

Wilderness House Literary Review 6/1

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She's Losing Her Innocence

Everything seems so strange.

It's like I just woke up and don't know where I am. Or why I'm surrounded by these bars?

And then there's this weird business with my body...

Relax, girl. Take a deep breath. Think happy thoughts. Think about...

But I was already thinking something. If I listen hard I can still hear thoughts echoing in my mind.

Can that be right? Can thoughts echo?

Listen to me. *Can thoughts echo!*

Who cares whether thoughts can echo! What matters is they're gone. And that my mind is virtually empty. In a single instant just about everything I knew has vanished. A puff of smoke carried away on a sudden breeze.

Well, some of it I still remember, but not the good stuff. I recall that I'm female, my name is Elizabeth and I'm supposed to live 64 years then pick up some fatal disease on vacation in Thailand. But other than that...?

It's all bits and pieces. Shards from a mirror that even now still shatters around me. I don't know why I'm lying here in the dark or where everyone else has gone.

I don't know anything except that none of this makes sense. Certainly not these bars on either side of me, or this paralysis that only lets me move in spasmodic jerks.

Whatever strange disease this is, please God make it go away!

And it's not just facts about myself I've forgotten. I once knew some really cool stuff—the meaning of life, the different realms of existence, the truth about God, the unity of all creatures...

And Karma? I knew exactly why I came here this lifetime and who I'd meet while I was here.

Now, of course, I don't know spit about the future.

And forget the past! I can't remember a single past life. I can see vestiges of my former lives, but like thousands of strangers passed on a city street, they're all vague and unrecognizable. And whether they're men, women, princesses or soldiers, I can't begin to guess.

This must be what amnesia is like. This wholesale blotting out of memory and understanding. Someone—I can't remember who—once told me this would happen; that I'd lose my "innocence" but eventually forget the loss.

Talk about nonsense! How can someone forget that she's forgotten everything?

Wait...! I think I hear something.

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Voices!

And look—a wedge of light is slowly widening across the ceiling.

God help me, two giants have entered the room and are walking on tiptoes, obviously trying to sneak up on me.

If only I wasn't lying here so helpless...!

Now, they're looking down at me. They must be drunk. Why else would they stare with idiotic grins and speak such gibberish?

"Was Baby 'lizabeth having a good sleepy-weepy, hmm?"

"And where's that pretty pretty smile...?"

Hey, keep your fingers to yourself!

"Is Baby 'lizabeth hiding poopsie in her diapers? Let Mommy take a peek..."

Lady, if you do what I think you're doing, I swear I'll start crying.

Oh dear, this may be worse than I feared!