

*Dana Gioia:*

A great irony exists within this poem: most people would love to receive flowers, but for this narrator receiving these flowers by mistake causes paranoia. A single decision to keep the vase of flowers results in the personified flowers punishing the gift-takers with the symbolic imagery of death, including the oxymoronic, synesthesia of a “sickly-sweet” funeral smell permeating the room. This poem emphasizes tone, which as the poem continues ranges from curious, to sarcastic, to melancholy. The lines of this poem also exhibit slant rhyme or near rhyme, which creates cacophony, and therefore nervousness, in the tone of the poem.