

To a Real Standup Piece of Painted Crockery

I wonder what the Greeks kept in these comicstrip canisters.
Plums, milletseed, incense, henna, oregano.
Speak to me, trove. Tell me you contained dried smoked tongue once.
Or a sorcerer or a cosmetologist's powders and unguents.
And when John Keats looked at you in a collection of pots
it was poetry at first sight: quotable beautiful
teleological concatenations of thoughts.

It's the proverbial dog of a poem, though:
slobbering panting and bright-eyed like a loquacious thug
or a spokesperson embattled on behalf of a sociopolitical thesis*
to which he has not had access owing to the need-to-know basis.

And he never says which pot. Just an oasis
of tease in a sea of tilth, kind of a concrete catachresis
bopping along with timbrels, irrepressible as Count Basie,
fabulous I mean classic I mean vout,
keeping the buckwheat in and the weevils out
while the rest of us get and spend and ache and earn
and go to the Bruce Springsteen concert and take our turn
lining up at the Metropolitan to look at the Macedonian gold krater
and promising ourselves to read up seriously.

* (Beauty : Truth = Ignorance : Bliss). Consult Precis.