The Applicant

1962

A man being assessed for his suitability for marriage

inclusive 1962

First, are you our sort of a person? — question based on superficial worth / appearance.
Do you wear — excluding (us + them)
A glass eye, false teeth or a crutch,
A brace or a hook,
Rubber breasts or a rubber crotch, — negative imagery → falseness / weakness; dehumanising imagery

Stitches to show something's missing? No, no? Then
How can we give you a thing? — continual questioning
Stop crying. — shut down emotions
Open your hand. — repetition is important. An empty world
Empty? Empty. Here is a hand — completeness of marriage; symbolism of hands

To fill it and willing — assonance makes it sound easy - automatic
To bring teacups and roll away headaches
And do whatever you tell it. — the role of women; dehumanising of females; repetition of 'it'
Will you marry it?
It is guaranteed — importance of a guarentee in an uncertain society.

To thumb shut your eyes at the end — death — imagery of gentleness.
And dissolve of sorrow. — metaphor
We make new stock from the salt. — women as replaceable; reformed; recycled. — machine-like / corporation
I notice you are stark naked. — vulnerability of nakedness. Satirical + metaphorical
How about this suit — conformity / uniform

Black and stiff, but not a bad fit. — emotionless, detachment. — formality of wedding
Will you marry it? - repetition
It is waterproof, shatterproof, proof
Against fire and bombs through the roof. — contextual; suit will provide safety; certainty in 'proof'
Believe me, they'll bury you in it. → suit as a representation of death.

Now your head, excuse me, is empty. — worthless, blank, easily manipulated
I have the ticket for that. - colloquial; woman as something to be bought
Come here, sweetie, out of the closet. — woman as hidden possession. — woman, patronising reference
Well, what do you think of *that*? — italicised; further dehumanises female.
Naked as paper to start — allusion to anniversary gifts. — LINK to man's nakedness

But in twenty-five years she'll be silver,
In fifty, gold. — anniversary gifts, tradition. increasing in value
A living doll, everywhere you look.

entrapment.
metaphor for the life of a wife, marked by milestones and tradition

It can sew, it can cook, — repetition of dehumanising language.
It can talk, talk, talk. — repetition; negative connotation of having a voice

It works, there is nothing wrong with it. — functionality / machination of women no substance.
You have a hole, it's a poultice.
You have an eye, it's an image. — remedies / home medicine / solution. comparative you / it.
familiar — My boy, it's your last resort. — it as wife, and marriage / double meaning. only option; conformity.
Will you marry it, marry it, marry it.
↳ insistance and repetition. No question mark is intentional. There is no choice.

11 October 1962

There is a tone of irony in the fact that a choice is given, when realistically there is no option for either the applicant or the wife.

Major concerns

* marriage union / patriarchy
* anger / outrage / sorrow
* parody of the institution of marriage → specifically the superficiality of selecting a partner
* marriage as an arrangement; not emotional attachment
* the objectification of women, both within the marriage union and in society at large.
* poem expresses anger towards socially constructed femininity as passive and obedient.
* job seeking as central metaphor → capitalist society