

BOOK *Perfect Lives* by

Polly Samson (Virago, £15.99)

Lives that seem perfect on the outside are often fraught with unspoken taboos, heartbreak and sadness. Such is the subject of Polly Samson's artfully woven collection of stories, linked by fragmented chains of connection. In them, one mother pretends to love her only child, another hates her daughter's tattoo, while another has never told her daughter who her father is. Polly Samson is the mistress of brilliantly drawn characters and her perfectly nuanced prose gives rare insight into the complexities of contemporary life. Extraordinary. ■

