



The Summer of 52

By Jim Cross

Preface

Tim was a tall, very slender lad of twelve years during the summer of fifty two. He was the oldest of six children in a poor family who lived in an overcrowded dwelling. It was just a few houses from the beach of a quiet bay in a small New England town. Tim looked forward to this summer because he had not done very well in school this year and the summer would be a nice break from all the troubles associated with school, the last two weeks of which were spent learning about the Revolutionary War.

Some of the other kids made fun of Tim because he wore glasses and seldom had decent school clothing. Tim was also too tall for his age and had not yet grown into his large feet or big ears. He frequently overheard relatives ask his mother if she thought he ever would grow into his ears. Tim also looked forward to this summer because he knew, having reached the magic age of twelve, he was expected to work with his grandfather to help support the family.

Tim's grandfather, an Italian immigrant who wore a blue suit and white shirt everyday, was the local fisherman. He earned his living by selling fish, shellfish, bait, and renting row boats. Spending the summer with his grandfather seemed like an adventure compared to attending school with all of its perils. So, most everyday Tim's grandfather would pick up Tim on the way to fishing and off the pair would go.

Chapter One

The first day started out with the appearance of Grandfather, who was pulling on my big toe in an attempt to bring me into a conscious state. It was still dark and for a few fleeting seconds I thought it was just a bad dream. I have never been awakened this early, for any reason. “What are we going to do in the dark?” I said. After the third tug on my big toe, I was fully aware that this was not a dream. A very short, slim man of seventy years was now my commander in chief. My love of my first job was beginning to wane before it even began!

Little did I know that my mother was in the kitchen preparing my breakfast so that I could go off to work properly nourished. I could smell the oatmeal cooking. What a treat, especially with powdered milk. Well, you can get used to anything if you try. She even made me an oatmeal lunch, just in case I didn’t die from the breakfast.

Grandfather was in a hurry, and about eight minutes later we were in his old truck heading for the beach. The truck was old and black, probably from the twenties, and it ran much better going down hill to the beach than it did coming back. It did not like to go up hill. I think Grandfather was afraid to step on the gas very hard. One of his favorite sayings was, “Go Easy.”

