



stories by Jack Driscoll

The World of a Few Minutes Ago

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In *The World of a Few Minutes Ago*, award-winning author Jack Driscoll renders ten stories from the point of view of characters aged fourteen to seventy-seven with a consistently deep understanding of each character's internal world and emotional struggles. All of the stories are set against the quiet, powerful northern Michigan landscape and share a sense of longing, amplified by the beautiful but often unforgiving surroundings. With keen attention to the nuances of his characters and their lives, Driscoll explores both their attachments to the past and their as-yet-unseen futures as he considers relationships between loves, old friends, and parents and their children.

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Few authors have the flexibility of voice and the emotional range and depth of Driscoll, who is at his best in this collection. Readers of fiction will enjoy *The World of A Few Minutes Ago*.

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From Reader Review The World of a Few Minutes Ago for online ebook

Anna says

I wrote about this for the Detroit Free Press. In short, I like how Jack Driscoll's story collection surprised me: it pushed harder in its voice, its scope, and its storytelling than I anticipated.

<http://isak.typepad.com/isak/2012/02/...>

Zinta says

Review pending.

Casey says

A really superb collection of stories. This is a real writer's story collection. What Driscoll manages to do with voice and language is very impressive. Based on this collection alone, he should be much more widely read than he is. Excellent stuff.

Sharon says

It was fascinating to read Jack Driscoll's stories after working with him as an MFA advisor last semester, to see how he puts in practice all the craft elements he was trying to teach me. The Driscoll-isms that struck me the most in this reading were: voice, vocabulary, poetic rhythms and long lines, whiz-bang smarts given even to uneducated characters, and compassion even for losers who shoot themselves in the foot.

I could give so many examples, but here are just a few. In "This Season of Mercy," a boy tells the story of his father, who works at a slaughterhouse. The environment is gritty, but this is how they talk: "We'd all wake up a step or two closer to our imminent selves, my mom's upbeat turn of phrase in a crisis." I want to live in a family in which people talk like that! With such elegant language, how can we not love them? In "Saint Ours," my favorite story, told in the point of view of a truck-stop waitress who is so smart it almost hurts, even though she's never gone to college, we get first-person phrases like this: "they never hazarded any other offspring" (Jack's verbs are never ordinary); "my hapless, head-on, rent-to-own wreck of a marriage, for starters"; (Jack's verbal lists, his delicious verbosity, makes him a poet more in the Whitman than Williams school). This is how the waitress describes her boss: "Venus flytrap all the way when it comes to late-night one-on-ones." ("One-on-ones" shows another one of Jack's signature verbal tricks: Using adjectives or adjectival phrases to substitute for nouns—e.g., instead of saying "wall-to-wall carpet," he will just say "wall-to-wall" as a noun or "scratch-offs" as short for "scratch-off lottery tickets"). The word play is so funny, too (in the same story): "Listen to me, Miss Cum Laude. Forget about the I.V. Leagues, okay?" Each line is so delicious, every writer should read this book to learn how it's done by a master. Brady Udall says, in his blurb, that Driscoll is one of the best living short story writers, and I only wish more people knew

his work. The book is published by a university press, so it may not receive the marketing blitz a bigger publisher could give it.

Driscoll is such a wonderful stylist, line by line the words SING. I am writing a review for The Nervous Breakdown, which will appear shortly.

Sarah says

This a beautiful book of deeply imagined, deeply felt stories. For me, only the first story in the book struck a flat note. This book is worth owning just for the story "The Dangerous Lay of the Land."

Gerry LaFemina says

Time and again I'm charmed by Jack Driscoll's prose and his understanding of the human psyche. These stories feature hard-luck characters whose lives are as cold as the northern Michigan landscape where they live, characters who, through the power of Driscoll's masterful storytelling, never give up hope, and whom we never give up rooting for.

L.E. Kimball says

Nobody handles language like Jack Driscoll; he's a poet. And nobody can rip your heart out in the same way. His writing is beautiful.

Mike says

I no longer live in Michigan.

It's now become a place where I'm from.

These stories are like the porch light of my childhood, each one calling me home during that magic hour between dusk and night. Jack Driscoll's stories are something to be read slowly and treasured. He is one of the best and, sadly, least known short story writers in our country.

Read "The World of a Few Minutes Ago" and find out why he's so good - read "Wonder" and marvel at its ending, or "Long After the Sons Go Missing," a story about a hunter who has gained a new perspective on life after falling from his tree stand.

In the story "Saint Ours," Driscoll writes, "'A single February,' he insists, 'can last a full year.'"

So can a great collection of stories.

Graham says

Driscoll's prose fills the reader's sensibilities with tightly compacted words laced together with a beauty and poignancy that is exquisitely painful in its gliding, cohesive language that scores it's way through your intellect and into your soul. Life in poetry, the poetry of life, prose that slides it's way into the realms of a new kind of poetic storytelling. At times painfully poignant, even oppressively depressing. Advisory: do not attempt to read all the stories in succession, space them, it becomes too much to bear when read altogether.

Susan DeFreitas says

I'm amazed at the degree to which Jack Driscoll captures his characters at a single, complex moment in time in this beautiful collection. Often, very little actually happens in the forward motion of the story--perhaps just a single, decisive tick forward: a man falls from a deer blind, a man's wife steals a horse--but a person's whole universe is revealed over the course of those few pages, often all the way back to their relationships with their parents. The effect is intensely heartfelt, profoundly empathetic, and also extremely concise.

The problem of exposition is a big one in fiction, and the most common technique, as far as I can tell, is to hang little bits of backstory on the little details of scenes (i.e., the forward motion of the story). But Driscoll has mastered a higher level technique: he buries his exposition in pure voice.

I'd recommend this collection to anyone who's a fan of short stories. These little pieces are magic.

Lenny says

I would like to let the author know that I really enjoyed this book. It relates to so much truth about the world today and I would seriously recommend reading this.

Dan says

Hauntingly beautiful. Once again, Jack Driscoll explores the desolate lives of northern Michigan and finds the loneliness and desperation common to all of us.

Elizabeth says

Having begun 2 of his novels and not bothering to finish, I was more than pleasantly surprised by his prose, his twists and turns, his characters in these short stories. I would highly recommend them and perhaps 'Really Liked Them' is more appropriate.

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of view of characters aged fourteen to seventy-seven with a consistently deep understanding of each character's internal world and emotional struggles. All of the stories are set against the quiet, powerful northern Michigan landscape and share a sense of longing, amplified by the beautiful but often unforgiving surroundings. With keen attention to the nuances of his characters and their lives, Driscoll explores both their attachments to the past and their as-yet-unseen futures as he considers relationships between loves, old friends, and parents and their children.

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Lydia says

I've got my signed copy and I'm going to start reading it tonight! I've had master classes with Driscoll several times and he never ceases to amaze me.

Jennifer Porter says

Must read for all short story writers. Especially those of us from the rust belt.
