

FOURTEEN

A change in the lighting.

The fingers of the left hand, still affixed to the chair, have become slightly more cramped. Otherwise, same as before.

But then, just before
 The big moment, before the catharsis
 Of auto-enumeration
 Was going to release me from care, I sneaked a quick
 Glance at myself—
 To make sure I was ready—
 Fly zipped, shoes tied, and so on—
 As if it made any difference, as if the inspector
 For whom
 I was preening was someone
 I needed
 To impress—I looked down at myself, saw
 The disheveled
 More-or-less presentable clothes, the limbs
 Stiff and awkward
 From sitting too long on too
 Hard a bench—
 And that's— Oh boy. That's—
 That's when I noticed
 That my hand—
 This one, down here—something
 Had happened—
 Whatever it was—whatever had happened—this thing
 Attached to me—
 It was no longer a hand.
 Odd, isn't it? How it wasn't until
 I looked myself over
 In that silly
 Preparatory exercise
 For self-recognition, not until I exchanged
 One sort of vanity
 For another—intellectual presumption for wanting
 To look good—
 Only then did I encounter

And begin
To absorb
This change in my body, this hand that had become
Something foreign, unrecognizable, something whose nature
I still do not know.