Jack Driscoll: teaches here.

Hal Neth: Hal stands in a corner wearing a plastic Indian mask and a brown hat. He sits down on the floor and crawls towards a chair, stands up, grabs the chair with a wrench, lifts it above his head and triumphantly frolics back to his corner. Sometimes he wriggles his hips.

Andy Rockwood: Give Andy a crayon and he will be happy for hours.
Notes on Contributors:

Rosalie Matchett: A disciple of Temogami, Rosalie spends her nights sleeping immersed.

Sally Alatalo: Sally's mother's advice: never take striped candy from strangers, never haunt a gazebo, never shame an artichoke and never walk on your hands while wearing high heels.

Liz Holmes: Elizabeth was walking to her room. A tap on the hall window tried to get her attention. She looked, then shut her door.

Dawn Banghart: a) Venetian blinds b) Fog with bagpipe music c) garret d) steaming tea pot e) grandfather clock.

Paula Smith: 5:00 a.m. The last light in Thor Johnson is turned off. Paula giggles.

Eric Schneider: A loose tile on Kresge has the letter "E" scratched on it.

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David Perk: The arms twist the head off. It likes to be spoon-fed or carried around in a bowling ball sack.

John Jackson: Standing on his head, John sips Earl Gray. His nose twitches.
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THE FURNACE REPAIR MAN

He is not in the basement repairing the furnace. He is upstairs in the kitchen making long distance phonecalls.

He whispers to the operator he is out of money and hangs up when he sees me walk into the hall shaking the snow from my hair. Turning on the tap he reassures me the pipes will not freeze. Outside on the porch he opens his orange toolbox. It is filled with photographs of himself on a Spanish beach. He shows them to me through the window, smiles, pulls his hood over his gray head and walks back down the stairs to where his truck should be. But there is only snow slanting through the trees and a dog barking. He does not hear me screaming for heat. He thinks the cold wind is sweet in his lungs. When I bundle up and read him my best poems about freezing he walks behind the house, across the field toward the wood’s edge. The snow is like salt on his tongue the wind moving downhill behind him.
Jack Driscoll

HEART ATTACK

The snow under the snow
covers his dark body

in this region of flatness
where the wind has followed him across the lake
filling his tracks. All night

the dog shivers in the ice hut
waiting for him to come back

his tip-ups planted, his gloved hands
shaking the long flashlight
dropped hours ago
and now almost burned-out

a dim glimmer under the snow. Face down
his eyes are open
as if he sees something under the black ice

himself perhaps, out of breath, and staring back.

Rosalie Matchett

OPENINGS

I open my blouse
to the sun and lie
on a hill. The wind blows
seeds over my skin. Dandelions
take root on my legs.
Growing along
my arms are violets.

I become a field
of low meadows.
Song birds fly
from my mouth.
From my body a swollen river
stretches into marsh.
THE RETURN

When you reach the front door drop your bags. Touch your mother's hair when you hug her, then remember who she is.

Feel your way upstairs. You discover your father crouched in a corner of your room. He is thinking of the models that were never built. The rail yard is still in the garage.

Locate your bed, and test it. Feel the cold mattresses piled against the wall. Across the hall you will meet your sister, in a bra.

Behind you, your mother stands in the doorway, thumbing through old papers. She says you won't need them. Agree, and throw them in a basket that you never empty.
John Jackson

SCOTT JOPLIN

Tonight is too hot to write. I spend it protecting the couch from the cat. Joplin comes to bother me again. Joplin and I don't get along because I try setting words to his music. I never succeed.

Joplin's notes collect under my arms and run down my sides. I let Joplin settle on the carpet. This hot air is too thin to carry his piano. I hear Joplin from the flat black of the back yard. I close the window and write things he doesn't read.

