

Kylie P. Broderick  
"A Story of Four"

One.

Three little children and one bed  
Who don't know what they did  
Who didn't understand what their daddy meant  
When he said he'd had enough.  
Now their mommy works from 6 to ten  
And they stitch their own dresses  
'Cause the kids at school don't understand  
That pretty clothes need money.  
Three little children and one bed  
And maybe if you'd listen  
You'd hear a little something  
That you could help about.

Two.

There's a girl sitting on the retaining wall  
All rouged cheeks and high heels to make her tall  
Who has cigarettes in place of dreams  
And thinks getting high is the way to see.  
But she doesn't know she's way too young  
That life hasn't really even begun  
That her cigarettes are a death toll  
She's bloated by trash that makes her too full.  
And way deep down in her soul,  
There's something she's fighting for  
And if you'd slow down and listen, you'd hear  
A little someone made of tears.

Three.

Boys with heartache, bells and tolls  
A brother whose country he was fighting for  
And a black casket laden with pretty white flowers  
Gone to a bigger something with more power  
Proud and broken, metals cold as ice  
They'd give anything to have him twice.  
They said he'd died strong, a warrior in arms  
But something in their mind, insistent hard  
Whispers that this isn't what they'd expected  
Because human life is supposed to be protected  
And violence takes a terrible price—  
What's born as sacred is torn by vice.  
And maybe if you'd think and listen  
You see that battles aren't won with fists.

Four.

Beautiful and smart, kind and shy  
She's the perfect girl for the perfect guy  
And everyone says they're meant to be  
Unconcerned with the subtle monster they can't see  
And after the perfect days, there's a perfect kiss  
Which suddenly mutates and turns and twists  
And she whispers that that's enough  
But he's starting to push her really rough  
She screams as he knocks her to the floor  
But he turns with a smile and locks the door  
And she cries and cries and cries and cries  
And he makes damn sure that her innocence dies  
She closes her eyes and prays, prays, prays  
Because by now there's nothing left to take  
And maybe if you'd listened to his dark intent  
There'd be left a beautiful girl in this one's stead.

A struggle to feel substantial,  
A fight to become real  
A current of the same direction  
A fractured fairytale  
A life of hesitation,  
And one squandered callously  
A lacerated realization  
And four lives that could have been so different  
If you'd only stood to listen.