

## Gold

### *Part I*

Fleeting glimpses of the towering marble pillars  
Tell me everything I need to know.  
Gold, real gold, the sunlight-melted-into-glass gold,  
Gleams under the gently swaying diamond chandeliers;  
Even the egg-shell colored walls scream *Do Not Touch*  
In the LED white light that illuminates the bathroom sink,  
Not to mention the squeaky-clean mirrors that show every speck of dirt.

Knees bounce restlessly, hands sticky with sweat,  
The rabid beast that churns out thoughts and fears and life  
Sprints from the speakers with their heavily shined black shoes.  
Bathrooms are diligently scrubbed clean;  
If a sneaker – slightly dirty, mildly used – were to brush  
Against the cleanest tile on the floor,  
Unearthly shrieks would rip from the ground in protest.

It's the bug-like David glaring up at the flyswatter Goliath,  
Except David feels like he isn't worth the dirt  
That sticks to the bottom of Goliath's shoe.  
Goliath would have to point down at David and shout,

*This one! This is the urchin without a silver spoon to clean!*

David would have to curl up in the back of a car not his own and tremble;

He'd wonder how he could ever be worth more than Goliath's janitor.

Tidal waves of *Hi, I'm so-and-so* finally careen through

The sandy, slightly polluted beach –

Candy wrappers, soda cans, half-eaten pizza,

Strange birds squawking eagerly, bonfire wreckages –

Is filled with whispers of fleeting strength and courage

Against the onslaught of the sharp stab

Of squeaky-clean newness of the ocean's tide.

Far too simple to gaze at the gold crust and the trembling diamonds;

Far too simple to stare at the marble-carved babies

Ending up being anything but angelic cherubs.

Hotel smells – Lysol, bleach, other expected chemicals – burn

Deep in the recesses of the mind and nostrils.

If I were to sink down into the cherry colored seat,

I could slip into the sea of freshly polished gold faces.

In the gleaming marble halls, gold adorned statues

That almost resemble King Midas and his sneering, golden gaze

Half-heartedly wave at the newcomers who arrive with their tape-crusted keys

Swinging from the vulnerable parts of their necks.

Someone calls out, the sea of Midas' mimics turns to answer, but their heads,  
Perfectly shined yet the gold foil coating somehow peels away, don't swivel to the left.  
Pity the single golden figure as it turns the other way.

## *Part II*

If the foil-cruled creature trips over its shoelaces just once, the gold disappears.  
Midas mimics turn in stilted ways not quite robotic;  
Laughter breaks out from one, soon followed by a sea of others.  
They all have mismatched socks that peak over the edge of their shoes,  
Nails bitten down a little too far, smiles that stretch a little too wide  
When someone shouts out any slew of certain numbers.  
They come alive as their gold-cruled illusion shatters like painted glass.

I see them at the supermarket, and they scour the clearance aisle.  
What treasures might they find today?  
Ten-cent boxes of candy canes stare at those who  
Scuff their slightly dirty sneakers over too-clean bathroom tiles.  
They pick up the box and twist it and turn it; they must examine it carefully.  
No one really likes mint, but it's on sale, so it might be worth it,  
Yet, who wants to spend a needless ten cents?

A piano sits majestically in a spick-and-span lobby;  
Giggles fill the air as someone's dirty fingers stumble over the keys,

But there is no sour sting of resentment.

Joyous clatter of a chair clanging against the ground breaks, the culprit laughs and bows.

Hot chocolate ice cubes crafted for fun under the cover of nightfall;

Laughter bleeds from the corners of our mouths when a frozen chocolate cube hits the floor.

The world is not quite gold anymore.

Through breathless laughs and gloves covered in snow,

The world becomes chocolate: sweet and inexplicably brown but never plain.

I've always seen gold, gold, gold and ground my teeth when I knew that I wasn't,

Yet from the window my eyes can see a gaggle of poor unsuspecting souls

Caught in the downpour without a single umbrella between them.

The gold was just foil wrapping over a chocolate bar with a joke scribbled on the side;

Now when I see gold, all I can do is laugh.