

Early harvest

by [Heather Kaufmann](#) in the [July 13, 2022](#) issue

Luke 6:27-36

I am eight years old, sitting on the back porch
of my childhood home in late July
a paper bag of unshucked corn at my feet.

Pausing before my task, I watch the maple
oak and beech that wreath the yard
shimmering in the gold of early evening light

short legs swinging beneath my chair in time
to the breeze that sings in nearby branches and warms
my own bare skin with the tenderness of midsummer air.

There is so much that has been cursed
(so much I try to bless)
the earth gives its sweetness even still.

My small hands peel back husk and strand—the fine silk
showering the ochre wood of the porch floor—to reveal within
each ear a patchwork of pale yellow and creamy white.

I pile my handiwork on a tray to carry indoors where my mother
drops them one by one into the boiling pot and together
we watch them turn bright as beech trees in October.

Once cooked, we smear our choice of cob
on a log of salted butter, tracing dimpled grooves
in the softened yellow before lifting it to our lips

to whittle row upon row of untidy ruts, each bite
a burst of juice, so sweet—this early gleanings, this taste
of a harvest yet to come.