

maintain a constant watch on the corrosive action lest it suddenly come up against some object that it might corrode.

The natural corollary of such a tendency was that I should openly admit the existence of reality and the body only in fields where words had no part whatsoever; thus reality and the body became synonymous for me, the objects, almost, of a kind of fetishism. Without doubt, too, I was quite unconsciously expanding my interest in words to embrace this interest also; and this type of fetishism corresponded exactly to my fetish for words.

In the first stage, I was quite obviously identifying myself with words and setting reality, the flesh, and action on the other side. There is no doubt, either, that my prejudice concerning words was encouraged by this willfully created antinomy, and that my deep-rooted misunderstanding of the nature of reality, the flesh, and action was formed in the same way.

This antinomy rested on the assumption that I myself from the outset was devoid of the flesh, of reality, of action. It was true, indeed, that the flesh came late to me at the beginning, but I was waiting for it with words. I suspect that because of the earlier tendency I spoke of, I did not perceive it, then, as "my body." If I had done so, my words would have lost their purity. I should have been violated by reality, and reality would have become inescapable.

SUNSET DEBRIS (1986)

RON SILLIMAN

from THE AGE OF HUTS

Can you feel it? Does it hurt? Is this too soft? Do you like it? Do you like this? Is this how you like it? Is it alright? Is he there? Is he breathing? Is it him? Is it near? Is it hard? Is it cold? Does it weigh much? Is it heavy? Do you have to carry it far? Are those the hills? Is this where we get off? Which one are you? Are we there yet? Do we need to bring sweaters? Where is the border between blue and green? Has the mail come? Have you come yet? Is it perfect bound? Do you prefer ballpoints? Do you know which insect you most resemble? Is it the red one? Is that your hand? Want to go out? What about dinner? What does it cost? Do you speak English? Has he found his voice yet? Is this anise or is it fennel? Are you high yet? Is your throat sore? Can't you tell dill weed when you see it? Do you smell something burning? Do you hear a ringing sound? Do you hear something whimpering, mewing, crying? Do we get there from here? Does the ink smear? Does the paper get yellow and brittle? Do you prefer soft core? Are they on their way to work? Are they feeling it? Are they locked out? Are you pessimistic? Are you hard? Is that where you live? Is the sink clogged? Have the roaches made a nest in the radio? Are the cats hungry, thirsty, tired? Does he need to have a catheter? Is he the father? Are you a student at the radio school? Are you afraid to fail? Are you in constant fear of assassination? Why has the traffic stopped? Why does blue fade into green? Why didn't I go back to Pasco and become a cop? Why does water curl into the drain in different directions on either side of the equator? Why does my ankle throb? Why do I like it when I pop my knuckles? Is that a bald spot? Is that an ice cap? Is that a birth mark? Will the fog burn off soon? Are her life signs going to stabilize? Can you afford it? Is it gutted? What is it that attracts you to bisexual women? Does it go soggy in the milk? Do people live there? Is there a limit? Did it roll over when it went off the road? Will it further class struggle? Is it legible? Do you feel that it's private? Does it eat flies, worms, children? Is it nasty? Can you get tickets? Do you wear sunglasses out of a misplaced sense of increased privacy? Do you derive

