

Never

by gerard varni

When a woman dies too young,
Say at 42,
Her bones broken,
Her body bruised
Beyond recognition
Much less repair;
When she dies
Thrashing
In the street
Amid rainbow-hued pools
Of water and gasoline
And blood,
Anointed on a bed
Of broken glass
In a twisted metal embrace;

When a woman dies this way,
Who suffers the greatest loss?
The husband?
The children?
(surely, the infant
left sucking
at dry air)
The sister? father? pastor? friends?

No, none of these
Is the one;
It is the woman herself.
Never again to feel
Her lover's caress,
Never to see

Her child's smile,
Never again
to soothe
to laugh
to love
to pray
Never.

