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Smudge Painting

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Smudge Painting

An oil pastel glides softly
leaving charcoal grey smears across papers
and something of its churning gloom
reminds me of
the twirling smoke of a smudge stick
drifting through the air and fading
away from the sparkling orange embers
and I blend
my blots of ash with fingers
long since stained brown from multicolored oils
remembering grandmother with her russet skin
arms flowing
sinuous smoke trailing after like a salmon through a stream of whirl-
ing silver
prayers falling from her lips
warbling joyfully and strong
eddy with smoky wisps gracefully