

Something that Stands Still

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It was a quiet question for my first grade teacher to push her nail into my finger to
help out a splinter.

I pulled away. It was a *classroom*.

She probably knew my trust was shaken: saw me looking down afterward.

At home that night, I felt famous by the gas stove in the kitchen,
my mother roasting the end of a needle on blue flame.

She took my hand and worked the something out while I pretended
it hurt, made the needle a knife, the scratching deeper.

I did this because I wanted more somethings to work out in the kitchen—
the dog at our feet, birds asleep in the yard, the dishes listening
to my cry and her calming whisper.