

THE JOSEPH M. COHEN FAMILY COLLECTION



JOHN AND JAKE

In 1948, John and Jake, two apprentice rakes,
Swam the yellow Merongahills,
From 21° Keesport to Demerose and back again,

It was the season of reckless risks,
When mispent young men took their baptismal swims,
They had no fryst with mermaid daughters,
Paring the fetid waters,
Side by side with their unseen fathers.

These Twin Rock linn kicked and stirred until they died,
And left one another in each others wake,
Euborant, buoyed by their strength,
They flowed as water through water,
And expressed the waves with soft splashing sounds,
Sure that they would never drown.

Halfway there and with a surge of courage,
They raced to see who would place first,
Glistening in the summer sun, their dolphins flew like dolphins,
Neither won.

Then spent, the triumphant pair waded ashore,
Wearing laurel wreaths wet and banded to their hair,
They never said what they had done to anyone,
Until today when John told me that good old Jake
Had passed away.

John and Jake

Duane Michals, *John and Jake*, 2003
Gelatin silver print (black & white), 20 x 16 in. (50.8 x 40.6 cm)
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