

Look At Me

written and performed by

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at

Cherish House

for the occasion of

One Family 45th Celebration

28th June, 2017

I

We are the women who go it alone
Who don't bemoan the perceived
shortcomings
Of the shape of our home
We love our kids, we give them shelter
We are their friend, champion and protector
Parenting rituals are a solo pursuit
School functions, a moment to deduce
That he's not busy tonight, or indisposed
It's always just me, alone and exposed
We are old and young, across all classes
We're strong, resilient and we're making
advances
I am a single mother.
I cherish my child.
Look at me.

II

We are the women vilified and hated for
another's absence
Yes, we're implicated, which is pretty mad,
since
We held our ground and stuck around
We worked in the laundry, presenting a
quandary
In a repressive society seething with piety
And although we've moved on
We're still seen as lesser
Never a chance that we might be better
Or just as good, in a different way
The richness of diversity on full display
I am a single mother.
I cherish my child.
Celebrate me.

III

We are the women who challenged the state
To change the laws and to set things straight
On illegitimacy and providing support
But still our constitution fails to endorse
The value of my family, the contribution I make
A lack of husband my unforgivable mistake
Societal structures default to nuclear
They don't work for me, in fact they fear
Anything but the traditional setup
Come on Ireland, it's time to step up
I am a single mother.
I cherish my child.
Protect me.

IV

We are the women susceptible to poverty
Embodying the anomaly that shows up an
economy
Balanced on the perch of unpaid care work
We raise our kids in economic uncertainty
With no safety net, yet masking perfectly
The daily toil that this stress brings
Shouldering alone whatever life flings
At us - mortgage, tax, childcare, labour
All these things harder than our coupled
neighbour
I am a single mother.
I cherish my child.
Value me.

V

We are the women who go it alone
Who don't bemoan the perceived
shortcomings
Of the shape of our home
We are one constituent in a rich tapestry
Because traditional families are no longer the
apogee
Families in Ireland are big and small
Mixed in gender or not at all
Kids are bio or fostered
Half, step or adopted
None of which matters if they're loved and
protected
But it would really help if their mothers were
respected
I am a single mother.
I cherish my child.
Look at me.