



CLIFF JUMPERS

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INTRODUCTION

Cliff Jumpers is a series of images taken in and around large water holes in land-locked towns in the western USA.

Families and groups of adolescents swarm these lakes, rivers and man made water areas to escape the summer heat. Their gathering is not too distant from an animal-like mating ritual. There is flesh, passion, flirting, showing-off, inebriation, and a lot of hormones, most of this going on under the eyes of parents and adults who are also participating in soaking themselves in these water-holes as a last grasp at straws to keep their youth.

“Youth is not a time of life it is a state of mind. It is not a matter of red cheeks, red lips and supple knees. It is a temper of the will; a quality of the imagination; a vigor of the emotions; it is a freshness of the deep springs of life. Youth means a temperamental predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over a life of ease.”

–Samuel Ullman



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PREPARING TO JUMP

Two boys stand on the cliffs encouraging a girl to jump. Swarming her like dogs. She smiles a flirtatious smile because she enjoys the attention, it boosts her self-esteem.

“They [Young People] have exalted notions, because they have not been humbled by life or learned its necessary limitations; moreover, their hopeful disposition makes them think themselves equal to great things—and that means having exalted notions. They would always rather do noble deeds than useful ones: Their lives are regulated more by moral feeling than by reasoning—all their mistakes are in the direction of doing things excessively and vehemently. They overdo everything—they love too much, hate too much, and the same with everything else.”

—Aristotle

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JUMPING

She jumps off the cliff edge into a pool of water below, unknown what's really in the water below and unknowing if her safety is ensured

"Time misspent in youth is sometimes all the freedom one ever has."
—Anita Brookner





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STAR-SHAPED JUMP

A young man falls through the air achieving that rush of excitement and freedom that free falling affords, not caring about impact until it arrives.

“The young do not know enough to be prudent, and therefore they attempt the impossible—and achieve it, generation after generation.”

—Pearl S. Buck

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RECOVERY

A young man picks himself out of the water and slowly recovers after a huge leap. Dripping wet and still experiencing a degree of euphoria from the fall

"For I have learned to look on nature, not as in the hour of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes the still, sad music of humanity."
—William Wordsworth





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PSYCHING HIMSELF OUT

Making the leap is always difficult because every instinct your body has is telling you not to do it. It takes some time to work up to the jump.

"No man knows he is young while he is young."
-Chesterton, Gilbert K

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JUMPING INTO AN OPEN PIPE

A boy is leaping backwards into an open pipe being used as a make-shift water slide.

"Youth does not require reasons for living, it only needs pretexts."
-Jose Ortega Y Gasset





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ROPE SWING

A boy about to leap off the edge of a small bank and swing into the water using an old piece of rope.

“Boyhood is a most complex and incomprehensible thing. Even when one has been through it, one does not understand what it was. A man can never quite understand a boy, even when he has been the boy.”

—Chesterton, Gilbert K

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TREE FLIP

This youth is using a tree which has been uprooted and is laying across the water as a perch to show off his abilities

“Every genuine boy is a rebel and an anarch. If he were allowed to develop according to his own instincts, his own inclinations, society would undergo such a radical transformation as to make the adult revolutionary cower and cringe.”
—Henry Miller





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JUMPING FROM A BRANCH

Even when girls are not present boys must show-off to one another to establish themselves in their 'pack.' These boys are leaping from a tree into the water below in an obviously unsafe manner, but things like courage and idiocy tend to go hand in hand for pubescent boys

"Brotherhood is not just a Bible word. Out of comradeship can come and will come the happy life for all."

—Heywood Broun

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CHILDHOOD FRIENDS

Four boys swim together in the mirky waters,
young enough to just be themselves, but old enough
to need their pack

*“There is a destiny that makes us brothers, No one
goes his way alone; All that we send into the lives of
others, Comes back into our own.”*
—Edwin Markham





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COOLING OFF

Two girls cooling themselves in the water on a hot summer day, waiting to be noticed, but secure with their friendship

"Everything has beauty, but not everyone sees it."
-Confucius

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FATHER AND DAUGHTER

A father and his daughter bask in the water and heat from the sun. Enjoying the last moments of childhood before his daughter becomes a teenager

“Certain is it that there is no kind of affection so purely angelic as of a father to a daughter. In love to our wives there is desire; to our sons, ambition; but to our daughters there is something which there are no words to express.”
—Joseph Addison





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SUBMERSION

A girl floats in the water and lets freedom wash over her adolescent body

"Beauty is the pilot of the young soul."
-Ralph Waldo Emerson

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PADDLING

A girl paddles in the water, enjoying its cooling effect and caught up between trying to look like a woman and wanting to play like a child

“Beauty is the mark God sets on virtue. Every natural action is graceful; every heroic act is also decent, and causes the place and the bystanders to shine.”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson





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MUD AND DIRT

A boy is covered head to toe in mud. These water holes are usually mud filled and murky watered, making it difficult for boys to put off their child-like desires to get dirty and play in the mud

