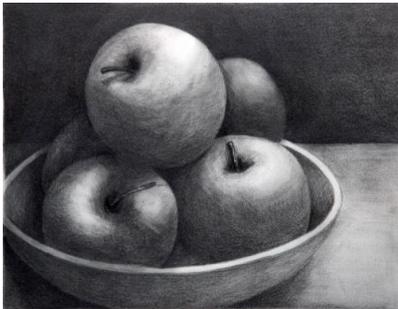


English Department



National 5 Specified Texts:
Carol Ann Duffy
Revision Booklet

The speaker of this dramatic monologue is the fictional Miss Havisham from Charles Dickens' Great Expectations. Jilted by her lover, Miss Havisham spends the rest of her life decaying in her wedding dress amid the remains of her wedding breakfast, scheming revenge on men.

Title lacks 'Mrs' as a reminder that she is forced to live the remainder of her life as a spinster.

Havisham

Word choice: oxymoron shows how confused and divided her mind is. Minor sentence adds impact to opening. The use of the swear word and alliteration of the plosive 'b' sounds creates the impression that the words are almost being spat out in bitter hatred.

Beloved sweetheart bastard. Not a day since then

I haven't wished him dead. Prayed for it

so hard I've **dark green pebbles for eyes,**

Imagery: eyes are green suggesting jealousy and have become pebbles suggesting they are cold and hard like stone. Veins on the back of her hands protrude like ropes with which she has murderous thoughts.

ropes on the back of my hands I could strangle with.

Word choice: Single word Spinster spoken like an insult. Isolated in a sentence on its own to emphasise her own feelings of isolation.

Spinster. I stink and remember. Whole days

in bed **cawing Nooooo** at the wall; the dress

yellowing, trembling if I open the wardrobe;

Word choice: Onomatopoeic 'Nooooo' brings to life the sound of her screams. 'yellowing' has negative connotations with decay and illness. 'slewed' suggests she sees the world through a skewed and disturbed angle.

the **slewed** mirror, full-length, her, myself, **who did this**

to me? Puce curses that are sounds not words.

Structure: completion of the question in the enjambment shows continuation of her suffering. Colour puce has negative associations of disease and fever to create synaesthesia, when one sense, in this case sight, is used to describe another, the sounds of the speaker's curses.

Some nights better, the lost body over me,

my fluent tongue in **its** mouth in **its** ear

Uses 'its' instead of 'his' for her lover - to create a sense of distance from him.

then down till I suddenly **bite awake.** Love's

Word choice: Stanza ends with violent interruption of her dreams. The use of the present tense in bite reminds us that, despite the years, her anger and bitterness are just as raw today. In addition, the choice of the word bite could also imply that she fantasises about inflicting pain on her lover.

hate behind a white veil; a **red balloon bursting**

in my face. **Bang. I stabbed at a wedding cake.**

Imagery: Violent metaphor represents speaker's heart and anger. The plosive 'b' and 'bang' emphasises the shock of this experience. Sudden onomatopoeic Bang in its own sentence returns speaker from dream to her miserable reality.

Give me a male corpse for a long slow honeymoon.

Don't think it's only the heart that b-b-b-breaks.

Imagery: Subverts usual wedding imagery into violent images- stabbing at the cake. Like Havisham, the cake has never fulfilled its purpose and decays. The penultimate line of stanza has sinister, perhaps necrophiliac undertones. Honeymoons are usually linked with happiness but are subverted here to be menacing. Final line is more poignant. The last word is broken up to imitate sound of speaker finally breaking down emotionally and to emphasise her mental state.

Valentine

Title suggests that poem will deal with conventional gifts of love with its connotations of flowers, hearts and romance. However, this is subverted from opening line. By inserting a negative at the opening speaker is dismissing traditional symbols of love and instead presents an object that is much more truthfully representative of love.

Not a red rose or a satin heart.

