

Prachuap Khiri Khan

by Richard Oyama

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, unbrazed,

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?