**Ralph**

*December 12, 2012*

A man’s not chisel unless he has his knife

Ralph went to bed early as he has big plans for the many

Hang his clothes with all his \_\_\_\_\_ in his pocket was the best part

As always, for 50 years, Ralph awake before the cock crowed at 4:00 a.m.

No need for an alarm. His own internal clock & instant would do as well

When there were cows to feed or milk, steers to\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Butcher, or doctor, hogs to count, wood to chop, weeds to hoe, thistle to dig with a sharpshooter, \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ corn to husk or shell, \_\_\_ to \_\_\_, crops to plant & cultivate, truck to repair, trees to prune, \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ & fruit to pick, \_\_\_ to that & pull, fish to catch, game to hurt, tires to fix & tractors to maintain, plows, \_\_\_\_ cultures to shape, as well cribs to \_\_\_\_, farm to repair, a well to clean out, as a full 6 ten’s off the place to bring in the \_\_\_\_ folding $$, you had to wake up & smell the coffee & hit the deck G 4 or give it up to the \_\_\_ & let the \_\_\_\_ cry & \_\_\_\_ full on the block.

Today was special \_\_\_. Phillip Paul and his family were back from Alaska on the old Weidner Place across the Clay County \_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_ Creek.

As he would do when they were little, he would be sitting in the old \_\_\_\_ living room in the \_\_\_\_\_ when they awake. So it was time to fire up the \_\_\_ & roll. \_\_\_ had \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_ & roads were muddy & slow \_\_ so need to get a \_\_\_ on.

Hit the floor, same reheated coffee, cold oatmeal, milk & cheese & out the door. Down the old step stair in the door, & get \_\_\_\_ in a hurry. Grabbed his old coat, coveralls, & hip boots & a light from the entryway, where the barn gear has a peg. The \_\_\_ line was set at the \_\_\_ by Phillip Paul but \_\_\_ behind the old house & barn with \_\_\_ bait. A real good \_\_\_. Real strong \_\_\_ you couldn’t break--- red slugs big hook with good \_\_\_\_. Degs setting.

If he \_\_\_\_\_, he can’t run it before \_\_\_\_ for cats & snapping turtles, & still made it in the roads while they were asleep; maybe \_\_\_ them with a mess for breakfast. We need to \_\_\_ may turn a light on; let her sleep in. See \_\_\_ get up with him & the \_\_\_ each day for 50 years, to cool their breaths & make sure he was \_\_ right & equipt for \_\_ or whatever.

Petish Paul when he has the floor, & went down & \_\_\_ his stuff, chisel, cramped the \_\_\_ & headed down the lane. Mom was rising, about to the old Weidner Place when he recall for his wallet, \_\_\_\_ & glasses. Damn. Empty Pocket. Had left all his $$ & gear in his \_\_\_ on the budget. Still as strong & fit as a young \_\_\_, can \_\_\_ a double \_\_\_ with the best, but the memory’s not as sharp as a razor as it once was. Especially when in a hurry & May’s not the type to remind him. No better or \_\_\_\_. No because\_\_ No problem. Too late to go back & still run the \_\_\_ & make the rocks & \_\_\_\_ need no staff at Phillip Pals for \_\_\_ or on the pond. Turn down the lane & into the Old Place driveway back to the barn & pond. Still dark. Have \_\_\_ with no \_\_\_\_ or you are fast asleep. Cut the engine & \_\_\_ by the \_\_\_ and them. No floodlight near as Moon up & shining bright & moonlight to see the path to the pond & run the light. They don’t even know I’m here. Slippin up on them \_\_\_

Canoe on the mud back with old \_\_\_ puddle. Damn \_\_\_ but I’ve done it A-Z, & when I did flip it, I \_\_ swam out only wet & muddy or no mud or \_\_\_ no big deal. No problem.

\_\_\_ stalls that across the pond back to back, \_\_\_ part in mud to the \_\_\_ put in mud; real good \_\_\_. \_\_\_\_ Nylon. Can’t \_\_\_ it real good, shop, by hook with a big stay barb. Sets Dep. Set the hood & it will hold a big cat or a big turtle. 100 yards/100 hours/ rotten \_\_\_ \_\_\_ bait hooded \_\_\_ with bomb through the back\_\_\_\_. Can’t throw the hook; or break the line. Can’t \_\_ the \_\_\_ line, or the sick hood line. 300 lb. test

Line \_\_\_\_!!

Looks like a good hand.

Push off & hand over had across the pond on the line pulling fist & \_\_\_, Line Across the \_\_ as I go, Drop the paddle.

No \_\_\_ or \_\_\_

No big deal no \_\_\_ but keep hand over head on the line

Can’t get some cuts off or turtle where they have \_\_\_ the \_\_\_ or barb is in too deep but wait go back lots with pliers \_\_\_ none now in my \_\_\_\_

Cuts or 3-6 lbs. \_\_\_ 5-12. Hit the \_\_\_ with 13 \_\_\_ & 3 turtles in the \_\_\_ Big load.

\_\_\_ a red big Snapper in the line. Biggest I’ve ever seen. Must be 25 lbs. Powerful goes for the \_\_\_ but I’ll pull the \_\_\_ back.

Pulling him in -- hell of a tug of war.

Damn – over she goes.

With the load in the canoe & the \_\_\_ son of a bit. Will \_\_\_ the \_\_\_ but no mind or \_\_\_

No big deal always to \_\_\_

No \_\_\_ no big deal. Always \_\_\_ day \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_

Been muddy & wet before.

Shit God damn \_\_\_ as my hand

Grabbed for the main line to hang on – a big \_\_\_ hook \_\_- its barb \_\_\_ & true—barb under the \_\_ of my \_\_- clean the \_\_\_ the barb goes home. Can’t throw the hook or \_\_ the line.

Real --- line. Stay real good hack & barbs

Set deep boat \_\_\_ & yards away.

In the water & can’t \_\_\_ it. 50 yeards from the \_\_\_. Water 20 feet deep. Hookin up like a big cat or turtle with 50 lbs of wet clothes & hip boots & one hand trapped. Can’t go for \_\_\_\_ with a \_\_\_\_

Line won’t hold me up.

Can’t tread water with wet clothes, hip boots, & one arm for long.

Too far to the \_\_\_ to yell for help. They’re fast asleep & \_\_\_ even know I’m down here.

No mind No \_\_\_\_ no big deal. Not a problem just get my old trusty blade from my pocket with my free hand, open it up with one hand as always, cut myself loose, make it too \_\_\_. \_\_\_ on me. They’ll \_\_\_\_ at old Ralph, muddy & wet again, \_\_\_ \_\_\_ the \_\_\_ \_\_\_ )), as before.

Getty Old \_\_\_.

But wait. A Man’s not dressed unless he’s got his knife

Looks like the laugh is really on me. Old trusty blade is back on the farm—in my clothing on the bedrest—

Forgotten--- left.

Done for. Hooked up. Goodline can’t bring it good hooks

Set Deep

Can’t throw the Barb.

50 years from shores

20 feet deep. Exhausted.

Can’t stand afloat

Going down wary in

My nose & mouth laughs \_\_\_ me so long

The old \_\_\_ smilkes

& laugh his cold laugh whispers

A Man’s not dressed

Unless hes got his knife. A little \_\_\_ is a big \_\_\_\_

They’ll wake up.

I won’t be in the Rocker. They will \_\_\_

I slept in for once.

Just not like Old Ralph to Act like that

Must be \_\_\_\_

Come run the light.

Find a 200 lbs

Dead weight. They won’t laugh.

Wish I was dressed

Had my knife.