

Spring 1979

The Man Who Named Children

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Recommended Citation

Rios, Alberto (1979) "The Man Who Named Children," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 12 , Article 44.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank/vol1/iss12/44>

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THE MAN WHO NAMED CHILDREN

Panfilo's head was shaped awkwardly
so that his mother would let out
one side of his hat.

He prayed for himself
and confessed this, finally
to the priest, Father Torres
who recognized Panfilo's voice
in the confessional and said
it was all right.

The priest was there
when Panfilo was born,
when his mother almost died
and needed extreme unction.

Panfilo remembered being scared.
He was taken wrapped in a blanket
to his father who wanted a son.
But this is ugly! said his father
and held him up by the lightbulb
so the other men could see.

I will name him Panfilo
he decided, and the men
looked down at their hands
and said to Panfilo's father *yes*,
each in his turn.