

Argument

Begin with this: it was quiet enough to hear a chainsaw in the next county. Prove that you are natural and that therefore your voice is only part of the greater landscape, the way bird and insect voices are a part of the dusk.

(Did I mention that I'm gently imbedded in nature? Not the nature I was born into: corn, rocks, a withered ash tree. The nature I feel when I remember that I am only natural, as natural as loam, as natural as that which makes a sock, as natural as waiting for teeth.)

If, once they've begun to listen, they're distracted again by the forces that work against you, tell them that someone else said it. "I read this in *The Nation*," you might say. You may have to speak up when you get to this part. You aren't really known for your commanding voice.

(The argument becomes air and is reabsorbed. A voice is only air, after all. It isn't related to corn. It started a long time ago. No, before that. People grew in and crowded when it started.)

When you say something happened, it should have *really* happened. Don't say, "When they got thirsty, I squeezed wine from my hand into their mouths."

(The beginning of the beginning of the beginning. It started before that.)

No, wait. You should start over. You're messing this up. Maybe it's better to not speak. Some people did put their forks down, but only for a minute. Maybe you should send your dog to them, a note tied around his neck.

(I was a mirror in reverse, a backwards sneeze, the opposite of flossing. I had a hard time getting work done. Things kept going wrong. I tried to start something important but then I smelled gas so I went out to wait. Leaves fluttered at me. I stared at pigeons.)

Back away slowly. Give people time to forget you before you even leave the room. You can disappear naturally; imagine grinding yourself out and the aftermath of grinding. You are there and then suddenly people can't see you. In this way, you are like a meal.

(Another time was when I waited for the new toilet. The old toilet came out and waited in the yard through snow, through two seasons.)