

Front Cover

TOM CULLIGAN

# Teacups and Sticky Buns



MOM'S STORY

TOM CULLIGAN

# Teacups and Sticky Buns

MOM'S STORY

This little book is so great that I couldn't resist, when I had come to the last page, starting it all over again!

- ROBERT MACDONALD

Remember compliments you receive. Forget the insults. If you succeed in doing this, tell me how. Keep your old love letters. Throw away your old bank statements.

- KURT VONNEGUT, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

The most interesting people I know didn't know at 22 what they wanted to do with their lives. Some of the most interesting 40-year-olds I know still don't.

- LESLIE ANN SHARP, PRESIDENT, CHASE MANHATTAN BANK

Enjoy your body. Use it every way you can. Don't be afraid of it or of what other people think of it. It's the greatest instrument you'll ever own. Dance, even if you have nowhere to do it but your living room. Read the directions, even if you don't follow them. Do not read beauty magazines. They will only make you feel ugly.

- GEORGE PEABODY



Culligan Publishing Company

TORONTO ONTARIO CANADA

PRINTED IN CANADA



TOM CULLIGAN  
Teacups and Sticky Buns  
MOM'S STORY



CPC

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TOM CULLIGAN

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MOM'S STORY



Culligan Publishing Company

SECTION ONE

The First Cup  
HALF FULL

—

THE BAY CHALEUR

*The Bay Chaleur is long and wide  
Can be mighty rough when a storm is on  
New Brunswick and Quebec on either side  
A challenge to boatmen and oilskins to don  
Spoken of us warm sometimes cold  
Some beaches are stony other have sand  
A place to relax for young and old  
This can't be spoken of every land  
The fishing is varied for one and all  
Herring, mackerel, codfish and sole  
Lobster, salmon, clams, oysters, scallops 'til fall  
For smelt, ice broken, we fish through a hole  
They come and go, some bide awhile  
'Tis a way of life since the world began  
Our forefathers settled for many a mile  
To pioneer a country that needed man  
Since this history started there's many a doubt  
As to who landed first and established therein  
Whoever, whatever, for those on the out  
Could be Doyle, Arsenault, Firlotte or Quinn  
Can't we settle this once and for all  
Someone surely has gone way back  
To folks who welcome this call  
To open records saved in pen*

MARGARET CULLIGAN  
February 1972

CHAPTER EIGHT

# A Roaring Fire

Getting up summer mornings, I'd be looking down the fields towards the ocean. And there I'd see, this bent-over body slowly moving back and forth in the middle of the small field on the shores edge. That was Mom picking wild strawberries.

Every summer without fail, she picked and preserved dozens of these most awesome, sweet delicious tiny wild strawberries. Before returning back to the field. If I could offer you only one tip for the future, sunscreen would be it. The long-term benefits of sunscreen have been proved by scientists, whereas the rest of my advice has no basis more reliable than my own meandering experience. I will dispense this advice now.

Enjoy the power and beauty of your youth. Oh, never mind. You will not understand the power and beauty of your youth until they've faded.

But trust me, in 20 years, you'll look back at photos of yourself and recall in a way you can't grasp now how much possibility lay before you and how fabulous you really looked. You are not as fat as you imagine.

Don't worry about the future. Or worry, but know that worrying is as effective as trying to solve an algebra equation by

chewing bubble gum. The real troubles in your life are apt to be things that never crossed your worried mind, the kind that blindsides you at 4 pm on some idle Tuesday. Do one thing every day that scares you. Sing. Don't be reckless with other people's hearts. Don't put up with people who are reckless with yours. Floss. Don't waste your time on jealousy. Sometimes you're ahead, sometimes you're behind. The race is long and, in the end, it's only with yourself.

Remember compliments you receive. Forget the insults. If you succeed in doing this, tell me how. Keep your old love letters. Throw away your old bank statements. Stretch. Don't feel guilty if you don't know what you want to do with your life. The most interesting people I know didn't know at 22 what they wanted to do with their lives. Some of the most interesting 40-year-olds I know still don't. Get plenty of calcium. Be kind to your knees. You'll miss them when they're gone. Maybe you'll marry, maybe you won't. Maybe you'll have children, maybe you won't. Maybe you'll divorce at 40, maybe you'll dance the funky chicken on your 75th wedding anniversary. Whatever you do, don't congratulate yourself too much, or berate yourself either. Your choices are half chance. So are everybody else's.

Enjoy your body. Use it every way you can. Don't be afraid of it or of what other people think of it. It's the greatest instrument you'll ever own. Dance, even if you have nowhere to do it but your living room. Read the directions, even if you don't follow them. Do not read beauty magazines. They will only make you feel ugly.

Get to know your parents. You never know when they'll be gone for good. Be nice to your siblings. They're your best

link to your past and the people most likely to stick with you in the future. Understand that friends come and go, but with a precious few you should hold on. Work hard to bridge the gaps in geography and lifestyle, because the older you get, the more you need the people who knew you when you were young. Live in New York City once, but leave before it makes you hard. Live in Northern California once, but leave before it makes you soft. Travel.

Accept certain inalienable truths: Prices will rise. Politicians will philander. You, too, will get old. And when you do, you'll fantasize that when you were young, prices were reasonable, politicians were noble, and children respected their elders. Respect your elders. Don't expect anyone else to support you. Maybe you have a trust fund. Maybe you'll have a wealthy spouse. But you never know when either one might run out. Don't mess too much with your hair or by the time you're 40 it will look 85.

Be careful whose advice you buy, but be patient with those who supply it. Advice is a form of nostalgia. Dispensing it is a way of fishing the past from the disposal, wiping it off, painting over the ugly parts and recycling it for more than it's worth. But trust me on the sunscreen. Getting up summer mornings, I'd be looking down the fields towards the ocean. And there I'd see, this bent-over body slowly moving back and forth in the middle of the small field on the shores edge. That was Mom picking wild strawberries.

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THE STORY SO FAR

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MARGARET CULLIGAN  
Made up from sections of others

CHAPTER TWELVE

# Who's Playing the Organ?

“I’m dreaming of a money Christmas” was more apt for Mom than a hoped for “white” one. At harvest time, farmers took advantage of sunshine just like Mom benefited from mistletoe music time. No head ever got turned away during Christmas and New Year’s holiday weeks. She squeezed in appointments for every possible head because she knew that January delivered few heads.

On Christmas Eve, Mom worked her darndest to get her last customer out of the house by 10:00 pm for the last minute choir practice. Getting up summer mornings, I’d be looking down the fields towards the ocean. And there I’d see, this bent-over body slowly moving back and forth in the middle of the small field on the shores edge. That was Mom picking wild strawberries.

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### THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

Accept certain inalienable truths: Prices will rise. Politicians will philander. You, too, will get old. And when you do, you'll fantasize that when you were young, prices were reasonable, politicians were noble, and children respected their elders. Respect your elders. Don't expect anyone else to support you. Maybe you have a trust fund. Maybe you'll have a wealthy spouse. But you never know when either one might run out. Don't mess too much with your hair or by the time you're 40 it will look 85.

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