The beauty and fire of nature have inspired poets for as long as poetry has existed, and the Spring Bulb Show is a veritable garden of delights for anyone seeking the spark of inspiration.

The poetry courses that we have had the opportunity to take at Smith College introduced us to some amazing contemporary poets—among them Li-Young Lee, Jean Valentine, and Louise Glück, who are represented in the gathering of poems presented here.

The very first poem we discussed in Annie Boutelle’s poetry workshop was “Irises” by Li-Young Lee. How was he able to make a flower mysterious, sexual, powerful, ambivalent, hopeful, and human—all at the same time? It was thrilling to experience.

The shapes, colors, smells and textures in this stunning array of blooming are reflected in poetry’s rhythms, sounds, and images.

We hope the poems we have chosen provide a complementary lens through which to see these marvels of the natural world.

We invite you to let the poems act as a kind of guide, an adjoining corridor to the experience of the viewer as you move through the profusion and diversity of blossoms and foliage here. Immerse yourself in the intimate practice of the senses on the page, observing the ways a poem can conjure a treasure map and lead us into the wonders that language, too, can offer, bewildering and powerful in its unfurling petals, alive and burning with color.

Janan Scott ’13 & Liliana Farrell ’13
SMITH COLLEGE CLASS OF 2013