The Shtetl is Burning

It is burning, little brothers, it is burning;
Woe, our poor shtetl – how sad! – is burning.
Angry winds with rage
Tear, break, and blow away;
The entire shtetl – everything all around – is already burning,
And you stand like that – looking on
As our shtetl burns.

It is burning, little brothers, it is burning;
All the aid depends on you.
If this shtetl is dear to you –
Take up the vessels and put out this fire;
Show us what you can do.
Do not stand like that, brothers,
With your arms crossed –
Take up the vessels and put out this fire,
Because or shtetl is burning.

It is burning, little brothers, it is burning;
The moment may come – Heaven forbid –
[When] the whole shtetl including ourselves
Will go up in fire and flames;
Like after a battle, all that will remain
[Are] only black, bare walls –
And you stand like that – looking on
With [your] arms crossed.
Do not stand, brothers – put out this fire,
Because our shtetl is burning.

M. Gebirtig