

Postcolonial Ballads

Labels

I have many names
first and last
in English and in Spanish
the difference is minute
but I hear it.

My name in English
does not sound like my name
it sounds foreign
does not sound
as my mother calls me
my name in Spanish
sounds like family
my close friends say it this way.

I have names of what I am
or what I have been
in response to those seeking to file me
in a neat compartment
of memory
or highlight
some perceived inadequacy.

I'm Chilean
Canadian
Ecuadorian
Sociologist
Teacher.

I'm a short
fair skinned
dark haired
immigrant
without an accent.

I'm a woman
open
curious
explorer of ideas
animal lover
survivor.

I'm a "gringa" Latina
temperamental
yet patient.

I'm a spirit seeker
experience weaver
artist and writer
poet and painter
chaos and beauty maker.

I'm political
analytical
unorthodox
and law abiding.

I am often not
what I appear to be
and yet I am
an open book.

I am
much more than adjectives or nouns.
I am
a complete imperfect being
as is everyone I face
so why limit
experience
with labels
that disable
on a face?

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