

Eric Maisel

# 90 *Days* of *Beauty*



Wellness Journal Series

Beauty is a very funny word. We hardly know what it means any longer. Is there any way to bring beauty back and have it mean what it once meant when artists and philosophers extolled the virtues of truth, beauty, and goodness? I think this journal may be one way back. Journaling on the meanings of beauty and on the realities of beauty may restore beauty and even save it. And, as you journal, you may land on the following powerful idea: that you are the beauty in life.

A rose or a teacup may be beautiful, an aria or a sunset may be beautiful, but when you kiss someone, when you protect someone, when you help someone, when you love someone, you are the beauty in life. Your loving heart is a beautiful thing. Your fierceness in defense of the defenseless is flat-out gorgeous. Your willingness to smile is a miracle of beauty. It is that smile that makes the peach or the string quartet beautiful, not the other way around.

Maybe you will finally be able to say, "I am the beauty in life." We have taken truth, beauty and goodness to the woodshed and given them a necessary postmodern thumping. But we can have them back. Embrace the truth that you are the beauty in life, that you are the arbiter of meaning in your life, that you are the one cherishing values like justice and equality, that you are the one capable of love and compassion. I would ask you to be with the following quotes and prompts with that shining idea—that shining ideal—in mind: that we are attuned to beauty because we are the beauty in life. We have it in us, we have it with us, it is us. May you relearn that truth through journaling.

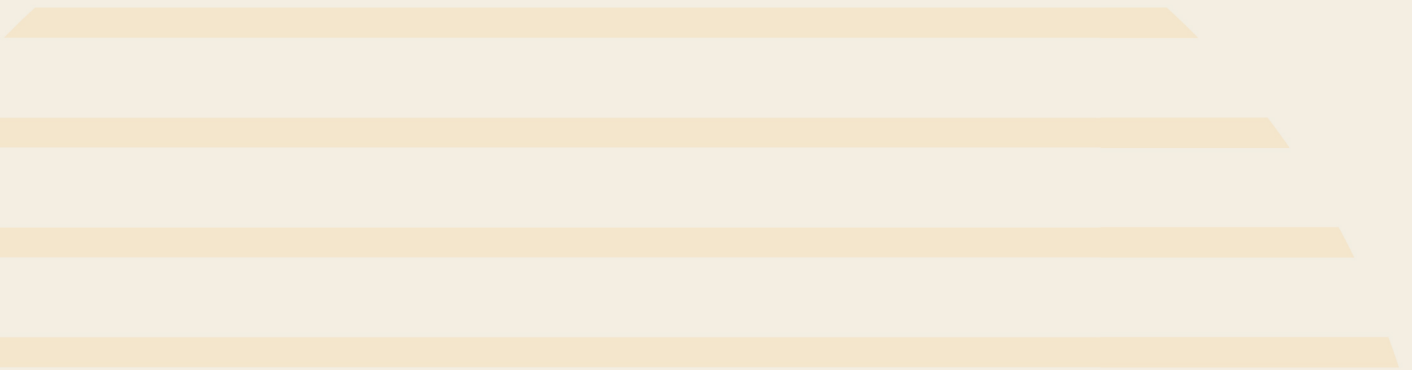
*For additional space, complement this wellness journal with your favorite paper and pen. Give yourself all the space you need!*



# Day 1.

“We live only to discover beauty. All else is a form of waiting.”  
—Kahlil Gibran

What is this beauty Gibran is affirming?



# Day 2.

“If you seek happiness and beauty simultaneously, you will attain neither.  
For the price of beauty is self-denial.” —Gustave Flaubert

Respond to the prompt, “Beauty and happiness are different  
conversations.”



# Day 3.

“Once in a lifetime a really beautiful song comes along. Until it does, I’d like to do this one.” —Cliff Richard

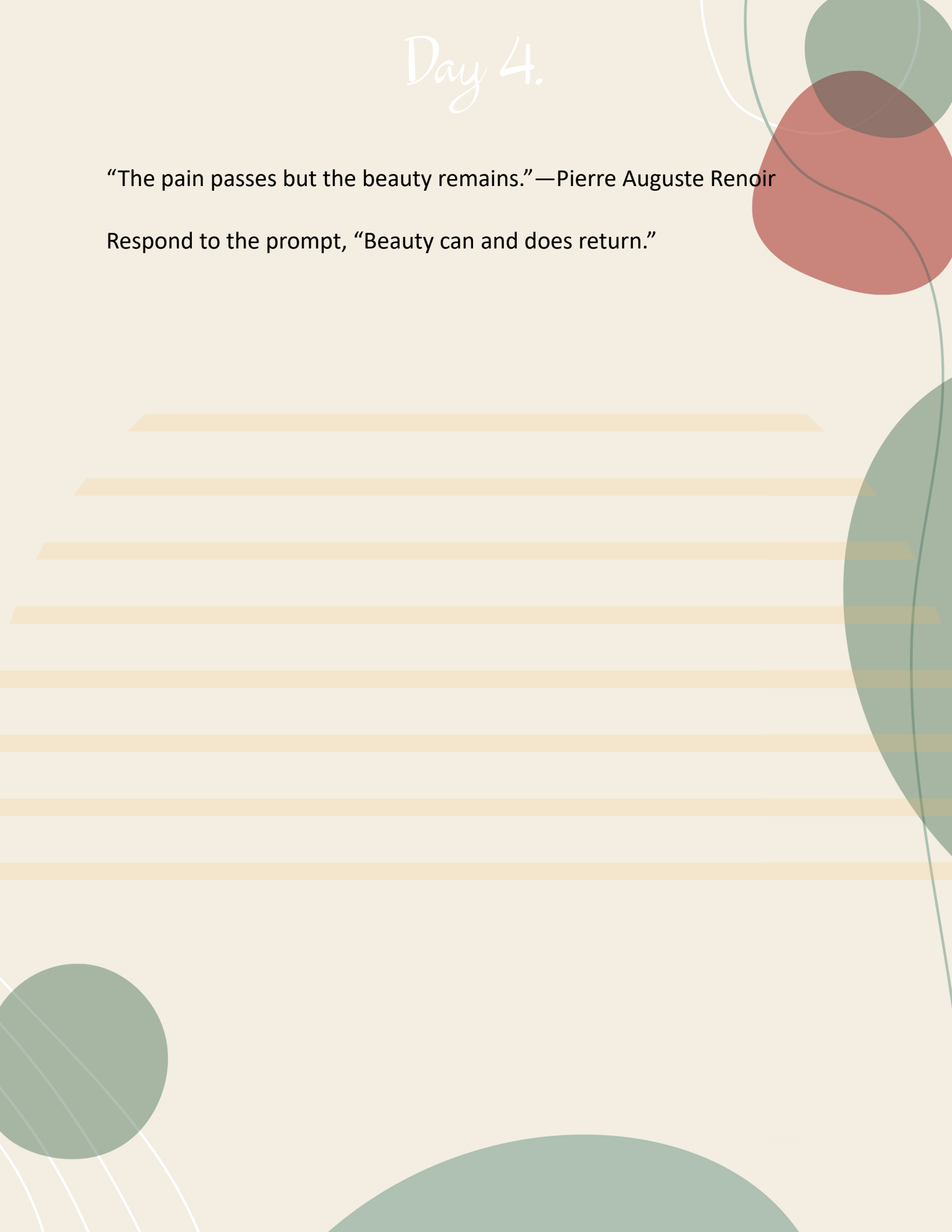
Is only the “really beautiful” beautiful? Or can there be beauty one or two tiers down?



# Day 4.

“The pain passes but the beauty remains.” —Pierre Auguste Renoir

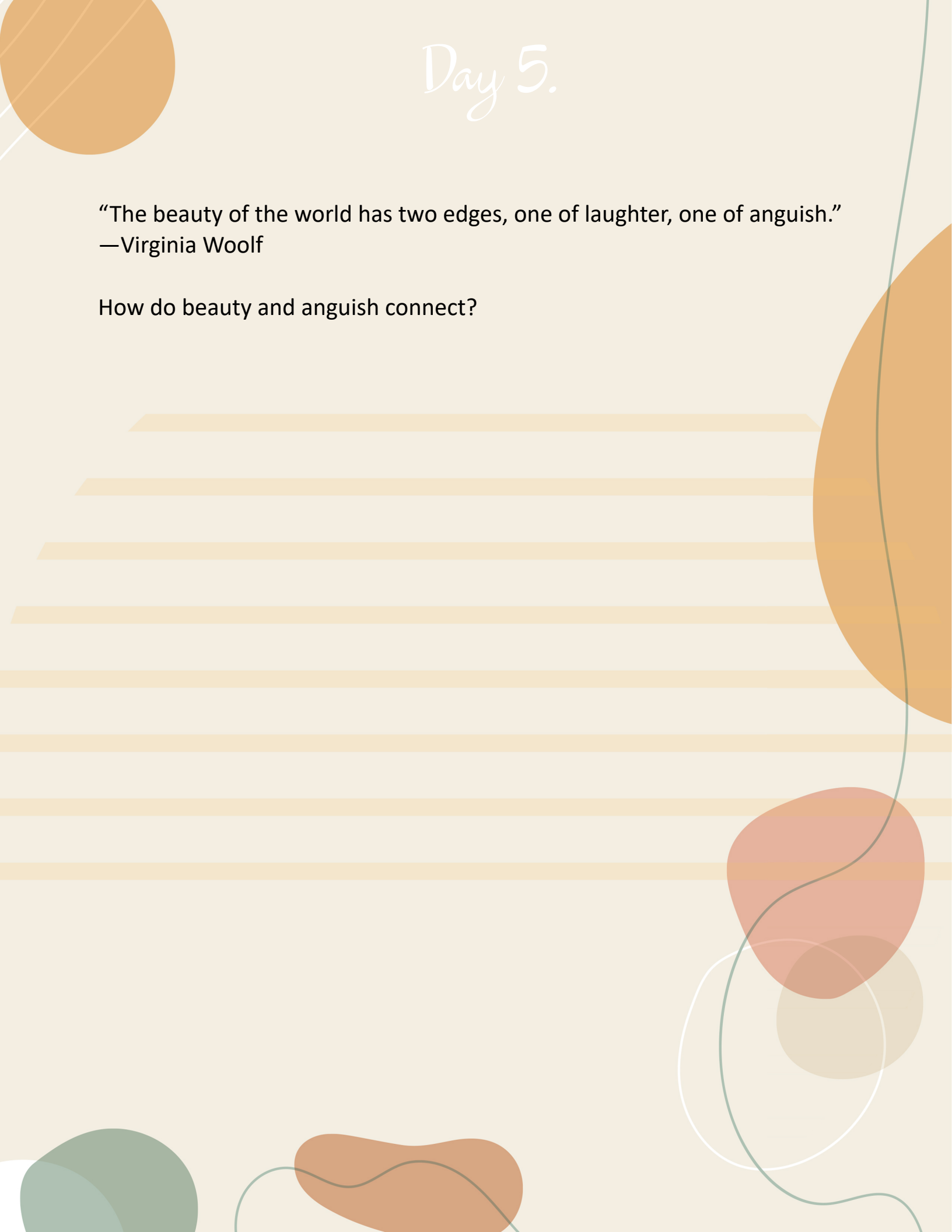
Respond to the prompt, “Beauty can and does return.”



# Day 5.

“The beauty of the world has two edges, one of laughter, one of anguish.”  
—Virginia Woolf

How do beauty and anguish connect?



# Day 6.

“The beautiful is as useful as the useful. Perhaps more so.” —Victor Hugo

Respond to the prompt, “Sometimes you need a can opener, sometimes you need beauty.”





# Day 7.

“The best part of beauty is that which no picture can express.”

—Francis Bacon

If so, then what can a painting express? Only hints and intimations?





# Day 8.

“I do not have much patience with a thing of beauty that must be explained to be understood.” —Charlie Chaplin

If trying to explain “beauty” isn’t the way, how can beauty be discussed? Or can it?









## Day 9.

“Beauty is unbearable. It drives us to despair, offering us for a minute the glimpse of an eternity that we should like to stretch out over the whole of time.” —Albert Camus

If we can't stretch out beauty to last over time, what should we do when the beauty isn't there?

# Day 10.

“It is cruel, you know, that music should be so beautiful. It has the beauty of loneliness and pain, of strength and freedom, of disappointment and never-satisfied love.” —Benjamin Britten

Respond to the prompt, “If beauty can bring us pain, should we maybe try to avoid it?”



# Day 11.

“I don't like people who have never fallen or stumbled. Their virtue is lifeless and not of much value. Life hasn't revealed its beauty to them.”  
—Boris Pasternak

Must we stumble and fall to know beauty?





