

**Riley Donlon**

Age: 17, Grade: 12

School Name: Homewood High School, Homewood, AL

Educator: Michele Cooley

Category: Poetry

---

**as I read the obituary**

there are six bouquets arranged around me in the living  
room, sunset-orange carnations and white roses, some  
tinged with green, bruise-black zinnias and pale  
Queen Anne's lace in fragile vases - we have plenty  
of vases now. the lilies are ballerinas balancing on their  
stems, the leaves love the light more than I ever could.  
someone saw more than beauty in these flowers and fit them  
together in intuitive harmony. they are not here to make grief  
beautiful, but is it not better to have a broken heart  
in a meadow than in a wasteland?