

## María Violín · *Daniel Moyano*

MANUEL THE SOUTH AMERICAN spent last winter playing the quena in a garret on Plaza Santa Bárbara surrounded by a rainy Madrid that he could not see from his window, which looked out on other windows with hanging clothes and enormous raindrops. Never a clear sky that winter with a few snows, and facing his a few yards away a window forever closed. The clothesline between that window and his always empty, enormous drops of rain in the rusted pipes, and the quena sounds as it sounds to you every afternoon after stopping work, notes to go on filling time in Madrid with twenty or thirty years ahead until it clears, stuck in Madrid who could doubt it. The rest of your life, stupe. I told you that when you took the boat. And don't give me any I'll die in Madrid with showers, let Vallejo rest easy. Anyway you're doing all right with your quena and your photography work, your attic for one and your records of the dark Sosa, playing the quena or sipping maté these nine winter months, you like telling yourself, thinking you were someone else now that you have to live twenty or thirty years more stuck in Madrid rain and Madrid attic, clothesline with nobody's clothes hanging out and an always closed window exactly opposite, six little glass panes black with soot and beyond the glass nothing and higher up roof tiles two centuries old at least and gutters with enormous raindrops everywhere and above sometimes ashen sky nothing to do with El Greco. He spent the winter playing the quena they'd sent him by mail with its air of an Indian quena made from a beloved woman's bones, that's what the quena's like they say, looking at the closed window and the clothesline which once was green and now principally a path for the very round drops hanging underneath, noiselessly falling almost directly on Manuel's window ledge, he with the quena plays because he plays to you or *girovagare* in the attic *senza donne e le mani tenerceli dietro la schiena*, like Pavese dead with no showers and no woman.

Without a woman's body you are without your own body in Madrid, pacing the attic with your hands behind your back like Pavese when death sought him out in that hotel in Rome, and if you don't have your own body you're exiled from your own self, cities are figments, you walk through the streets of Madrid but really you are walking only through

mist, only Cibeles mist and Puerta de Alcalá mist only, guard against Pavese's fate, it's too drastic and not at all Latin American, the other one correctly told Manuel, the one who believed he was with him when he walked alone through the streets of Madrid and paced the attic on Santa Bárbara in Madrid, every night with no body and with no South America, there was no one with a body in the attic, only enormous raindrops running like live animals along the green line, the drops falling without the shape of drops, without rain now, at exactly the moment of grazing Manuel's pane the rain died buried among the orange peelings in the little patio below with its fallen clothes and shoes and toys, all there four stories below among the skeleton the rain turns into when it falls into the patio and buries itself in the drains, the gray afternoon of a tango, *senza mamma e senza amore* and thinking what must she be doing now my sweet Rita of the Andes among the rushes and calabur trees, dreams mixed with alcohol, until that morning when the window opposite dawned so clear, almost transparent curtains inside and a shadow moving to and fro, the life which arrived had very clear traces in the center of the clothesline, slip, panties hanging in the center of the line, a small pythagorean monochord of transparent cloth, she must be a woman fallen from heaven.

It's a risk to develop photos with the window opened, she may put her light on to take in her panties which are now dry, a monochord swaying in the middle of the line, he can cover the photo he is developing for the daily ABC, a plateresque portal of a historic building going to ruin, now the image gradually appears on the paper, ten seconds more and it will be well defined, the outline of what is going to be the portal trembles in the fluid, when the desired contrast appears, acetic acid and stop, into the fixer, but just at that moment she puts on the light and the portal disappears from the paper and Manuel looks at her window with its liquid developer curtains, her image hesitates behind the curtains, the contours are not defined, long hair floating in chemicals, but that's her waist, that's her breast and the rest you imagine, the image withdrawing from the window is not clear, an overexposed or badly focused photo, now there's nothing more beyond the curtain Pavese *senza donna* but now it seems she again approaches the window, it's a badly focused photo, a photo blurred by the mesh of the curtain, but what a woman my God, too much for you, Manuel, if she pushed the curtain aside and you saw her clearly, she's one of those dreamboats who don't exist, a woman from heaven or from a

*Playboy* cover, a cluster of balls wouldn't satisfy you who could doubt it, but Manuel said yes swallowing saliva, he was going to scale Aconcagua, Aconcagua was moving off behind the curtains, peaks too high are always blurred by the clouds.