# Day 12.

“All fashions are charming, or rather relatively charming, each one being a new striving after beauty, the desire for which constantly teases the unsatisfied human mind.” —Charles Baudelaire

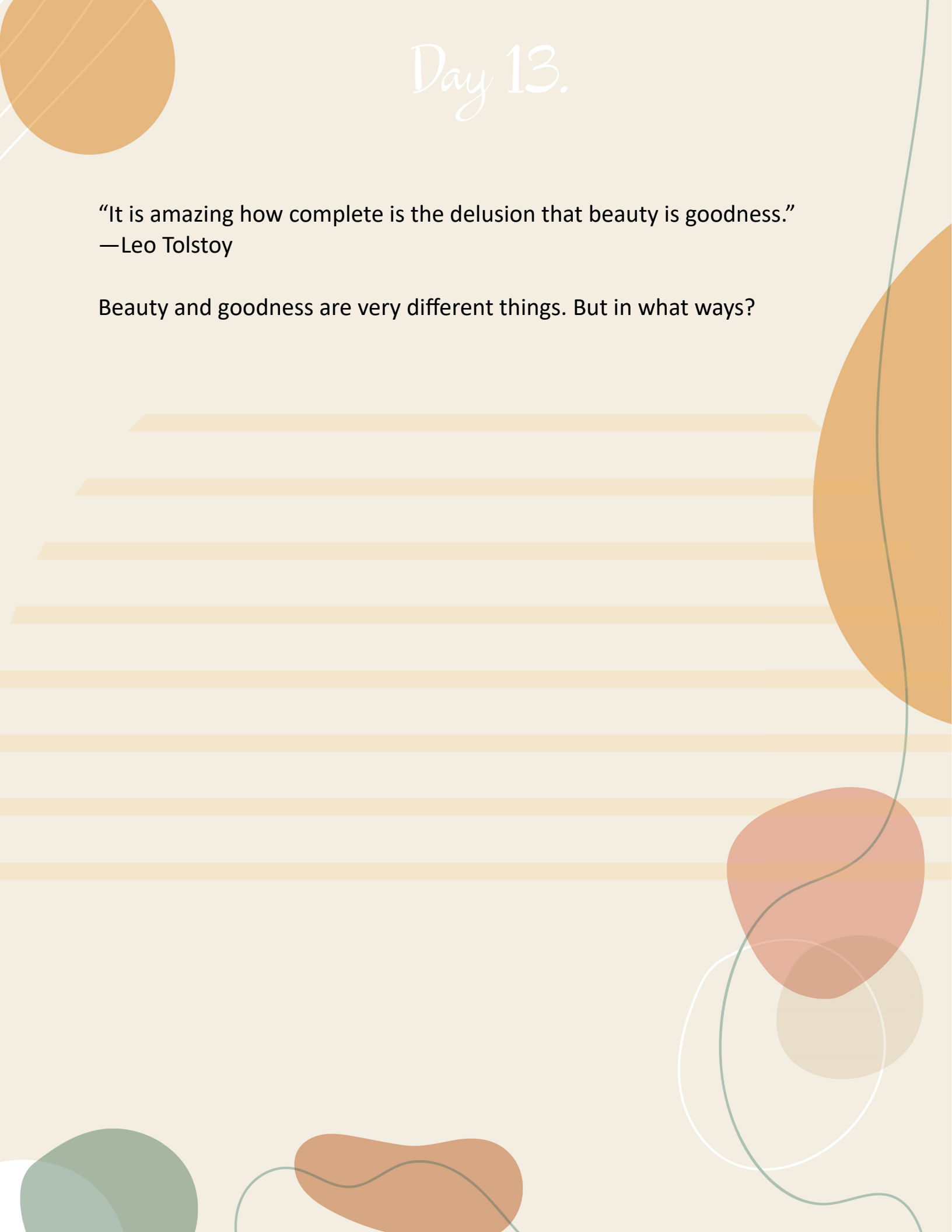
Respond to the prompt, “Beauty is a tease.”

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# Day 13.

“It is amazing how complete is the delusion that beauty is goodness.”  
—Leo Tolstoy

Beauty and goodness are very different things. But in what ways?



# Day 14.

“Nothing’s beautiful from every point of view.” —Horace

If the front is beautiful and the back isn’t, when might you want to show the back?



# Day 15.

“Beauty ought to look a little surprised: it is the emotion that best suits her face.” —E. M. Forster

Respond to the prompt, “Beauty ought to look a little surprised.”

A series of horizontal lines for writing. The first four lines are slanted upwards from left to right. The remaining lines are straight and horizontal. The lines are a light beige color and are spaced evenly down the page.

# Day 16.

“Beauty is a precious trace that eternity causes to appear and then takes away. It is manifestation of eternity and a sign of death as well.”  
—Eugene Ionesco

How can beauty signal both eternity and death?





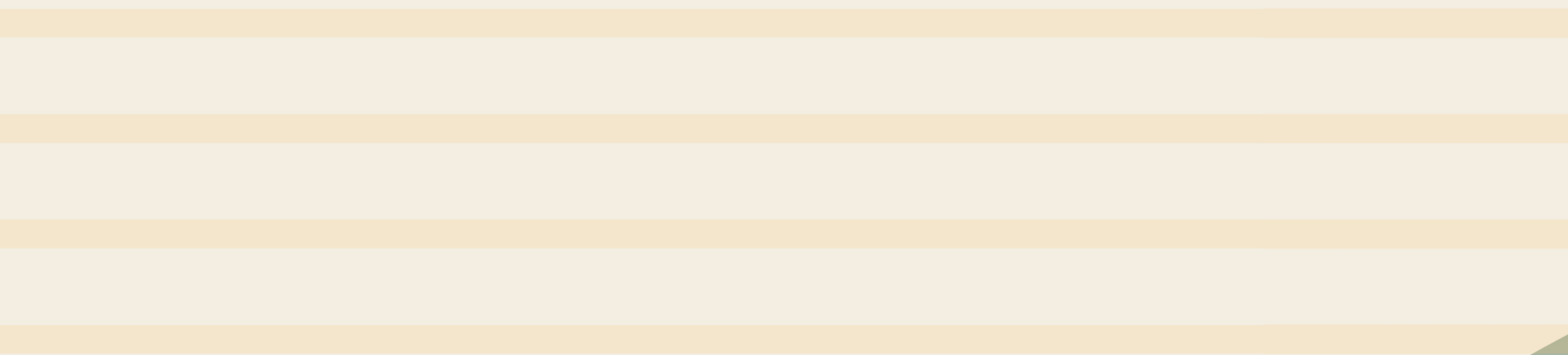
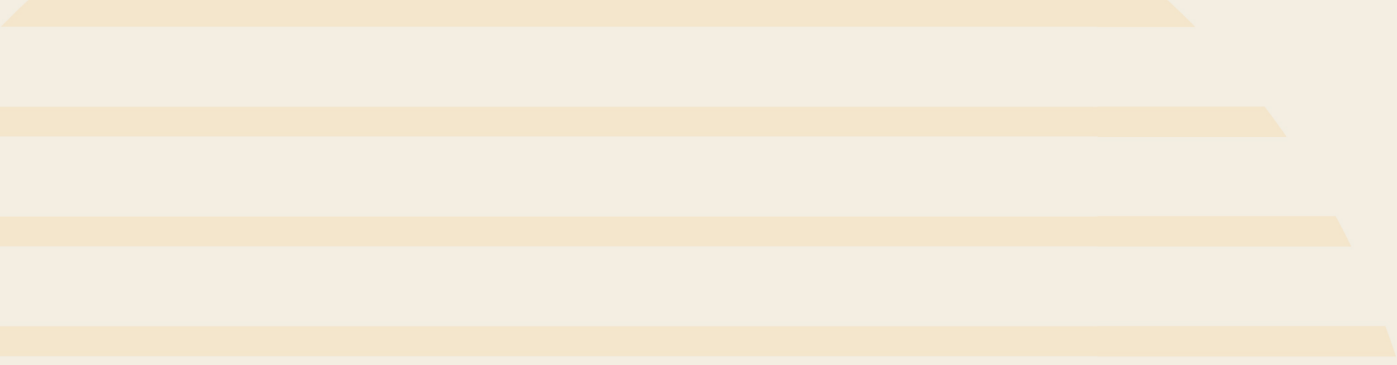


# Day 17.

“If you foolishly ignore beauty, you will soon find yourself without it. But if you invest in beauty, it will remain with you all the days of your life.”

—Frank Lloyd Wright

Are you in the habit of “foolishly ignoring beauty”?





# Day 18.

“Things are beautiful if you love them.” —Jean Anouilh

Respond to the prompt, “We make things beautiful by loving them.”



# Day 19.

“My heart that was stolen away by the wild cherry blossoms -- will it return to my body when they scatter?” —Kotomichi

What happens to beauty when the wild cherry blossoms scatter?



# Day 20.

“Art produces ugly things that frequently become beautiful with time.  
Fashion produces beautiful things that always become ugly with time.”

—Jean Cocteau

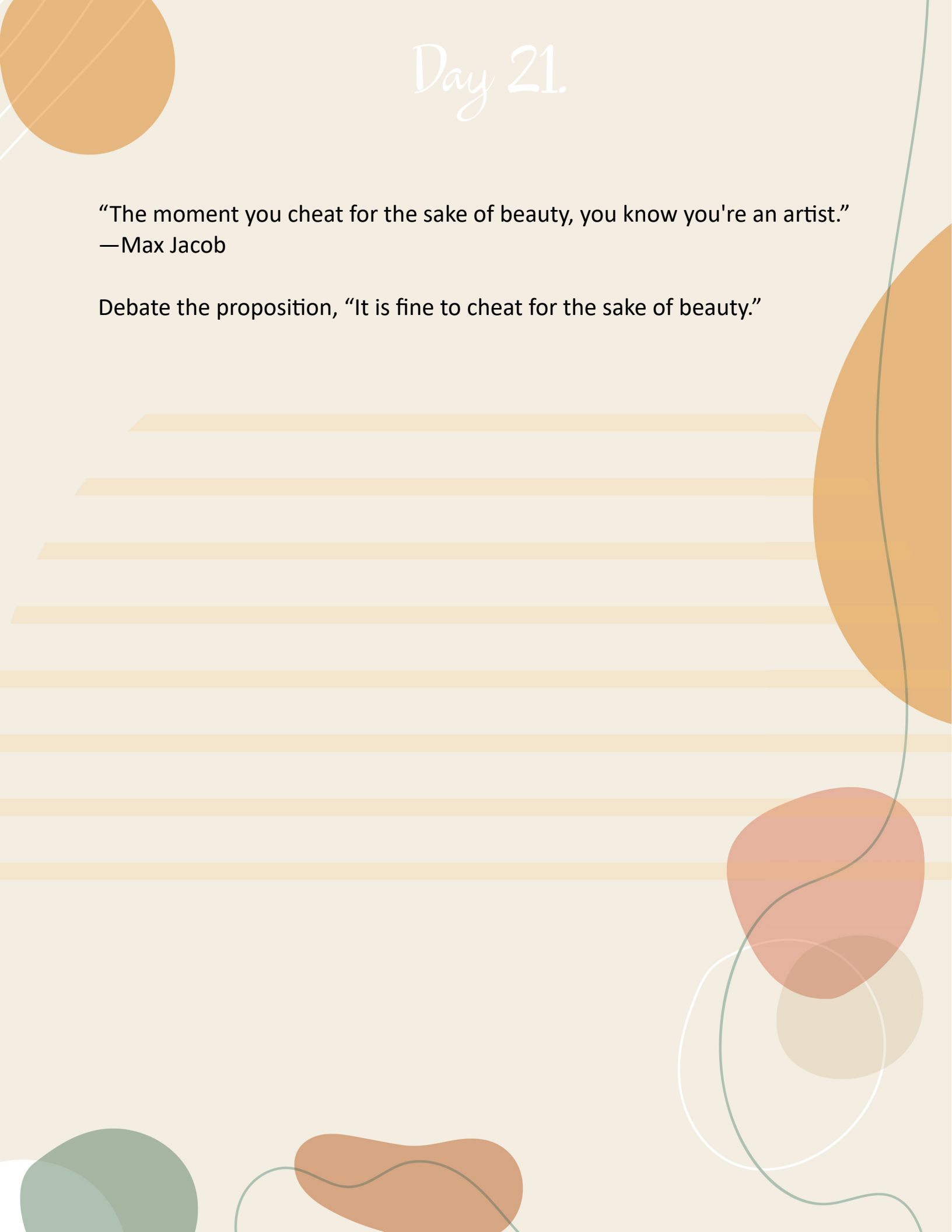
Respond to the prompt, “The beauty of fashion always becomes ugly.”



# Day 21.

“The moment you cheat for the sake of beauty, you know you're an artist.”  
—Max Jacob

Debate the proposition, “It is fine to cheat for the sake of beauty.”



# Day 22.

“Truth isn't always beauty, but the hunger for it is.” —Nadine Gordimer

Respond to the prompt, “The hunger for truth is beautiful.”



# Day 23.

“Hollywood is beautiful. Everybody is plastic—but I love plastic.”  
—Andy Warhol

Is “beauty” exactly personal preference?

The background features abstract organic shapes in shades of orange, green, and yellow. A series of horizontal lines, some solid and some dashed, are positioned below the text, serving as a guide for writing. The overall design is minimalist and modern.



# Day 24.

“I have a horror of people who speak about the beautiful. What is the beautiful? One must speak of problems in painting!” —Pablo Picasso

Are there better and worse ways to speak about the beautiful? What might the better ways be?



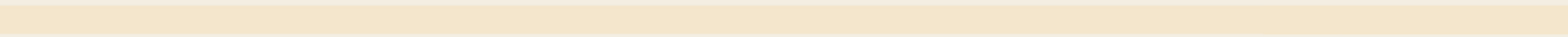




# Day 25.

“To emphasize only the beautiful seems to me to be like a mathematical system that only concerns itself with positive numbers.”—Paul Klee

Respond to the prompt, “The beautiful should include negative numbers.”



# Day 26.

“Beauty always promises, but never gives anything.” —Simone Weil

Is beauty only a promise? Or does it also deliver?