“Great endowments often announce themselves in youth in the form of singularity and awkwardness.”
-Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

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SOPHISTICATION WHILE SOAKING

An older girl sits in a chair in the water trying to find the balance between being more of an adult and appearing sophisticated and wanting to join in with the water festivities

“Most people don’t grow up. Most people age. They find parking spaces, honor their credit cards, get married, have children, and call that maturity. What that is, is aging.”
—Maya Angelou





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LILOS AND CIGARETTES

Parents of children lie on lilos showing signs of aging and having had a rough life. They want to join in with their children to feel young again and escape the lives they are living

"I wanted to be with the kind of people I'd grown up with, but you can't go back to them and be one of them again, no matter how hard you try."
-Ethel Waters

20

SUN SPARKLING

A girl wades through the water allowing her flesh to sparkle and tease the boy she is with. They play a game of desire and wanting

“What we ought to see in the agonies of puberty is the result of the conditioning that maims the female personality in creating the feminine.”
—Germaine Greer





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LEGS

A girl does a handstand under the water so only her youthful legs show. She is showing off for friends and strangers, but mostly boys

"You may chisel a boy into shape, as you would a rock, or hammer him into it, if he be of a better kind, as you would a piece of bronze. But you cannot hammer a girl into anything. She grows as a flower does."

-John Ruskin

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FRIENDS

Two girls who are friends, for the moment, stand together in the water. Drama, hormones, jealousy and emotional confusion are in their past and future but for the moment they are peaceful

“Girls are so queer you never know what they mean. They say No when they mean Yes, and drive a man out of his wits for the fun of it.”
—Louisa May Alcott





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FAMILY I

A family arrive at the water's edge ready for a day of swimming and fun. The parents enjoy the youth of their children before they're on the cusp of adolescence and become un-needed

"The only perfect love to be found on earth is not sexual love, which is riddled with hostility and insecurity, but the wordless commitment of families, which takes as its model mother-love. This is not to say that fathers have no place, for father-love, with its driving for self-improvement and discipline, is also essential to survival, but that uncorrected father-love, father-love as it were practiced by both parents, is a way to annihilation."

—Germaine Greer

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FAMILY II

A family play together in a dam. The water is mirky and unappealing but the desire to be cool and to be themselves, together as a family, is more important

“The family is the nucleus of civilization.”
-William J. Durant,





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FAMILY III

A Mother is helped by her two sons as she walks through the water, showing a strong family bond and connection regardless of whom is watching

“After all, life hasn’t much to offer except youth, and I suppose for older people, the love of youth in others.”

–F. Scott Fitzgerald

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SELF ESTEEM

Two girls sit on the bank of the water wanting to fit in and overcome with teenage emotion and fear

“Adolescents are not monsters. They are just people trying to learn how to make it among the adults in the world, who are probably not so sure themselves.”
—Virginia Satir





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ISOLATION

A girl sits on a towel incased in her own natural beauty of solitude and observation

"I think there's a time in your life where you don't feel like you fit in. I think everyone has that when you're a teenager, especially, and especially in the society we live in."

-Matthew Vaughn

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DISTRACTED

A girl lies on a boy's stomach as a form of flirtatious play. She looks at her phone distracted and indifferent to the world around her, the beauty of nature and the boy she is teasing

"A different world cannot be built by indifferent people."
—Peter Marshall





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ADOLESCENT LOVE

A girl holding on to the boy she loves as tight as she can incase his indifference manifests and she loses him. He carries on with his task fuelled by hormones and hunger

“Women wish to be loved not because they are pretty, or good, or well bred, or graceful, or intelligent, but because they are themselves.”

–Henri Frederic Amiel

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ATTITUDE

Two girls partake of underage smoking while sitting at the side of the water watching the frivolity. They are filled with attitude and the desire to be older than they really are

“When you are seventeen you aren’t really serious.”
—Arthur Rimbaud





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A GROUP

Boys and girls sit together and flirt and tease each other. The boy has a tattoo on his chest so that he can still display his identity regardless of his lack of clothing

“All nature’s creatures join to express nature’s purpose. Somewhere in their mounting and mating, rutting and butting is the very secret of nature itself.”
–Graham Swift

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A PACK

A pack of youths walk to the water banks carrying their alcohol and smoking so they can grow up faster than age affords

“Teenage boys, goaded by their surging hormones run in packs like the primal horde. They have only a brief season of exhilarating liberty between control by their mothers and control by their wives.”
—Camille Paglia





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ALL AGES OF BOYS

Four boys of different ages find the same fascination and excitement in finding, capturing and playing with a snake regardless of what age they are

"Youth has no age."
-Pablo Picasso

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THE WOLVES

Four teenagers sit on top of a cliff drinking together, watching girls and waiting to make their move on them. The boys show their tattoos like cows that have been branding. They are trying to display their identity and appear to be 'cool'.

