

## Wilderness House Literary Review 10/2

*Prerna Bakshi*  
**Forgotten**

With no lullabies to sing,  
no stories to tell,  
no songs remembered,  
I rock the cradle gently,  
hoping it will stop you from crying,  
but you continue to cry.

I lift you up,  
bring you back down again,  
kiss you on your cheek and then back up again.  
I do this several times,  
hoping it will stop you from crying,  
but you continue to cry.

I try to feed you.  
Pat your tummy.  
Talk to you.  
Play with you.  
But none of this works,  
as you continue to cry,  
you continue to cry, cry, cry, cry, cry,  
until Amma speaks to you  
in your tongue – the mother tongue.

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### Post marriage bliss, sorry, blues

Post marriage,  
I have grown a few sizes.  
(Make that many)  
I wear churidar less, salwar more.  
Cut sleeve wearing days are gone.  
Half sleeve saree blouses is all I look for.  
I hate wearing gold jewelry,  
but it gets gifted each year, anyway, some more.  
The gold earrings my family gave  
make my ears swell.  
But I must wear them  
for I'm a married  
Indian woman, they compel.  
A married woman mustn't complain.  
That's the job of others.

With each passing year, I may not  
lose a lot of weight but I lose  
a part of myself. I slowly disappear  
into the crowd of women, or is it that  
they disappear into me? Either way, we continue  
to disappear until none of us survives,  
none of us remains,  
until all traces of our  
existence is erased.

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### Sometimes the simplest words are the hardest to say

Does language determine thought?  
Or, does thought determine language?  
This debate is still not settled.  
Still it's fascinating how quickly  
does our language change,  
how quickly does it accommodate reality,  
as soon as someone dies.  
Our tongue, suddenly,  
rolls out verbs in past tense  
before our mind  
could even form thoughts.  
It's as if our tongues have a mind of their own.

Sometimes, in the race between  
language and thought,  
language finds a way to get ahead.  
But not always.  
It's been 11 years since I've lost  
my sister to blood cancer, and  
yet it's one of the shortest words in  
my language, I find  
impossible to use.  
I guess, I refuse to use.  
thi - Was  
(Feminine, singular, past tense)