

Heirloom

by [Rebecca Bratten Weiss](#) in the [May 5, 2021](#) issue

In stores, my father would reach into his pocket with a big red hand, offer to pay for his purchases with a fist full of beans, explaining the economics of abundance: one seed makes one hundred. I remember the confusion of the cashiers, our mortification.

In the old house he had a bean room snarled with vines, dried beans in their pods, beans for the apocalypse, beans for the Great Tribulation, beans for feasting and planting and surviving, beans for life and death. Grow corn and beans, he said. Put no trust in mammon. Hope in resurrection.

My father died on Easter Sunday, while people stalked the grocery aisles for collard greens, hoarded beans and grew anxious over onions. My father died in red suspenders with his corn unplanted. All the packets of heirloom seeds I'd given him, untouched. He died before he got to see everything unravel.

We buried him with beans in one pocket, corn in the other.
If the boatman asks for payment, he will have coin in abundance.

I think of Lazarus emerging from the earth, the tender curl of a bean vine, spears of corn piercing the soil. I find myself hoping for resurrection.