THE FIRE

I died
Seventy-five dollars for my life
Mama, they gave you seventy-five dollars for my life
I died
But I will never die again
It will be different from now on
Listen-listen
Let me tell you how it was

Late in the afternoon
We were tired – too tired to talk
Murmurs – machines humming
cloth rustling – needles singing
clicking
stitching castanets

THEN

SCREAMING – SHRIEKING

FIRE!!!!!!!

BLACK SMOKE

FIERY FLAMES

BLAZING CLOUDS

HELLISH SICKENING FUMES

RED AND BLACK COBRAS COILING UPWARDS

EVERYWHERE – ENGULFING

FORESTS OF FIRE

EVERYWHERE –

TERROR – HORROR – PANIC –

RUN – ESCAPE – ESCAPE

NO

NO

NO ESCAPE

FIRE ESCAPE DOORS ARE LOCKED – WE WILL DIE
WE ARE GOING TO DIE

GOTTENU – JESUS – GOD

We cannot breathe – we are choking – we are dying –

TRAPPED – STRANGLING

ENGINES – FIRE ENGINES

COMING – WITH LADDERS

WE ARE SAFE

THE ENGINES ARE HERE

GOTTENU –

WE WILL BE SAVED WE WILL LIVE

OH JESUS – THEY CANNOT REACH US –

We are too high

We must jump – JUMP INTO THE NETS

NO

NO

WE WILL DIE –

WE ARE TOO HIGH

BUT WE WILL BURN ALIVE

WE MUST GO – GO – OUT –

OUT FROM THIS BLAZING HELL

Black skirts flutter – circle in the air
Black parachutes at a death party

THEN – FAST – PLUNGING DOWN – DOWN
SMASH!

Someone says – she is not dead
They do not know – they cannot see me
I arise
From still, silent sleepers
On their pavement grave

I shake my fist –

I AM NOT DEAD!!