Imagery: "brown paper" refers both to the texture and colour of the outer layer of onion, also reminds us romantic gifts do not need to be concealed within expensive wrapping. Here onion symbolises a positive aspect of love as it represents honesty, often experienced at beginning of relationship. 'It promises light' also indicates hope in relationship. 'careful undressing of love' refers to sexual relationship (peeling away of clothes) and layers of personality opening up. The word 'careful' suggests tenderness and sensitivity between the lovers.

I give you an onion.

It is a moon wrapped in brown paper.

It promises light

like the careful undressing of love.

Structure: The use of commands establishes the forceful character of the speaker. The full stop and isolated sentence emphasise the forceful presentation of the gift.

Here.

It will blind you with tears

like a lover.

It will make your reflection

a wobbling photo of grief.

Imagery: Gift also bears a warning conveying the idea that this relationship may cause pain and make you cry, just as getting too close to a chopped onion can bring tears. An additional warning in the form of an extended metaphor continues this idea- 'a wobbling photo of grief.'

I am trying to be truthful.

Not a cute card or a kissogram.

Speaker continues to stress desire for honesty within relationship. Before this line, the speaker had described their love in gentle terms, what follows is a change in tone to one which appears to be more brutal and threatening.

I give you an onion.

Its fierce kiss will stay on your lips,

possessive and faithful

as we are,

for as long as we are.

Structure: repetition- the speaker emphasises the importance of this gift being accepted by their lover.

Speaker now highlights not only the romantic, positive aspects of love but its more negative, darker associations. Just like some romantic relationships, it is strong, unpleasant and difficult to erase. Similarly while the word choice of 'faithful' has positive connotations of trust, word choice of 'possessive' suggests an element of jealousy, and insecurity.

Take it.

Structure: Builds to a climax with speaker becoming even more insistent by using imperative command.

Its **platinum loops shrink to a wedding ring,**

if you like.

Imagery: Compares white rings of onion with wedding ring. Just as onion shrinks to smaller and smaller rings so too can love in a relationship diminish.

Lethal.

Its **scent will cling to your fingers,**

cling to your knife.

Structure: Single minor sentence and powerful adjective "Lethal" reinforces notion of death to freedom if a long-term union is pursued. Scent from relationship suggests that the memory of a deep relationship may last, even long after it has ended.

Imagery: Even where powerful love is difficult to forget, it may lead you into dangerous situations where the final outcome could be brutal and violent as suggested by the final word knife. A knife can slice through an onion just as honest language can reveal the truth concerning a loving relationship.

Duffy was inspired to write this poem by a friendship with a war photographer. She was interested in the difficulties that come with the job- having to capture the pain and suffering of war without being able to help directly. She also asks us to consider our own response to such pictures and how we have become desensitized to such images.

War Photographer

Place of peace and calm. Safe from dangers of his work- photographer is an outsider.

Alliteration/Metaphor. Harsh S sound reminds us of the harsh world he works in. **Personification** - spools can't suffer but the images they hold are of suffering. Therefore once the spools are developed they bring the suffering to life.

In his **dark room** he is finally **alone**

with **spools of suffering** set out in **ordered rows**.

"Ordered" - He is trying to make sense of things. The spools are also compared to soldiers - dead or alive - as they are "set out in ordered rows." Image of ranks of soldiers or mass graves in rows.

The only light is **red** and softly glows,

as though this were a church and he

a **priest** preparing to intone a Mass.

'Red' - Room is lit like a church sanctuary lamp. Also has connotations of blood. He is compared to a priest and there is a definite sense of ritual in the way he develops his film.

Belfast. Beirut. Phnom Penh. All flesh is grass.

List of places where he has recorded images of conflict. Use of full stops helps to "fix" the images - final part of the printing process - into the mind of the reader. 'all flesh is grass' comes from New Testament and reinforces the religious imagery as well as emphasising fragility of life.

