

This poem is based on 2 Corinthians 4:1-9 which includes: "But we have this treasure [Jesus] in jars of clay [us] to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."

Ian Leitch quotes it in a sermon on this page. I did a bit of searching for the author. It is either attributed to "Author Unknown" or to the late Beulah V. Cornwall and is entitled, "The Chosen Vessel".

The Master was searching for a vessel to use -  
Before Him were many, which one would He choose?  
"Take me," cried the gold one, "I'm shining and bright,  
I'm of great value and I do things just right,  
My beauty and lustre will outshine the rest,  
And for someone like You, Master, gold would be best."

The Master passed on with no word at all,  
And looked at the silver urn, narrow and tall,  
"I'll serve You, dear Master, I'll pour out Your wine,  
I'll be on Your table whenever You dine,  
My lines are so graceful, my carvings so true,  
And silver will always complement You."

Unheeding, the Master passed on to the brass,  
Widemouthed and shallow and polished like glass.  
"Here, here," cried the vessel, "I know what I'll do.  
Place ME on Your table for all men to view."

"Look at me," called the goblet of crystal, so clear.  
"My transparency shows my content so dear.  
Though fragile am I, I will serve You with pride,  
And I'm sure I'll be happy Your home to abide."

The Master came next to a vessel of wood  
Polished and carved, it solidly stood.  
"You may use me, dear Master," the wooden bowl said,  
"But I'd rather be used for fruit, not for bread."

Then the Master looked down and saw a  
vessel of clay,  
Empty and broken and helpless it lay,  
No hope had the vessel that the Master  
might choose  
To cleanse and make whole, to fill and  
to use.

"Ah, this is the vessel I've been hoping  
to find,  
I'll mend it and use it and make it all Mine.

I need not a vessel with pride of itself,  
Nor one that is narrow to sit on the shelf,  
Nor one that is bigmouthed, shallow and loud,  
Nor one that displays his contents so proud,  
Not the one who thinks he can do all things 'just right',  
But this plain, earthly vessel, with My power and might."

Then gently He lifted this vessel of clay,  
Mended it and cleansed it and filled it that day,  
Spoke to it kindly, "There is work you must do,  
Just pour out to others as I pour into you."