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A Word Not Lost

Donna Atkins Gilbert

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A Word Not Lost

Donna Atkins Gilbert

*In line today at Albertson's
I heard a laughing man say
it about your sister, your
daughter and your first
grade teacher with such
enthusiasm and inflection it
made me shudder beneath
my milk carton. And*

it is not lost on me

The way you repeat it,
Relish it, judging in sweeping
Satirical filler or sardonic
censure, such
Dismissive humor. Whether
Consciously, cavalierly,
intending to
freeze/shatter/splinter
Or rising up from under a
boiling, acrid
Torrent of loathing, of
antipathy

it is not lost on me

When women are crammed
into decomposing body
bags of
Mary or Mary Magdalene,

Symbiotic symbols like lichen
Enmeshed, resilient,
dependent upon each other

Just as

Horace King's eyes are
hooded with fire of
intolerance from his own
cruel childhood;

Just as

Aaron J. McKinney tied a
Shepard to a fence in the
country
Whipped him with a pistol,
left him to die with
His blonde wisps like
wings folding
In the *scent of sagebrush*
carried by *Wyoming wind*;

Just as

A man can hook up
someone's granddad by
chain to a pick-up bumper,
drag him
Till his skull pops open like
a melon, his arms and
legs shredded at the
severed ends,
Landing twisted in opposite
ditches—

it is not lost on me

And my sisters' motivations
for love-making
(whether she enjoyed it,
with whom where when
how often mounted
Him ten times in-a-row,
sweating, grinning,
panting, and
Taking names later or
waited demure as
any daisy)
Are none of your affair
not open for your comment,
Relentlessly dipping into your
repertoire of *refer-to-it-often*

Hits—your little
Black bag of epithets.

Just as I know justice, I'll
stand and stare you down
Until your weaknesses
upend you
Until you stop presenting to
me the pimples on your
naked ass
Until you cease assaulting
my senses, my sisters,
The air we share, the world
and me with whore.