Ekphrastic Poetry

Edward Hopper, *Night Hawks*

The man sits alone, wondering why he ended up this way.
He knows how, but he still ponders why
He thinks back to nights when he chose sleep over the company of countertops, servers, coffee, and faltering relationships.
The couple next to him is cursed
he thinks cruelly to himself--rancid booze hidden beneath coffee clinging to his breath.

The couple sits full of regret—
Regret that neither has yet to acknowledge or deny.
Regret that causes sustained silence
  whispers and curses you in the night
  plagues you as you try to walk home without a hint treason behind your dew-dripped eyes.

The wine is wearing off as the night wanes on.

The server continues with his work, ignoring the incessant soft clamor of ceramic mugs on countertops.
No words are often spoken
just sounds to emphasize the moments passed
as they try to be forgotten.
Unlike the day,
darkness rarely embraces change.

The lonely cries of the jazz musician’s syncopated rhythm floats from the night club on the corner. It settles on the café like fog over the bay on warm spring mornings--unbreakable until the time changes and the sun fully rises.

The coffee is cold, and the windows are clear.
It is past midnight.
The glint of light from the street lamps illuminates the dark alley as the stagnant night air looms and curls around the customers, helping to mask time and difficulty.

Night hawks—
individuals who gave up on the day, who prefer the drum of an old piano to the sounds of children playing
or church bells ringing.

Night hawks choosing—
one last location to dwell.
Try and stop the hangover that was formed around the corner.
Curb the smell of whiskey and red wine with coffee.
Forget morning.
Night hawks pondering—
their last moves before dawn breaks
as eyes beckon the daylight to sleep.

Night hawks—
evading the day while others trivialize moments of the dark.

CLM