An erotic fascination, eh, Manuel? How he turns over in the cold cold bed in the bed alone alone, never have I seen you so imaginative as now, how icy it's growing outside in mid-April a thousand waters, or perhaps tomorrow her panes (and yours) will have no transparence, no frost to scrape, he told himself, then a spurt of hot water and transparency where she appears saying good morning, a wisp of steam comes from her mouth, a very hot body against the frost, without curtains or haze you'll be able to see the entire cathedral opposite, the entire cathedral for you alone, her body is frosted in pinpoints of warm texture, upper and lower zones, especially boundary zones, you're a seer in the heart of Delphos, give me a hint where you're going with such a big board, Manuelito, in such frost, you can't move with such a thick board deep in a dream. But then it was when she thus, and I thus, and then she *us*, and I *her*, and she *me*, along the length of the line go Manuel's thoughts from drop to drop, they leap over the frosted panties, reach the window like a cat, soft little hairs against frosted skin, then she *me* but I too *her*, and beyond her body it's about to rain, Manuel manages to see the Indians of his village leaping like frogs to bring rain. Manuel leaps like a frog, one must see how lovely it rains and the Indians croak gratefully.

She has gotten up and Manuel bears the cold from his open window. There is a modification in the window opposite: the lower curtains have been opened and now they make an almost pointed arch in the panes washed by the frost. White, tall, entire, clean, she appears under the arch, opens the window and draws the line in, but the remains of the frost jam the pulley, she puts her other arm out into the cold to pull with both hands, but no good, she makes a gesture which at once is a beginning of laughter when Manuel breaks the frost and also pulls on the line which now moves, with shudders the slip abandons the center of the line, two-thirds of the way there's a perfect accord between her laughter and Manuel's, breaking raindrops the slip moves toward the other window. Manuel's arms clinging to the line out the window push in one direction, the arms of the woman from heaven pull in the other with virginal dignity, mistakes and laughter while drops of ice fall, the panties travel stiff

with frost, wrinkle a bit in the center and flutter like wings, a butterfly on the wing so thinks Manuel's desire, and when they're within reach of her hands Manuel makes a fake pull, the butterfly shifts route, heads back toward Manuel's window when he says the panties are frozen and she answers something in a foreign tongue which Manuel doesn't understand, now Manuel does croak, giving another jerk of the pulley, and she seizes her sex-cover trying to say thanks, but what she says sounds from distances Manuel doesn't manage to hear, she closes her window and Manuel's heart says glo glo like frogs when it rains.

Hard to read tonight beside his window with the English girl's lighted window facing him. English girl? Not very probable.

"Love love?" says Manuel.

"No, no," the English girl's long loose hair says, quivering.

Amore amore? Liebe liebe? Amour?

"Nothing nothing." The English girl's body stirs, shaking the tablecloth.

Hard to read knowing she was there, horrible chapter where the novelist enumerated the hero's ancestry from his great-grandfather on down without relating the maternal branch, a chapter from Genesis, Enoch begat Saul and Saul begat Aaron and Aaron begat his very own mother. Hard to read when there her shadow passes like a tall architecture, there are no panties on the line barely visible in the dark, the window lit and within the swaying shadow, the lace curtains drawn, farewell arch and farewell her, see you in the morning English girl, she hears nothing, leaning against the curtain she replies with her hands, Liebe liebe, and her head now blurred says nothing, sleep well and her hands against the pane nothing nothing, afterward there are no more words or hands or head in motion, she's motionless against the glass, a quiet image in a photograph. What corridor must her garret open on? There are ten doors in each corridor, but there are also many corridors and different stairways. Stairway 3 corridor 2 door 14? And she nothing nothing, she doesn't know how to say a word this dear English creature who fell from heaven, scarcely a thanks brought from who knows where. A bird could fly up there, a couple of flaps and it would be at her window, it's only a few yards (and four storeys below), it wouldn't even have to fly, hardly leap and there it would be, but I'm a frog glo glo waiting for rain.

