



OCTOBER  
2019  
£4.80

Harper's

Kristen  
*The* Stewart  
courage  
to be  
her own  
woman

BEAUTY IS...

BRAVE of  
HEART







*'Rose Colored Spectacle' (1974) by Penny Slinger*

*Beauty is...*

# INNOCENCE & EXPERIENCE

by Juliet Nicolson

When I was very small, I think I confused beauty with love. One of my earliest memories is of a deliciously scented, silk-rustly, often-absent mother bending over my bed and kissing me goodnight on her way out to dinner. 'You are beautiful,' I whispered as she drifted away in her familiar mist of Ma Griffe, the perfume she had used since the war. Physical beauty has always been eclipsed for me by that heady combination of smell, sight and touch. When I was about eight, the most beautiful thing I could imagine was the brand-new £5 note that my grandfather would slip our way for Christmas. The whiff of new ink, the crinkle of paper and the sight of such riches was beauty in an envelope. As I approached my 21st birthday, my mother offered me, unsolicited, the choice of a party or an improving nose job. Apparently, a clever man in Harley Street knew just how to transform me into a post-nose-op Cilla Black. Rejecting life with a perfect pop profile, I plumped unhesitatingly for the party.

Over the intervening years, I have encountered beauty in all its infinite, unexpected variety, unwearied by time, untarnished by cosmetic alteration. Since childhood, I have never failed to find beauty in the written word, in a fairy story, in a love letter, in a line of poetry, in writing a sentence that expresses just what one intended it to.

The beauty of the natural world appears not so much in a dazzling sunset as in the fragility of the first January snowdrop, when confidence that the roots beneath the frozen earth will ever flower again has begun to dwindle. Beauty is in the astonishment of May, when the

world is once again green with hope. It is there in the scent of mown grass and in the brilliance of summer colour, in the sensation of kicking one's way through piles of fallen golden leaves in the autumn, and again in the sparkle of a December icicle, the shimmer of a snow-dusted lawn.

Most recently, I have found beauty in simplicity and the innocence of children, and in what their innocence can teach me. A few years ago, I was sitting on one of those glistening white beaches in the Hebrides, a tiny grandchild on my lap. As she scooped up a handful of ivory-coloured sand and ran the grains through her fingers, her expression was one of astonishment and awe. She had never seen sand before and, for a moment, neither had I.

Beauty abounds in friendship, in recognising the purity of trust in another person, in the eyes of the person who listens to you and in discovering you are able to listen in return. Beauty is in memories rolling across your mind. It is in peace. It is in silence. And now I know that I was right all along. Above all, beauty is in the face of the person you love.

'Beauty is a purple  
passage in the mind.  
Beauty takes your  
breath away when you  
have only one breath left.  
Beauty is hope in the  
midst of despair.  
Beauty is petals falling in  
the snow and a rose that  
witheres in a bowl of dust.  
Beauty is where you never  
saw it before, revealed  
by the artist'

*Penny Slinger*