

# Prachuap Khiri Khan

by Richard Oyama

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On the walk to Hasu Gyoza, sun  
Flaring over wires, above the  
Irrelevance of a church spire, concrete wall  
Sun-blackened by striations, I'm thinking of

Where books are made flesh.  
Venerated old women rest in plastic chairs.  
The tropic day's end steams into dark.

A mother showers her daughter  
With a hose, prepubescent bare chest,  
Hands on hips, unbrazen,

Unashamed. Am I Gauguin  
Stumbling on an arrondissement of orientalist bodyness?  
Manhattan hubris has nothing to do with  
This fishing village.

The aunt of the Catholic schoolteacher  
Who lives alone in a pitch-roofed house  
Behind the apartment complex  
Roasts bananas on a sidewalk grill.

What do I know of such relations?  
Is the protocol to don velvet slippers when  
The *hongnaam* is flooded? Is the novel as  
Central as soi dogs lying abed in this field?