Then Manuel became a firefly. He put out the light in his room and

waited to see if she peered out, and she nothing nothing. He put it on again with a firefly rhythm to see if she understood the calls of light in the dark. A bit of flight and a tiny spark to call the partner, that's what fireflies do. Another short flight, another flicker, and she nothing nothing. Then the woman from heaven put out her light and Manuel's heart pom pom, capable of igniting her and making her another firefly, she too a short flight and a brief spark, she who puts out and I who put on, now I put out so she'll put on, pom pom. But she did not put on her light and Manuel ceased being a firefly, he became an Indian turning to frog, frog turning to rain, he took the recorder and began to play so that it would rain, he played in the dark with a slight fear of the silence and darkness, with a little of Pavese in the darkness *senza donna, verra la morte e avra i tuoi occhi*, because if there were no love the other could come, a very white woman much whiter than the cold snow, and when you're stuck in Madrid or in Paris anything can happen, that woman, and then goodbye. He sighed and emitted a long altiplano cry which resounded from peak to peak and from window to window, the sound of the mestizo Ayyyyy, a long long *meeeeee* which was like a question, an And? which flies without need of being a firefly, an And? which sparks of sound which could come from the throat of any animal when it questions and in the silence which followed the quena's sound the footsteps of death could be heard it comes looking for me, beside you would be life, open the door, sweet, but at that moment from the English girl's window came the concomitant sound, the other firefly's spark, and now yes his heart pom pom, which kept beating alone when the sound of the English girl's flute ceased, a *sol* with warbles, I'll throw you a silken cord, and the quena's *do* and quickly the flute's sweet *mi*, the first inversion of perfect accord, comparable to my love, come up, the cold woman very much colder than death is leaving, and if my line won't reach I'll add my braids to it, neither death nor shower in Madrid, *verra l'amore e avra i tuoi occhi*, Pavese. Manuel left his musical sparks to go to the other room, which faced the English girl's window and saw that she had put her light on to play, leaning against the open window. The English girl has a look that neither smile nor grimace modifies, a look only, animal eyes concentrated on Manuel, she raises her flute, the flute high in the air for Manuel to see, he raises his quena and poises it there high up for her to see, what they look at are not instruments, they're looking at their bodies, they look at each other until making each other tremble. When

the silence reaches an intolerable tension she blows her flute, emits a *re* high and white as she, in that silence a *re* is very important to their bodies, she waits with her body thrust back and the quena responds with a concomitant sound which is unique, and she puts out the light and disappears, and Manuel pom pom toward his bed, the other firefly also puts out the light to think of the encounter, which already exists somewhere, everywhere that encounter already exists which Manuel is now awaiting asleep like a good child.

Manuel leaps out of bed and runs to the other room when he hears the noise of the pulley. The English girl is hanging out recently washed clothes, a white tablecloth, and she runs the line, the tablecloth comes toward Manuel and Manuel looks at the sun and blinks, a beautiful day he says to the English girl who says something in another language. Your flute's very good Manuel says and she hangs a napkin on the line. I liked it a lot, you know? and she smiles, wrinkling up her nose, a lot says Manuel, and she hangs out pink panties, creak creak the pulley with a slip advancing toward Manuel who now says we speak the same language, he says it stupidly in words, now we can understand each other, don't you see? and she hangs out a green blouse which says nothing nothing, then an immense sheet with loud creaks of the pulley, she says something in her language and Manuel says glo glo and she laughs and hangs out white stockings, the line moving and the tablecloth and slip almost at Manuel's window, and he extends his hands to touch the slip and she laughs and disappears and reappears flute in hand, what about chatting awhile it seems she is saying to him, and he who takes the quena and waits looking at the English girl and thinking of an exotic name to give her, useless to turn the thing over in his head, the South American has no name to give the English girl who is falling from heaven.

She plays looking at Manuel with animal cunning, she plays and sways as if wishing her body too were a sound, the wind stirs the rope and she tells Manuel where she's from, tells him things about her country, but Manuel with his musical and geographical displacement cannot understand, he notices that there is a lot of snow in that country but nothing else, a marching air which she practices, seeing that he has not understood she says nothing either, and she stops playing and seeing that he does not understand anything she makes a gesture as if saying come on what a fool you are, and invites him to talk. Then Manuel plays the only music he

knows, from the altiplano, so that she can clearly see he's from the cordillera, and she understands, she puts on a sombrero and dances like the Chulas, yes, something like that he says, he hasn't chosen the exact music but it's close. Again she plays airs from her land, Manuel is lost between something Nordic and something Slavic but it's all the same, face it she's a creature from heaven. *Ti ri rí*, Manuel says pointing below toward the street, we'll meet in the entrance he means. *Tu ru rí*, the English girl says with the flute pointing below but in the other direction. She leaves the flute and combs her hair without a mirror, Manuel leaves the quena and finishes dressing, she has already gone out and he goes down the stairs like a cascade, the truth is he's gliding down the English girl's hair, recently combed, toboggan hair which will make him fall directly between her legs, his thoughts travel there.

