He always woke up at 4:30 regardless of the tide. When the tide was out he would quickly get ready and head down to the dock where his boat was tied. When the tide was high and the seaweed was below the surface of the water he would start a fire in the small wood stove in the room and read the Bible and drink coffee until the tide dropped exposing the weed. Looking through the large east-facing window in his room, John saw the first tips of the floating seaweed poking up through the water as the tide began to ebb out of the bay. He put on his thigh waders and got his raincoat and thermos of coffee then he walked down to his boat. He put his thermos and raincoat in his boat and walked along the three docks and up another ramp by the bait shed the lobstermen used to keep redfish, pogies and herring cool until they could be stuffed in bait bags or strung through the eye and put in lobster traps. He pulled down three large nets and three ropes from their piles and brought them back to his boat. Laying out the nets in the three compartments he then set the ropes aside for later. He turned the key and started the old engine. He untied the boat from the dock and pushed off and moved the boat back until he was clear of the other boats tied up next to his. He stepped over the divider and back to the steering wheel. He grabbed a weathered spoke handle on the wheel and spun it a hard left then put the boat in forward. Being careful to keep clear of the lone piling that was underwater at the moment, he headed for the next bay over cutting through gut between the ledges and Pole Island.

The boat puttered slowly down the bay, slowed by years of use and the water logged wood of the hull. As the sun rose in front of him, the leftover wisps of fog from the night began to disappear. Pulling up next to the rocks he heaved the engine up. He got out of the boat and stood on a piece of ledge, the thigh waders keeping him dry in the cold morning water. He waded a little deeper into the water and began to pull the weed from the rocks into a pile in front of him.

He reached out and grabbed onto a clump of seaweed and ripped it from the rocks, letting it float in the water. When he had gathered all he could reach, he lifted the pulled seaweed, arm load by arm load, into the boat. He repeated the process again moving down the shore an arm length into the seaweed at a time. Three hours later the seaweed filled the boat to a little higher than the gunnels. The full bags were always 1400 pounds; he always took time and stomped on the piles to make the bag square. Each bag always 1400 pounds and always square. When the boat was fully loaded he would run a line counterclockwise through the loops on the outside of the net and cinch it up tight, tying a simple slip knot to keep it from loosening up. He picked up the rake used to pull seaweed when the tide was too high to stand on the rocks and pushed the boat off from the ledge and lowered the engine. He snapped the alligator clips on the battery posts to turn on the bilge pumps, a slight jolt going through his arms from wet gloves and batteries. He stood up and moved back to the steering console and put the engine in gear.

As he returned to the dock, he just saw Nick coming from the shop before his view was blocked as he approached the pier. Nick cranked up the boom truck used to lift the bags of seaweed from the boat and walked to the rear of the truck to the control levers, lighting a cigarette as he went. As he swung the arm of the truck out over the boat the engine slowed down and almost stalled every time the boom was moved too quickly. John started with the front bag, hooking two loops on the ends of the ropes and around another hook at the bottom of a scale on the boom. As Nick lifted the bag from the boat John stood on a small platform on the steering console and holding on to a small driftwood mast, rocked the boat back and
forth to keep the bag from catching under a lip on the rail. While the bag was in the air Nick would jot down the weight of the bag and the number of the I.D. tag on the side. After setting down the pad and pen Nick brought the bag away from the water and set it down on the pavement next to the boom truck. Nick then swung the arm back to the boat to get another bag. After the back two bags were taken out of the boat John climbed up the ladder on the side of the pier and got three more nets and ropes from the pile. He threw them down into the boat and climbed down the ladder, started the engine and went back through the gut to the same bay as before.

Around midday he sat on the rail of his boat and drank some coffee from a thermos and then after a few minutes continued working. When the tide dropped in the afternoon he pulled out a two bushel plastic bait tray with a piece of rope attached to its handle from beside the steering console. He walked up the rocks away from his anchored boat, dragging the tray behind him. Bending over at the waist he pulled seaweed off the rocks and loaded it into the tray. When the tray was stuffed full he dragged it back to the boat and dumped the weed into the compartment.

Finishing up two bags for the afternoon he got back into the boat and pushed off from the shore with the rake. He arrived back at the dock and Nick came out and started up the boom truck again. Writing down the weights from the scale and the I.D. numbers off the bags Nick unloaded the boat then John got three more nets and ropes for the next day. John went back to the side of the dock where the skiffs were kept and tied up the boat for the night.

He walked slowly back up to his room leaving a burlap sack of seaweed by the door. He did this every day and at the end of the week he would bring these bags home and put the seaweed in his garden. The room was more of a box with windows and a door, perched above the workshop and display tanks for the lobster dock that occupies the land. He opened the Bible and began to read until the sun dropped below the trees and it became too dark to read. Not having a light in the room, John fumbled with the coffee machine, setting it for the next day and then lay down on his cot to sleep.