# Day 27.

“Solitude gives birth to the original in us, to beauty unfamiliar and perilous, to poetry.” —Thomas Mann

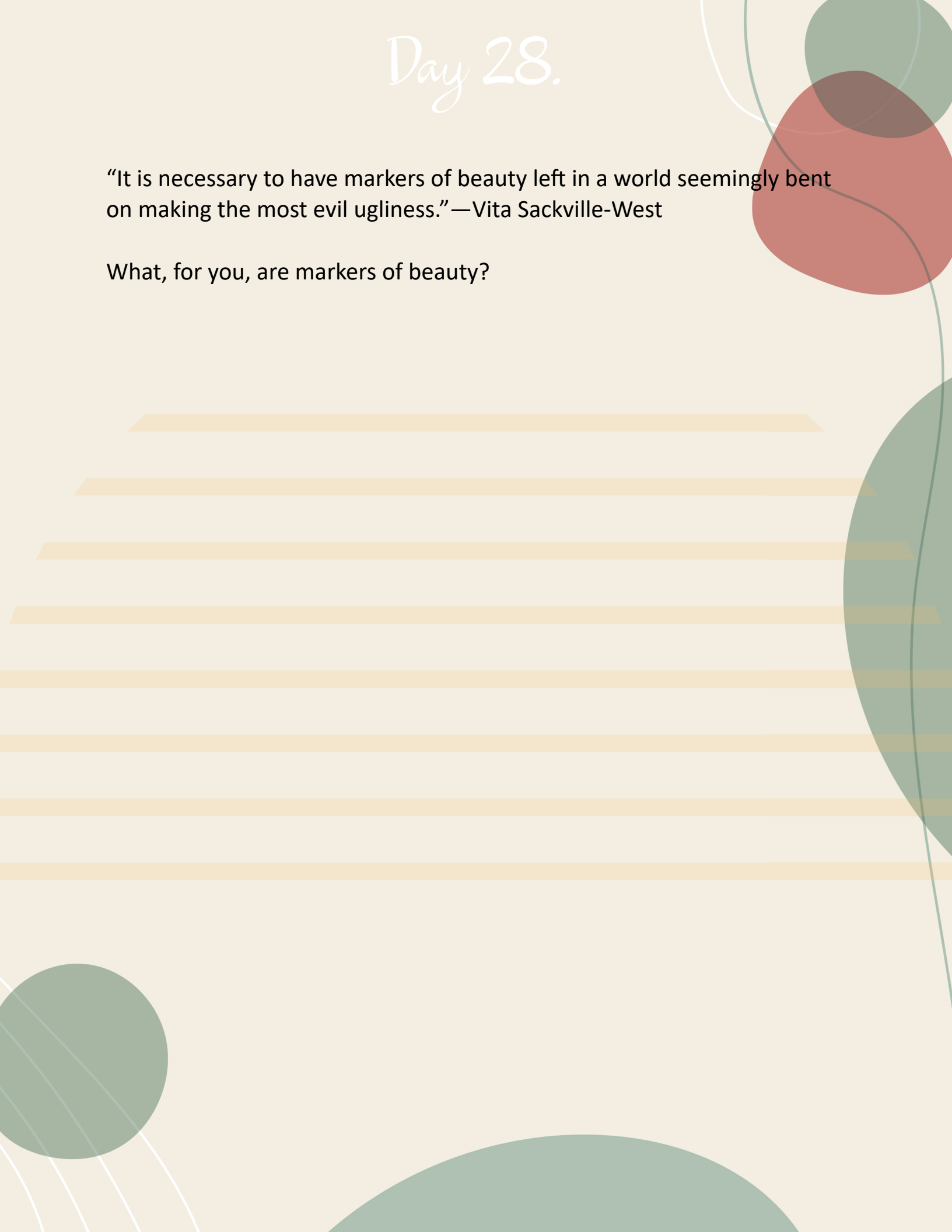
What, for you, is the connection between solitude and beauty?



# Day 28.

“It is necessary to have markers of beauty left in a world seemingly bent on making the most evil ugliness.” —Vita Sackville-West

What, for you, are markers of beauty?



# Day 29.

“Poets say science takes away from the beauty of the stars—mere globs of gas atoms. I, too, can see the stars on a desert night, and feel them. But do I see less or more?” —Richard Feynman

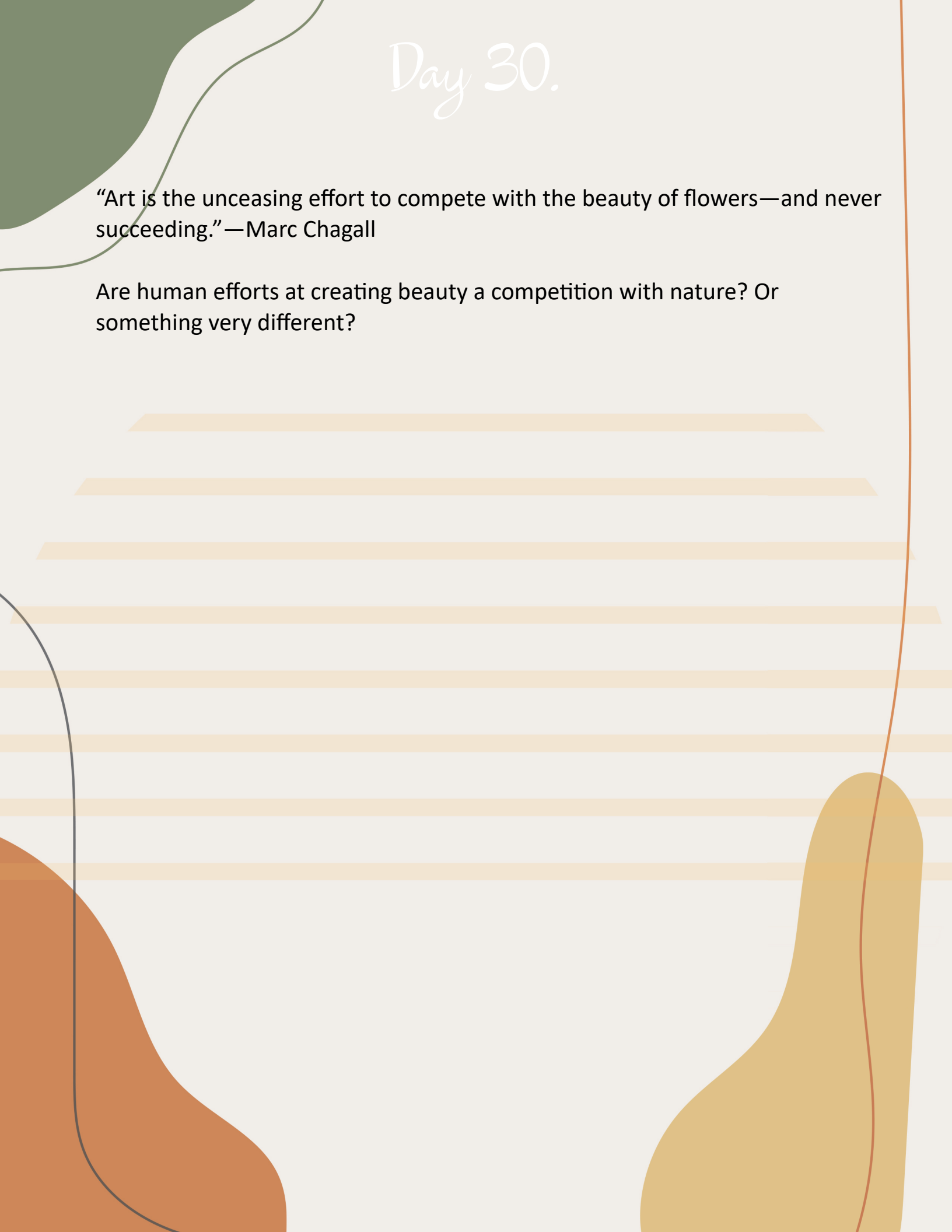
Does science support beauty? Harm beauty? Neither? Both?



# Day 30.

“Art is the unceasing effort to compete with the beauty of flowers—and never succeeding.” —Marc Chagall

Are human efforts at creating beauty a competition with nature? Or something very different?



# Day 31.

“Perhaps all the dragons in our lives are princesses who are only waiting to see us act, just once, with beauty and courage.” —Rainer Maria Rilke

We understand what it means to act with courage. What might it mean to “act with beauty”?



The page features a light beige background with abstract, organic shapes in muted orange, sage green, and mustard yellow. A series of horizontal, slightly irregular yellow lines are positioned below the text, serving as a guide for handwriting practice. The lines vary in length and are spaced out, with some lines extending across the entire width of the page.

# Day 32.

“I don’t worry much about beauty or perfection. All I care about is life, struggle, and intensity.” —Emile Zola

Is “beauty” the wrong focus? The wrong principle?

The page features a minimalist design with large, overlapping circles in muted colors (olive green, terracotta, and dusty rose) at the top and bottom corners. The central area is filled with horizontal lines for writing, consisting of four lines with angled ends and six solid horizontal lines, all in a light beige color. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.









## Day 33.

“The first question I ask myself when something doesn't seem to be beautiful is why do I think it's not beautiful. And very shortly you discover that there is no reason.” —John Cage

No reason? Or perhaps no nameable reason?

# Day 34.

“Beauty is not caused. It is.” —Emily Dickinson

Respond to the prompt, “Beauty is.”



# Day 35.

“I cannot believe that the inscrutable universe turns on an axis of suffering; surely the strange beauty of the world must somewhere rest on pure joy!” —Louise Bogan

Respond to the prompt, “On what does the strange beauty of the world rest?”

A series of horizontal yellow lines for writing, framed by abstract leaf and circle graphics in green, red, and brown tones.

# Day 36.

“Life is not measured by the breaths we take but by the moments that take our breath away. Think of all the beauty still left around you and be happy.” —Anne Frank

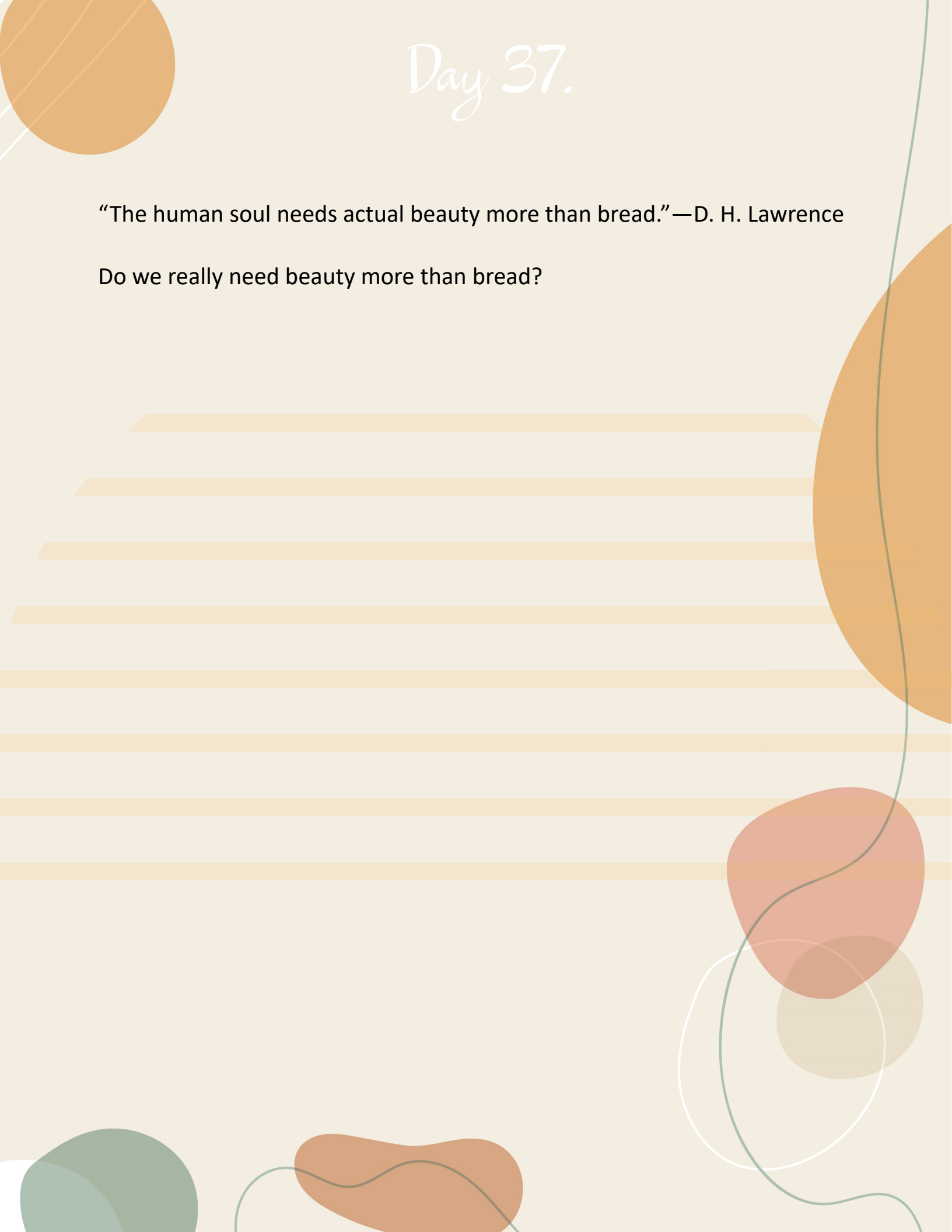
What moment last took your breath away?

The page features a light beige background. In the top right corner, there are overlapping circles in shades of green and red. A thin, light green line curves from the top right towards the bottom right. The central area of the page is filled with horizontal lines of varying lengths and colors, including yellow, orange, and light green, creating a layered, abstract effect. In the bottom left corner, there is a large green circle. At the bottom center, there is a large, semi-circular green shape. The overall design is modern and artistic.