In the doorway the English girl spreads out to be more when the South American arrives. The desire of the English girl leaning on the doorway looks within toward one of the possible stairways, and the English girl looks at the other, trying to hear Manuel's steps which don't come yet. And the English girl's desire, seeing that the South American is not on any of the stairways, goes into the street with the wind and looks toward the cordillera while the English girl stands statuesque against the door frame awaiting the fall of the fruit, desire is listening to quenans in the cordillera but Manuel is not there either, she tries to hear Manuel's steps on the stairs but there are neither steps nor Manuel, while Manuel goes in and out the door looking for the English girl inside and outside, but there's not a trace of the English girl, only the empty doorway and the almost empty street with more cold than people and a smell of baking chestnuts coming from close by, as the English girl's desire trembles in the cordillera near the snow, no quena no Manuel, while Manuel sees Pavese pass by the door, Pavese is going toward death which must have his eyes, Pavese going to the street where his love lived, the girl who cannot open the door to him and will let him die, and Vallejo still there, the very white woman passes before him, she sees Manuel and creates an artificial shower, although it is not raining in Madrid that woman makes it rain near Manuel, while the English girl cannot explain why the South American hasn't arrived yet, soon the minutes will change names and still nothing, nothing nothing says the silent stairway, he will not come now, it's a mistake, it was not a date, musical language is usually limited in these cases the English girl

thinks calling her desire, perhaps he wanted to tell me goodbye and there was nothing about a date in the doorway, but *why* then? says the English girl's desire, but *why* then? says Manuel in the doorway, if it was perfectly clear that we would meet here below, while the English girl looks at her watch, more than a half hour and the South American nothing, then she calls her desire again, desire comes down from the altiplano and once more returns to the English girl's body, the two mount the stairs slowly, what a disillusion, it was a mistake in pitch, while Manuel's watch tells him the hour is gone, I don't know why I waited until now, he says just as he sees the very white woman cross the street toward his door, preceded by a rain which belongs only to her, the woman very much colder than the snow raises a hand as if to detain Manuel, who manages to close the door which she is already spattering with her rain, the woman follows far behind as if nothing has happened, her face dusty, a feline walk, and Manuel reaches his room feeling that no one is entering there, death is seeking me, the English girl's window is closed and the clothesline, too much woman for me, Pavese *senza donna*, I in your body English girl, I in you English girl, but nothing, she is a creature from heaven.

Manuel points his quena at the closed window and strikes a *mi* awaiting the *sol* for harmony, a *mi* which is humbled to be reconciled and pardoned. The sound emerges from the quena, balances on the clothesline, passes through the windowpanes and halts a moment to look at the English girl entire in a chair and her hair falling sadly down to her waist. The sound trembles with desire and approaches her immense architecture, it does not know how to penetrate her, it's afraid of falling, of stopping before entering her, but luckily there far off Manuel keeps blowing now with the last bit of air from his lungs, and the sound climbs the English girl along the strands of her hair, the *mi* multiplies, divides, a bit of sound for each strand, and from there goes down the English girl's body as if along a violoncello chord, there's not a single pore of her which does not have its corresponding bit of *mi*. While the sound runs over her body, she trembles in a coming and going of the chord in tune, she trembles feeling the bits of sound gradually gathering at the tips of her toes, they become once more only a *mi*, and there the sound dies and her body returns to the chord's silence and repose. Her desire takes the flute to respond with the sound which will form perfect harmony, but the English girl takes the flute and blows a different sound, a *fa* which is going to blend with the *mi* which

sounds again there on the quena, a harsh harmony which means no to everything and nothing nothing for Manuel, who in the face of that aggression puts his quena away. He puts it away at exactly the moment when he notices that between his garret wall and the wall around the English girl's window there's a very evident difference of texture despite centuries of weathering. But then, Manuel says, her garret belongs to another building, her entrance is not mine, her doorway is in one of those streets around the block, Campoamor Santa Teresa Fernando VI and Hortaleza streets, the names of the streets bordering the block buzz around Manuel as he goes down the stairs in search of entrances, there are many but through one someday the English girl will appear, all of her.

Foreign goods, not that. Bookstore. School. Fish. Coal yard. Doorway—that could be it. That's a suspicious door. On this street, almost nothing. The doorway, yes—but no. Watch out for the grocer, she's always popping out. Nothing here, a new building. Note the number of that door. And keep an eye on the bar. Another bookstore. Basketwares, nothing. Another doorway that may be it. Back to Hortaleza, my entrance. First reconnaissance concluded. There are at least five entrances which interest me, Manuel thinks before his first glass of the afternoon in *Juanita's*.

