

Carpet and hoops, viol and tambourine,
 Where Annibal sits perched with brows severe,
 A serious ape whom none take seriously,
 Obligated in this fool's world to earn his nuts
 By hard buffoonery. We see them all,
 And hear their talk—the talk of Spanish men,
 With Southern intonation, vowels turned
 Caressingly between the consonants,
 Persuasive, willing, with such intervals
 As music borrows from the wooing birds,
 That plead with subtly curving, sweet descent—
 And yet can quarrel, as these Spaniards can.

JUAN (near the doorway).

You hear the trumpet? There's old Ramon's blast.
 No bray but his can shake the air so well.
 He takes his trumpeting as solemnly
 As angel charged to wake the dead; thinks war
 Was made for trumpeters, and their great art
 Made solely for themselves who understand it.
 His features all have shaped themselves to blowing,
 And when his trumpet's bagged or left at home
 He seems a chattel in a broker's booth,
 A spoutless watering-can, a promise to pay
 No sum particular. O fine old Ramon!
 The blasts get louder and the clattering hoofs;
 They crack the ear as well as heaven's thunder
 For owls that listen blinking. There's the banner.

Host (joining him: the others follow to the door).

The Duke has finished reconnoitring, then?
 We shall hear news. They say he means a sally—
 Would strike El Zagal's Moors as they push home
 Like ants with booty heavier than themselves;
 Then, joined by other nobles with their bands,
 Lay siege to Guadix. Juan, you're a bird
 That nest within the Castle. What say you?