



DEBRA GINGERICH

THOUGHTS AFTER HEARING A LECTURE ON TRANSLATION

How is it that he loves me
 through all of these languages,
 through the check points
 and road blocks of Serbo-Croatian,
 German, sometimes Romanian,
 the dictionaries he strums through
 while I'm fast asleep, while
 the introduction to his language—
 the book I bought
 with good intentions—rests
 beside me on my nightstand
 and the gift from his brother
 in Paris—40 lessons to speak
 French—sits shelved? My three
 months immersed in French
 are ten years forgotten
 except *Je ne comprend pas*.
 My dreams are content
 in one language
 while his wide-eyed mind juggles
 four tongues. And this is his gift to me—
 how he can love someone
 so lazy, so rested
 in American English—this language
 of our love, this language
 so far from his fractured home.