The English girl has a canary in the cage which she has hung by the window, a canary which stops singing when Manuel plays the quena (she still doesn't answer, the flute silent). It seems that the canary cannot see Manuel stick his head out the window with his quena (Manuel is always against the light), so that when it stops to listen to the quena it cocks its head in the most favorable direction for hearing. It seems that the canary does not know the quena's sound and thinks it's another bird, a very strange bird, a bird never heard before, a bird from nobody knows where, foreign. Manuel plays for the English girl without knowing that a part of his music is for the canary, he plays so she'll come out and she nothing, he plays thinking that the sound goes very far and very fast, between the English girl's room and the street where she lives there's an acoustic tube of stairways which ends at an unknown door, the quena's sound reaches that and then goes out into the street and is lost in Madrid the labyrinth. Manuel calls the Chilean painter who lives on Lequerica and asks him to take a walk around the block to try to hear the quena's sound coming from a doorway. You're crazy or all balls says the Chilean and then goes around

Manuel's block, a quena in Madrid, you have to have balls the Chilean thinks tilting his ear toward the doorways, all he manages to hear is a Frank Zappa record and says so, what a shame Manuel says as the girl puts her head out the window and takes in the canary, she looks at Manuel but doesn't smile as at other times, at once she puts out the light and it's over.

Chinese shadows on the wall when at night she emerges to cover the canary's cage, ridiculous Manuel projecting shadows with his hands, a deer a dog a bunny a swallow who flies and she nothing, she closes her window, give work a try, butterfly. Today's game is covering the windows with old post cards and she nothing, with Japanese engravings and she nothing, carnations hanging from the clothesline which are withering beside the English girl's window, the canary looks at everything without understanding anything, at times he remembers the foreign bird which hasn't sung in some time. Now that's enough says Manuel, print the negatives you brought from your country. Enormous trays to develop enlargements, hang them on the line, and there hanging from the clips will be the overflowing rivers which rush down from the mountain, the forests which the English girl has never seen, vicuñas and guanacos are fluttering on the line and she nothing.

And if you disguised yourself, Manuel? Manuel buys a pile of hats at the flea market, the most modern are from Galdos's period. Each time she puts out or takes in the canary, Manuel appears with a different hat, complemented by mustaches and wigs which do not always match, there are green hats and yellow, tall ones and feathered ones, Italian capelinas and Indian feathers, while the first rays of sun give the English girl the aspect of a ripening grape. The mixture of hat styles and the coming spring favor Manuel when after trying various hat combinations he discovers one which arouses the grape's full maturation, a hat halfway between a Basque beret and a biretta, all very absurd with ostrich feathers and hanging paper butterflies, she laughs as if she were laughing for the first time and says something in her language showing her tiny goldfish tongue right out of Lugones' story, the English girl sticks out her tongue and hides, and immediately Manuel and the canary see her stick her head out with a Tyrol hat on and the flute in hand. Manuel takes his quena and blows so that he undresses her with the sound, now that she is naked the English girl is no longer from heaven.

Until discovering her entrance, there's no other possibility but music,

Manuel. Go on then, for she's a musical instrument you're now going to play. She's very well tuned, recently taken out of the case, an instrument halfway between a guitar and a violin, but female. To produce a sound the flexible body must enter into vibration, which breaks the molecular equilibrium, and that's the bow's purpose, impulses, frictions deliberately prescribed in their exact rhythm. When the disturbed molecules try to return to their former repose, your movement will prevent that, and then the oscillations, the coming and going. But to produce sound a channel is needed, something sound can travel through, the channel can be solid or gas or liquid, and besides there's the clothesline, the velocity of sound 341 meters a second at 15 degrees centigrade, how well the English girl vibrates at that temperature, she's from a cold land. United by the clothesline (there are two-winged panties in the middle) Manuel and the English girl are instrument and performer, they achieve sound but not yet music, to do that they need the scale, we know that a sound alone says nothing to anybody. We have to organize our vibrations, English girl. With my quena I'll make you vibrate freely all over, but the butterfly panties between divide the line into two exactly equal portions, the Greeks' monochord, and the sound which comes from your panties is the octave of your sound, and thus the number of vibrations of each portion is exactly double the number of yours. But if I run the panties toward two-thirds of the line, and toward your window, I have an interval of a fifth, and running them still a little farther I have that of a fourth, and those are perfect rhythms, thanks Pythagoras, I'm almost beside you, English girl.

