

PETALUMA HIGH SCHOOL TRACK

Covered buttons. Sensible lace-up shoes, black, against
pearl stockings that match her swept-up hair.
She walks briskly around, me in sneakers behind her,

and the entire blue-suited fire department now
behind us. The older, large men joke about the *young bucks*,
and young men run ahead of us all.

Shirts off, backs glisten, mouths boast as they try to outrun each
other. They fly without effort by the older citizens of our town who
creep arm-in-arm along the outside edge near the bushes and fencing.

Muscle and certainty that life will be like this, a competition they
will always win. Firm, powerful pushing from ground through air.
They call her *m'aam*, and say *Good day* to me, tip

their hands in salute to their captain, and for a moment
I believe what they believe, love all our legs lunging
in the same direction, love us all.

Donna L. Emerson