

## The Staves - Dead and Born and Grown (2012)

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01 – Wisely & Slow 02 – Gone Tomorrow 03 – The Motherlode 04 – Pay Us No Mind 05 – Facing West 06 – In The Long Run 07 – Dead & Born & Grown 08 – Winter Trees 09 – Tongue Behind My Teeth 10 – Mexico 11 – Snow 12 – Eagle Song The Staves are: Emily Staveley-Taylor - vocals Jessica Staveley-Taylor - vocals, guitar Camilla Staveley-Taylor - vocals, ukulele

To steal a phrase from Wisely & Slow, the opening track on the Staves' debut album: tender women, why is it you whisper when you really need to yell? It's clear from their lyrics that these three sisters from Watford aren't wilting wallflowers: their songs unflinchingly demonstrate the difficulty of reconciling love with a desire for autonomy. "I can't be married," youngest sister Camilla tells one man on In the Long Run, while on Snow, eldest sister Emily dismisses another as "a little child", assuring him that: "I will never belong to anyone." Yet something gets lost in the translation to harmony: whether the sisters' gossamer voices are woven together or flutter alone, what you hear is a bloodless, polite prettiness. It doesn't help that the musical backing is so insipid: wisps of gentle guitar that too rarely surprise, as with the skewed chords of Wisely & Slow or the icy glint of Tongue Behind My Teeth. --- Maddy Costa, guardian.co.uk

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