



# The Business of Naming Things

*Michael Coffey*

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“Riveting . . . vibrant and unsparing.” —*Publishers Weekly* (starred and boxed review)

“Superb. . . . Startlingly original.” —*Library Journal* (starred review)

“Once I started reading these stories, I couldn’t stop. They absorbed me thoroughly, with their taut narratives and evocative language—the language of a poet.” —**JAY PARINI**, author of *Jesus: The Human Face of God* and *The Last Station*

“Sherwood Anderson would recognize this world of lonely, longing characters, whose surface lives Coffey tenderly plumbs. These beautiful stories—spare, rich, wise and compelling—go to the heart.”  
—**FREDERIC TUTEN**, author of *Self Portraits: Fictions* and *Tintin in the New World*

“Whether [Coffey is] writing about a sinning priest or a man who’s made a career out of branding or about himself, we can smell Coffey’s protagonists and feel their breath on our cheek. Like Chekhov, he must be a notebook writer; how else to explain the strange quirks and the perfect but unaccountable details that animate these intimate portraits?” —**EDMUND WHITE**, author of *Inside a Pearl* and *A Boy’s Own Story*

Among these eight stories, a fan of writer (and fellow adoptee) Harold Brodkey gains an audience with him at his life’s end, two pals take a Joycean sojourn, a man whose business is naming things meets a woman who may not be what she seems, and a father discovers his son is a suspect in an assassination attempt on the president. In each tale, Michael Coffey’s exquisite attention to character underlies the brutally honest perspectives of his disenchanted fathers, damaged sons, and orphans left feeling perpetually disconnected.

**Michael Coffey** is the author of three books of poems and *27 Men Out*, a book about baseball’s perfect games. He also co-edited *The Irish in America*, a book about Irish immigration to America, which was a companion volume to a PBS documentary series. He divides his time between Manhattan and Bolton Landing, New York. *The Business of Naming Things* is his first work of fiction.

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