

Birthdays in the Field

My birthday is on May 13th, the absolute best part of Spring. From my earliest recollection, it was always a beautiful day. I especially remember warm sun, green leaves, singing birds, and the smell of the earth. Mom always let me stay home from school on my birthday.

I liked to work alone in the fields.

This was the best time of year for that.

Normally I could skip out on morning milking and go right to the fields as the sun was rising.

The spring days are long, and I loved them.

I worked into the evening.

No matter how late it was when I came home, Mom would always have a nice dinner of leftovers for me and probably a piece of something special, like cake.

I generally came home after dark.

Of course, I would have to make several trips home during the day to refuel the tractor or change machines or make repairs, but most of the time I could be alone in the fields.

By the time I was twelve, Pa had taken a full-time job as a carpenter, so he was gone during the day. Pa and brother John preferred to work with the animals anyway, so no one objected to my preference for fieldwork.

I would try to work the fields farthest from home, where it was easy to imagine I was all alone with the earth.

I don't recall ever having a birthday party when I was a kid.

Don't recall ever wanting one either.

I've had a few birthday parties in my adult life, and I do really appreciate the effort people put into the parties.

I am especially thankful for the times the kids came home such as on my 50th birthday, but year in and year out, more than anything else, I have enjoyed the wonderful spring birthdays that I spent alone working with the land.

Being a farm boy was the happiest time of my life.

I knew it even then.

In more recent years I have tried to spend my birthdays alone in the Boundary Waters. That reminds me of other stories. Tom.

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