In My Name
---Rochelle Goldstein
(tankas)

Stitch in their names now
before you forget, before
the white lint collects
on black Velcro seams you sew
before the hungry take your clothes.

Use just that spongy
thread, the one your mother spun,
the silk rope she threw
to pull you to shore, the chord
they played to wake you: songline.

Sharpen your needles:
you’ve one chance to pierce the cloth, to
sew your song with theirs,
their name with your name. Sow them
into seed in the valley.

Tell of the names hid,
the old rabbi of Venice
who memorized names
so the Jews could live, then burned
the ancient book where
their names lay, to fool the Nazis.

Tell of the names named
hunted names stalked like deer. Tell how
friend betrayed friend, tell
how some refused to speak, how
others refused to speak up.

Tell of the passing
to the New World, through the gate
of another name.
Tell, so the erased will know
their names, trick the angel death.

Touch them, make them live
again with your fingertips.
Black marble wall, lost
engraved names, valley
of one name, where snow collects.