.

**Question:**
How is a thing of beauty a joy forever?
*Or*
Do we experience things of beauty only for a short moment or do they make a lasting impression on us?

**Answer:**
A thing of beauty is a joy forever because it is an eternal source of pleasure and motivation. The happiness given by it never fades away, but keeps on increasing.

**Question:**
Why is ‘grandeur’ associated with the ‘mighty dead’?

**Answer:**
The poet finds beauty even in death. ‘Mighty dead’ refers to our glorious forefathers, who were great in their own ways. Grandeur is associated with them because our past is full of stories of their glory. They will always be remembered for their achievements.
Question:
What is the message of the poem, ‘A Thing of Beauty’?
Answer:
The message that the poem conveys is that a thing of beauty gives us endless joy. It helps us to come out of sadness and hopelessness. The memory of such a thing is a source of everlasting happiness.

Question:
What is the ‘endless fountain’ and what is its effect?
Answer:
‘Endless fountain’ refers to the beauty of nature. It is a boon from heaven itself. Our life is full of miseries but the infinite delight that we get from beautiful things of nature gives us motivation to continue our journey.

Question:
What image does the poet use to describe the beautiful bounty of the Earth?
Answer:
The poet uses the image of nature as an ‘endless fountain’ pouring onto us from heaven. Nature is a source of endless joy. The sun, the moon, the daffodils, the clear streams, the forests etc, are a few beautiful images that make a deep impact on us.

Question:
What pleasure does a beautiful thing give us? Are truthful things worth treasuring?
Answer:
A beautiful thing gives us everlasting joy and pleasure. Beautiful things are worth treasuring because their memory soothes our nerves and inspires us to overcome the depressing elements in life.

Question:
Analyse the myth of Endymion in the context of the poem.
Answer:
The poem is an excerpt from John Keats’ first epic poem ‘Endymion’, which was published in 1818. The title of this poem is taken from the very first lines of Endymion. According to Greek mythology, Endymion was a handsome young shepherd who lived on Mount Latmos of Asia Minor. He was in love with the moon goddess Selene, who was also known as Cynthia. The enchanted shepherd resolved to seek her in his admiration. This poem echoes the pleasure of the shepherd as he wanders through the forests and finds pleasure in
beholding the beautiful sights of nature. That beauty can create joy in the soul that will last forever, is what is conveyed in the poem. The nature with its beauty, the sun, the moon and daffodils gives to life a new meaning and significance.

**Question:**
Explain ‘An endless fountain of immortal drink’.

**Answer:**
This line is taken from John Keats’ poem, ‘A Thing of Beauty’. That beauty is everlasting, as it creates an eternal joy in the beholder. It is an endless fountain of joy that is immortal as a drink pouring down on us, as a water of joy from the edge of heaven’s cliff. The eternal joy is like a bliss of heaven on Earth. The poet here says these words in order to explain the nature of the pleasure and joy that is created when a beautiful object is seen by a beholder. The poet here affirms the truth that beauty is not ephemeral, but eternal. The pleasure we receive in perceiving a beautiful object is a gift that is worth treasuring, as the joy soothes the gloom in our minds.

**Question:**
Explain ‘A thing of beauty is a joy forever’.

**Answer:**
It is the first line of John Keats’ first epic poem, ‘Endymion: A Poetic Romance’ and of the poem ‘A Thing of Beauty.’ This line is dramatically very significant because it is multi-layered in its meaning. It explains the effect of beauty on the soul. Beauty heals the negative impulses of our life. It relieves us from being weighed down by worldly worries. Keats, as a romantic poet, brings out the belief in the power of nature to heal and give happiness. A beautiful thing is an object of joy because it gives us mental peace and makes us happy. Its value lies in its effect on us and it never breeds a sense of nothingness. It will not diminish with the passage of time.

**Question:**
Analyse the poetic devices used in the poem.

**Answer:**
The poem is rich in images and the use of various poetic devices. There is alliteration in ‘simple sheep’ which actually refers to mankind. Metaphor has been employed in ‘moves the pall’ where our souls steeped in sadness and hopelessness are compared to dead bodies covered with a shroud. In the metaphor, ‘immortal drink’, a feeling of immense joy has been compared to a drink that flows down from heaven’s brink, like an endless fountain. There is use of alliteration in ‘noble natures’, ‘simple sheep’ and ‘cooling covert’.

The poem abounds in the use of imagery, as in ‘flowery bands’, ‘daffodils with the green world they live in’, ‘clear rills’, and ‘endless fountain.’

**Question:**
‘A thing of beauty is a joy forever.’ This is what John Keats says in the poem. Do you think in the present times of acute stress and violence, proximity to beautiful things can lead man to everlasting happiness? Discuss.

**Answer:**
A thing of beauty gives us permanent happiness. When we look at objects of beauty, we feel happy, and the lasting impression that such objects leave on our mind continues to give us pleasure even when they are no longer in our sight. In the present times of acute stress and violence, the objects of beauty attain even greater significance. When our mind is anxious and troubled, the very sight of beautiful things often comes as a relief and provides us comfort and happiness for the moment. Appreciating beautiful things is like appreciating God, who has bestowed them upon mankind as a gift so that we can derive happiness and solace from them. Proximity to beautiful things brings us closer to the creator, in whom lies the ultimate power to grant us relief from all anxieties and troubles. Therefore, it is sure to bring everlasting happiness at all times.

**Reference:**
http://keats-poems.com/poems/endymion/
https://www.litcharts.com/poetry/john-keats/ode-to-a-nightingale

Link for Video Explanation refer:
https://youtu.be/iPz7KyQ1auU