

Apollonio di Giovanni di Tomaso: **Panel from a Marriage Chest with Story of Apollo and Daphne**

**Chased (But Still Chaste) At The Chazen**

I.

Thank goodness she's not wearing those chopines.  
I don't think she could outrun a turtle in those things.  
Those pedestal shoes were like putting women  
on two pedestals.

II.

Cassone, Italian. Modern English translation, caisson.  
Caisson, a box used in the military to transport  
ammunition or dead soldiers, which gives a double meaning  
to the army's marching anthem, *As the Caissons Go Rolling Along*.

III.

Cassone, Italian. An ornate box given  
to a bride and placed in the bridal chamber  
usually at the foot of the bed. Think of it  
as a bridal casket, it's purpose symbolic.

*Look at this beautiful box! It is yours,  
all yours, and now that you belong to me,  
get in it. This box defines the limits  
of your influence in the world.*

IV.

Apollo and Daphne, the pursuer and the pursued.  
Eros, with one arrow of gold and one of lead,  
engineered this little lust-versus-chastity scene.  
Now he sits back and watches it play out  
singing, *What's Love Got to Do With It?*

V.

In the painting he is chasing her.  
She is being chased and trying to remain chaste.  
She appears to have her thumb raised. Is she  
hoping to be picked up by anyone but him?  
When being chased by a wild animal, climb a tree.  
When chased by human males or Greek gods  
it's far safer to turn into a tree.

VI.

Six thousand years of patriarchy  
and we're still seeing the same old stories.  
Today, she could be any woman.  
He could be the president.

--Ed Werstein