

Poetry

The Scents of Youth

What lingers? The scents of youth.
Thistled fields of wild onion and mint,
on the wind always a hint of next season,
leafmold, ragweed, wildflower, pine,
children pushed by dark toward supper.
And older, in a rusted Chevy or Ford,
its rag top mildewed, fins glowing
with moon near water, motor silent
but for ticking, windows steamed,
love's perfume sharper than citrus
or summer cedar, the bouquet
of a lover's whisper between
bruised lips, the promise never
to fade just before she faded.
And above all else, from playing fields,
closets and drawers, attic heights
and cellar depths, beneath every bed
for as long as memory, as unsettling
as an old sin just recalled, dust.

David Citino