

Janet Theny / MADRE

On the balcony the morning ripens mango gold
already dry and hot
there are bodies in the ditch
School childrens' feet are road dusted
Their voices call

Madre madre mia

A car passes leaving an answer
as barren as the dust
as silent as the road
where now only the roosters call cocksure

Madre madre mia

Wet hands on rough stone
Hands work strong and bent
To caress each bloodied face.

The balcony deserted at noon
White shirts hang dry and stiff
They hit against the railing
Calling

Madre

And where there is no food
There is no hope
In your lap the children suck
Their hands slap and pull the breast
That offers nothing
No comfort for the dying.

Night becomes the lilac bloom
The balcony calls the Madre out
The heavy scented blanket of the night
Suffocates the scream
For the children whose silence
Is the memory of a schoolyard
empty

Madre madre mia