**How We Didn't Tell Her**

By Sandra M. Gilbert

that the housekeeper said that   
the gardener said that   
someone named

Jean or Jeannie or Jenny  
who was his friend or maybe   
his boss had said that

today that just  
today he was hit by a car   
& he was killed he died

at once in the prime  
of his handsome youth he   
who was her youngest her

onetime baby ice-cream   
cone with dimpled arms   
& scrumptious tummy he

who gardened & prayed   
for purity on earth  
but we said let's wait let's

wait to tell her till we're  
sure & we called the gardener  
the housekeeper the irrigation lady

the police the coroner  
the highway patrol the neighbors   
we called everyone but her

until at last the gardener  
said no no how could the housekeeper   
get it so wrong it wasn't

him it was someone else who was   
hit by a car and killed   
today & we rejoiced & were

glad we hadn't told her because   
his handsome flesh his pulsing   
prime returned to us as a gift

more precious than before  
& as for the other one, the other   
mother's son who really died

today we let him go we   
didn't give him   
another thought.