

How to Remember Your Mother

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Shake grass seeds onto the lawn when it turns yellow/ never wash a cast iron skillet/ do not try to revive what has already died/ mix it with something new instead/ go to the mosque on Fridays/ kneel/ your mother has bad knees/ kneel/ remember that you do not have to pray/ that is for you, not for her/ stop saying sorry/ please/ thank you/ i forgive you/ you do not owe anyone shit/ that is for you/ and for her/ say the word shit several times/ that is her favorite word/ never ever use a measuring cup/ measuring cups are white people shit /don't taste food/ feel it/ lock yourself in a room with all of the lights off/ don't come out until/ you know what you did wrong/ count to three/ count to five/ count to ten/ recite the Quran on the way to school/ the grocery store/ the gay club/ nobody has time for faith anymore/ love women with/ unwavering confidence/ love men with/ cautious optimism/ that is for you/ and for her/ wear shoes that are two/ different colors/ salt the perimeter of your house/ draw a black dot/ behind your ear/ evil is not welcome here/ when you are reborn/ choose to be her/ play like children are supposed to/ do everything she wished she could have/ do not just love your body/ revel in it/ drink and dance from the dip/ in your hips/ our family's women are big-boned/ never yell/ break cycles/ never grit/ your/ teeth/ never flare/ your/ nostrils/ break cycles/ do not smoke/ break cycles/ finish school/ break cycles/ make a name/ for yourself/ break/ cycles/ salt your/ mouth/ break/ cycles/

Evil is not/ welcome/ here.