

Flower Talk · *Neal Bowers*

A clutch of jonquils early
when the snow hangs on and yellow
is more yellow for all that stubborn white,
as if in the middle of a flattened city
someone had the courage to sing;

daisies for whimsy
in those stalled summer months,
when every field waves back at the sun
a thousand imitations;

a few carnations, red only,
preening on their tall stems
for what seems like weeks
while the pin oaks rust
and maples tick the window;

dahlias opened and in bud,
shining like tiffany lamps
for that cloistered feeling as the wind settles
and frost spreads its stiff linen;

in the blar bull's-eye of winter,
a single gardenia in a cut glass bowl,
a scent which translated into any language
means yes.