He has a job to do. **Solutions slop in trays**

beneath his hands, **which did not tremble then**

though seem to now. **Rural England. Home again**

to ordinary pain which simple weather can dispel,

to fields which don't explode beneath the feet

of **running children in a nightmare heat.**

'Solutions slop in trays' - double meaning, referring to the onomatopoeic sound of the chemicals used to develop but also the hope that in some way these photographs may help to bring about a solution to the conflicts they depict.

Photographer must distance himself from the subjects of his photographs. However, he is able to let down his guard in the privacy of the darkroom as he allows himself to react to the terrible suffering he witnessed.

Contrast between **Rural England** and war zones, noting how our ordinary problems can disappear easily with nice weather. The injustice of the situation is exemplified when he notes how our children don't have to be fearful of landmines when they are at play.

Something is happening. A stranger's features

faintly start to twist before his eyes,

a **half-formed ghost.** He remembers the cries

of this man's wife, how he sought approval

without words to do what **someone must**

and how the blood stained into foreign dust.

Direct reference to a famous war photograph taken during the Vietnam war. This image helped to highlight the horror of this war.

Something is happening- injects drama and suspense into poem. Here, Duffy allows us to "see" the horrific photograph develop before our eyes.

half formed ghost - The photographer has captured the image of a man in his dying moments. This description is dually effective since it both describes the way the figure is gradually appearing on the paper, while also alluding to the fact that since he no longer exists he has effectively become a ghost.

The photographer recalls how, unable to speak the same language, he sought approval through the unspoken exchange of looks with the victim's wife. Again the connection to a priest is effective here as they, like this photographer, must tend to people in their final moments. Just like a priest, he feels his job is a vocation - a calling rather than a career as he asserts he does what someone must.

As the poet begins to reach her conclusion, she makes a comment on the way these images are received by the people they are produced for: both the newspaper editors who commission the work and us, the readers of these publications.

A hundred agonies in black and white

from which his editor will **pick out five or six**

for Sunday's supplement. The **reader's eyeballs prick**

with tears between the bath and pre-lunch beers.

From the aeroplane he stares impassively at where

he earns his living and **they** do not care.

The **hundred agonies** that the photographer has selected for his editor contrasts immediately with the phrase 'will pick out five or six' in the next line. The careless way the editor selects the images reinforces how little care we have for the subjects in the pictures.

Duffy extends this uncaring response to us, the readers of the newspapers, using pathos to describe how we feel sorry but only in between our social

The poem ends with the photographer departing once more for a new job as the cycle begins again. He feels isolated from his countrymen as he refers to us as 'they', emphasising how little he identifies with our lives and values. As he looks at the landscape of England from the aeroplane, there is a growing acceptance that, despite his best efforts, his photographs will ultimately make no real difference.

In this autobiographical poem, Duffy considers the sense of isolation and confusion she felt as a child when her family moved from the Gorbals in Glasgow to England. She describes both the literal details of the journey and the move as well as the deeper, metaphorical journey that she and her family experienced as a result of this decision. As the title suggests, she considers to what extent our identity is shaped and defined not only by our environment but by changes in dialect and culture.

Originally

Decision affected her entire family unit through the first person plural "We"

We came from our own country in a red room

Describes interior of train. Colour red has connotations of passion or anger, reflecting her own feelings about being forced to leave the city of her birth. Word choice and alliteration of "**fell**" and "**fields**" emphasises her lack of control in the making of this important decision.

which fell through the fields, our mother singing

our **father's name** to the turn of the wheels.

The optimistic mood of her mother acts as contrast to negativity of Duffy herself and is also slightly ambiguous - the reader is unsure whether their father is in the train carriage with them or if they are travelling to meet him at their destination.

My brothers cried, one of them bawling, **Home,**

Home, as the **miles rushed back to the city,**

Brothers emotions seem to reflect her own: they are crying and one of them is bawling "**Home, Home.**" The repetition and capitalisation of the word "**home**" reinforces the misery and overwhelming sense of loss she associates with this time.

the street, the house, the vacant rooms

where we didn't live any more. I stared

Personification emphasises her own desire to return to Glasgow, to reverse this trip. In contrast to her younger siblings, who are loud, Duffy is silent. Word choice "**blind**" shows her uncertainty and anxiety in future.

at the eyes of a **blind toy**, holding its paw.

