

contrapuntal name tag

in the shower pieces of my back
fall off and run between my legs
and i revision riverbed skin
in bathtubs i have scrubbed
the name that ran up and down
my name's source
or a tale told by my mother's sister
who ran up a hill
in the old neighborhood
in june over cement steam
from the house of a boy
she fucked up after mother had
long discarded his affection
in favor of white powder
smooth Brown orientalist fantasies
she daydreamed of/f
in a tapestry hanging in the hall
in the chewing twist of tongue
she ran
wove around the block
curved up the block
opened under stained glass
where my mother and her sisters
were sometimes in connecticut
i am called
almost seven
performing on a stage
in texas
the program needed more room for
other words besides my name
so taking half on
and taking half off
i was renamed
no longer a rose with no thorns
a rose
with and as
a cold god
a mischief maker
dogscatshamstersfish
became my name
akin to a pet
that one might
run
feed
cage
watch
marvel
easy to say
easy to call

my mother and grandmother
their mothers and grandmothers
and tapestries unravel
between my legs
from ocean to mainland to hill
is my name source
her mother before her
could it be
we
were each named on this lie
they chose a language
to mark the difference
in my face and skin
in the curve kicked from each curl
of this rose
a language so colonized it loses itself
in the myth of my name turned
soft a's and diphthongs
became my name
a warning to the reader
the seer the seeker of truth
the tapestry in my name
stitch blue-lipped fantasy to my face
my skin my hair my myth
step out of my name
ms. ann williams teaches
at lunch
we're all legs and
blackened bellies
in line
teasing the boys
cuz Prince just changed
his name
to a symbol
and we
and they
he and me
a name that people name
even super-hero villains in comic books
in peach pink tights
the room smells
hair oil lip smacker resin
from pointe shoes
and sweat
we sing
stevie wonder
we practice
ailey movement on concrete
at lunch

easy to tame
my name

i'm tagged
my name