

## Scoli II

Words must salve;  
 there've been withheld  
 some that would soothe.

With what else  
 might the heart be plied?:

a gleaming giftshop, carefully devised  
 to peddle no mistakes,  
 provident in rabbit-rimmed stoneware,  
 floral teatrays, elfin garden gloves. Lean ladies—gray,  
 regal, horsey stock—exchange  
 anecdotal weddings, celebrations,  
 even a cremation  
 in a busy month.

Their daughters marry, their grandsons play;  
 they flit from occasion to occasion  
     disregarding a linty-coated browser  
         even as she disregards the starved of Delhi,  
         wishing the wretched ones no harm  
         and far too couth to prance with open alms  
         into the marketplace, treading tubercular spittle,  
         insulting the ravening palms with paltry coins.

Better, in beige cardigan and tactful scarf,  
 to retail pleasure  
 to those who can receive

and turn discreetly  
     from that shopper with a hint of shtetl in her face  
     now craning to read the underside  
     of a Rosenthal cup, and now a Lalique vase  
     locked behind glass,  
     peering as one engrossed,  
     her lip snide, her eyes aghast  
     with loss.