

MORE LIGHT

“He himself admitted that it might be present, but denied that it was intended. Indeed, the emphasis on it annoyed him: ‘The loneliness thing is overdone,’ he said. But it undeniably exists.” ~ Lloyd Goodrich, *Edward Hopper*

Or is it the light that exists for him as he paints?
Not that old buttery-yellow light-bulb light,
but this miraculous light the makers call “fluorescent,”
this clear-as-day light that bathes the diner,
this harbor in a sea of darkness. How it pours
through the plate-glass window, rinsing the red brick
wall across the street, spilling through the window
of somebody fast asleep! It’s seeping into her dream.

You’d think the man in the white cap had more light
than a man would need to make it through this night.
The coffee urns are beaming over his shoulder
like stainless angels! What else would he talk about
to the dude whose cigarette’s gone out? And what
would the lady be studying there but a book of matches?
And the man in the dark gray hat with his back to us —
is there anything left in his glass but light, more light?

~ Donald Finkel (1929-2008), American poet