Orphans

Mark Halperin
Two Poems · Mark Halperin

Orphans

In Tallinn, in a small town in Pennsylvania, in Matsue the lives I cast off like clothes lie in casual heaps beside the still warm beds.

I went on somewhere else, here, but the life I left the way I put down a glass entering another room, meaning to come back for it,

still anticipates my hand or body. Maybe in one of those places a man looks up from his reading expecting me to enter, or a woman rounding a corner pauses beside old stones for a second, thinking it’s me crossing the square. And maybe only the streets wait, only the trees arching above them. Some mornings, groggy from sleep, uncertain which life is mine, I turn as bigamists must, wondering just whose embrace I will enter. My son has bashed the car door, my wife glowers. Does a will to evasion pull or is it one of those lives left standing open,

junctions, discontinued branches, uncompleted, hanging fire, waving desperately, occasions and orphaned possibilities only I am missing from?