



## Too Many Names, by Pablo Neruda

Monday is tangled up with Tuesday  
and the week with the year:  
time can't be cut with your tired scissors,  
and all the names of the day  
are rubbed out by the waters of the night.

No one can be named Pedro  
no one is Rosa or Maria,  
all of us are dust or sand,  
all of us are rain in the rain.  
They have talked to me of Venezuelas,  
of Paraguays and Chiles,  
I don't know what they're talking about:  
I'm aware of the earth's skin  
and I know it doesn't have a name.

When I lived with the roots  
I liked them more than the flowers,  
and when I talked with a stone  
it rang like a bell.

The spring is so long  
that it lasts all winter:  
time lost its shoes:  
a year contains four centuries.

When I sleep all these nights,  
what am I named or not named?  
And when I wake up who am I  
If I wasn't I when I slept?

This means that we have barely  
disembarked into life,  
that we've only now just been born,  
let's not fill our mouths  
with so many uncertain names,  
with so many sad labels,  
with so many pompous letters,  
with so much yours and mine,  
with so much signing of papers.

I intend to confuse things,  
to unite them, make them new-born,  
intermingle them, undress them,  
until the light of the world

has the unity of the ocean,  
a generous wholeness,  
a fragrance alive and crackling.

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