# Day 37.

“The human soul needs actual beauty more than bread.” —D. H. Lawrence

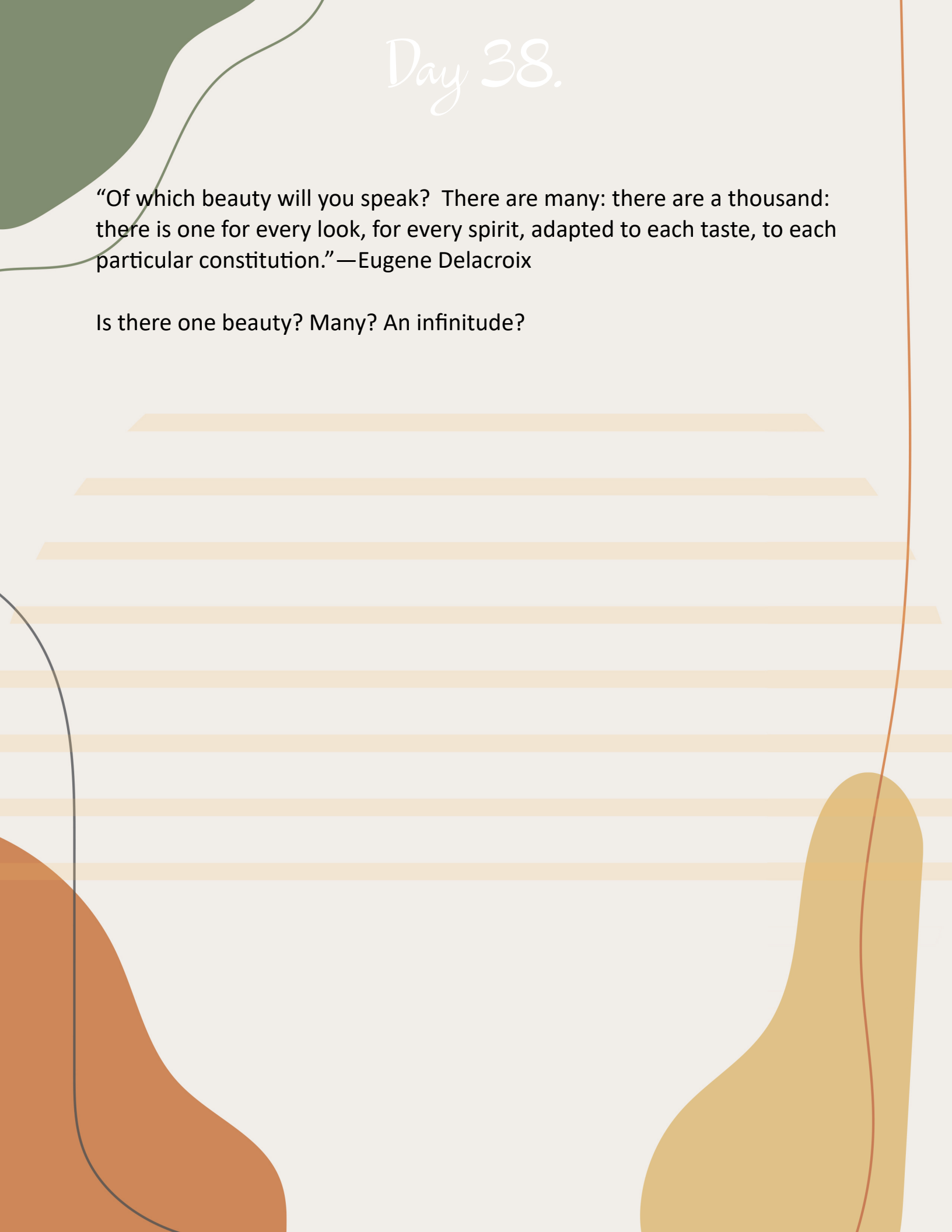
Do we really need beauty more than bread?



# Day 38.

“Of which beauty will you speak? There are many: there are a thousand: there is one for every look, for every spirit, adapted to each taste, to each particular constitution.” —Eugene Delacroix

Is there one beauty? Many? An infinitude?





# Day 39.

“Beauty is merciless. You do not look at it, it looks at you and does not forgive.” —Nikos Kazantzakis

Respond to the prompt, “Beauty is unforgiving.”

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# Day 40.

“The truly important things in life -- love, beauty, and one's own uniqueness - are constantly being overlooked.” —Pablo Casals

Why is it so easy to overlook love, beauty, and one's own uniqueness?

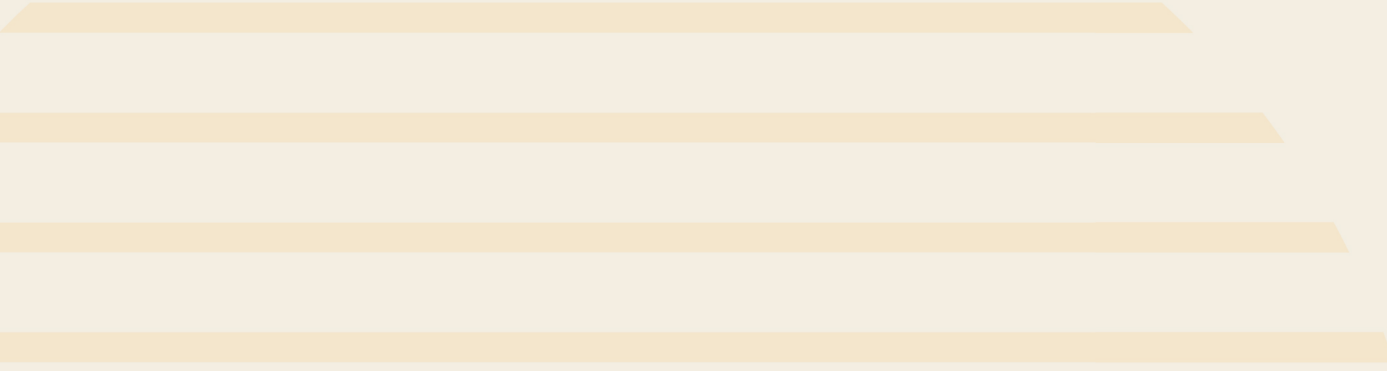




# Day 41.

“If you truly love Nature, you will find beauty everywhere.”  
—Vincent van Gogh

But even though he found that beauty everywhere, that was not sufficient. Can beauty be sufficient?



# Day 42.

“Blessed are they who see beautiful things in humble places where other people see nothing.” —Camille Pissarro

In which humble places do you see beauty?



# Day 43.

“Nature gives to every time and season some beauties of its own.”  
—Charles Dickens

If every season has its beauties, what are the beauties of winter?



# Day 44.

“Beauty will save the world.”—Fyodor Dostoyevsky

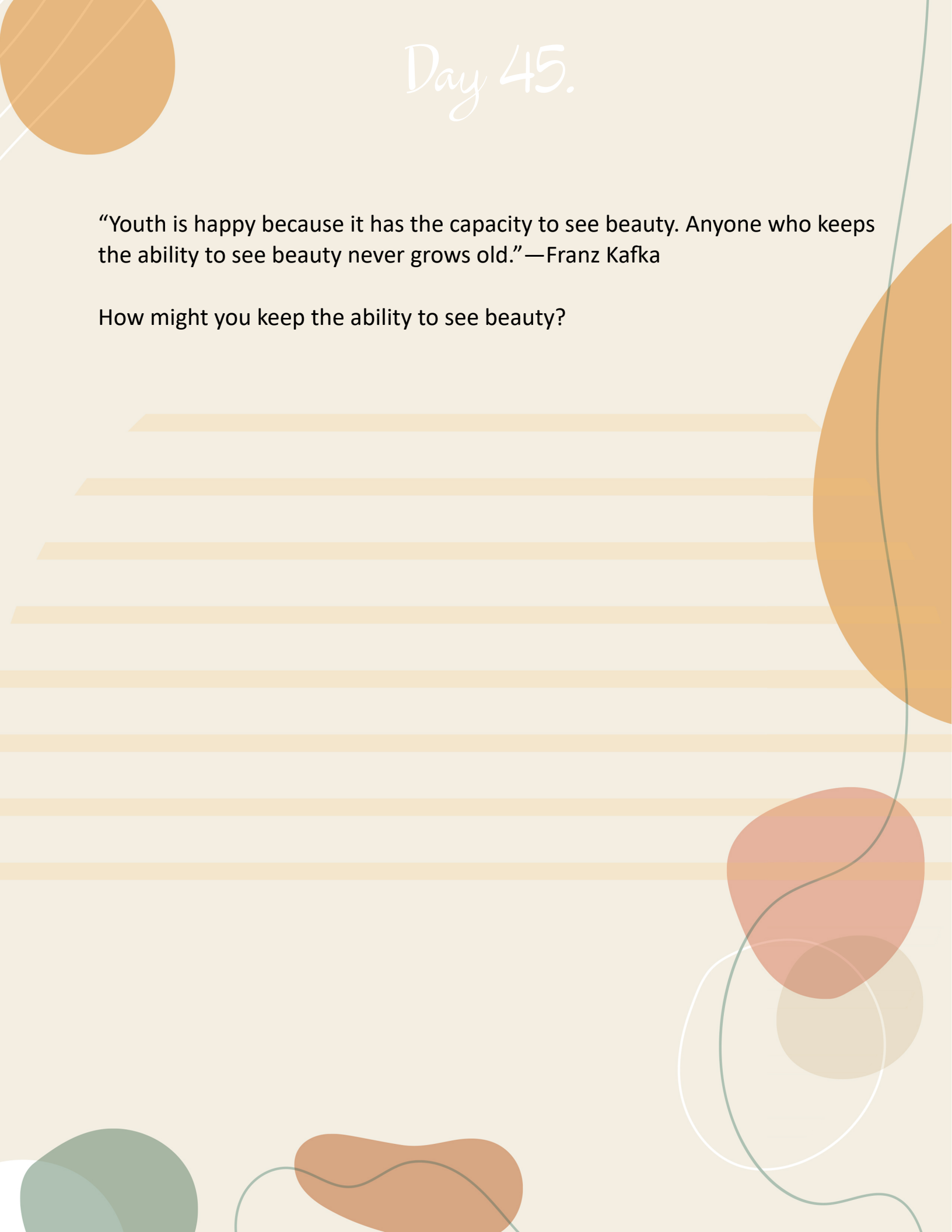
How can beauty save the world? What might Dostoyevsky have had in mind? What might you have in mind?



# Day 45.

“Youth is happy because it has the capacity to see beauty. Anyone who keeps the ability to see beauty never grows old.” —Franz Kafka

How might you keep the ability to see beauty?

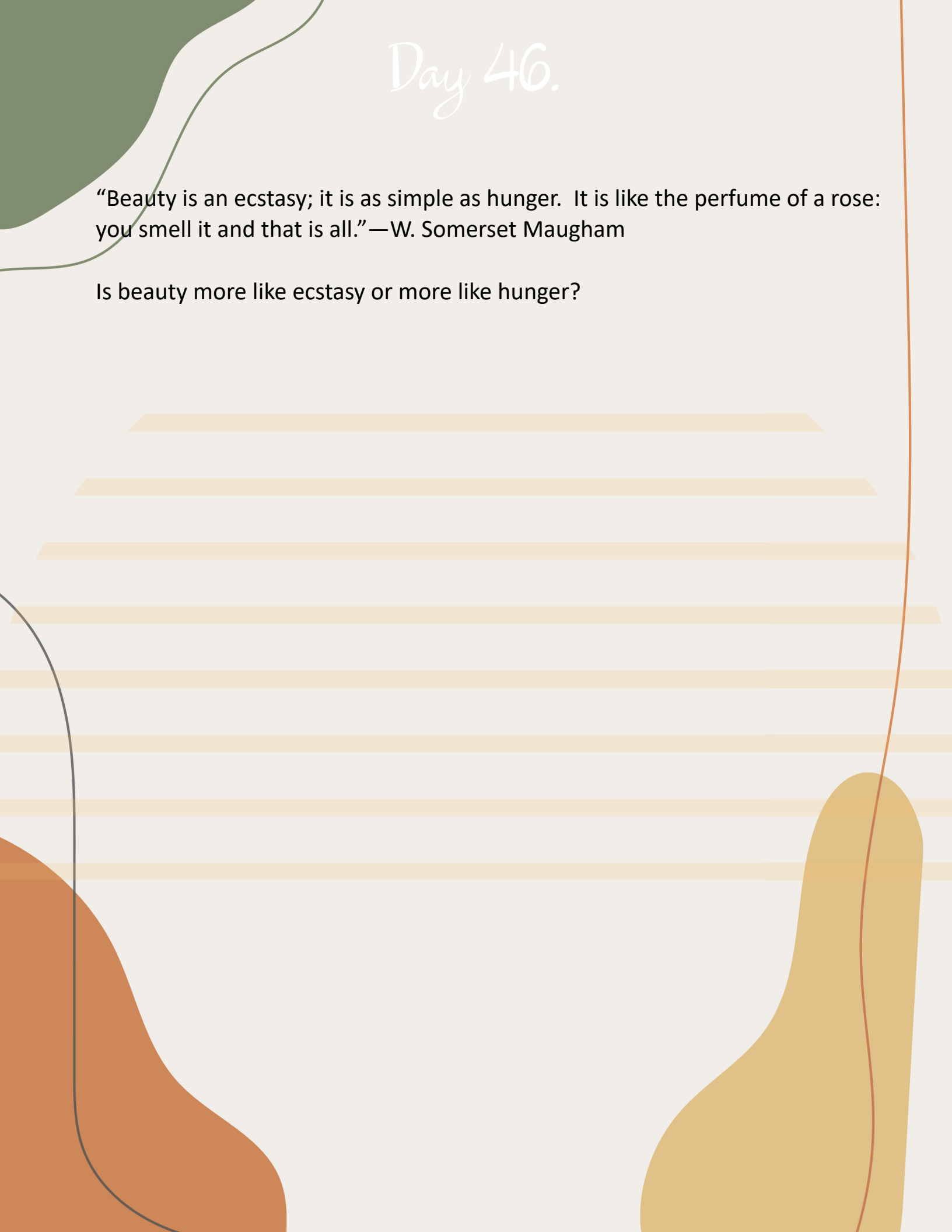




# Day 46.

“Beauty is an ecstasy; it is as simple as hunger. It is like the perfume of a rose: you smell it and that is all.”—W. Somerset Maugham

Is beauty more like ecstasy or more like hunger?



