

Stephen Robertson

Fragment

*I could not see what he saw; but I saw him see
across the criss-cross checks and grids and patterned lattices of life
through glasses, darkly.*

—A fragment, formulated forty years ago
and filed in the middens of my mind.
And in my mind it conjures up a vision
of the image that inspired it: a scattering
of people in a city street, shop-window-browsing.
A group, gathered around and gazing into
one window; but one young man half-turned
across the rest, looking with unfocussed eyes
into the distance down the street. I could not see
what he saw. . .

Inspired? Why should such a mundane scene
so briefly glimpsed, make my muse suggest
just three alliterative lines—at best
a semi-stanza—and then to cease? It seems
perverse—the more because the fellow
was not wearing glasses.