All childhood is an emigration. Some are slow,

This metaphor reveals key idea explored by Duff. Childhood itself is equated with changes and transitions that are often beyond our control, just as emigration is.

leaving you standing, resigned, up an avenue

Elongated, drawn out phrasing of first three lines emphasises the "**slow**" stages of childhood and provides a contrast with the short, abrupt sentences that follow. Her sense of confusion is reinforced as she recalls "**Corners, which seem familiar**" leading to "**unimagined, pebble-dashed estates.**" The word choice of "**seem**" and "**unimagined**" exposes her confusion in this new, strange and unfamiliar landscape.

where no one you know stays. Others are sudden.

Your accent wrong. **Corners, which seem familiar,**

leading to unimagined pebble-dashed estates, big boys

Underpins her sense of confusion as she is confronted by behaviour and language that is alien to her.

eating worms and shouting words you don't understand.

My parents' anxiety stirred **like a loose tooth**

Optimism of her mother in the first stanza has been replaced with an "**anxiety**" that "**stirred like a loose tooth.**" Simile emphasises that her parents are struggling with move. Italicisation of final line reminds us of autobiographical nature of poem and refers back to the first line of stanza one.

in my head. *I want our own country,* I said.

"**But**" indicates change in writer's line of thought as she meditates on inevitability of change. She uses the second person "**you forget, or don't recall**" to involve the reader.

But then you forget, or don't recall, or change,

and, seeing your brother **swallow a slug,** feel only

Speaker is older and more reflective as she considers her own gradual transition. "**swallow a slug**" refers back to boys eating worms in second stanza - this act is evidence that he now fits into his new home.

a **skelf of shame.** I remember my tongue

Use of Scottish dialect "**a skelf of shame**" shows that she still feels attached to her Scottish roots. She still feels out of place and like a splinter

shedding its skin like a snake, my voice

in the classroom **sounding just like the rest.** Do I only think

Implication that, despite these outward signs that she has adapted, she continues to feel out of place.

I lost a river, culture, speech, sense of first space

and the **right place?** Now, *Where do you come from?*

Question that the poet has been attempting to answer throughout poem and yet still by the end she is nowhere nearer to a resolution. Challenges both herself and us to consider our own notions of self and identity.

strangers ask. *Originally?* And I hesitate.

By the end of the poem it is clear that the poet is no closer to defining her identity. When asked the question "**Where do you come from?**" she still has to qualify and clarify this simple query with the response "**Originally?**" This momentary hesitation reveals that even though she is older, the speaker continues to have mixed feeling about her true origins.

Anne Hathaway was the wife of William Shakespeare. She was seven years his senior and already pregnant when the 18-year-old, Shakespeare married her.

Anne Hathaway

The poem begins with actual extract from Shakespeare's will. Duffy uses it as the catalyst for the poem and imbues the bed with a much more magical and sensual meaning. The "**second best bed**" was in fact the couple's marital bed, while the best was reserved for guests. Duffy imagines, then, that this legacy was the playwright's last romantic gesture.

'Item I gyve unto my wief my second best bed...'

(from Shakespeare's will)

Immediately the reader is transported to a magical landscape filled with metaphor, especially appropriate given that Shakespeare himself was the master of this technique. The bed is a "**spinning world**" suggesting their love made Anne dizzy and was all encompassing.

