

# Never

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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.

