

JOHN BENSKO

The Objects of Affection

If you guessed misery, you'd be
wrong. What they invoke is more
like regret, combined with desire, the openly

awkwardly, grasping, inability
to let go, and the aesthete's pure
love of worthless form. Thus we say,

I do. The rings are exchanged, the choir
swells to victory. Rice
is thrown, the church emptied. Where

shall we go? To the nice and exotic,
though they should be
mutually exclusive. Once there, the object

develops among palms and sand the panoply
of habits we have known
and ignored. Gracefully,

nostrils are picked. A drone
of voice is perfected. Latent
love of awful music finds a home.

This is not what we meant
when we said, *I do.* Now, *we don't*,
and the affection, with the object,

remains. Is this the perfect want?
The having, yet the needing?
The living body and the haunt?
It flits down the hallway, receding.