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## My Mother Four

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## My Mother Four

I can make out Poinciana trees miles away because of their flame red tops. I was asked who my father was and answered my grandfather. I had friends, I believe in cliques. Whitney Houston and Janet Jackson and *Dirty Dancing*. Single parenthood and single parent marriages. Add water, instant family. Summers in Tennessee with squirrels, a test drive for a mother. Chlorine taste in my mouth for days at a time; it must be summer. Barbie dolls are always naked. A pink and lilac bike, Cabbage Patch kids. Books in big, brown boxes. No alliteration intended. I don't remember who cooked for me then. From brown to green. Jail-house uniforms and cute little boys. Sesame Street lunch boxes. Too much love. Spoilt baby. I could never determine if I had enjoyed my childhood. If I had made the most of it, taken advantage. My name has all this history. I could be anyone but I choose:

'Let them eat cake' she said.

But no one thought it was because she was happy.

'Rich Bitch' they cried.

And her head rolled because the poor have so little happiness.

And the rich so much cake.

Mummy, mother, mine called Marilyn. No alliteration intended. Blue and gold and black. Oceans surround. Babies in amniotic fluid. I love because I know there are those that need it. This my tribute to them all. My first teacher is my favourite. Mummy, mother, mine called Mayrona. No alliteration intended. I live far away and go to church. I drive in a navy Nissan. I eat McDonald's. No piano, no ballet, no horseback riding. Still I'm perfect. Yellow Alamandas. Eighty Gucci bags, 5 Fendi, shoes, shoes, shoes. I read because of you. Mummy, mother, mine called Verona. Another. Sharon cleans my ears, mother four. You gave me kids before I could have them. No secrets there. Shall I tell you secrets Marvell-one-mother? Kitty curled up on my bed. Pictures in my Sunday best. Hair so different from now. Oppressive heat. No country life. Don't crunch up candy, suck it. I'll be your seat-belt. Marvie, Mae, Rona, Sherry. Nursery rhyme, chant and prayer. Hail Mary, Mother of God. Do the Catholics have it right? No twilight here. Grasshoppers in glass jars, in the palm of my hand. I love surprises.