

LIFE AFTER LIFE

*Henri Matisse*

This man lived the last years of his life in exclamation points.

This man called those fourteen years *a second life*.

This is a man who after colon cancer surgery, swung between a wheelchair and a bed.

This seventy-one year old man broke with his creative past inaugurating what he called *painting with scissors*.

This man's assistants prepared brightly colored paper for their master to cut into, and after Matisse finished, they'd pin them all over his room.

This man worked years not knowing or caring what these cut outs would be.

This man said about the collages, *As I am obliged to remain often in bed because of the state of my health, I have made a little garden around me...there are leaves, fruits, a bird.*

This man took six years to compile a book of dancing cut outs titled *Jazz*, based on the *chromatic and rhythmic improvisation* of the music he loved.

This exclamation point man said, *Only what I created after the illness is my real self.*

This man believed it a privilege to grow old.