**Names**

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I am tired of having five different names;                      -

Having to change them when I enter

A new country or take on a new life. My

First name is my truest, I suppose, but I

Never use it and nobody calls me by this Vietnamese

Name though it is on my birth certificate—

Tue My Chuc. It makes the sound of a twang of a

String pulled. My parents tell me my name in Cantonese

is Chuc Mei Wai. Three soft bird chirps and they call

me Ah Wai. Shortly after I moved to the U.S., I became

Teresa My Chuc, then Teresa Mei Chuc. “Teresa” is the sound

Water makes when one is washing one’s hands. After my first

Marriage, my name was Teresa Chuc Prokopiev.

After my second marriage, my name was Teresa Chuc Dowell.

Now I am back to Teresa Mei Chuc, but I want to go way back.

Reclaim that name once given and lost so quickly in its attempt

to become someone that would fit in. Who is Tue My Chuc?

I don’t really know. I was never really her and her birthday

on March 16, I never celebrate because it’s not my real birthday

though it is on my birth certificate. My birthday is on January 26,

really, but I have to pretend that it’s on March 16

because my mother was late registering me after the war.

Or it’s in December, the date changing every year according to

the lunar calendar—this is the one my parents celebrate

because it’s my Chinese birthday. All these names

and birthdays make me dizzy. Sometimes I just don’t feel like a

Teresa anymore; Tue (pronounced Twe) isn’t so embarrassing.

A fruit learns to love its juice. Anyways, I’d like to be string ...

resonating. Pulled back tensely like a bow

Then reverberate in the arrow’s release straight for the heart.