A Thing of Beauty (Poem and 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.

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)

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.

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
‘Giants 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.

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), and 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

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 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)