

Michele Reese

IN-BETWEEN PLACE

This place between language
where I stand willing myself to understand
this man speaking to me, at me, or around me--
causes me to break
my glass of beer. So I leave

still thinking in a language that is not my own,
searching for more in this one than just numbers--
numbers like the codes I know
to make telephone calls in foreign counties
like I am making now
to find family in the next city

past Köln with its blackened cathedral,
difficult o, and McDonalds.
Inside the M, I count out coins from a Ziplock.
Here, I can ask for "un numéro zwei" and be understood.

Losing hunger, I try changing francs.
The numbers becoming enough now
to purchase gummy bears and Smarties.
That is what I desire
while waiting for my train to Hamburg

where my uncle will come to the Hauptbahnhof
to say "hello, Michele."
I will follow him home
and not stop to wonder why
he stays fluent.