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## The Anti-Romantic Direction of Tram 14

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# The Anti-Romantic Direction of Tram 14

*by Kevin Griffith*

It's already been two hours since we left  
for what I thought would be a nice  
time — turkey with plum sauce, soda  
water in chipped glasses — all for  
under a dollar. But we're on the wrong  
tram, going the wrong way,  
patiently awaiting the edge of the city.  
A dusk settles, our minds settle,  
you and I — no talking.  
I don't think the delay's so bad;  
we have the time.  
You don't look me in the eyes  
and I flick my thumb over the  
thorn of a rose handed back  
an hour into my mistake.  
The tram stops;  
a sprung door slaps open,  
and the conductor steps out for  
supper at this last post.  
We only watch,  
and wish for more than plum sauce.

## His Body . . . His Land

*by Kevin Griffith*

A house leans into the slope of rows  
like a man who suddenly realizes his heart has taken grip.  
As I pull into the driveway, gravel chatters my arrival  
to sample soil for a Clinton farmer.  
He steps out of his front door, head shaved, stubble sprouting,  
wrestling the after-effects of surgery —  
a surgery that left sewn openings stitched  
into his once-powerful arms.  
Now the arms only hang at his side or  
motion across the rows, the palate of my working.  
  
Wrapped into a fortress against the cold,  
I venture stiff into the rows opened for sewing.  
The season's too late for this;  
the land's outserved its purpose.  
I push the hesitant tool into the luke-cold earth  
and draw out a core, a sample of the ground's worth.  
I repeat this process over the acres,  
poking through the riff-raff of broken stalk,  
calibrating the future of his tired land.  
Soon I'll pack the cores into goldfish boxes  
and send them up-state.  
But we know the results already.  
His body he holds at arm's length;  
his land is out of reach.