

# WHEN EMILY PLAYS



*When Emily Plays* (detail) by John Elkerr  
22" x 30"

Acrylic paint, spray paint, ink on paper

Text by Stephen Eric Berry

i.

when Emily plays a vein in the middle of her forehead purses and coils among flung adders of chestnut burr. hammers grow ravenstones. dampers rise and tremor on the jaw of some dead leather god.

ii.

when Emily plays ink-scarred fingers press lead from ivory. a paralytic infused with nerve drifts down the stairs, Mother's gown streaked with black spectral ores of the sun.

iii.

when Emily plays she kicks off her slippers. down below, in the midnight Palaces of Versailles, doomed marionettes dance with lemon drops flung about from silks looped around her toes.

iv.

when Emily plays russet strains of cicada fire streak her cheeks. how is the world not a petty droning critique about nothing when you are soaring over the ice-beds of Titan?

v.

when Emily plays she thumps her heels on the rug embroidered with palisades of ancient eyes: here a martingale battened to a racing carriage, there a marrow drum of all humanity making love at once.