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Mother's Day Bouquet

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IMAGE 2 ALISHA MERRILL

Mother's Day Bouquet

JESSICA GONSOULIN

The flowers were left at the front door
without card or explanation.

Only my son could have done it.

I didn't expect it from anyone else.

Who would claim to be my child?

A profusion of red peonies

dipped in and deepened with black ink

thin silky petals like petunias

The usual sprightly pink carnations

too large to sprout in a buttonhole

Golden spider lilies like sunrays exploding

Palm leaves like green porcupines

An unidentified shrub

Bridal Wreath like a cloud of white insects

Purple larkspur buds shriveled at the water line

I gave them plant food and sugar

to make them bloom gloriously.

A large pale pod opened overnight

into a hot-orange lily with six anthers.

Black seeds fell onto the six petals

that also fell lightly and awkwardly--

hors d'oeuvres for bees.

One of the spider mums awakened

to a bad hair day.

I trimmed off the cancerous parts of the bouquet,

removing dead leaves and fragile blossoms,

And filled the vase with tap water.

Droplets fell like petals upon the table.