The "**forests, castles, torchlight, clifftops, seas**" recalls the setting of some of Shakespeare's more famous works. This intimate, sensual tone is continued in the metaphor comparing her lover's words to "**shooting stars which fell to earth as kisses.**"

The bed we loved in was a spinning world
of forests, castles, torchlight, cliff-tops, seas
where he would dive for pearls. My lover's words
were shooting stars which fell to earth as kisses
on these lips; my body now a softer rhyme

Duffy extends the language metaphor - Anne's body is a softer rhyme to her husband's harder, more masculine body, while the erotic touch of his hand on her body is described as "**a verb dancing in the centre of a noun.**"

This deliberate comparison elevates their lovemaking to something poetic and, in doing so, literary terms become loaded with sensuality.

Anne imagines too that, like the characters in his plays, Shakespeare has 'written her', suggesting that it is only when she regards herself through his eyes and imagination that she feels fully alive.

to his, now echo, assonance; his touch
a verb dancing in the centre of a noun.
Some nights I dreamed he'd written me, the bed
a page beneath his writer's hands. Romance
and drama played by touch, by scent, by taste.

The enjambment from line eight continues the extended metaphor from the previous quatrain as the bed is compared to the parchment on which the passion and excitement so associated with the playwright was written.

All the "**romance and drama**" contained in these pages was played out or begun on their bed, and again Duffy implies that the inspiration for his characters and plots came from their lovemaking. The word "**romance**" is deliberately placed at the end of line nine to emphasise that this is what she most associates with their relationship.

The senses "**touch**", "**scent**", and "**taste**" are employed to reinforce just how vividly she can still recall their lovemaking, as though through immersing herself in these memories she can experience this passion once more.

In the other bed, the best, our guests dozed on,
dribbling their prose. My living laughing love –
I hold him in the casket of my widow's head
as he held me upon that next best bed.

In a marked contrast, she compares the poetry and sensuality of their lovemaking with those who slept in the "**other bed.**" In a mocking comment she asserts that they are only capable of "**dribbling their prose.**" The implication is clear - poetry symbolises the most skilful and creative use of language while prose by comparison is ordinary and unexceptional.

At the end of this quatrain, Duffy employs elongated assonance in the phrase "**My living laughing love**" to emphasise again how vividly and clearly the speaker can recall their passion, suggesting that her lover continues in some ways to exist and survive in her memory. The dash creates a pause to allow us to reflect on this idea and prepare us for the resolution and the final couplet.

The final couplet ends with the masculine full rhyme of "**head**" and "**bed**" to provide a defined conclusion to the poem. The metaphor of holding her lover in the protective "**casket**" of her imagination repeats the idea in the previous line that, in our way, our memory of a deceased loved one allows their continued existence. Duffy seems to suggest that this is much more fitting than an urn or coffin which, although they may contain the physical remnants of a body, can never capture the energy of the person's character. By remembering her husband, and replaying her memories of their passion, the speaker is really honouring his true legacy and repaying him for the way that he held her in "**that next best bed.**"

Written from viewpoint of the wife of the mythological King Midas. King Midas was granted a wish that everything he touched would turn to gold. With comical undertones, his wife reflects on her foolish husband's choice and eventually leaves him to waste away in isolation while she laments the loss of their physical relationship and the chance to have a baby together.

Mrs Midas

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 gently blanching the windows**. So I opened one,

then with my fingers wiped the other's glass like a brow.

He was standing under the pear tree snapping a twig.

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 - and it **sat in his palm like a light bulb. On.**

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

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.

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

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

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

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 forks.

He asked where was the wine. I poured with **shaking hand**, a fragrant, bone-dry white from Italy, then watched

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

In the first stanza, Duffy presents Mrs Midas in a typical modern domestic scene, pouring a glass of wine as she cooks and begins to **"unwind"**.

The personified kitchen, **"filled with the smell of itself,"** with its **"steamy breath"** and **"gently blanching the windows"** is in contrast to the life-sapping events that are taking place in the garden, as Midas stands under a pear tree and snaps a twig which then miraculously turns to gold.

Imagery/Structure : This simile suggests both the shape of the pear and the brightness emanating from it. The full stops add a comedic effect, highlighting Mrs Midas' shock of what she has just witnessed. Humor in first thought of Mrs Midas' when she questions whether he is just **"putting fairy lights in the tree?"**

Stanza three describes King Midas entering the house as he turns the doorknobs and blinds into gleaming gold. Wife is reminded of history lessons.