When the concert (concert!) ends, Manuel and the English girl stretch their arms, their fingers on the tip of air, of the chord, their fingers don't reach the exact note, it's terrible for musicians not to be able to reach the center of sound, the English girl's desire is a quena missing between her legs. Manuel feels he has the hard quena between his own, the quena is so hard it hurts, near you would be life, there are words neither of the two understands, they are cries from the forest which is caught in the photograph, a jungle never seen, says Manuel, tigers and doves cry together in the dark. The entrance? Nothing nothing says Manuel, nothing nothing says the English girl. Don't let the woman much whiter and colder than the snow appear. If you're near the English girl and that woman comes, the English girl will be able to add her braid to the chord so that you can climb up and then the very white woman nothing, and the English girl

everything. And if we give the English girl a name so that once and for all she'll stop being the woman from heaven? A flesh and blood name to be able to have her, the first that comes into your head, a plain everyday name, any name, she's much more than any name. María? Do you like it? Good. I think it's perfect.

María, Manuel says, and María sticks her hand out the other window. Someone pounds on Manuel's door. The very white woman? Manuel takes refuge in the window. María opens her arms and in her language says come, come she says, come with the sound of love, the English girl's desire says come and the woman who walks with Pavese keeps knocking, she knocks at the door in the rain, she's created a shower for Manuel, it's raining only there beside his attic door and Madrid is Paris with a shower knocking at Manuel's door, ay rigorous death let me live one day more and the woman says no, no, nothing nothing, open the door to me for it's raining. It's not the Indian frog rain of his village, it's the rain that carried off Vallejo and now wants to carry Manuel off because he's alone, now Manuel understands many things, he knows who has confused the entrances, this woman has a predilection for South Americans.

Did you see last night on television the eels' journey to spawn. Fantastic, wasn't it? As far as the Sargasso Sea. Good, here's the clothesline, Manuelito. Eels are equilibrists, the northern rivers where they travel to spawn are filled with dangers, some eels die of course. Yes, barefoot is better. You must lighten the burden, you never know how much the line will bear. Don't forget the quena.

The horizontal quena in his two hands is not an offering. It's the equilibrist's balancing rod to keep him from falling. Four storeys below there are orange peelings and worn-out shoes which Manuel doesn't look at, Manuel has his eyes fixed in the air which ends with María, he looks at the air and at María with the eyes of a frightened guanaco, he drags his feet along the line, two-thirds perfect harmony, while María rests her hand on the line and feels the pulse from Manuel's body, while the very white woman is breaking the lock. Fear and death stand between Manuel and María, but they are transparent, she can see Manuel's nostrils and eyes, and Manuel's quena in perfect equilibrium. María hears the shower in Manuel's attic and doesn't breathe, she sees the butterfly panties and doesn't breathe, impossible for Manuel to move a foot to get to her, that would mean blood on the shoes and orange peels there below. Manuel sees

the panties and doesn't breathe, his feet stop right there to listen to the shower that very white woman made. María pulls the line to move Manuel and the obstacle, but she can't, María has no strength, everything is very quiet as it rains inside, the butterfly sees that María has no strength and begins to move her wings, Manuel raises his eyes to see the flight, there goes the butterfly winging over the two-centuries' old roof tiles. For the first time the canary can now see Manuel, at that distance he's no longer against the light. María's eyes cannot see the panties' flight, they are fixed on the eyes of the guanaco who arrives with the quena, every bit of her wants to be a guanaco and María pulls the line and touches Manuel's fingers, Manuel a fruit falling into María's room, the rain ceases far off, and in his ancient tomb monochord Pythagoras smiles.

There's still fire in María's cold attic. The guanaco and his mate have a perfect communion in their common one-word language. Eep, eep, says the guanaco, eep eep, his mate smiles, and they look deep into each other, where there are rivers which eels swim up. The canary has been carefully carried to the other room so it won't see these things. Only the fire, the year's last fire, is looking at them. Since it can have no words, it has sounds. English girl chord, South American bow. María Violín and Manuel Bow beside the fire breaking the molecular equilibrium, that's what impulses are for, friction fittingly proportioned in their exact rhythm. Manuel Quena disturbs María Violín's repose with pure rhythm, without slackening (on the contrary!), and when the molecules, because of inertia, want to return to rest, the fluctuations begin, the two vibrating, seeking the other repose, the bodies' repose, the bodies' silence that will burst into music. Just when the butterfly appears flying over the roof, only the canary sees it return, the canary sees the butterfly appear flying over the roof and then, careful of its delicate structure, settle once more in the center of the Pythagorean chord.

*Translated by H. E. Francis*