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Women in Chairs

David Van Buren

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David Van Buren

Women in Chairs

(Four paintings by Edward Hopper)

11 A.M.

The nude in the blue
velvet chair, black
slippers, long brown
hair, leans
toward the open window.

She sees the sun move among
skyscrapers, crowds
cross avenues.

Inside her hands, a prayer:
a tiny bird
she will toss into the sky.

The Barber Shop

A woman passing through Life
magazine, men discussing football.
A shadow splits the face of the clock
on a once white wall
into light and dark.

No words tell her story.
No hands hold the time.
Outside two stripes climb
the pole, never reach
the top or touch.

Chop Suey

Two ladies out to lunch
in another language
ask each other
and themselves
what's gone wrong
with their lives.
No waiter is in sight.
A pot of tea, one empty bowl
between them
but no knives.

Room in Brooklyn

Three windows let
late sunlight in.
Pink flowers fill
the white vase
on a blue tablecloth.
At the edge of her bed,

where daylight ends,
the widow in the wooden chair
watches the roof
of a red brick building
where the sky begins.