# Day 47.

“The possibility of pleasure can be the beginning of beauty.” —Marcel Proust

Respond to the prompt, “Beauty begins in possibility.”

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# Day 48.

“Exuberance is beauty.” —William Blake

There is some connection between passion, exuberance, and life energy, on the one hand, and beauty, on the other. What is that connection, would you say?





# Day 49.

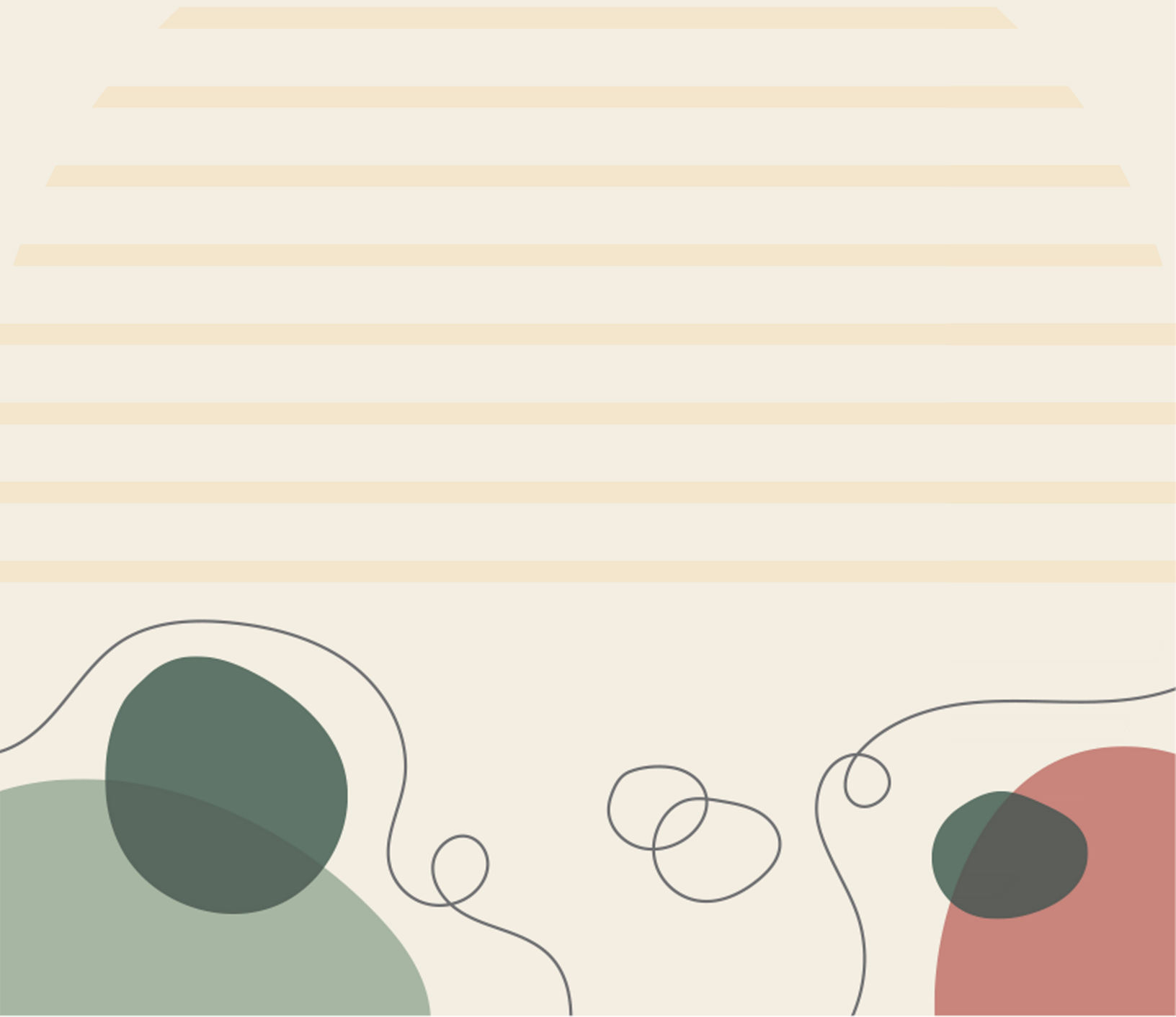
“Let the beauty we love be what we do. There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground.”—Rumi

Respond to the prompt, “Let the beauty we love be what we do.”

# Day 50.

“Everything has beauty. But not everyone sees it.” —Confucius

What blinds people to beauty?



# Day 51.

“I pray, O Lord, for you to make me beautiful inside.” —Socrates

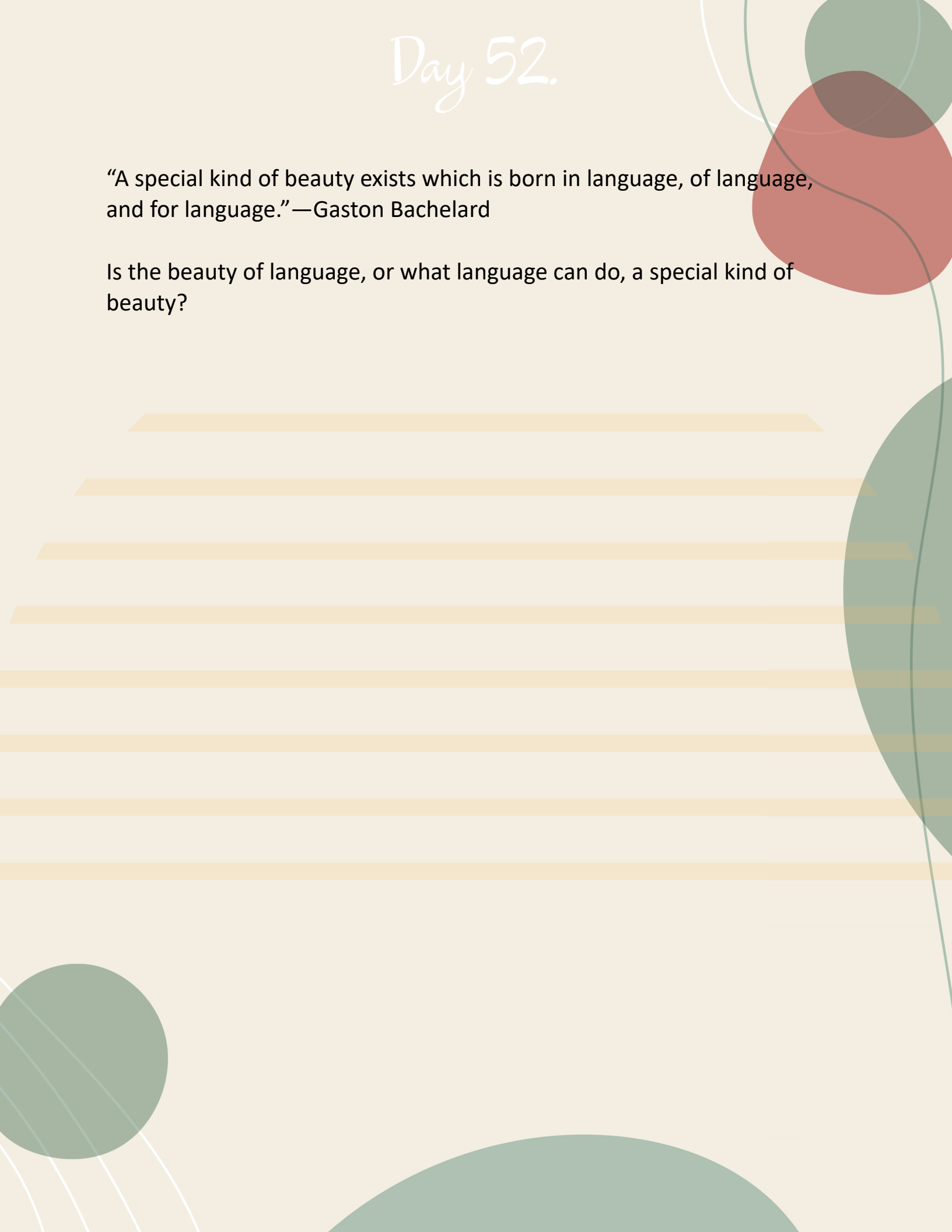
What might you do to make yourself more beautiful inside?



# Day 52.

“A special kind of beauty exists which is born in language, of language, and for language.” —Gaston Bachelard

Is the beauty of language, or what language can do, a special kind of beauty?

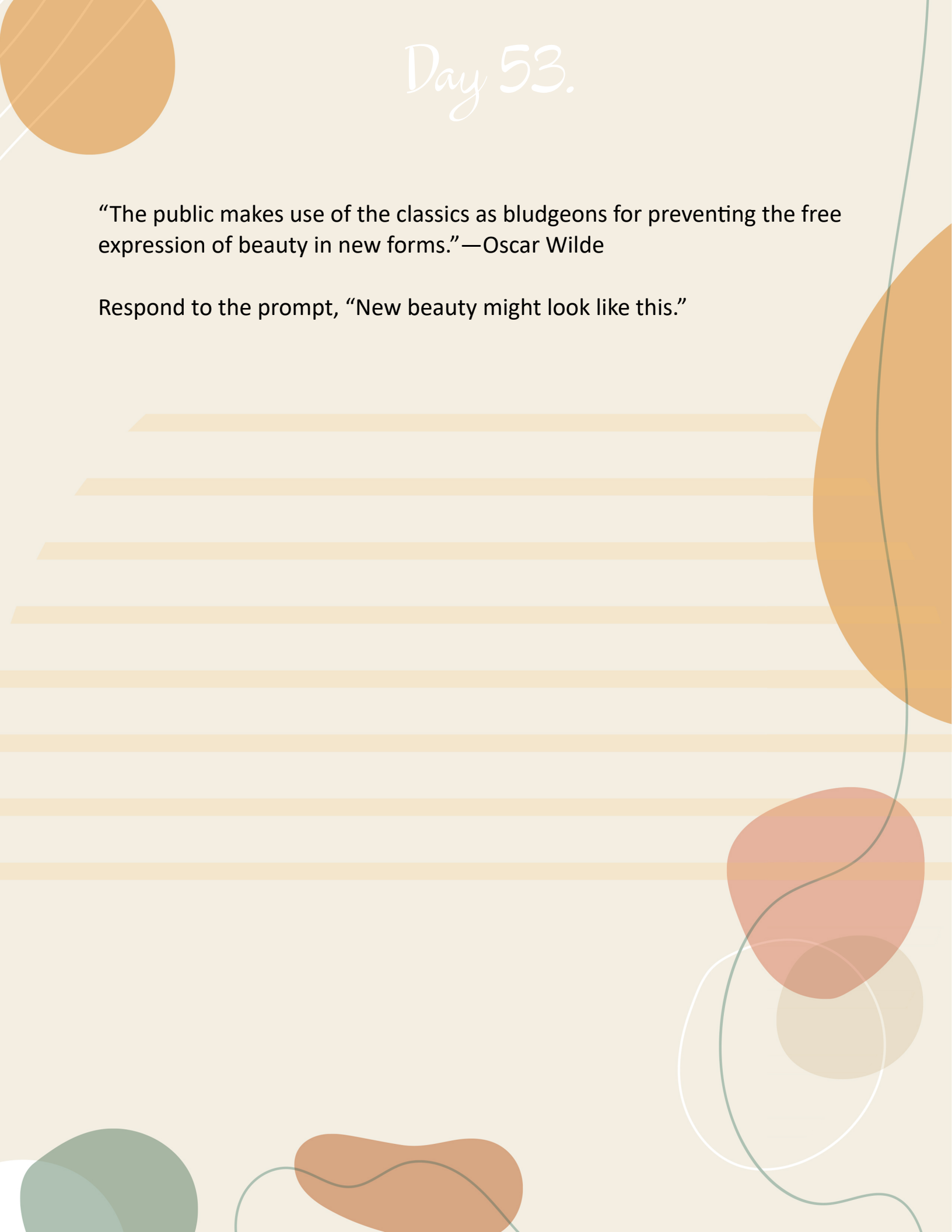




# Day 53.

“The public makes use of the classics as bludgeons for preventing the free expression of beauty in new forms.” —Oscar Wilde

Respond to the prompt, “New beauty might look like this.”



# Day 54.

“Maybe I have concentrated too much on dry bones and too little on the flesh that clothes them. But won’t you concede that the bones have an austere beauty of their own?” —A. B. Pippard

Might there be two kinds of beauty, lush beauty and austere beauty?



