

Leo Cosmiano Baltar

In a dream, a stranger asked for my name, to which I responded

after Dominic Sy

All names are contradictory—
the attempt to unite in a set
of syllables the multiplicities
of the body. Look, my body
is a swollen bruise—dark
& darkened by a name
I don't own. Inside my torso,
a cornucopia of peonies
& dahlias & tulips.
But my name, an assortment
of rotting flowers. What decay
it reeks. This is the madness
of the human language:
see how it makes us believe
that the body is a product
that needs labeling—a name
with only one meaning.
My name is a verdict
from a court that is my father;
a tyranny of his tongue.
Every utterance, a new immigrant
living in my skin.
Because what is a name
if not to recreate?