A Soul Is Speechless on the Street

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This feeling of sadness, which is fragmented, passes, like the junked car numbered O, next to an oak a traveler notices through his tinted window.

The fact that every feeling passes inevitably explains, at least in part, the disbelief a man alone might come to. Or a woman. Take Hopper’s Deserted Main Street, not quite the space in which the soul hovers, speechless, without a thought about God or beauty. What it means there behind the clapboard storefronts involves slippery questions of the light and dark sensations which come and go, like cells, in a lifetime. Or take the man farming along the Hudson who is startled by the sight of purple loosestrife. Take his wife inside the farmhouse feeling an emptiness peculiar to her, born of an event not unlike abandonment.

There are others, unnameable, thrown into this daily exhaustion: the boy standing on the top of his van, parked askew in a field, or the bent woman climbing the stairs of a bus on Boylston. These, examples of what we call a perishable condition.