# Day 55.

“Where beauty is worshipped as a goddess, independent of morality and philosophy, the most horrible putrefaction is apt to set in.” —Aldous Huxley

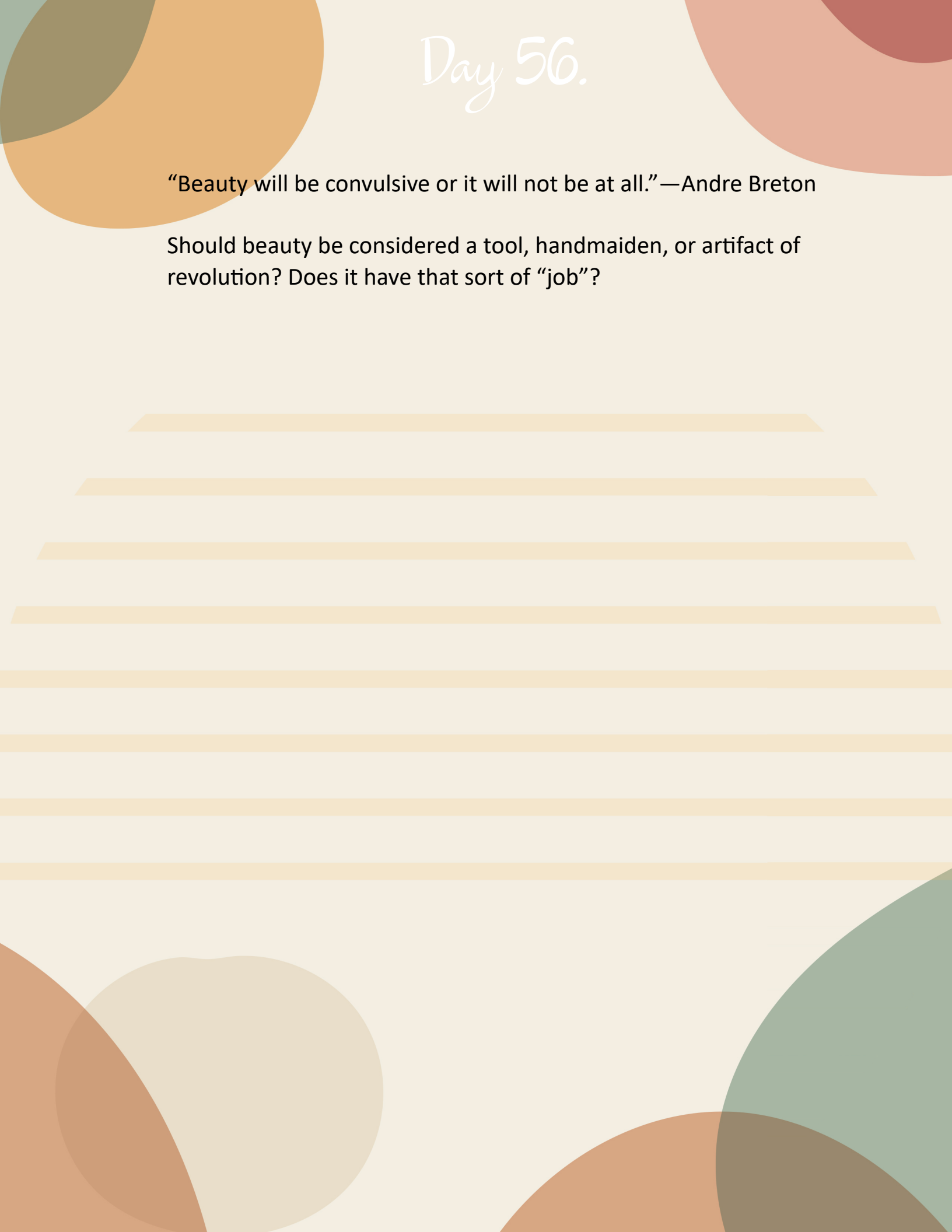
Respond to the prompt, “We must be careful not worship beauty-for-beauty’s-sake.”

The background features abstract organic shapes in shades of orange, green, and yellow. A series of horizontal yellow lines of varying lengths and thicknesses are positioned below the text, serving as a guide for writing. The overall design is minimalist and modern.

# Day 56.

“Beauty will be convulsive or it will not be at all.”—Andre Breton

Should beauty be considered a tool, handmaiden, or artifact of revolution? Does it have that sort of “job”?









# Day 57.

“It does not matter a hoot what the mockingbird on the chimney is singing. The real and proper question is: Why is it beautiful?”

—Annie Dillard

Do we want the beautiful song or do we want to know why it is a beautiful song? Or do we perhaps want sometimes the one and sometimes the other?

# Day 58.

“Dive deep, O mind, dive deep in the ocean of God's beauty!”

—Bengali Hymn

Does creating beauty seem more like soaring or more like diving?





# Day 59.

“Mathematics possess not only truth but supreme beauty, a beauty cold and austere like that of sculpture.” —Bertrand Russell

What is “cold beauty”?



# Day 60.

“Beauty halts and freezes the melting flux of nature.”—Camille Paglia

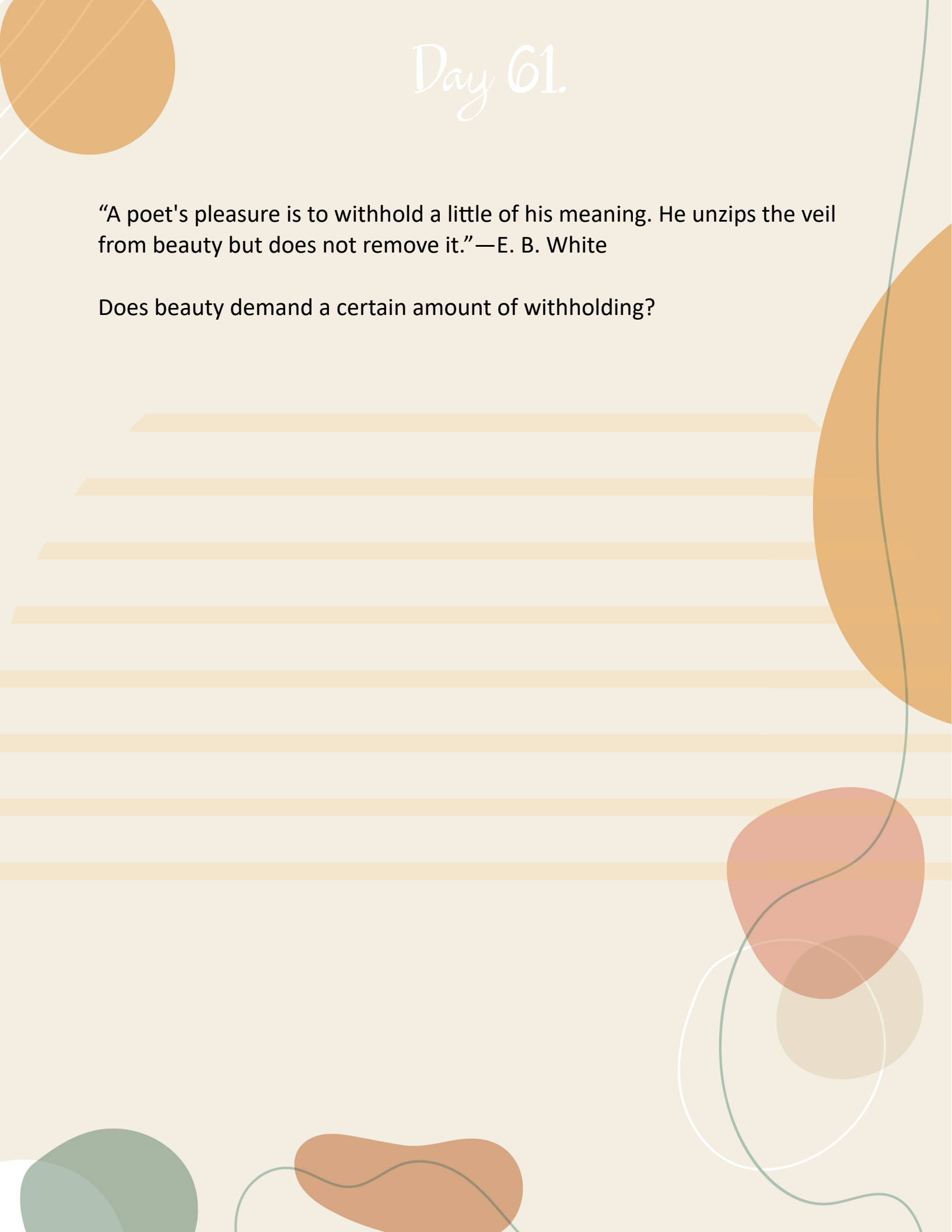
Time melts away. Can beauty halt that?



# Day 61.

“A poet's pleasure is to withhold a little of his meaning. He unzips the veil from beauty but does not remove it.”—E. B. White

Does beauty demand a certain amount of withholding?



# Day 62.

“United with reason, imagination is the mother of all art and the source of all its beauty.” —Francisco Goya

What sort of process is the “uniting of reason with imagination”? Can it be described?

A series of horizontal orange lines for writing, with decorative abstract shapes in green, orange, and yellow at the corners.

# Day 63.

“I believe in the might of design, the mystery of color, and the redemption of all things by beauty everlasting.” —George Bernard Shaw

Journal on the prompt, “Beauty and redemption are connected.”

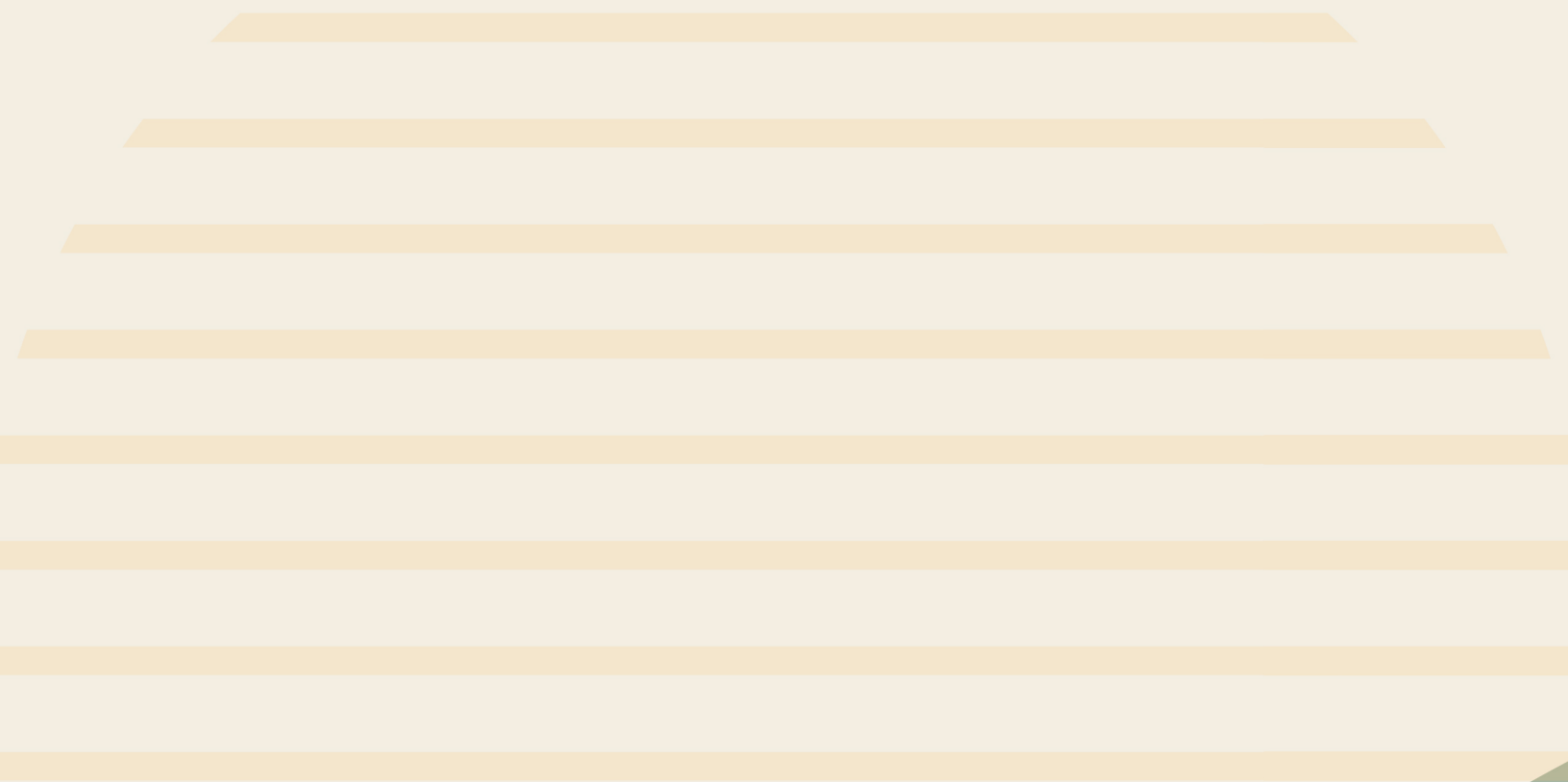
The writing area features a series of horizontal lines for text entry. The top four lines are yellow with a 3D effect, while the remaining lines are solid yellow. The page is decorated with abstract organic shapes in orange, green, and yellow in the corners and along the bottom edge.



# Day 64.

“Though we travel the world over to find the beautiful, we must carry it with us or we find it not.” —Ralph Waldo Emerson

Respond to the prompt, “I carry beauty within me.”