Mrs Midas utters typical expression to show shock/panic.

Mrs Midas attempts a sense of normality by her matter-of-fact tone in serving up dinner:

This comedic effect is maintained as Midas ends up **"...spitting out the teeth of the rich."** This line clearly demonstrates the negative effects of such a **"gift"** as Midas can no longer enjoy the simple pleasures of food, while emphasising that gold teeth are usually only seen in the mouths of the rich.

'Shaking hand' suggests Mrs Midas is worried about the change in husband. Alliteration used to highlight the seriousness and reality of the situation when she witnesses the transformation of a glass into a "golden chalice."

It was then that I started to scream. He sank to his knees.
After we had 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:

The sinking in of reality is further echoed in the first line of stanza five when Mrs Midas "**starts to scream**" while her husband "**sinks to his knees.**"

The stanza ends with Mrs Midas relaying the precautions she takes to protect the cat by locking it in the cellar and then moving the phone, but humorously allowing the toilet to be changed into gold.

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'll be able to give up smoking for good.

The word 'granted' is a pun which is repeated to convey her opinion that, in general, people can and do make wishes but if they are going to be given, then of course her "**fool**" of a husband had to be the one to have his wish come true. She is truly aggrieved by this and goes on to explain the futility of such a wish since gold "**feeds no one.**" In doing so she exposes the inherent lack of real value of gold. Even so, humour is injected to contrast with this harsh fact as Mrs Midas considers, on a more positive note, how the situation will mean that at least Midas will "**...be able to give up smoking for good.**"

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.

The remainder of the poem continues to highlight the damage Midas' gift has done to their relationship with the beginning of stanza seven summarising the full effect in the single statement: "**Separate beds.**"

Mrs Midas' terror of her husband touching her is continued and emphasised as she reveals how she even puts a chair against the door at night because she is "**near petrified**", scared of being turned into gold, a harsh consequence and the reality, should he come near her. Humour again, offers a bit of light relief as she relays how the spare room has been transformed into the impressive "**tomb of Tutankhamun.**" This symbolises that their relationship and dreams are effectively dead.

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 separateness of the couple is further highlighted as she focuses on the physical suffering they must now endure, in contrast to the fulfilling relationship they enjoyed before Midas was granted his wish. These were "**halcyon days,**" days of joy when they were "**passionate**" and "**unwrapping each other, rapidly, like presents, fast food.**" However, she now rightly fears Midas' "**honeyed embrace**" since it would be deadly to her.

In stanza eight, Mrs Midas expresses her sadness now of being deprived of the opportunity to have a real baby.

She begs the question: "**Who...can live with a heart of gold?**" Usually, this expression has positive connotations and is associated with kindness and empathy. Here, this familiar metaphor is ironically inverted as the literal meaning is implied, inferring that it would be impossible to survive as a living being with such a heart. A superficial, initially attractive description of the baby she dreamt about is presented with its "**perfect ore limbs**" and "**amber eyes,**" but this descends into a disturbing image as these flame-coloured eyes are deemed to be "**holding their pupils like flies.**" Sadly, her milk will remain only a "**dream**" too as her breasts can never bear any milk as long as her husband has this "**gift**". Waking to the "**streaming sun**", again, poignantly reminds us that each day she will awake to a world in which gold dominates every waking moment.

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

In Stanza nine, the consequences of the myth and the effect on their lives continues to destroy their relationship as Mrs Midas bluntly informs us: **"So he had to move out."**

She then conveys how she had to drive him to live in their isolated caravan **"under cover of dark"** and how she returns alone as: **"the woman who married the fool,"** clearly blaming her husband for stupidly wishing for gold. She tells of how at first she visited at odd times, always parking the car a safe distance away in case she was affected by his gift.

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.

