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Presents on the Metro

On a full train, I gave her my seat;
on a stalled car, half a newspaper.

Having nothing on the 4:15 one afternoon,
I reached up and brought down a bouquet
of Arabic graffiti. Since we didn't speak
the language we were free to translate
the probable anger, even threat.

Anyway, romance is embedded
in imagination, vulnerable
gesture, and cannot be pronounced.
She smiled and bent her face
to smell the buds.

We left the car together and sprinkled
the stems and tender leaves
with water from a drinking fountain.
In a vase the lines would curl a little more,
into what we wanted to say.

Jack Stewart

"I was educated at the University of Alabama, University of California-Davis, and Emory. From 1992-95 I was a Brittain Fellow at Georgia Tech. My work has appeared in *Poetry*, *Gettysburg Review*, *Dark Horse*, *Southern Humanities Review*, and other journals/anthologies. I live in Montgomery, Alabama." J. Stewart