His Body . . . His Land

Kevin Griffith
Grand Valley State University

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/amaranthus

Recommended Citation
Available at: http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/amaranthus/vol1986/iss1/9
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.