**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.