

Julia Jimenez

Etymology

After Kristin Chang's "Nomenclature"

We named them after unborn children.
We named the vulture after vultur, she tears

the sinews from dolls. We named bats
after batte. He flaps the leather to pitch

an eyeball. We named mosquitos after musca,
who sips blood for supper. We bury creatures

in Eden's basement. The ground shrivels,
boxes of toys too violent. We named

violence after violins, the stanza of murder
carved into rock. Abel spits out

blood. We named his rock
after Jesus, the cornerstone of thieves,

you whose mother stole our dog. We named
you after sinners. We delivered the gospel,

a foreign language, a foreign god.
We baptized you in new names,

left you inside arks of immigrants
resembling caged animals. We named

crows after kraia, funeral mourners
scavenging earth for the kingdom.

We named the bomb after bombus, the hum
of death tucks the street goodnight.

We named the morning after mourning.
The sun rises, a maggot from a ribcage.

We named silence after silere,
be quiet as Gabriel tells Mary,

as the abductor tells the hostage. We named
the world after weoruld, the age of man falls

like missiles plowing a shrub of corpses.
Their names become numbers. We named

some after Apostles, some after Saints: to live
beautifully, die early. Larks live longer.

The spirit ascends higher. We named
man after Adam, the woman after me.

We named questions after answers,
the body after bread. We named fruits

after poison. We named gardens after
cemeteries. For the children

we left hopeless, we
named you after

grace.