pleasure from farts in the bath? Is there an erotic element to picking your nose? Have you a specific conceptualization of earwax? What am I doing here? How do the deaf sing? How is it those houses will burn in the rain? What is the distance to Wall Drugs? Why do they insist on breaking the piñata? Is penetration of the labia sufficient to support a conviction? Is it a distraction to be aware of the walls? Is it bigger than a bread box? Which is it? When you skydive, do your ears pop? Do you bruise? Did the bridge rust? Is your life clear to you? How will you move it? Will you go easy on the tonic, please? Do you resent your parents? Was your childhood a time of great fear? Is that the path? Do the sandpipers breed here? Is that what you want? Have your cramps come? Do you tend to draw words instead of write them? Do you have an opinion about galvanized steel? Who was John Deere? Are you trapped by your work? Would you like to explore that quarry? Is it the form of a question? Where is Wolf Grade? Are your legs sore? Is that a bottle neck? Who is the Ant Farm? Where did she learn to crawl like that? Is the form of the dance the dancer, or the space she carves? Can we go home now? Who was that masked man? Does he have an imagination? Will he use it? Is it obvious? Is it intentional? Is it possible? Is it hot? Why did the mirror fog up? What is the context of discourse? What is the premise of the man asking a passersby if they have change for a dollar? Who took my toothbrush? What made her choose to get back into the life? What is the cause of long fingers? What is the role of altered, stretched canvas on wood supports, hung from a wall? Why do they seem so focused, intent, on their way to work? What makes you needle happy? Why does he keep large bills in his shirt pocket? How do you locate the crosshairs of your bitterness? What was it about shouting, mere raised voices, that caused him always to go out of control? Do you hear that hum? Is there damage? Is the answer difficult or hard? Is each thing needful? If there was a rip in my notebook, how would you know it? What makes you think you have me figured out? Why do my eyes water, devoid of emotion? What is the difference between a film and a movie? Do you want sugar? Why does my mood correspond to the weather? How do you get down to the beach? Is the act distinct from the object? What did you put in the coffee? Did your ears pop? Would you prefer to watch the condos burn? Where do the verbs go? Will you ever speak to the issue of cholesterol? What is a psychotropic? Does pleonasm scare you? Kledomania? Who leads the low-riders? What is the relation between any two statements? Is anything as tight as anal penetration? Will we stop soon? Will we continue? Where are those sirens coming from? Is it necessary? Is it off-white? Is a legitimate purpose served in limiting access? Will this turn out to be the last day of summer? Will

you give up, give out, over? Why is sarcasm so often the final state of marriage? Is this the right exit? Have you received a security clearance? What do you think of when I say "red goose shoes"? Why does the blind man use his cane like a wand? What is the source of your agitation? Can't you smell the rain before it falls? Are you dizzy, faint, nauseous? Do you have chills? Can you help it? When is the question a form of order? Does order mean a form of command? Do rabbits scratch? Do words peel their outer meanings? Is that your hair? What if I want this so plain you can't see it? Have you noticed all these women with asymmetrical faces in their too-loud makeup? What is so special? What is an ice pick? Do you have involuntary erections without probable cause? What time do you have? Does it begin to wear thin? What about struggle? Do I dare to eat a peach? When do you rise? Why is the verb the second word? Have you watched how new graves begin to move down the slope of that hill, how it fills? What are you trying to tell me? Is that the island? How do they make carbon paper? Is it too hot? What about this? How does a harbor harbor? What of an art of sensory deprivation? Do you like to go down? Will you be able to make it? At what point does meaning begin to blur? Is that a flag in the rain? Is there anything suspicious about the dead? Will you flush when done? What sort of experience will I be forced to exclude? Are you ready? Are you certain? Do you feel this? Is this it? Do we turn here? Will it rain? Aren't you afraid I'll go on endlessly, shamelessly, pointlessly? Do you know that the true structure of a prison is built around its illegal commodities market? Don't you think your fever correlates with stress? Don't you watch those bank clerks each morning, waiting by the door to be let in? Isn't anyone ready to describe real life? How does syntax shape the chair? Where is that woman going with a cake in a box? How did you come to love flow charts? How is a sentence true? Do you see that woman in the crosswalk, turning first this way and then that, as if dazed, uncertain as to the way to go? How soon before I turn into an old man with a bedroll under one arm and a paper bag full of rags and clothes in the other, talking to myself as I walk? What is the source of the dull pain in the jaw? What is the emotional dimension of circumcision? Why do people stare at you? What do they say? Do you care for your cuticles? Are you aware of vessels in the eye?