

Self-Portrait

I was far outside the frame, beyond
the pale, lost in the margins, smudged
like a fingerprint and frankly, nervous
about holding my own. I knew what was coming:
you, toward me, your arms open,
preparing to wrap them around my neck
with the clear determination some people
bring to learning anthropology. I was not
about to be moved, to be swept off my feet
by your exotic bracelets. I'll admit
I sometimes incline toward
the minute particulars of a scene
but never have I been undone by a woman
on account of her accessories. Until now,
when I come into the picture, captivated
by black coral beads, the gold wire of an earring,
the rustle of red scarf against a neckline,
as this pull, this great tug at my heart,
forklifts me into the foreground
at the center of a photograph
of empty beach, empty that is except for
you, and pine and manzanita,
the silver rings and necklaces of white surf.