

A Soul Is Speechless on the Street · Gary Zebrun

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.