

Dead Rose at 5 Points Local

Having plucked the disheveled
petals from the core,
she waits
for the dead to speak
of last week's sweetness—

of damp upholstery
and worn-out shoes,
of locked chests
and the faint honey
of unrealized hope.

Magnetized,
I twist the stem;
I quarter the seeds and
blemish the plate.
Which north rings true?

Which faded-red
bridge reveals the lost
inner compass?
Our ice cubes clink
no answers, as the essences

of hibiscus, lavender,
and mint slip over my tongue,
concealing the cool
tang of her demurring
ghosts...

But when she says *whisper*,
touching her lips
with an index finger,
I hear distant trains
baying like wolves,

and smell the char of nights
trailing the undiminished
river, its waters flowing
in every possible
direction, away.