

Photo Op at Walt Whitman Junior College

Swimmer's Bodies.

Long, lean, hardmuscle.

Water Jocks. Sunfreckled shoulders.

Chest and arms built by lap after lap
of backstroke, crawl, and butterfly.

Clean chlorine smell of 'pits and crotch
and sunstreaked hair.

Robed, they mill on the breezy pool edge,
toes curling, hot for competition,

28 young men on two college teams,
handing off their robes

for a test plop

into the flat blue water's roped lanes.

Stretched nylon trunks, brief, pouched.

The warm assurance

of a quick unconscious self-grope.

The feel of a buddy's cupped palm

patting encouragement

on a wet nylon rump.

The swimmer's jockstrap:

lightweight, cotton banded

around muscular collegiate waist,

strapped down

around symmetrical moons

of golden undergrad butt.
Grab-ass, towel-snapping
naked horseplay in the showers,
but serious
at the water's edge. Intense.
Water animals.
Fresh wet hair tucked
with long-fingered hand
into tight latex cap.
Bright eyes, goggled.
28 young men,
splashing and dripping with sun.
28 young men and all so...manly.
They hardly douse
whom they know
with spray
when to cheers they raise victorious fists,
pulled triumphant from the pool,
walking barefoot
past the bleachers,
leaving wet prints of perfect feet
and dripping Speedo trunks.
Eyes reach out
to feel
what applauding hands may not touch.
Love's lust
makes the swimmers' bodies
loved all the more.

Overhead,
above their nearly naked brotherhood,
a long-muscled diver
takes golden flight:
bouncing,
then launched,
tucked, rolled,

Photo Op at Walt Whitman Junior College ©Jack Fritscher 125

knifing downward
through the crystal air,
slicing through sun into deep waters:
a dove
breaking the surface of the sea,
a god
in graceful descent,
a man
in full plunging dare.
Cameras click.
Telephoto touch.
All their warm wet images,
single-framed,
for magical conjuring,
late
in the private one-handed night.