**O Emily**

Jeannie Roberts

*I have done a charcoal sketch today of young pines at the foot of the forest. I may take a canvas out of it. It should lead from joy back to mystery―young pines full of light and joyousness against a background of moving, mysterious forest. . . .*

―Emily Carr, "Hundreds and Thousands," in The Complete Writings of Emily Carr

This quiet morning, untouched,

free of color and complication, oil

and next translation, you focus

on *the foot of the forest*.

Strokes lilt across the tilting tooth

of your manila surface, bringing line

into lyrical form. Like the limbs

of yielding pine, your hand sweeps

and sways, obeys its keen sense

of compass as it *leads from joy*

*back to mystery*, to the darkened

well of elder interior,

to the lushness of understory rolling

midst the grace of ascending light.

O Emily, will you keep this quiet

morning, untouched, free of color

and complication, oil and next

translation, or, will your charcoal

sketch, made pristinely lean, in

black-and-cream, exist unparalleled

on paper?

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