

After Class

You'd think that by now
I could have figured out
how to avoid the drama
of standing across from

a boy staring at his feet
convinced that for all its
apparent rudeness, no
answer to my question

is preferable to the truth.
I only asked him where
his homework was, but
the whole authority/age

advantage and ominous
summons to followed by
standoff in a hall visible
to cackling classmates

has apparently scared
the honesty out of him.
Wait, I'd like to say, I'm
not that teacher, I hated

that teacher and still do,
but it's too late to be hip
with this kid, who I think
with no little indignation

has backed *me* into this
hallway with his refusal
to honor the unspoken
teacher/student pact of

I ask and you do. He's
loyal to a different pact,
one predicated not on
ask/do but didn't/won't.