

WRESTLERS UNFINISHED

Takedown : wrestlers joined
in fierce lines force
found in this intricate ritual
at the point force fails.

Delicate grapplers the groin
grounds for touch why
stall loins forever hot in a halo
of wash and stroke one

body set on tipping the other?
No reversals here no
turning back though exposed
the back triangulates head

arm and leg : most stable
of compositions the echo
and dip as tanned hands grip
wrists one face turned

up the other in to pin both
shoulders and lay the back
flat. After the body passes
the dimpled mustard

mat rises into itself that slow
give of padded elasticity
first creased then wrinkled
a custard body cradled

legs gathered up two shaven
heads passively bent
roped in torso twisted groin
groped slightly spread

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Published in the Fall 2006 Issue of [*Disquieting Muses Quarterly Review*](#).



Thomas Eakins's 1899 oil on canvas.