

Sting

By Rich H. Kenney, Jr.

With my lecture
on the brink of defeat
to side conversations
and roaming cell phone eyes,
I asked if anyone
had trouble paying attention
to the newly introduced idea
when the quietest student of all
raised her hand and said
it was the wasp
skimming the ceiling
that had hers - and every head
looked up in time to see
the gliding yellow-black
buzz-duster, its long legs
dangling like landing gear
looking for a runway.

For a second, it hovered
over the middle row as if
pondering descent
onto a mound of chow mein-
then quickly crossed the room
in one face-felt swoop-
the face belonging to Kicks

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who removed his cap
in reprisal when the gentle
voice opined composure
and suggested we keep
in check any weapons
that whack or smack-
for venom's fresh spill,
she warned,
summoned trouble-
reckoning a nest of unrest.

She whispered
it wasn't worth the risk
and explained how
one of her friends
got stung in the mouth,
creating angst and tongue-swell.

And so we sat
for what seemed
a semester with sealed
lips and trailing eyes-
a kind of rattled serenity
I never thought possible
thanks to a lesson in presence,
one may I learn to land.