

Say the Wrong Thing

By Nikki Moen

Say the wrong thing
say too much, all around
about your own experimental isolation tank
(and what's in the water)

speak in jagged animal fits
that confuse listeners
that cause riotous expressions to spark
in their features-
or better yet, a scoff at the next table

When you were quiet
the water ran deep, but now that you shout-
You're a riptide, somehow
and all others respond in a multitude
of confusing ways

After your years out here
you know you can't take your words back,
can't huddle them together
and try to strangle them quiet

So, yes, be such a crank
(because you probably always were)
and wrap your tongue around
those severely twisted gears
that will catch in the wrong direction-

Let other people be smooth and liquid,
their thoughts a gliding sail
along the gentle crests
of reason, sense and dignity

For *someone* has to fumble
around in the tide pools

marveling at all the strange creatures
and laughing at their own stubbed toes...

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