

History Lesson

In the movies they always remember
Everything in such vivid detail—
Flashbacks of special nights, a crowded room,
Furniture in grandma's house, the September
When all hell broke loose, a siren's teasing wail,
The dress she wore, the silly, flowered hat,
The first time's ecstasy, old love's perfume,
A face, a friend, the light. Oh, it's just that
For me these pictures don't come back entire,
Not in sequence, not as narrative acts,
But only a frame there, a fragment here,
A sensation maybe as chill or fire.
What, then, is wrong?—sure, memory can't be gone,
For haven't I made a sparkling career
Out of dredging up places, dates, and facts
For little girls and boys in school to con?

David Curtis