

## White Memory Number Two

I'm nothing original standing beneath the sworded damsel  
on the Arch of Triumph,

remembering my father's harangue against the citizens,  
saving their asses, twice, damn frogs,  
the past ahead of my every step. He doesn't like the wine,  
tearing a roll of hard bread with his teeth,

he who didn't get to walk in the fire, the family lore  
of can-can girls & cabarets when the only photos

are black & whites in England, some trees, my father  
stuffing one hand inside a baseball glove. The ball

is a long time returning from the other side of an English meadow,  
from his fellow survivor, who died the other day  
showing his granddaughter how to eat ice cream at a mall.

The mall's name should remain nameless, the English meadow.  
This is a way of keeping the future from dissolving away.

At times, he concentrates on the archival ache in his head.  
Someone's broken in & poured acid over the film, men  
trained in chemical weapons, tossing a baseball back & forth  
among some identifiably English trees, limey trees, stoic acorns.

Everything about this past declares thrift, standing very still  
in a meadow soaked with sunshine & waiting,

waiting to be called to action. The afternoon sun is permanent  
as if history had unfurled its tailor's tape measure as far as it could  
go.