

***Nighthawks* by Edward Hopper
by Nathan McClain**

See how closely she sits to the man
in the blue suit? See how their hands
almost touch? How she reminds me
of my mother—a woman in red

drinking coffee. See?
Hopper was obviously lonely.
Why else would he paint her, my mother,
sitting there like this?

Which would make me what?
The soda jerk in white?
I'm eager enough. I want to help.
Even if it means simply waiting

to light each man's cigarette.
My mother spent
nights alone, wiping coffee mugs
clean of dust. How the lines

that creased her mouth deepened...
See? And what if she dies
this way—sad, untouched?
I say I want to help

but it's as if my voice is a faucet
running—a refrigerator's empty hum

Hopper was obviously lonely.
Why else paint the gray-suited man
at the counter, my father, his back turned?

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