



Emily Fox King  
Detail from "Mother's Day"  
oil on canvas

## The Color of Longing

*Melody Newey Johnson*

*After a painting by Emily Fox King*

This blood, this longing was meant for  
your particular darkness. That shadow,  
the red droplet on the floor, a new wound:  
These are mine to name. And in my name  
you are known, no less worthy than your  
brother. No less chosen for this canvas of  
violence and change.

If there were a name, I'd give it to legion.

You lit a candle at dawn, robbed the  
blue hour of her longing; doubted green  
when everything told you I was there:

between shadow and stem.

If there were a way to ring you around rosies  
and ashes and posies, I would mark you,  
smudge you with flower and rain;  
your longing, your song, sung long past dusk.

This edge is the answer to your longing.

If you thought you could summon me with  
longing, you did. And I waited in the blue hour,  
before the candle, before dust-shine when  
the sun broke. If you thought I could save you  
with shades of color, you were right.

If you know the leaf edge, the yellow dust  
in the heart of the blossom, the red droplet,  
you are closer to home than you think.

I found you there once: In yellow.

The blood, the mud, the unnamed woman:  
known to me. The longing between root  
and blossom: your nursery. At this edge,  
light shelters every darkness, every moment  
you wish for something other, knowable, and sane.  
This color, this bloom, bears your name.

Come, now, let's see what you make.