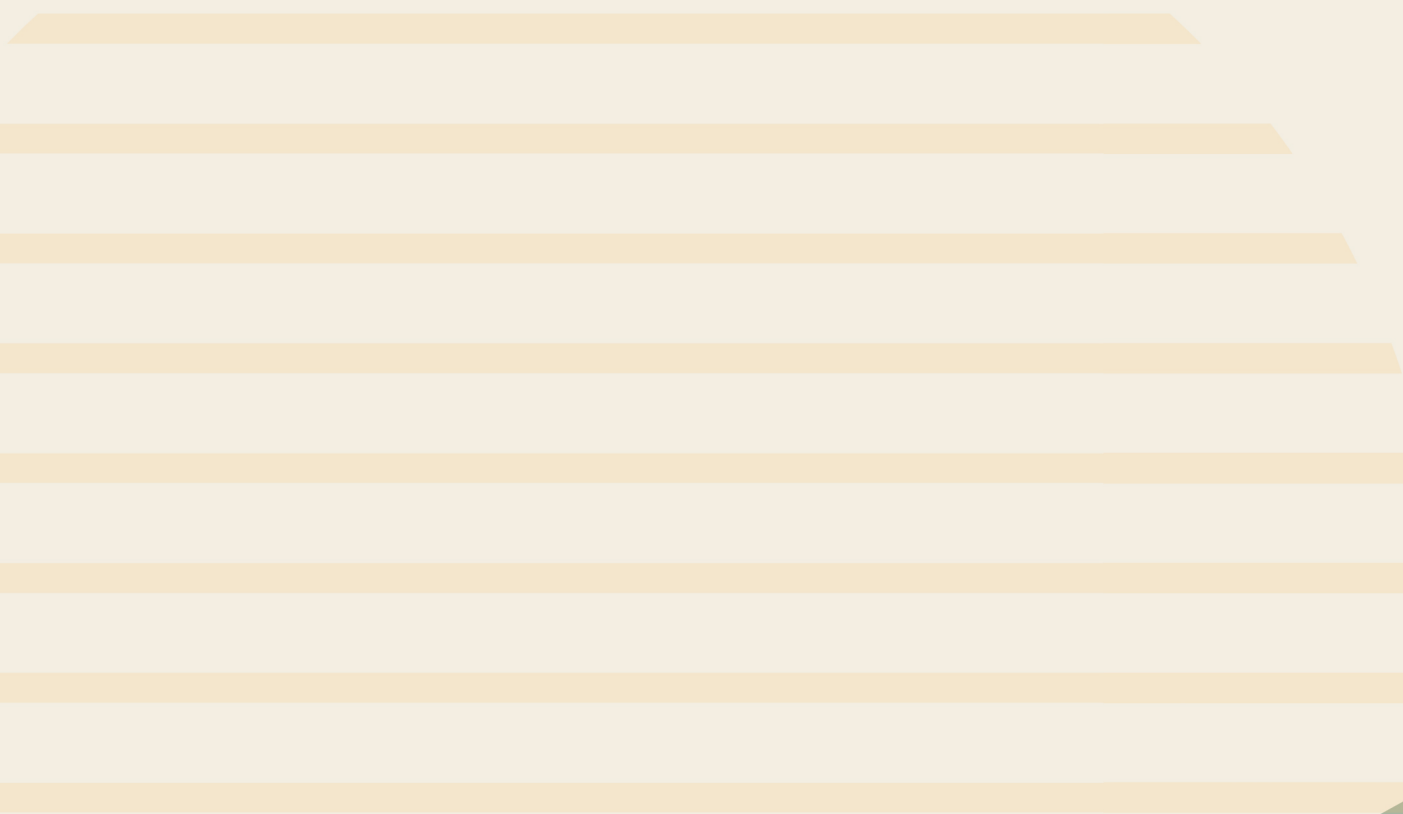




# Day 65.

“A new beauty has been added to the splendor of the world—the beauty of speed.” —Tommaso Marinetti

Is there beauty in speed?





# Day 66.

“Beauty is not the purpose of creation, it is its reward.” —Gyula Halasz

Respond to the question, “In what sense should beauty be construed as a reward?”



# Day 67.

“A painter was asked why, since he made such beautiful figures, his children were so ugly; to which the painter replied that he made his pictures by day and his children by night.”—Leonardo da Vinci

What can we make beautiful and what is beyond us to make beautiful?



# Day 68.

"I seated ugliness on my knee and almost immediately grew tired of it."  
—Salvador Dali

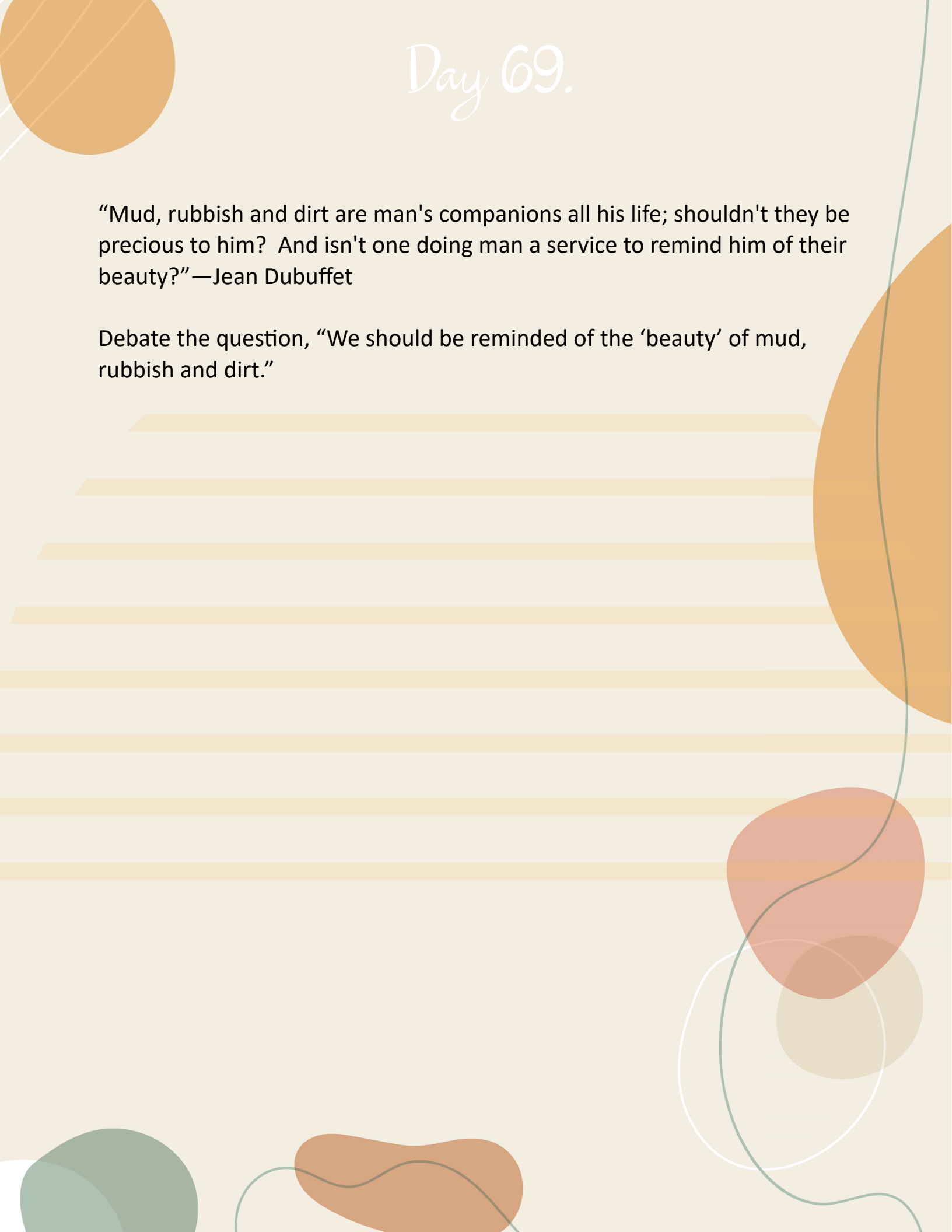
Maybe ugliness intrigues us. But would that grow tiresome quickly?



# Day 69.

“Mud, rubbish and dirt are man's companions all his life; shouldn't they be precious to him? And isn't one doing man a service to remind him of their beauty?”—Jean Dubuffet

Debate the question, “We should be reminded of the ‘beauty’ of mud, rubbish and dirt.”



# Day 70.

“I threw the bottle rack and the urinal in their faces and now they admire them for their aesthetic beauty.” —Marcel Duchamp

Should “beauty” be entrusted to the art establishment, if urinals become beautiful because art professionals say they are?



# Day 71.

“When I'm working on a problem, I never think about beauty. I think only how to solve the problem. But when I have finished, if the solution is not beautiful, I know it is wrong.” —R. Buckminster Fuller

Respond to the prompt, “Right solutions will always be beautiful solutions.”

A series of horizontal lines for writing. The first four lines are slanted upwards from left to right. The remaining lines are straight and horizontal. The lines are light yellow and set against a light beige background.



# Day 72.

“Beauty and sadness always go together.” —George MacDonald

Do beauty and sadness always go together? If so, why?







# Day 73.

“Loads of people, particularly artists, hate pretty pictures.”  
—David Hockney

What makes something pretty and something else beautiful?

# Day 74.

“That is beautiful which is produced by an inner need springing from the soul.” —Wassily Kandinsky

Can the beautiful be produced through indifference? Or must there always be an inner need?



# Day 75.

“The emotion of beauty is always obscured by the appearance of the object. Therefore, the object must be eliminated from the picture.”

—Piet Mondrian

Respond to the prompt, “Which is more beautiful, a real thing or an abstracted thing?”

A series of horizontal yellow lines for writing, with decorative abstract shapes in the corners. The shapes include overlapping circles and leaf-like forms in muted green, red, and beige tones. A thin white line curves around the bottom right corner.

# Day 76.

“I decided that if I could paint that flower in a huge scale, you could not ignore its beauty.” —Georgia O'Keeffe

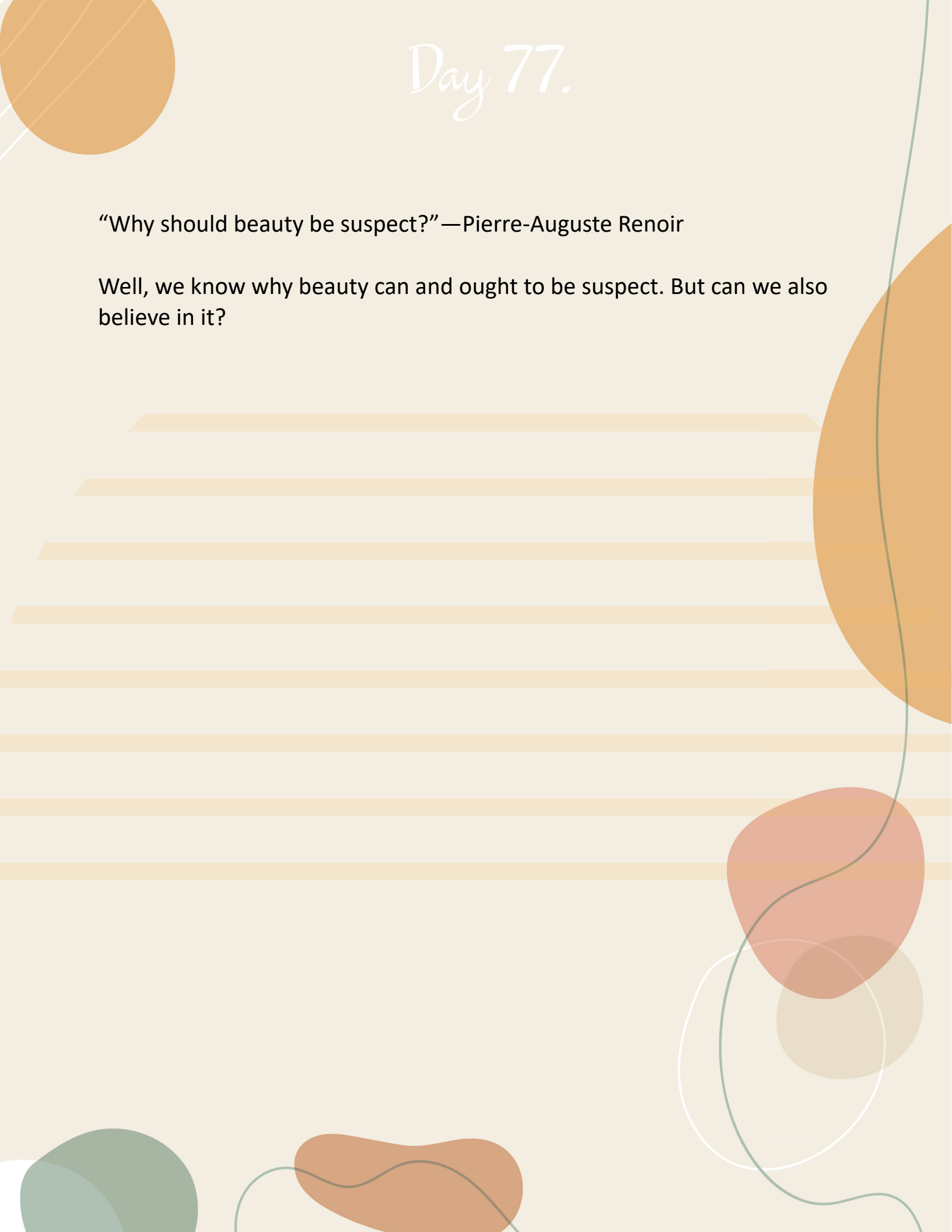
What practice might help you not ignore beauty?



# Day 77.

“Why should beauty be suspect?” —Pierre-Auguste Renoir

Well, we know why beauty can and ought to be suspect. But can we also believe in it?



# Day 78.

“How beautiful the leaves grow old. How full of light and color are their last days.” —John Burroughs

Respond to the prompt, “My last days can be full of light and color.”



# Day 79.

“Beauty is the love that we devote to an object.” —Paul Serusier

As you are the beauty in life, how shall you love yourself?

The background features abstract organic shapes in shades of orange, green, and yellow. A series of horizontal lines, some solid and some dashed, are arranged to provide a space for writing. The lines are light yellow and have a slight 3D effect with a darker yellow shadow on the right side. There are four dashed lines at the top, followed by six solid lines, and then more dashed lines at the bottom. The overall design is clean and modern, with a focus on providing a space for reflection and writing.



