

Tulips in Springtime Bloom

An upper Midwest wind whistled through the trees that crisp autumn morn.
Door chimes signaled our postman, clutching a box wrapped in dark brown paper.
Unfamiliar postage adorned the parcel, with special markings to 'keep cool'.
My mother's eyes gleamed in eager anticipation—a passionate gardener—keenly
aware of the colorful potential contained by the succulent Dutch bulbs.

Lovingly chosen that warm spring afternoon—a college boy's first journey abroad.
His small gift—brilliant colors, single and double blooms, variegated petals with
feathered tips—all dazzling features hidden in three-hundred drab little
brown orbs.

Her joy evident while digging intently into the earth, carefully burying each corm in
damp soil.

The promise of fresh blossoms—new life—held by each successive spring.
Intense shades—magenta, orange, red, pink, violet—a scattering of early white crocus
and golden daffodils amongst the tulips.

When the spring blooms faded, other flowers offered a constant summer bouquet in her
carefully tended gardens.

She beamed with pride as neighbors and passersby stopped to chat, admiring her grand
floral display.

With age, the homestead grew less serviceable—the stairs a burden, the winters too
harsh, the distance too far.

Options considered, difficult decisions rendered, a new reality undertaken.

Relocation of a parent disrupts lifelong roots.

Even for this seasoned traveler, a move equivalent to her first journey.

The bulbs, pulled out of the land on that last summer day, had divided and multiplied,
filling nine large bags.

"You might want to forget a few for the new owners," she whispered as I dug into the
hard ground.

A bright new home, accessible, more conducive, and just down the road.

Fresh flower beds were specially cut into the yard—to accommodate the transplanted
tulips—like our transplanted lives.

With the next spring, another proud display for new neighbors and new passersby.

Her muffled call for help came early that cold spring morn—the sky still dark before the
break of dawn.

In several hours, the sun would warm the tender leaves piercing through the soil.
Days floated together.

I gripped her hands in the sterile confines of intensive care.

Contemplating an unknown future, I whispered of the impending blossoms and unending
love.

A slight fog blanketed the horizon that damp spring morn.

Together alone—I held her in those silent moments—

And much too soon, we were alone—together.

Her greatest gift to me.

That afternoon, the house was ardently quiet, save for the gentle rustle of a spring breeze
and the faint ringing of her windchimes on the porch.

Clusters of tulips swayed in the warm air, their verdant stalks at full attention, their
radiant petals now in vibrant bloom.

Has it really been two decades since that box arrived?

Time slips by, yet each spring brings the joy of new flowers—the vivid hues a new
beginning.

A river of tears has moistened the ground.

Soon a 'For Sale' sign will be planted in the rolling lawn.

As my spade breaks the rich dirt, I remember to “forget a few” of the tulips for others.

—Tomas L. Griebing