

Why I wanted to be a Mother

for my little brother

To be a wishing well
To throw dreams in a pot
To make dumpling soup

To rock steady in a wooden chair
To kiss my son's forehead
To watch him fall asleep (grinning toothless
As if grinning was his way of scolding the world)

To wince at his curl of great lashes
To call him forth out of the dark—
The bold shimmer in each streetlight going on and off

To boil *cerasee* and sage
To bathe cuts and bruises
To watch the body heal in days

To touch the soul's chest and watch it heave
Then grow into lungs made for mountains
To bring about laughter out of the cave's mouth

To walk the path back to Acklins
To pass the hills of goats and sheep and hens
To find my brave reflection at the water's edge

To pour honey down a vase
To watch yellow elders sprout
To sing to every living thing
Until they are no longer gray.

How to Feed a House

5 cups of water

2 ½ cups of rice

1 tablespoon of cooking oil

1 big fat grouper

1 onion cut into circles

2 limes

½ teaspoon of thyme, sprinkled

2 dashes of crushed pepper

m/y mother's salted hands

her prayerful voice

steel, fire, ice and

everything pertaining to health

all balled up like a fist

striking hard

at a

at a at a at a

lusciouscoconut

luscious coconut

luscious coconut

coconut coco-

nut tree.

Things My Father Said

I'm the best there was and the best there ever will be.
You know I'll never disappoint.
Money sure doesn't grow on trees.
Tell your Mummy, "Go sit down, *aye*."
Men are in this mess because of a woman called Eve.
Why do you ask me so many questions?
You like to speed like your Dad. Hope you don't get in accidents too.
I bet you that bad driver in front is a woman.
I love you like I love myself because *you are me*.
There's not a day that I don't pray for you children.
Why don't you go and ask your Mummy that question?
You need to visit your Grandmother. She may not live that long.
Is that what you think of your father?
I don't hear from you in days and this is what I get?
Do you guys have any leftover fish?
When are you going to come and cook for me?
Don't you care about your old man?
I know you love me, but you have to do better.
I'm getting tired now and my body, old.
Ya'll could *skylark*, *aye*!
You're very knuckle-headed, just like your mother.
I don't want any excuses. Put family first.
I know you can do anything you put your mind to.
Don't worry. Someday things will get better.
Soon your Dad will make everything *okay*.