Part for the Whole

By Robert Francis

When others run to windows or out of doors
   To catch the sunset whole, he is content
   With any segment anywhere he sits.

From segment, fragment, he can reconstruct
   The whole, prefers to reconstruct the whole,
   As if to say, I see more seeing less.

A window to the east will serve as well
   As window to the west, for eastern sky
   Echoes the western sky. And even less—

A patch of light that picture-glass happens
   To catch from window-glass, fragment of fragment,
   Flawed, distorted, dulled, nevertheless

Gives something unglassed nature cannot give:
   The old obliquity of art, and proves
   Part may be more than whole, least may be best.
