

# Write Your Life

## *A micro memoir writing project*

**Recall a life lesson you learned when you were young — not from words, but from watching.**

### An Unscheduled Delivery

“Come with me, Buck,” my dad said.

It was a Sunday afternoon. We were finishing dinner when the phone rang. He listened for half a minute, closed his eyes, and nodded. “All right,” he said. He listened another minute, then shook his head. “All right then, Steve. As long as you got the money.” He looked at me and pointed at the back door.

I would have been eight or nine years old. I’d been on dozens of deliveries with him. I’d climb up into his truck, and he’d start to sing as he drove west out of town, across the river, or east into the corn fields, delivering farm gas, filling 275-gallon tanks with heating oil for his customers.

“This won’t take long,” he told me that day.

It was a cold day in late November. Across the river, two miles out of town he turned right onto Orr Road, drove another mile to a dirt drive at the end of which was a house trailer. It looked like it had been dropped out of the sky and bounced a few times. A cold wind would have blown right through it. We got out of the truck. I walked with him as he pulled the hose to the back of the trailer where a 50-gallon drum rested in a wood saddle. The oil hissed past the nozzle and into the drum. After a minute he capped the drum and went back to the truck. We sat in the warm cab for a minute while he filled out the bill.

“Come on,” he said. “I want you to see this.”

The man who opened the door was unshaven. He wore raggedy overalls and it looked like two jackets. My dad put an arm around my shoulder and pulled me closer so I could see inside the trailer. Old newspapers, clothes flung over a chair, a sink full of dishes, empty long-neck beer bottles on the table.

He handed my dad some folded dollar bills, looked at me, and smiled. “This your boy?” He held out a hand toward my cheek and crooked his index finger, miming a tickle.

“You need help lighting it, Steve?”

“No, I’ll take it from here, John. I got it.”

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We rode in silence on the way back to town. He reached over and laid a hand on my knee. He said maybe we'd have a piece of pie when we got home. How'd that sound?