Stanza ten continues to present images of this solitary, distanced, detached separate lifestyle as she describes the single golden items she discovers on her walk from the parked car to her husband: **"Golden trout"** and **"a hare hung from a larch."** She describes him in a sorrowful state as **"thin, delirious, hearing, he said, the music of Pan."**

This associates him to another Greek god, this time the isolated figure of Pan, who was the god of shepherds and flocks, and we note the irony that a gift so equated with wealth and prosperity should result in such emotional poverty.

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.

The final stanza stresses Mrs Midas' anger at her husband's 'pure selfishness' in making a wish that has not only affected him but also deprived them both of any physical relationship and his wife of a chance to have her dream baby.

In the end, the poet is reminding us that the myth of Midas, normally only viewed in connection with how it affected Midas and his life, also affected his poor wife who, even after all her anger has been unleashed, is still left alone with nothing but a wistful, regretful sense of loss for the man she married. In a poignant line, she remembers fondly their once full, physical relationship and mourns its passing: **"even now, his hands, his warm hands on my skin, his touch."**

The repetition of the words **"hands"** emphasises too that his touch, once a potent symbol of their intimacy is now lost forever and reminds us that, unlike human skin to skin contact, gold is cold and hard.

Some Useful Definitions

Allegory	A story in verse or prose, with a double meaning, which can be read and understood on two levels.
Alliteration	The use of the same initial letter in two or more words in close proximity to create a particular effect, usually intensifying the words. Sometimes the sound of the repeated initial letter adds to the effect.
Ambiguity	When a piece of language can be interpreted in more than one way; often used for humorous effect.
Analogy	An agreement in certain respects between things which are otherwise different.
Assonance	The repetition of similar vowel sounds, usually close together, to create the effect of the sound of the particular vowel used.
Caesura	A break or pause in a line of poetry, often marked by punctuation
Cliché	An idiom or figure of speech (often a metaphor or simile) which has lost its impact through being over-used.
Contrast	Bringing two objects together to show the difference
Enjambment	The continuation of a line of poetry without a break.
Free Verse	Poetry that does not have end rhymes or follow a set rhythm.
Hyperbole	Exaggeration to emphasise the sense of the words
Imagery	Figurative or descriptive language, often, but not necessarily metaphorical to give heightened meaning, reveal feelings etc.
Juxtaposition	Bringing two ideas close together for literary effect, usually contrast.
Mood	Feelings of poet/narrator and/or the way the poet makes you feel when you read the poem.
Onomatopoeia	A figure of speech in which the sound of the word reflects the sound being described.
Oxymoron	A figure of speech in which two words with opposite meanings are brought together to form a new phrase or statement.
Paradox	An apparently contradictory statement
Pun	A play in words that are alike or nearly alike in sound but different in meaning, often for comic effect.
Personification	The attribution of human qualities to inanimate objects
Repetition	When a word or phrase is repeated to create a particular effect, usually to emphasise the idea contained in the words being repeated.
Rhyme	When the sounds at the ends of lines agree with each other.

Rhythm	The pattern of sounds created by a poet's choice and arrangement of words.
Stanza	A group of lines in a poem, forming a definite pattern of rhyme and metre throughout the poem.
Structure	How the poem is laid out, with a beginning, middle and an end.
Synecdoche	A figure of speech in which a part is used to refer to the whole.
Symbolism	A symbol is an object, animate or inanimate, which represents something else, with which it has some connection. A literary symbol has the effect of combining an image with an idea.
Synaesthesia	The mixing of sensations; the appeal to more than one sense at the same time, e.g. "a black look".
Theme	The main subject(s) or message of a poem.
Tone	The poet's or speaker's attitude to his subject, conveyed by the style of writing. Think of the tone of voice you would use if you were saying the words aloud.
Verse	A group of lines which forms a unit in Free Verse, where there is no overall pattern of rhyme or metre.
Word Choice	The actual words chosen by the poet to create a particular or striking effect.