

First published in the United Kingdom in 2006 by Shearsman Books Ltd 58 Velwell Road Exeter EX4 4LD

at www.shearsman.com/pages/books/ebooks_home.html

Copyright © Ken Edwards, 1999. All rights reserved.

Cover: 'Red Paint Splatters' (detail) by Amanda Ruch, copyright © Amanda Ruch, 2006.

Text set in ITC Veljovic 14 point.

Acknowledgements

Some of these stanzas appeared in *Five Fingers Review* 14, 1995. Thanks especially to guest editor Fanny Howe.

CHACONNE

Ken Edwards

CHACONNE

for Trane

(49 variations)

After the rain lost in chrome dioxide sound no more words

Heard where the air filled under the orange trees the last sounds so passed the hours in the east

That you were part
of that
a spiral
organisation
gathered about waters

Blood & muscle sound no more the receiving station lost black bird phosphorescence Dark
Ziryab would only sing
of that
framed
beauty

Invented a plectrum
of an eagle's wing
his power & method
spread through the Maghreb
in sound

```
The slave singer tuned roots lutes outshone poets
```

Sweet Qalam
was
a Basque girl sent when
young to study in the
east

Silk in her own tongue legato & strophic

como rayo de sol

lost

the pain

Returned upon itself
a spiral
in the quantum void
riff
blood & muscle

Down slowly behind the shadow falls off it evaporates

Phosphorescence takes the focus off sensation of hearing wood in a forest

Maybe
a Miles groove
maybe collapsed lungs
the human experience
of burning nights

Instruments
fretted accordingly
spread
rosary of sound in
praise

A night with Bird the way
you blow
say
there was
logic in harmony

Rosary of sound cut into the strophes a durable epic seldom in the glamour

Play lute riff preserve the link allow grace Words
because we are not
under the orange trees
sound
hieratic roots

Say there was logic in harmony and you were part of that engineered resonance

Hearing the collapse of language in muscle & blood riff

Say you were lost in the Muslim world glory tumbled like flutes so thickly gyric Human moods in a motley art of words in harmony control Broken verse sung by everyone played at prayer-time on twenty-seven drums of gold The shadow falls slowly down behind phosphorescence falls gathered about waters

In the dream palace of Al-Mahdi a hun dred *laúds* performed

Avempace would run
after the drover
so as
not to lose the
sound

Framed
in
the shell the blood
equinox
dreams

Speaks of patterning in the Mozarabic lute jayal carrizo laúd rota rabel Black bird added a fifth
bird
black pearls
Africa lazy bird
shakes for grace

In different modes play

xocra nura

play

dulzama gaita

Melodic

chain

in a single line

two simple canons paired

in spiral

Rustic rhythms seven groups in threes & fours control in the east Trumpets straight & curved shawms or chirimías horn castanets of burning stones which crack in the heat

Words
overheard in the street
pitch
as if out of nowhere
pristine

Strange oxides filling the burning lungs streams cut in the rock rosaries of water

From Central Park West

amour

from Dahomey

fall

flutes

Dance
evaporates
the shadow
falls
in strange particles

The chords begin to flow sweet pastorale of ghosts if you look hard enough you'll see after the rain Dreams
and schemes
on late night radio
allow grace
at the sharp moment

Sound
chases the train
heat
under the orange
grove habib

Praise
María Pérez
La Balteira plucked the
young soldiers
confessed to them

Africa
Alabama
speaks of
patterning
dance just for the love

Play the blues to Bechet blues to Elvin blues to you desire the songs the slave scales

On far-off summer nights
while
the melody of talk
stills you're
out

Your art
in the gold fluent tongue
organisation
broken mathematics
upward from the bass

```
You'll see
a love supreme
burst
free
air
```

The resonance derived from speed angelic phrase-ends cut into the strophe

Cut
fade sound & vision
when there is no longer
any sound the room is
filled

Allow grace at the sharp moment hieratic "your sound has no more words" Originally a Spanish dance, the chaconne is a series of musical variations on an unvarying ground bass. In Bach's *Chaconne* for unaccompanied violin (final movement of the Second *Partita*), the bass is implied. In the poem, a sequence of 49 syllabic linepatterns cycles through a five-line stanza form, making a total of 49 stanzas without repetition (the 50th would repeat the structure of the first). Titles of many compositions by John Coltrane are interwoven. Proper names include those of mediaeval Arabic-Andalusian musicians, for example Ziryab, nicknamed "Blackbird" for his dark skin, who added the fifth string to the *ud* (oudh, lute). Unfamiliar words are mostly names of musical instruments. Much of this stuff comes from Ann Livermore: *A Short History of Spanish Music* (1972).