

Namesakes by Jessica Mehta

My mother named me after her father she hated. Like buying Papo's notice with a fat grandchild would make up for anything. My mother named me after famous cowboys then went and married an NDN herself. Meanwhile her own mother said, *No*

darker. My mom named me the second most popular girls name in 1981 because firsts were for good girls without panic. My middle name was the same as a boy in sixth grade with greasy nails and dirty hair so I said it was short for Colette. My mother was a surprise

fifteen years too late. In the hospital, her father said, She ain't much to look at, is she? and asked the nurse to name her. The little Mexican girl chose Rita after her own child and nobody not nowhere ever could say a pearl was an ugly thing. My mother named me

for a man she despised well after his girth had gone to skeleton and the coffin flies went still—but still,

I thought a namesake should mean something good and holy like clean slates, buried shames and starting overs.



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