

Ballerina:

Inconsistently balanced tone throughout. The poem fluctuates between high dramatic flair and conversational sarcasm (“how rude”), which can be jarring for the reader.

Voice occasionally slips into cliché. Phrases like “the show must go on” and “how the tables turn” risk feeling overused unless they’re purposefully subverted or contextualized more uniquely.

Consider anchoring the tone more clearly. Decide whether this is primarily tragic, vengeful, or horror, and stick to it, or transition more smoothly between them.

There is a lack of clarity in motives. The speaker’s reasons for vengeance is vague. There is a reference to being bruised and to the other party’s malediction, but not enough is said to ground an emotional stakes for the reader. Vague threats feel abstract and lose emotional weight without more tangible grounding.

There is disjointed emotional escalation throughout the poem, having more grounded escalation and emotional depth to it will improve the poem. The run red statement could be rewritten to reveal the action rather than having it fall flat.

My Lover Dressed in Black

The repeated reference to flowers and floriography becomes formulaic over time. While clever, the poem becomes a checklist of plant meanings rather than allowing the symbols to organically support a story or emotion.

There’s a hint of emotional betrayal and danger, but the speaker’s relationship to the “lover” is static—there is no shift in perspective or discovery over the course of the poem.

The reader is told about the symbolic flowers and then given a glossary. This flattens the experience and discourages interpretation.

Phrases like “Your form perfect without a crack” are clear, but lack poetic texture or emotional punch.

Nearly every flower gets a stanza, followed by a line declaring the ballerina’s form or the inevitability of death. This repetition feels mechanical.

The momentum toward the “finale” is muted because there is no variation in tension. Every stanza already implies doom.

Too on the nose: The floriographic meanings are interesting but used with a one-to-one equivalence that makes them predictable. “Tansy = hostility,” “Hemlock = death,” etc. Flowers feel like annotations, not emotional extensions. They serve more as labels than as embodied metaphors.