

FRISBEE

MY SON AND I SAT on the steps of the concrete ship at North Avenue beach. We ate hot dogs bought at the concession stand. He talked nonstop about the lake, the gulls, the volleyball players. I watched them fly through the air like Olympians, their glistening outstretched arms tucked under their chins, fists welded, legs streaming out behind like tails.

In front of us two frisbee players hovered, Apollo and Zeus, throwing the discus straight as a kiss. My son stared at them as though they hung above an altar he prayed at. He asked why their chests were hairy and flat, not white and soft like mine.

Then two short men, maybe Pakistani or Iranian, with bulging muscles and snug trunks walked up. "It is a good throw!" one pointed at Apollo's frisbee which had caught a sudden breeze and drifted into the world of volleyballs.

"I haven't seen you throw one yet," Apollo retorted.

The Iranians positioned themselves not parallel to the Greek gods, but so that their throws, which were bad, crossed paths. Their frisbee skidded onto the cement walkway or broke up volleyball points. They wore half-smiles and walked to distant landing sites with short, unhurried steps. When one throw landed at Apollo's feet, he bent down, hurled it back, and said, "Harder than it looks."

"I do not think so," the dark man said softly.

"Well, it's obvious you can't throw a frisbee worth shit." Apollo cocked his arm and bull's-eyed Zeus's gut.

"Please to remember that accuracy is not at times the object for motivating this game."

"You're right," Apollo pointed a finger in the air and the frisbee twirled like a top on it. "I forgot. The object is to fuck up volleyball games and piss off your partner."

"Hey," I said to my son, "let's go sit somewhere else."

"I have to finish my hot dog," he said.

But he had forgotten his hot dog. He was staring at all four men as though he wanted to sink his teeth into them, as though they were gods he might consume, a communion that would forever satisfy his hunger.

An errant frisbee wandered by. I stuck out my finger. It landed, light as a butterfly. The trick was to slow it down while keeping it spinning, holding its motion aloft.