

Mrs Midas

Half-rhyme suggests relaxed atmosphere in the kitchen. Things are easy and mull along.

A time when the colour gold appears naturally. It is also when things come to an end, as the seasons change.

It was late September. I'd just poured a glass of wine, begun to unwind, while the vegetables cooked. The kitchen filled with the smell of itself, relaxed, its steamy breath

Mundane domestic description which also shows the comfort she has in the norm.

Imagery
Description is usually applied to the cooking of vegetables, but here it is used to show the harmony of what she is doing, and the things around her. Domestic bliss.

gently blanching the windows. So I opened one, then with my fingers wiped the other's glass like a brow.

Breaks the calm with a violent verb-phrase. Shows how things will change with his new skill.

He was standing under the pear tree snapping a twig.

Imagery
Ominous - what is happening on earth makes things dark for her.

Word Choice
Gold is an unnatural colour in all of this gloom.

Now the garden was long and the visibility poor, the way the dark of the ground seems to drink the light of the sky, but that twig in his hand was gold. And then he plucked a pear from a branch. – we grew Fondante d'Automne –

Imagery
Translates to 'melting autumn'

Imagery
A moment of realisation that things are going to change.

and it sat in his palm, like a lightbulb. On.

Disbelief

I thought to myself, Is he putting fairy lights in the tree?

Series of short sentences
She's taking things step-by-step and is analysing what he is doing.

He came into the house. The doorknobs gleamed.

He drew the blinds. You know the mind; I thought of the Field of the Cloth of Gold and of Miss Macready.

When King Henry VIII met King Francis I they, rather than fighting, tried to out-do each other with wealth. She implies here that he has become obsessed by money.

Acknowledgement of gender-roles.

He sat in that chair like a king on a burnished throne.

The look on his face was strange, wild, vain. I said,

Metaphor
Image underlines the difference between his greed, and his basic needs, which he forgot when he made this wish.

What in the name of God is going on? He started to laugh.

Refers to the Housekeeper in 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' who was more concerned with showing off the house than looking after the children.

I served up the meal. For starters, corn on the cob.

Within seconds he was spitting out the teeth of the rich.

He toyed with his spoon, then mine, then with the knives, the fork

He asked where was the wine. I poured with a shaking hand

a fragrant, bone-dry white from Italy, then watched

as he picked up the glass, goblet, golden chalice, drank.

Shakespeare coined the phrase 'poison chalice' which refers to a situation which seems profitable, but which has hidden consequences.

A chalice was also used at the 'Last Supper' which implies that things are ending for them.

Use of humour
- the toilet can
be referred to
as the 'throne'.

It was then that I started to scream. He sank to his knees.

After we'd both calmed down, I finished the wine

on my own, hearing him out. I made him sit

on the other side of the room and keep his hands to himself.

I locked the cat in the cellar. I moved the phone.

The toilet I didn't mind. I couldn't believe my ears:

how he'd had a wish. Look, we all have wishes; granted.

But who has wishes granted? Him. Do you know about gold?

It feeds no one; aurum, soft, untarnishable; slakes

no thirst. He tried to light a cigarette; I gazed, entranced,

as the blue flame played on its luteous stem. At least,

I said, you Word Choice for good.

Imagery/Techniques
Sentence Structure

Separate beds. In fact, I put a chair against my door,

near petrified. He was below, turning the spare room

into the tomb of Tutankhamun. You see, we were passionate then,

in those halcyon days; unwrapping each other, rapidly,
like presents, fast food. But now I feared his honeyed embrace,

the kiss that would turn my lips to a work of art.

And who, when it comes to the crunch, can live
with a heart of gold? That night, I dreamt I bore

his child, its perfect ore limbs, its little tongue

like a precious latch, its amber eyes

holding their pupils like flies. My dream milk

burned in my breasts. I woke to the streaming sun.

The practicalities
of his 'gift'. She
uses humour
here to show that
the passion in
their relationship
has ceased.

Blunt sentence
underlines her
disgust that he has
been granted this.

List of the
aesthetic
qualities of gold -
but this is as far
as it goes, it has
no real worth in
their relationship.

Imagery
Implies that he is
building himself a
golden tomb, which he
will die in ... his gift
will kill him.

Unusual syntax
to create a
word-play.
It implies that
she is angry
that he,
typically, has
had his wish
granted.

Imagery
Implies that her
desires can't be
met with his
golden touch ...

Shows how the
distance
between them
develops ...
first to
separate beds,
then to
separate
floors.

A
mythological
time in the
middle of
winter where
the weather
is calm.

So he had to move out. We'd a caravan
in the wilds, in a glade of its own. I drove him up
under the cover of dark. He sat in the back.
And then I came home, the woman who married the fool
who wished for gold. At first, I visited, odd times,
parking the car a good way off, then walking.

You knew you were getting close. Golden trout
on the grass. One day, a hare hung from a larch,
a beautiful lemon mistake. And then his footprints,
glistening next to the river's path. He was thin,
delirious; hearing, he said, the music of Pan
from the woods. Listen. That was the last straw.

What gets me now is not the idiocy or greed
but lack of thought for me. Pure selfishness. I sold
the contents of the house and came down here.
I think of him in certain lights, dawn, late afternoon,
and once a bowl of apples stopped me dead. I miss most,
even now, his hands, his warm hands on my skin, his touch.

Carol Ann Duffy