

Ana Luísa Amaral: Poems

What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet.

Romeo and Juliet, II, ii

WHAT'S IN A NAME

Tell me: what's in a name?

How solid is a name if answered to, by what parallel wars
is it sustained?

Lineages, subject lands,
races tamed by a few syllables, history's foundations set in laws forged in fire and flame?

Remove the name and love will still remain, as will you and I - even in death,
even if only as myth

Yes, even as myth (do you hear?),
even our brief history
that some will read as mere inert matter, will remain for our all-too-human eternity

And others
will always take it up,
when their century most needs it

And my love, my stronger half, we, for them, will be like the rose -

No, like its perfume: ungovernable free

NO MAN'S LAND

I say: space
or some recipe to take its place

A proper space
a no man's land
because it's simply not big enough the space conquered at the expense of silences, wardrobes
and upsetting onions

My syncopated self
built a stronghold but
it's not enough: everything fades butteries and dreams
and even the onions viciously repeat themselves

I say: space
or some recipe to take my place

Translated by Margaret Jull Costa