

Nightshade

Ladies

Bethany Bruno

I had been expecting this package for quite some time.
Tugging at tape concealing opening, hands began to shake uncontrollably.
Chambers of anxious heart began pumping rapidly
Icy chips towards every nerve.

Handfuls of Oleander petals softly fell towards feet
pink and white flowers look harmless to untrained eye.
petals act as forewarning venomous confetti

My mother eternally nurtured her floral gardens,
as if they were toy dogs in need of complete attention.
all pretty and sweet-smelling buds,
her "nightshade ladies."

Lily of the Valley or Ladies in White,
Blue Ladies, or the Belladonnas,
Her prized baby, Oleander or Pink Ladies.

Each one, grown and nurtured
For one simple purpose,
Poisonous possibilities.

Now act as a messenger
that stated my mother's obvious message:
Dead to me.



Drop 24" Round, Oil on
Convex Circle Canvas,
2021
Hannah Keats