

The Poetry of Money

He joined the firm as a star, married his honey
and, confident of his powers, set out on a wild
investment program. In time he found the right
speculation to invest in. His partners hoped he might
pull off his miracle & make them a pile of money.
He brought forth his plan as his wife their first child.

The word he had was so good even his child
could plunge in safely; he saw it simply as honey
for old rope, put the bulk of the firm's money
into a nickel mine, certain that this was no wild
gamble, but safe as platinum or gold; he felt he might
begin the party, knowing every detail was right.

He watched the screen, sure he had made the right
choice; it seemed so obvious that any numerate child
could see it. He didn't dream then that the bears might
get in before him, raid his nickel-plated pot of honey
but as he added up the figures, he knew in that wild
market he might have squandered all the firm's money.

For weeks he laboured; trying to claw back the money,
struggled day and night, trying to set the ledger right
while his colleagues watched, ready to pounce like wild
beasts; as they stalked around him he felt like a child
thrown to the wolves, or bears with claws at the honey.
But did he see daylight? One dawn he felt he just might.

All day & night he worked with every ounce of might
to reassure his partners he could still secure their money.
They hovered at his desk like winter bees round honey
until they were convinced his calculations were right.
Then one of his colleagues went weeping like a child;
& he'd never heard a burst of cheering so wild.

The fear he could have failed them drove him wild;
he couldn't stand the thought that he just might
have ruined it all: himself, his firm, his wife and child.
Lord he was tired as he counted his profits, the money
he'd laboured to get; his judgement might have been right
but he's come to realise there are more alocs than honey.

For many months afterwards, cuddling his honey, he might
relive an hour of wild fear that he still hadn't got it right –
yet still he corrupts his child with the poetry of money.

RON PRETTY