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.

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