

# Why Mr. Doss Had To Die

by John Riley

It was my mom that sent me over to see Mister Doss. Said he had nobody to feed but one crazy brother and if I stayed long enough and was agreeable Mr. Doss would make sure we got fed. Mr. Doss kept his crazy brother leashed like a dog to a wrecked Packard. Said he had to if he wanted to get any work done. The Packard didn't have doors so his brother could scamper inside when it rained. When it was hot and dusty all he could do was sit on the running board with brown spit drooling out of his mouth.

In summer when the garden came in I'd go home with some fresh beans or maybe a tomato or two and a couple of potatoes. Mr. Doss showed me how to dig up the potatoes after the row had been furrowed. He held my little hand in his and guided it through the dirt. In the winter at hog slaughtering time I'd help salt the meat and when it was cured Mr. Doss would send me home with some bacon and maybe some beets he'd canned and a jar of peaches. I went over there when I was told. Then I got too old and couldn't go back. It wasn't long after I left home. Never thought I'd have reason to go back.

