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Christmas in Mercado, 2006

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JENNIFER GRATHWOL

Christmas in Mercalo, 2006

Two crooked concrete steps on the corner
of two winding cobblestone roads beside
houses painted but faded into the years,
and the stories I'd hear about this little town
where the words don't make sense
but the smiles feel the same and the fires
are warmer this time of December.

Frozen marble steps wrap around
my history, my home these faces
I've known but haven't touched until Christmas in Mercalo.

I cried when I left and I knew what you meant
when you said
that my Nona's father could never say goodbye
when he knew
there wouldn't be another hello or another Christmas
in Mercalo.