

Fall 1986

Look Park: Florence, Massachusetts, 1958

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Recommended Citation

Driscoll, Jack (1986) "Look Park: Florence, Massachusetts, 1958," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 25 , Article 29.
Available at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank/vol1/iss25/29>

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Look Park: Florence, Massachusetts, 1958

Each day after swimming
how I loved the hot massage of the shower,
the nozzle wide open on the back of my neck.

But one Sunday I was the last one out of the pool
and the women from the asylum
were already under the showers when I walked in,
a mix-up in hours.
They all wore bathing suits except the youngest one
who would not leave when a whistle shrieked
from the locker room.
I stood sunburned and shivering,
stared through the sting of chlorine
at the first naked woman I had ever seen.
I was scared when she turned towards me.

I was only thirteen,
that age when love hovers around the flesh
of magazine nudes unfolding
all summer behind a friend's garage.
"What I would do," I boasted then,
meant nothing when she moved steaming to touch me,
and I knew growing up I would remember my fear
of her wet lips parting
and the way she kissed me with her eyes wide open,
her skin clean and glistening in a way that was never insane.