

THREE JAPANESE EDO PERIOD POTS

Bowl 1

Witness to old fire,
you beg to be picked up
and returned
to human hands.
And turned...
my controlled combustion
pressing warm life
into your creamy glaze
which, once viscously boiling
in 1629
congealed
into pocked perfection.

Bowl 2

Lead-glazed raku,
black, not just dark
but no less comely.
And the sheen of the
night kiln's fire is
in your smooth parts,
in your rough.
then...a cleft
through which the unglazed
clay, your solid soul
emerges.

Bowl 3

Three bands - mauve, gray, mauve.
In balanced contention the caught
but rising matte gray conspires
with the pot's rough rim
to ride me over the edge, where
I see the green froth of
ceremonial tea.

All three

You are not a circle, but its end,
the genteel force that makes us turn, turn, turn

in echo of your creation.
In flows of glaze, crackles ceramic,
dimples, burrs, ridges and scratches,
the way ash fell,
textural evidence to chance.
Cultivated - I see heaps of shards -
imperfection, to reveal to refractory
man the perfection sought
in the potter's mind.

And now placed into my hands.
So few things in this world
were really meant to be held...

Before ever again I
call a rough object imperfect
I will remember Koetsu's bowls.