

Self-Portrait, if I Were Matisse

Joannie Strangeland

Let out the fierce in me, orange heat
and the savage green jungle that grows
in my gut. Put on the paint bold,
a slash, a sweep. Contrast

attracts and repels. Beauty holds
more than one face and I'll leave
Helen to her own symmetry. I'm looking
for the heart, alive and pulsing.

I want the surface below my skin,
the light behind my ears. Primary,
primeval. The color waves to the eye,
tells the belly now.

I'm serious.
Play is everything.