

Do you agree with the saying that *a woman's work is never done*? Levi Tafari does, and he wrote this poem to tell the world about his very special mum.

Do this preparation exercise first and then read the poem.

Preparation

Match the vocabulary with the correct definition and write a–h next to the numbers 1–8.

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| 1..... to tell someone off; to reprimand | a. rude |
| 2..... impolite | b. scores |
| 3..... lots of | c. to point the finger |
| 4..... to clean something with a cloth | d. to chastise |
| 5..... to accuse somebody | e. to wipe |
| 6..... an animal that is a mixture of a horse and a donkey | f. a ROLO |
| 7..... part of a city inhabited by a minority group | g. a mule |
| 8..... a type of chocolate-covered toffee | h. a ghetto |

The First Woman in my Life

by Levi Tafari

A woman's work is never done
If you don't believe me ask my mum
She worked her fingers to the bone
To provide us with a decent home
If she lived in Ancient Rome
She could of built that city on her own
She cooks, she cleans
She does everything
She irons decorates and does the shopping
She chastised us when we were rude
But never sent us to bed with out food
Everyday she would change our clothes
If we had colds she would wipe our nose
Or if we went to mum with a problem
Mum would always help us solve them
We didn't want for anything
We got the greatest gift mum's loving
You can have ten aunties and scores of lovers
But remember you only have one mother

I remember when someone pointed a finger
Mum said I was Black, beautiful and I had culture

She always made sure we went to school
Because in this life you can't be a fool
You can see people will ride you like a mule
It was mum who taught me to be cool
So mother there's something I want you to know
I love you mum, I love you so
You taught me to survive in the ghetto
You can have my last ROLO

If it was not for you then I would not exist
So here it comes for you a kiss
Yes you was the first woman in my life
But one day I will take a wife
Then hopefully she'll become a mum
A woman's work is never done.

© Levi Tafari, March 1983

This poem was selected as part of the BritLit project. To find out more about BritLit visit our TeachingEnglish website:

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/britlit>