

# Lens

*by* Kathy Fish

Prue was a scarecrow of a woman, thin and hard with a straight mouth. But she knew the secret for growing tulips. Her tulips were bright yellow and blood-red, eighteen inches tall in full bloom. Their heads swung round in the Kansas breeze. She worked for the county and lived alone.

A photographer came from the Wichita Eagle.

"Well, there they are," she said, pointing.

He laughed. "No, I want you, too." He made her lie flat on her stomach in the grass, her face level with the blooms. "They're exquisite," he said. "How do you do it?"

"Do you know," she said, "that strangers come round to see my flowers? Little girls in Easter bonnets trample my garden. They pick my flowers and don't ask permission."

His elbows planted in the dirt, he aimed the camera and adjusted the lens, took pictures until the sun sank low.

They entered her house through the kitchen door. The photographer unbuttoned her long cotton shirt, pulled down her loose pants. He touched her grim mouth with the tips of his fingers, ran his hands down her slim, hard body. In bed, she was silent when the photographer cried out.

Night fell and the photographer slept, one hand between Prue's legs. She lay awake and watched the light from passing cars travel the walls of her bedroom, then disappear.

