

A perplex raising

by [Brian Doyle](#) in the [March 20, 2013](#) issue

The man on death row in the federal penitentiary writes to me
On lined loose-leaf paper that when he was a boy in the South
He was so absorbed by tent revivals that he knew he would be
A preacher, knew it in his deepest bones. I would stand on my
Bed and preach to the babies, and stand on a barrel and preach
To the chickens and the hogs, and preach the Word to the cow,
Who would not come to Jesus nor to anyone else neither. Well,
That is not how things turned out for me, which is a long story,
But what I want to get down in this letter is the blessings I had
When I was a boy. Now there is much to say that was not at all
In the least blessed, it was a violent and perplex raising we had,
But what I want to get down is that was a time of great wonder
And satisfaction for me because I knew what I was going to be.
I could spend a lot of time explaining how I came to not be that
Which I knew I was going to be but I have wasted enough time
In that fruitless pursuit. Thank you for reading this letter, which
Is a kindness on your part. It allowed me to remember a blessed
Time, there on the old barrel preaching the Word to the animals.