Angles and Reflections

DB Ross
Angles and Reflections: an exhibition of Lewis Wickes Hine photographs and one female student
1.
If silence is like the flat face
of a cerulean glacier lake

and the still plane of an azure
glacier lake is like an unruffled

field of docile wheat stalks
and so on and so on then benches

are built to stumble upon, coffins
as humidors for smoking macanudos,

photography for elongated curves
geography meant for the dead.

2.
*Untitled (skilled men and women
with machinery).* The threads—
cotton or wool or nylon,
acrylic or some other fabric
treading through the loom
move like light streams out
a reflective prism forming
a tapestry in the foreground.

3.
She is all angles and planes
having lines to distinguish

pressed calf muscles.
Glossed pale legs crossed

trace the defined curves
of the gallery bench

on which she sits, and longs
to pose, or match a pout.

A notebook on the lap
provides a perpendicular

and her arms the correct
geometric reflection.
4.
*Untitled (skilled men and women with machinery)*. Movement

is a light bulb attached by a wire to a fixed point on an iron girder loosely dangling, revolving, if you care to think of it that way.

He is wearing a pinstripe jumpsuit. I see him bending over the loom, with greased gray hair, wrinkled face, a tie, and diligence. I see him straightening after the flash has phosphored out.

5.
*Untitled (skilled men and women with machinery)*. Loaded gears and gasping valves turn over and over precision lathes, creating a rickety sound or a moving rhythm, metal jimmying against concrete.

A completed carpet hangs behind, on the wall, clandestine in black shadows. The swinging light designs its own patterns.

6.
She is all silk and starch, black trousers and white blouse.

All stillness and perch, like a dappled pear or a shined apple on a round kitchen table.

Circumference is important, 360° inevitable, flat lines only run in one direction. North is north, south south, the west for the sun’s descent the east for its rise. Maps to mark position while benches become islands and walls the white curve of atmosphere. Her blue eyes do nothing, but stare.
7.

*Untitled (skilled men and women with machinery).* His face is parched from concentration or the heated air burnt by pistons and his rumpled and frayed shirt matches the pale soot filled pigment of his skin, the absence of color makes difference indiscernible. The absence of color weaves its own similarities.

8.

If silence is the cherry ochre stained smoothness of wooden floorboards symmetrically laid, and enameled three inch thick wood floor panels are glossy black and white photographs and shapes are only passing shadows then there is nothing to distinguish or hold or make still, or make whole.

There are hammers that must hit nails; flashes that must flicker. There is only nothing to collide, or there is nothing at all. No beams to take account and make level, no seams of plaster to make seamless. There are white walls with small hooks to hang frames from. There is only the frozen gate or the stunned eye.

*DB Ross*