

REDEFINING BEAUTY

We cannot comprehend the beauty
of something old, cracked, broken—
we might splint a fledgling's wing
enabling it to soar despite infirmity,
or shore up sharply bent stalks of gladioli
hoping their seeds will sail on the wind—
no longer are they viewed as lovely.

We regard our aging bodies as betrayers
of our youthful appeal, seeing them
as capable of transformation—tucked
layered, plumped, shrunk by skillful
surgeons promising Ponce de Leon's
famed elixir—the rejuvenation far less
than our hopes for perfection.

How thrilling to see a Japanese potter
desire the jagged shards of an ancient
vessel, then reshape it, repairing its
cracks by sealing them with liquid gold,
creating an object now newly revered
for its provenance as well as for its
unexpected, glorious imperfection.