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SHE USED TO GIVE ME FLOWERS  
Glenna Holloway

When I was ten I heard her called a whore,  
The sentence fletched with thorns that stung my spine.  
I followed her through rows of phlox before  
That word bored itching in my brain. Define  
The user of a hoe! But that could not  
Explain the rancid-seasoned tone that fell  
Like well-aimed spittle on my father's hot  
Hearthstones. Unfitting with her bouquet smell.  
I later learned the meaning of the slur,  
Through tears watched twitching sun explode with lies,  
Then wicked moons formed coins, men's grins and her;

*Enraged I did not know*  
Long coils of rage knew not what to despise.

*My rage called something something*  
My childhood, white phlox petals, all my prayers:

Quicksilver dropped on knife-edged granite stairs.

*Rage coiled, not knowing what I should despise*

*Rage coiled  
awaiting not knowing  
what which  
I should*