

Saucy Orange

— (*Burpee Series*) 1978, Alden Mason

Maybe this is how my body looks inside its skin,
ranks of epithelial cells the frame, the rest
a riot—every color contained in its own membrane,
a sloshy, brilliant chaos. Let's assume my blood stays
where it belongs, and we are taking that fantastic
voyage, our tiny ship propelled through my innards:

I would love

for it to feel like this painting
as we sluice along the dips and rills,
glide through green pools (should I be worried?),
pass obsidian organs (anxious?)
bounce off banana-yellow coils. Maybe,
since this is my body, my doctor
shouldn't come he sees only danger
in such proliferation. I would want... a musician, I think,
and a four year-old so we can all squeal
with joy.

I once had a friend who, like me, stuck her fingers
inside every sea anemone picked up sea stars
and cucumbers out of rank tide pools—
she should be there too.

Most, I'd want

the lover who made me feel like this—

shocks of lapis and turquoise
in a contour map of orange, red dots exploding
around a crackled island of brown—wouldn't it be sweet
to give back a taste of the reverence
I could never convey.