

On my  
persistent need  
to address  
others by full  
first name

He thinks that when I say *Valentin* I am angry.

I imagine his mother conditioning him

with a willow switch, scolding, *Val-yen-tyen Me-l-nick-offv!*

(Does he have a middle name?) *Nonetheless*—

He gets this amused look on his face, raises the

right corner of his mouth (which actually signifies

disgust, but he doesn't know this), *Ooo-oooh*,

he reaches for my right hip, *someone's angry*:

I am not angry. But feigning anger is easier

than explaining the found phonetic beauty of full

names and the wish that he (or anybody really) would

start calling me by name. Can I become anonymous

by oversight or disregard? Repeating his name

to embody [me, us, him], an incantation.

Meg Matich