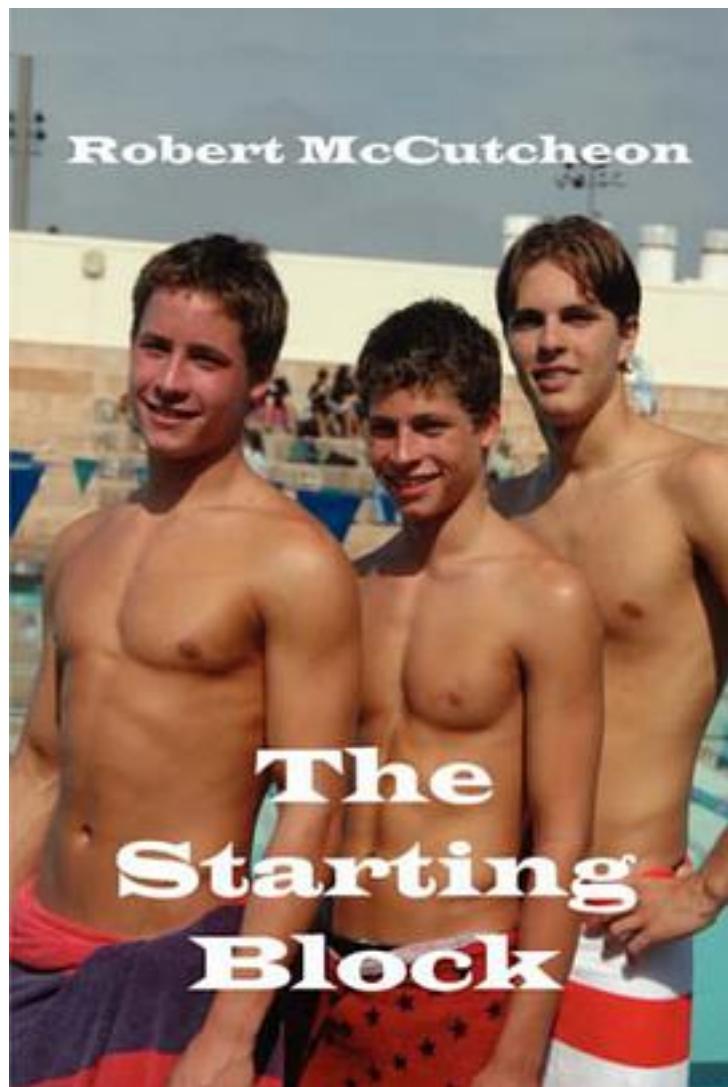


# The Starting Block



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Swimming runs in the Livingstone family, so to speak. And to sixteen-year-old Teddy Livingstone, as he follows in the wake of his two older brothers, life often seems more like a relay race than even he would like. There is no doubt who anchors that relay. His oldest brother, Chip, a senior in high school, is the fastest of the boys in the water, as seems only right. Billy is the in-between brother: not the youngest, not the fastest. But Teddy is in between in his own way. *False Start: Judges and Timers Ready* tells the story of the first of three big swimming meets in the suburbs of 1967 Pittsburgh that make the brothers rivals and teammates at the same time. The events of that crucial swimming season force Teddy to choose which of his brothers to forgive-Billy for losing or Chip for winning. Those months hold events for Teddy besides the hundred free. He falls in love for the first time, he learns to drive, and he has a falling out with his best friend. All along he has to figure out how to think about girls, if your family can be your friends, whether love can be won or lost like a race. It helps Teddy to recount those events in his own way; he likes to think he is ghost writing his life. Sometimes he speaks in the first person; sometimes he prefers the distance of the third person. This method suits his divided self-torn between childhood and adulthood, between love and the illusion of love, but above all between brothers.

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