

Changing

by [Joseph Bathanti](#) in the [July 2025](#) issue

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At family picnics in North Park,
the women—the girls too—

my mother and sister,
aunts and cousins—

my French grandmother
refused to enter a public pool—

cloistered hip to hip
in my uncles' dark foreboding sedans

to undress and slip into bathing suits.
They draped the windows with towels.

Plymouths and Pontiacs
turned into palaces,

the picnic a fable,
the park a realm.

Transfigured, milk-white,
they emerged from the automobiles,

and filed dutifully—
hands lifted against

the pleading light—
into the spangled blue water.