

Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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The World of a Few Minutes Ago.

Driscoll, Jack (Author)

Feb 2012. 184 p. Wayne State Univ., paperback, \$18.95. (9780814336120).

In Driscoll's seemingly straight-ahead yet covertly mazy short stories, northern Michigan's aggressive winters play in stinging contrast to the blaze of his characters' emotions. Set in endangered small towns, these tales dramatize with wit and heart combustible conflicts between fathers and sons and husbands and wives, the crushed hopes of smart kids caught in the vise of no options, and the subtle repercussions of class divides. A man proud of his door and window factory who loves to hunt is estranged from his educated, artistic, and gay son. When hard-luck Alden gets out of jail, he stays with his successful old friend, a married college professor, and finds that trouble can take root anywhere. In the funny, romantic, and mythic story "Prowlers," a couple ventures into the pristine realm of the rich, which plays in haunting counterpoint to the alcohol-fueled chaos Driscoll orchestrates in shabby houses and trailers, where belongings are few but rage and despair are abundant. Ludicrous and tragic predicaments become vehicles for profound awakenings in Driscoll's suspenseful, incisive, and compassionate stories of camouflaged wisdom.

— *Donna Seaman*