"The young are permanently in a state resembling intoxication."
—Aristotle





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GIRL WITH HER THREE DOGS

A girl plays with her three dogs at the side of the water. She hides behind the necessity to allow her dogs to exercise but she really wants to be in the water like her peers

“Human tragedies: We all want to be extraordinary and we all just want to fit in. Unfortunately, extraordinary people rarely fit in.”

– Sebastyne Young

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CONFUSION AND MUD

A young boy plays in the mud. Stuck between the age of wanting to play and the age of having to like girls and show-off

"Many people never really grow up; they just learn how to act in public."
—Bryan White





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MATING RITUALS

Two girls and two boys stand together trying to look their best to attract the opposite sex and to appear at their best

"Boys will be boys. And even that wouldn't matter if only we could prevent girls from being girls"
-Anthony Hope Hawkins

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ALCOHOL

A young man helps a girl drink wine from a bag getting her drunk so he can feel more relaxed around her and hopefully make his move on her

“The wine of youth does not always clear with advancing years; sometimes it grows turbid.”
—Carl Jung





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THE FLIRTATIOUS TOUCH

A boy touches a girl on the arm in a flirtatious manner hoping that his feelings of lust and desire are reciprocated and that he can satisfy his hormonal drive

"The pleasure of one's effect on other people still exists in age -- what's called making a bit. But the bit is much rarer and made of different stuff."
-Enid Bagnold

40

LUST

A girl and boy kiss on the perch of a rock. Her flesh beneath his hands helps to stir his animalistic desires. She just wants to be loved and needed

"A man loves the meat in his youth that he cannot endure in his age."
—William Shakespeare





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DESIRE

A boy and girl hold one another whilst standing in the water. To the outside observer it may seem like an odd coupling, but his sexual desire and her want of being needed has brought them together.

"So many people try to grow up too fast, and it's not fun! You should stay a kid as long as possible!"

-Vanessa Hudgens

42

PASSION

A couple of youths kiss while bathing in the sun. So much flesh and skin has led to an overwhelming desire to touch one another

"Passion rebuilds the world for the youth. It makes all things alive and significant."
—Ralph Waldo Emerson





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WANTING

A boy wraps his arm around a girl to ensure all other males in the area know that she his is territory and his prize. She holds his hand hoping they will fall in love

“That hunger of the flesh, that longing for ease, that terror of incarceration, that insistence on tribal honour being obeyed: all of that exists, and it exists everywhere.”

–Ben Kingsley

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COUPLING

A boy and girl pose their fleeting desires caught for a single still moment—a youthful, summer relationship that is just as freeing as summer itself

“Through our great good fortune, in our youth our hearts were touched with fire. It was given to us to learn at the outset that life is a profound and passionate thing.”
—Oliver Wendell Holmes





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ATTRACTION

A girl bathes in the sun, she is perched on a rock in the hope that someone will notice her and make her their target. She goes unnoticed.

“How much has to be explored and discarded before reaching the naked flesh of feeling.”

—Claude Debussy

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GIRLS MAKE GOOD FRIENDS

Two girls stand hoping that they appear glamorous and hope that their bodies rival those of fashion models and super stars

“An adolescent is somebody who is in between things. A teenager is somebody who’s kind of permanently there. And so living with them through the various teenage hopes and sorrows and joys was curiously enough a maturing experience for me.”
—Andrew Greeley





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SHOW-OFF

Two girls have found their perch for the day. They proceed to flirt with one another and appear that they are having a great time in the hopes of attracting boys.

“Don’t show off every day, or you’ll stop surprising people. There must always be some novelty left over. The person who displays a little more of it each day keeps up expectations, and no one ever discovers the limits of his talent.”

– Baltasar Gracian

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THE NEED TO GROW UP

Two girls pose on the beach in a super model style. They saw someone else do it once, and hope that mimicking will make them as beautiful as the images they have seen before

“And your very flesh shall be a great poem.”
—Walt Whitman





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INNOCENCE

Four girls stand together feeling beautiful. They have taken a lot of time to make themselves feel this good about their appearance

"The world's biggest power is the youth and beauty of a woman."

-Chanakya

50 LEGS

A girl helps her friend untie her bikini top so that she doesn't end up with tan lines. They believe that you can't be beautiful if you're skin is pale.

"Being a teenager is an amazing time and a hard time. It's when you make your best friends - I have girls who will never leave my heart and I still talk to. You get the best and the worst as a teen. You have the best friendships and the worst heartbreaks."
-Sophia Bush





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TWO GIRLS AND TWO LILOS

Two girls stand in shallow water, they have spent the day floating around on their lilos attracting attention with their flesh and their artificial hair, their make-up and their bottle applied skin tone. wAt this moment in their lives they think that's all they are worth, and that they cannot exist without the attention from boys

"Adolescence is when girls experience social pressure to put aside their authentic selves and to display only a small portion of their gifts."

—Mary Pipher

