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## First We Eat: Growing Up in Val Di Comino, Italy

By Maeve Doyle

Life Rattle Press, Toronto, Canada, United States, 2015.

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English . Brand New Book \*\*\*\*\* Print on Demand \*\*\*\*\*.

On the farm, first you worked, then you had breakfast. Born to poor

tenant farmers in rural Italy in 1950, Giuseppe Schiavo's

mother, who already has ten children and is ill, gives her

newborn baby away to her best friend to nurse. Carmela

Cedrone and her husband Domenico, whose five children all

died in childbirth, welcome Giuseppe with open arms. He

happily grows up with his stepparents in an old stone

farmhouse. When he turns ten, Giuseppe's birth parents

suddenly reclaim him and immediately put him to work on their farm. Eventually, his birth father makes him quit school.

In one day, Giuseppe goes from the beloved only child of

landowners to a stranger in his birth family of sharecroppers.

In this collection of short stories, Giuseppe describes his journey

from cherished adopted stepson to child farm labourer to his

immigration to Canada, where he becomes a well-respected

master stonemason who lives by the words, First we eat. Then

we do.



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