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Mr. Weber
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“Persephone”

I lived in the Palace - bonnie, braw, bright.
I stood in front of that grand mirror,
showed myself to him

and I told him he looked rather dashing,
sitting on that big bed,
in his all-black suit with his long black beard,

and his bleak, bland face lit up upon seeing my body.
His gaze crawled on my skin; I knew that look he gave me,
wanting me to give him a show,

and I would've loved to do it,
except I slipped on a silky, sparkling, socialite gown that
Mother demanded I wear - “Oh, you will look so elegant my pretty little girl” -

and dealt with his scoffing.
He ran his hand down my back,
suggesting I wear the blue, bawdy dress

but whatever would mother think?
No worries, no worries, he cooed.
You are your own person, time to let yourself blossom

and I could blossom indeed,
that I could do here. Free from *her* grasp,
like the puffs of smoky air
like the booze that sloshes around.
He leaned in,
his breath an aromatic absinthe.

I entered the Palace - drab, dry, dreary.
I stood in front of her,
twirled in my posh dress

and that sweet voice -
Daughter mine, how lovely you look, how lovely you *are* -
her words a fresh breeze
carrying honeysuckle's sweet scent into my life.

Oh Mother mine, how I longed for you.
To be free from his lusting, glaring gaze
to be with you. Please,
Màthair, are you ready to be my Mommy
or will you just hire another nanny?

Rationale

Using “Demeter” as a model, I crafted a poem that reflects the core of Carol Ann Duffy’s poetic techniques while conveying a unique voice to display a newly synthesized story and message. Duffy extensively uses her Scottish cultural-background throughout her poems. I imitated this style in my poem by describing Hades’s palace as, “bonnie, braw, bright”, and by using the Scottish-Gaelic word for mother, *Màthair*. Another of Duffy’s techniques is enjambment. This shows the distinct break in setting, and therefore, the tone/mood of the poem as reflected by the speaker. I imitated this by having all of the stanzas set in the Underworld be spoken by Persephone as one thought to show the continuity of a teenager’s (Persephone’s) thoughts. Only when Persephone enters her mother’s Olympian palace does a period abruptly appear to show this significant break in Persephone’s tone, which also shows a difference in her behavior. The use of symbolism further highlights Persephone’s conflict (between having her mother’s attention and being independent), similar to Duffy’s use of symbolism to show Demeter’s sorrow by using stone/cold imagery. Specifically, I use controlled-substances like “absinthe” and the “puffs of smoky air” to symbolize Persephone’s reckless and perhaps stereotypically teenager nature when she is with Hades, whereas the “silky, sparkling, socialite gown” symbolizes her mother’s wishes for her daughter in a more controlled future. Overall, I believe my pastiche poem, “Persephone”, bears a noticeable resemblance to Carol Ann Duffy’s writing style and technique though it carries a revisionist message.