

## Story Draft

I was a landlady a long time.  
It seems I never did enough dusting,  
was grouchy, often mean with the meals.  
I hung my totems and trees in the hallways.  
On occasion I found my epiphanies  
knocked askew, turned to the wall.

My studio I made a room of my own.  
I hoisted chairs to each corner  
on a homemade rigging of pulleys  
and string. Beneath them I worked;  
their cobwebbed backs would shimmer  
like wings, angels patiently watching.  
Worthwhile visitors I would bless,  
quickly offer a seat. The fools  
I let stand, hoping they'd leave.

One day, before it struck me  
my work was at all known,  
I heard a knock at my door.  
My hair in a kerchief,  
my painting dress smelling of turps,  
I found on the steps a creature  
jazzed up in a great hat,  
face hidden under a flutter of ribbons.  
*You must be the painter, Miss Emily Carr,*  
it suggested, cocking head and hat  
to the right. It wanted to buy.  
Fearing a weakness for posies  
drooping under the weight of pastel,  
I ushered it in.

*What catches your eye?* I ventured.  
*Trees*, it said,  
*branches adrift in the wind.*  
I pulled out a canvas.  
It was taken aback.  
I pulled out some sketches.  
Seeing God in each one,  
it oohed and it aahed,  
collapsed into a chair  
dropped without warning behind it.  
Removing its hat, a woman's eyes

looked straight into mine.  
Finally she chose four little pines  
I worked hard at stirring  
aware of the forest moving in  
on cats' feet behind them.

Ten dollars in my pocket  
and the woman rehatted, I hurried her out.  
My tenants suspiciously eyed  
the brown square of paper tucked under her arm.

That night I feted my sisters well on pork loin.