# Day 80.

“Beauty is a long, solitary walk over Cornish cliffs on a crisp winter’s day.” —John Le Carré

Complete the thought, “Beauty is ... ”



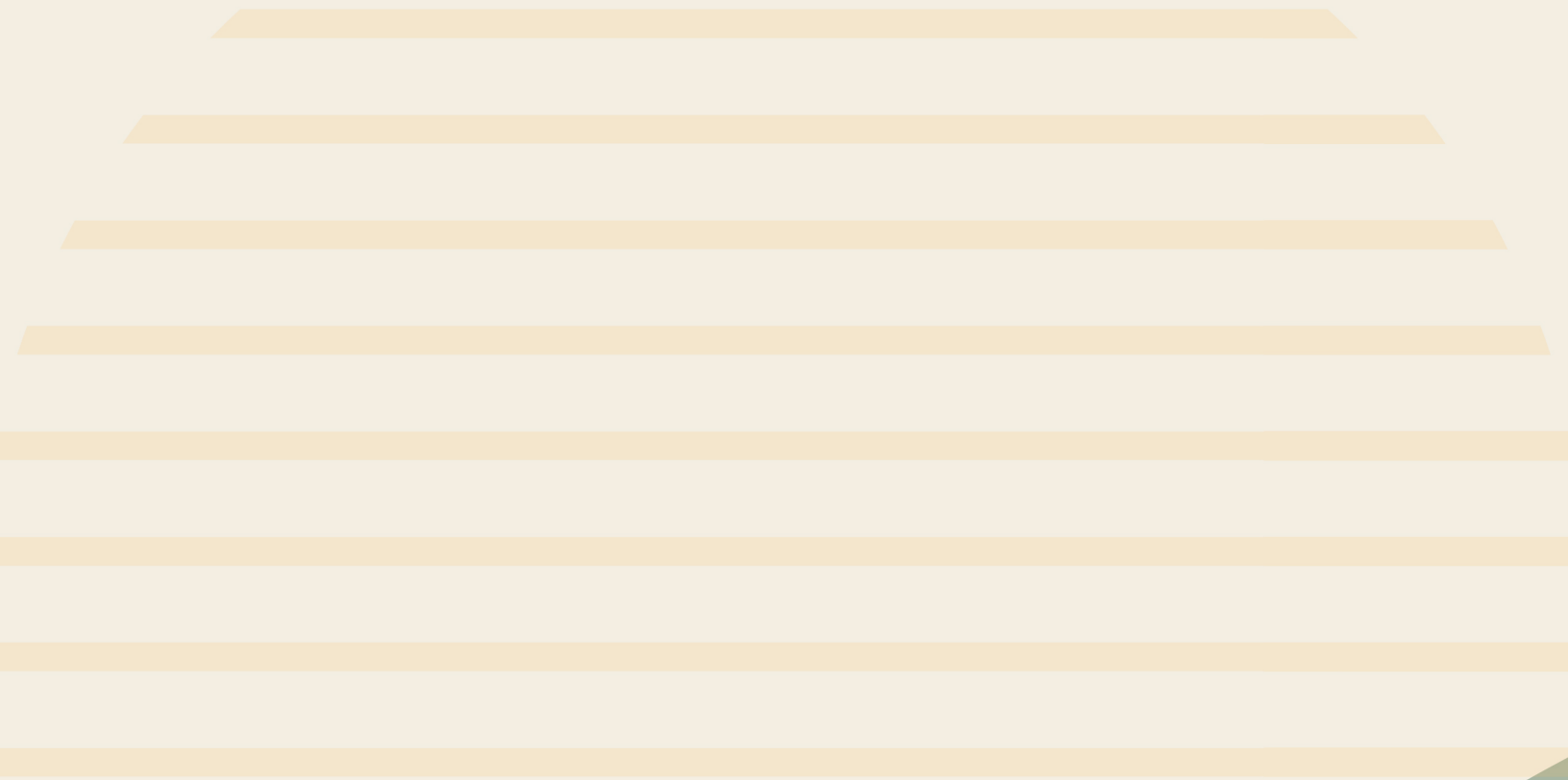




# Day 81.

“When I think of beauty I think of rhythm—in painting and in sculpture, and, since I am not musical, in the arrangement of words.”—A. S. Byatt

Respond to the prompt, “I am alert to the rhythms of beauty.”



# Day 82.

“It is not sufficient to see and to know the beauty of a work. We must feel and be affected by it.” —Voltaire

Respond to the prompt, “Beauty is about feeling as well as knowing.”



# Day 83.

“The greater your capacity for love, the more beauty you find in the world.” —Jane Smiley

How might you increase your capacity for love, and thereby find more beauty in the world?



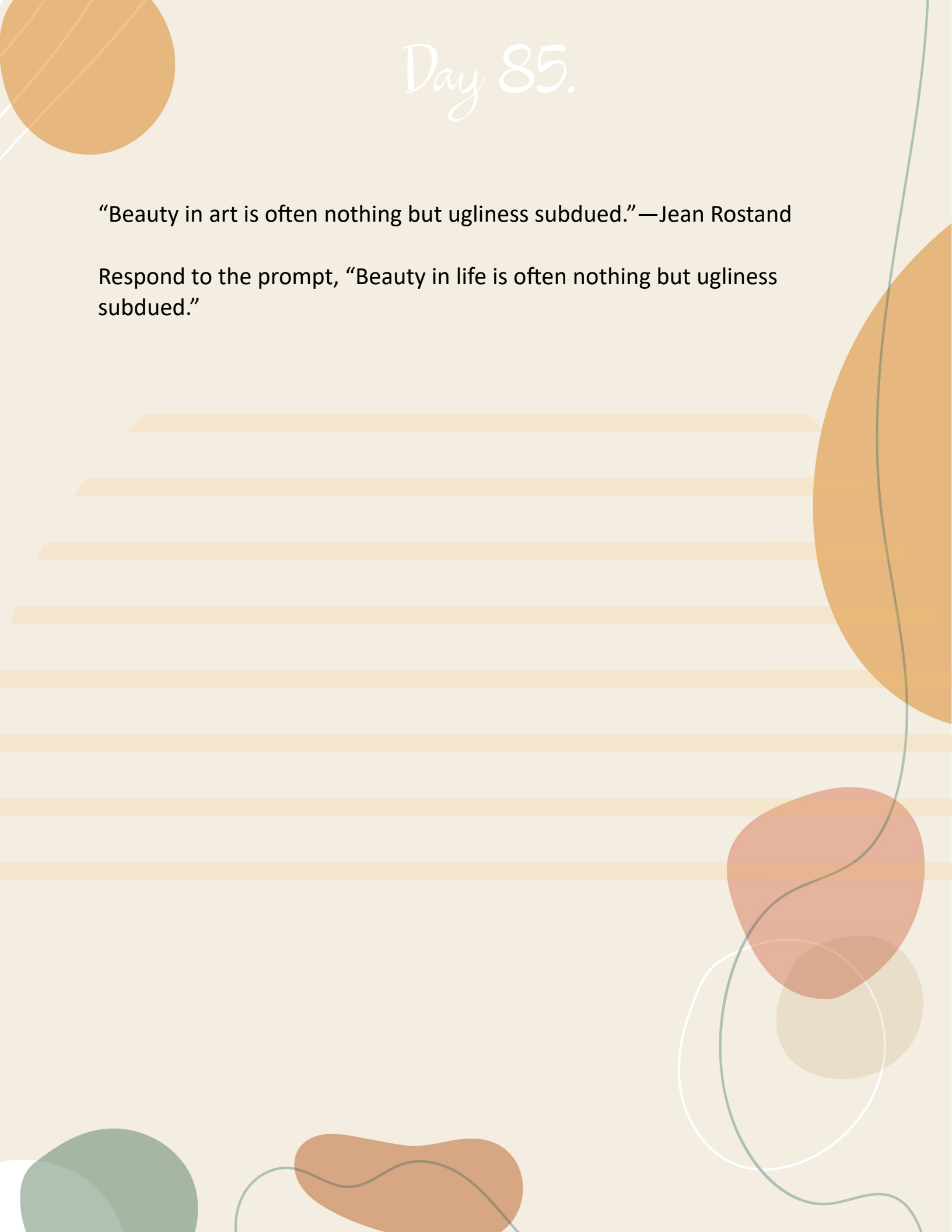
“Knowing this to be a worthless life, why do I keep living on? Because this life contains something called beauty.” —Nagai Kafu

Respond to the prompt, “Beauty is one reason for living.”

# Day 85.

“Beauty in art is often nothing but ugliness subdued.” —Jean Rostand

Respond to the prompt, “Beauty in life is often nothing but ugliness subdued.”



# Day 86.

“In nature, nothing is perfect and everything is perfect. Trees can be contorted, bent in weird ways, and they're still beautiful.”—Alice Walker

Respond to the prompt, “I may be contorted and bent in weird ways, but I am still beautiful.”

A series of horizontal orange lines for writing, with decorative organic shapes in green, orange, and yellow at the corners.

# Day 87.

“In such ugly times, the only true protest is beauty.” —Phil Ochs

How will you protest beautifully?

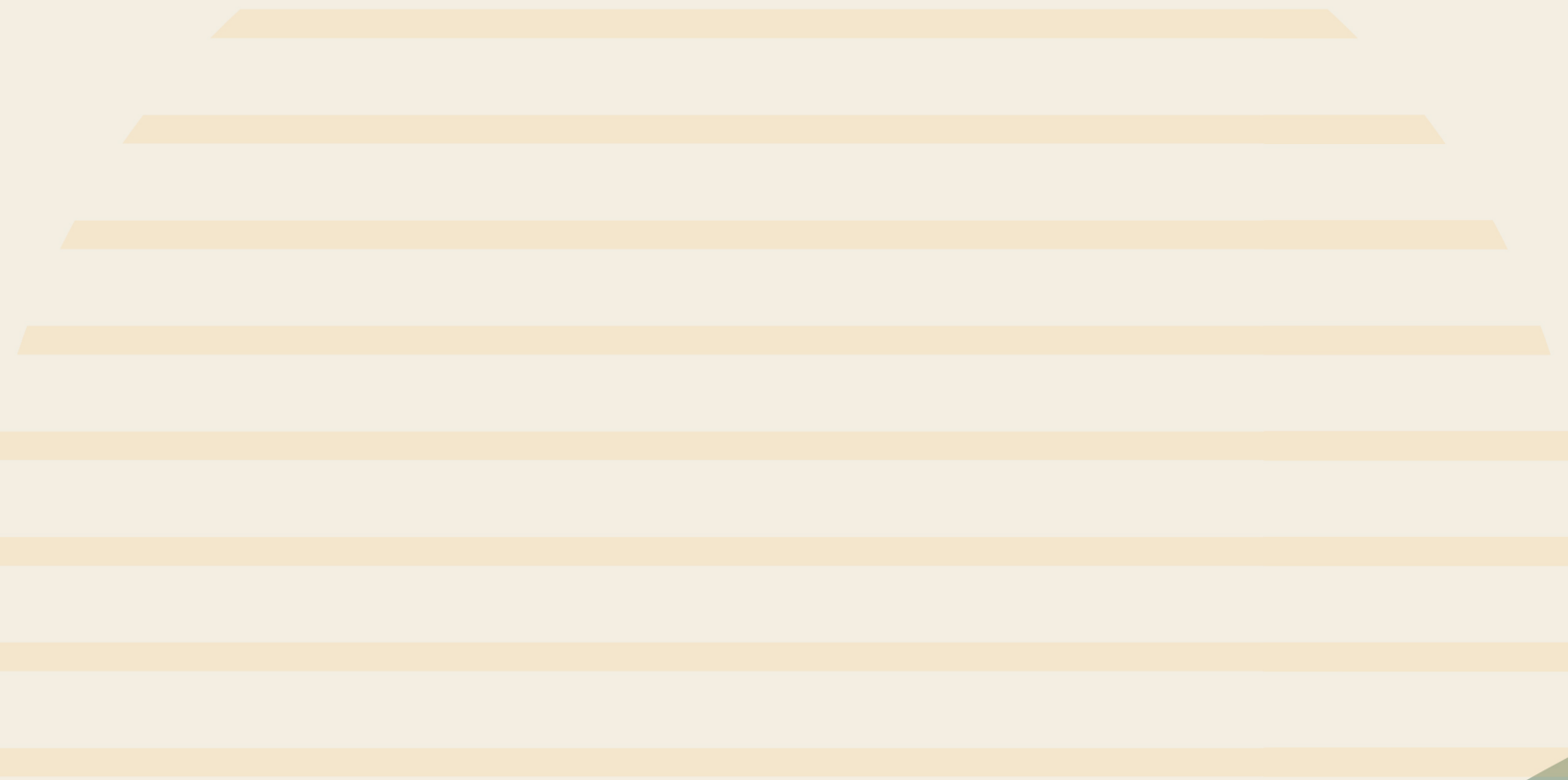
A series of horizontal lines for writing. The first four lines are slanted upwards from left to right. The remaining lines are straight and horizontal. The lines are a light beige color and are spaced evenly down the page.



# Day 88.

“The impulse of modern art is the desire to destroy beauty.”  
—Barnett Newman

As the beauty in life, what impulses do you want to nurture?



A series of horizontal lines for writing. The first four lines are slanted, and the remaining six lines are straight.







# Day 89.

“I never saw an ugly thing in my life: for if you let the form of an object be what it may, light, shade, and perspective will always make it beautiful.” —John Constable

How might you go about transforming the ugly into the beautiful?

# Day 90.

“Beauty is one of the rare things that do not lead to doubt of God.”

—Jean Anouilh

Well, we may retain our doubts about gods but not doubt that beauty exists or that we are the beauty in life. Respond to the prompt, “I have no doubt that I am the beauty in life.”



## **About Eric Maisel**

Eric Maisel is the author of 50+ books. His interests include creativity and the creative life, life purpose and meaning, mental health and emotional wellbeing, and critical psychology and critical psychiatry. His books include *Coaching the Artist Within*, *Fearless Creating*, *The Van Gogh Blues*, *Life Purpose Boot Camp*, *Mastering Creative Anxiety*, *The Future of Mental Health*, *Why Smart People Hurt*, *Why Smart Teens Hurt*, *The Power of Daily Practice*, and *Redesign Your Mind*.

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