

Of Seeds

I went with him once and shook the hand of Dr. Berry, a woman as sweet and petite as her name if it weren't for that big ol' brain, that giant personality, that powerful laugh. *Good things come in small packages* and Dr. Berry was well-pleased that the seeds she'd planted in my dad's prostate were doing their deed, wiping out every cancerous cell with a burst of radioactivity. It was a treatment my dad, a farmer, could appreciate. *A seed* instead of surgery. Short and sweet, a clipped sibilant neat as a pill and that's all euphemism requires of a word—that it be digestible, containable, easily slipped in speech that stands for other speech: semen, investments, competition, *an all-around awesome person* on younger tongues. We all know *seed money* and *man seed* and a *bad seed*. And if you're carefree and lazy, that you'll *go to seed*, but if you're thought to be a winner, you're the *number one seed*. You see, my dad was only fifty. And I, at fifteen, listened to my mother cry for that part of their life she wasn't ready to see die. So when the local doc wanted to sacrifice it all with a scalpel, my dad went home. He did his homework. He drove to Detroit, to the small and all-around awesome person Dr. Berry, in a time of year when the fields lay frozen and nothing is growing and Dad takes note, with every passing farm, of the neighbors who are behind on harvesting.

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