Rosalie Matchett

THE LAKE

Sitting on gray stones
I watch the blue lake, rocking
Back and forth. Walking
Along the shore
I rub my feet
In wet sand, I practice
Loon calls that roll
Over the edge of the beach,
And I bend to push
Stones out
On the lake's dark skin.

When the shore falls
Asleep, lying flat
On my belly
I slip under
The water's edge. All night
Pulling gray stones down
Below wet skin, I sing
In the black.
Sally Alatalo

WEEDING

A pale woman
stands
in my room.
She smiles
at the flowers
dying
on the windowsill.
Her cheeks
sag.
Her hair
thins,
is scarce
as a row
of young plants
after weeding.
And every time I look
she is
there.

David Perk

WALKING

This thing in the road is no stone.
I see it each day,
blinking from teacups and
windows. It stares at me
from the dirt, the mouth
frozen in the middle of a word.

It feels like a tree.
I brush off the cheeks as though
dusting a fossil. Pulling it
out of the road
is like pulling a root
from the ground.

I take it home and burn wood
in front of it,
rub it, stir the milk in the cheeks
to move. I ask myself: How
did you lose it?
How many days has it been in the rain?
David Perk

WATER YEARS

I lie
at the bottom of a lake.
There is a swell.
I open my mouth and my skull
slides out. It rises
slow as the bubble of a fish.
It will lift from the water,
a moon rising
from a dark ocean.
These are water years.

Liz Holmes

STONES

I stand with Duck Lake
around my knees watching a clam
loop trails through the sand.
Beside me, a log broken,
grey, the bark worn ragged
where the trunk was anchored
to the beach. I search
the sandbar for stones
to skip over minnows streaking
directionless, silver
against the black bottom.

Later, the clouds bunched above the trees,
I squat until the water dampens
my thighs, and tilting my head,
I listen to stones
humming on the lake's floor,
as if the fish
waiting by the rivers mouth
were starting upstream.
Dawn Banghart

THE DROWNING

I Last night, a man drowned in Duck Lake. Now, boats circle boats, hunting for the body. Reporters stand by taking snapshots of the wife who cries. The man's body is found, torn bait.

II People stand on their white-washed docks, glazed under suntan oil. Watching, drinking beer. One of the men walks to the boat launch where reporters and police gather. He steps in front of the cameras, showing his best side. Hoping to be in the headlines tomorrow.

III I go swimming, after, in water not too deep. The ambulance has left. The people are gone. The waters waves curl against the shore.

Beth Wolfson

UNTITLED

Next door someone is singing.

I cringe, thinking he has stolen my sleep and has swallowed it to avoid suspicion.

Closing my eyes, I forget the loss and cast a melody heavy as stone. My eyes harden then fall into their caves.

By morning, I find my sleep in the crevices under my eyes. It has been there all night, waiting to be voiced.
smith/
midnight in
acapulco
Paula Smith

MIDNIGHT IN ACAPULCO

The heat had settled in every corner of the dark hotel room. Lying on the small bed, the man blinked at the squalid shadows and felt perspiration tickling his forehead. He tried to shift the position of his clammy body in the bed, but the sticky sheets imprisoned him.

In the bathroom, dimly lighted and sweet with disinfectant, he had splashed water on his face, but the water was lukewarm and had only mingled with his perspiration.

He tried to remember why he had returned to Acapulco. Out of the damp shadows, he tried to draw memories. All he could remember was waking up on a glorious blue morning here in Acapulco, and stepping on something as he got out of bed. It had been a gold-colored earring, jangling with beads. He had kicked it under the dresser and poured himself a glass of tequila, not noticing until afterwards that twenty dollars was gone from his wallet. That must have been twenty years ago, he thought. He had spent the whole vacation dead drunk...he turned his head restlessly on the pillow and stared at the worn curtains, limp in the night air.

