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Classroom Discussion

Scott Sheedlo

"What do you think?" the teacher asks.
The room fills with silence.
Eager eyes await my response,
 a hint of who I am.
I hesitate...

Answering is turning on the faucet
Which taps a spiritual spring,
 the source of my individuality.
My words are either droplets or pools.

When I turn the knob the flow is unpredictable,
Sometimes,
 gushing hot water that scalds the skin,
Other times,
 trickling lukewarm, failing to quench
the drinker's thirst.

Turning the knob here is too risky.
No towels to dry the spills.
No buckets to catch the overflow.
What if those around me find my water
 saltier than their own
 or more metallic in taste?
My silence is my self-defense.

If I were certain I could pour a glass, diluted and
refreshing to all,
 I would answer...

"I don't know," I say and avert my eyes to the safety
of the desktop.