

## Oud and saz

Oud and saz thrumming percussively through Arabic arpeggios  
under the fingertips of a man whose face  
is lined with his devotion to this art,  
which he gives to us five or six this night  
in Bali.

He doesn't even register our applause.  
White muslin pants on hand-carved Indonesian day bed, comma,  
throw pillows, thin body, two gold rings, one in each ear,  
the lobes dangling, brows furrowed with music,  
the iPod rigged through the micro mix board,  
wires snaking over the rattan.

The two women to my right are rapt,  
as well they should, as well the world should  
to all that's beautiful, under paintings of rose burgundy,  
gilded over brown, red curtains shimmer with gold,  
a wooden case with a glass door displaying  
"Botanica" and "Arts d'Afrique"

The prelude stretches over Time  
bird-cricket sounds electrical over speakers.

I try to put this into "words" for the people not here,  
including -and perhaps only-myself in the future.

Arabica has caught us all in its thrall.  
As well it should.

Andy Couturier