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# The Tracker William Eagle Feather Muses on His Name

by Robert Cooperman

Spawned by a white trapper  
sheltered for a night by a Ute woman  
stolen by raiding Lakotas  
and treated no better than a slave,  
I was the boy mud was flung at  
after Mother died,  
coughing red blizzards.

My name: "William"  
came to me after John Sprockett  
recited a poem by that Shakespeare,  
at a funeral, something about not  
fearing the sun no more.  
I couldn't cipher half the words,  
but the sounds wove pictures pretty  
as geese across the falling-leaf sky.

I figured William Shakespeare  
had powerful magic, so took his name:

"Eagle Feather."  
Mother said one fluttered down  
at my birth: only reason  
the tribe didn't set me out to die.

The one time I glimpsed  
Preacher's wife, I wanted  
to whisper my name in her ear  
over and over and over.

