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Against White Dogwoods

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Against White Dogwoods

You got time-out for some petty cruelty,
parked under an antler-rubbed hackberry
off the Veery Trail, while Dad and I walked on,
hardly looking back. For how long?
(I don't remember even the season.) Long enough
to scare the bejesus out of you.
How the woods must have scurried
around your cringing form.
You had to wait.
At age 8, didn't know any way out.

Fifteen years later,
I go back to the spot, no hackberry,
instead white dogwoods, muddied tracks
around one young trunk barefaced of bark.
Since you killed yourself,
the time-out never ends.

Why bloom now, white dogwoods?
Where is my forgiveness?

Sharon Kennedy-Nolle