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**CRISPY LEAVES**  
**By Tara Meddaugh**  
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*After a physical run-in with a florist, a young woman visits her mother's grave, informing her of a change she is making.*

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LEXY

Yes, the tulips are dead, Mother. But I didn't originally plan that. Plan on giving you brown tulips. With crispy leaves. I tried to refuse them, but...I'm just not good at talking to florists.

But I know it's important to you—to have fresh flowers on your grave. So this afternoon—when she—the florist—when she brings out these dead ones, I try to explain. But still be polite, like you taught me. So I say, “Ma’am, thank you for the thought, but—” And I put my hand out, I gesture, to sort of make my point. And I'm not done, but that's all I get out, when she shoves them in my hand and almost screams at me, “You're welcome!”

So the flowers are in my hands and she's looking at me, grinning, like she expects money or something. And I'm about to pay her, I'm about to pay her for four dead tulips and leave—when something—I don't know, something suddenly surges through me, through my veins—like I've got new blood in me! Powerful blood! Strong blood that people will listen to! Respect! So with my new blood pumping through me, I grab the tulips with one hand and this lady's neck with the other, and I shove those moldy flowers all over her! I shove them in her ears, and her mouth—since she's got it open, screaming—and just all over her face! And it feels so good, Mother! It feels so good...

Then I look back over at the brown tulips and I wonder if they're all really dead? And I want them now. So I let go of the woman and I cut off a little piece of blue ribbon from the counter, and I tie it around the flowers. And I come here. To you.

And I know you're used to getting fresh flowers every day, but I want you to know that I'm not coming back tomorrow. Or the next day either. Because it's a two hour bus-ride to get here and I have a job now [and I hate the bus.]<sup>1</sup>

So you can have these dead flowers, Mother. But I'm keeping this tulip. Because it still has a little green in its stem.

[I'll see you at Easter.]

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<sup>1</sup> Dialogue in brackets may be omitted if desired.

