

groom's family for taking me. To get money for the dowry, Maa sold three brass vases and a brass wedding lamp that had been a part of her own dowry. Hardest of all, our cow had to go. The family would no longer have fresh, rich milk to churn for butter to make into ghee. Instead they would have to buy ghee in the marketplace, where it was expensive and not fresh. Money was not enough, though. The family of my bridegroom asked, "What jewelry will she bring?"

I had two bangles made of glass beads and some plastic toe rings, nothing more. I heard Maa and Baap talking together so late in the night that the moon slid up and down in the sky. The next morning Maa brought out the silver earrings she had worn as a bride. They were solid silver, and so heavy that when I tried them on, I was afraid my ears would stretch to the size of an elephant's. The bridegroom's family was satisfied.

To please me, my baap asked for my bridegroom's picture, but none was sent. I knew little about him except that his name was Hari Mehta