Down one of the dark streets below his window, a Mexican band was playing. He could remember the obese musicians with their sequinned suits and broad-brimmed hats, holding their old guitars and trumpets in pudgy hands. He thought of himself twenty years ago in a flowered shirt, drinking tequila and paying them to play "Cielito Lindo." He buried his head in the moist wilted pillow and tried to sleep. The strains of "Cielito Lindo" reached his ears through the coarse pillowcase. Of his wet monstrous body, only the mouth was dry...sour and dry. He didn't dare to drink the unpurified water from the tap, and in the oppressive humidity he could not imagine getting dressed to go down to the bar.

The springs in his mattress creaked as he sat up, still staring into the dark corners. This place isn't...he thought,

Jeannette Flick

UNTITLED

The car swims through rain, tires float down blacktop. My stomach contracts like a startled caterpillar. Teeth holding lips shut, I brake, pull over, open the door and slide across wet grass to the trees; I feel the hot rise of vomit burn my throat, gushing like a severed artery until my stomach falls out on the ground, steams in rain.

I open my mouth to the rain to dissolve the brown trail left by my stomach, walk back to the car, press the accelerator with my foot and wrap one arm about my stomach as the car wades down the highway.
to be chanted in a high and low voice: brackets, ____, above or below notes signifies that the note (or group of notes) is slightly faster than other, unbracketed, notes:
• • • • short note , __ long note , , breath mark
Jeannette Flick

BARN RATS

Barn rats chew the foundations of Lew Smith's barn, their droppings blacken grain bought to feed the buckskin in winter.

The rat's skewered lengthwise on a pitchfork that clicks against ribs. Its tail stiffens like a frozen hose. Blood rises around the prongs, stripes grey fur.

When the tail melts to the floor, Lew toes the rat into the manure spreader, and unloads fresh grain.

A high scream in the street rose like the cry of a bird. The man froze for a moment, petrified, until the scream turned to hysterical laughter and was joined by a whole chorus of laughter and a torrent of Spanish voices. When they moved around the next corner, the sounds faded.

He got back into bed, fumbling awkwardly for the pillow, and the mattress groaned dangerously. The heat settled between the sheets and seemed to soak into his body, pouring out of the dark. He would have to wait until dawn.
Eric Schneider

EMERGENCY

You are home, dropping your coat in the hallway. The house is quiet and you find the note your mother left on the kitchen table. She will call soon. It was an emergency.

Your father dies at work, clutching his chest and kicking down his waste can. But that can't be. His car will roll up the driveway in an hour.

That means your little sister, walking home from kindergarten crosses the street in front of an angry car.

Her small body leaves a red stain on the pavement. Her head is still sun warm when the morgue attendant shuts the freezer.

But she's not it either. Your dad has to pick her up before he can come home. Only you are left, lying in the hospital watching the emergency team fail around you. Your mother is hysterical as you reach for her hand saying you're sorry. They drag her away, take you to the pathologist. When he starts the autopsy you explain that he's wrong. You are young and your mother needs you. Taking the note, you say goodbye and leave him. Soon, the phone rings.
The man across the street looks in the camera shop window but he is no photographer.

I would follow him but he does not go anywhere. He just puts his hands in his pockets and turns to the street. Embarrassed, I turn away.

When he turns again I turn, stomping the cold from my feet.

This goes on. After dark, I leave to buy two coffees.

Driving by in my van, I roll down the window and ask him if he wants a coffee.

He shivers, mumbling, shaking his head. People pass and whisper.

The night invades my body like cancer. Tired, I tell myself he means nothing as an excuse to leave, but I return at four AM and he is lying face down.

like a smashed spider. I rush to him but he has frozen, his white face shifting color under the flashing Kodak sign. I sit by him and tap the sidewalk with bare fingers, watching him until snow falls.

I go home and when I return later, his body is gone. People walk heavily on the new snow, packing it smooth.
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It will lift from the water,
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These are water years.

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loop trails through the sand.

Beside me, a log broken,
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Later, the clouds bunched above the trees,
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Back and forth. Walking
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