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On the Newsweek photo of eleven Iraqi boys swimming in a bomb crater

We could say this portrait is tragic
what have we done to these people
that they must cavort in our filthy footprint

These boys who splash and lounge and dive and loiter,
tan and lean, hair black and dripping, arms and chests
glowing with the surprise of virgin muscle

These boys who could be Michigan boys at Fuller Park
Municipal Pool, I-pods and wallets tucked in gym bags,
confident a bounty of bikinis will soon emerge from the parking lot

But they are not Michigan boys, their shorts
tri-striped Adidas knock-offs, their pond
a gravy of mud and broken building

We could say how backward, has no one educated
these children on the dangers of bacterial infection
electrocution, or chemical bath? But let us thrill

Only to the joy of splash, To the boy with arms
outstretched like wings, cheek-to-cheek grin
compelling me to think of my older brother

Let us say only these boys are giants
look at that one mid-dive, how he flies
from the rubble's edge, fingertips arrowed

Toward the murky poison – we could say
he's plunging into disease, or we could
admire his reach.

