

INDIGO MOOR

The Opus Vows

My wife kisses
her late father's memory
—first his picture
then his brushes—before
scending florals raging across
our bedroom walls.

And I'm forgotten.
Matisse is greedily
laying claim to the brilliant
colors swooning
across delirious opuses.
But your grief willed

the latest movements
anchoring the west
wall by the closet,
a frenzy of flowering
angst. Who's to say
why my traditional paintings

toss insults across
the room to impressionist blooms
like fishmongers across an alley?
The gradient lines
of the newer, graphic paintings
jump into the fray, their stitch-

work of smaller
brushstrokes broadening
to cacophony, drowning out
the first leathery bars
of "Summertime" seeping
from the phone's speakers.

At the funeral, your brother off-hands
he hung your father's prized chandelier,
but his fists clench and unclench
on invisible piano wire
and drywall screws. Every painting
is a future argument summer rain

can't silence. Dry thistle hangs from the ceiling,
somber witnesses to this acrylic
battleground. The door jangles;
Matisse has come to claim you. No,
it's only me stepping in from the cold.

Poet laureate emeritus of Sacramento, California, **Indigo Moor** is the author of four books of poetry: *Everybody's Jonesin' for Something* (University of Nebraska Press, 2021), *In the Room of Thirsts & Hungers* (Main Street Rag, 2017), *Through the Stonecutter's Window* (Northwestern University Press, 2010), and *Tap-Root* (Main Street Rag, 2006).

CATIE O'LEARY

Visual Stories—Crane, 2019
Collage with antique engravings, 11 x 9 in



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