

# The Harvest

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My mother loves persimmons. I tried my first bite in the kitchen of the house where I grew up. I held out my hand for more. I bought some in my adult life and wasn't as thrilled. Perhaps it was my mother's love for the fruit that made it taste so good? Perhaps it was that my mother knew how to pick them out or knew when they were properly ripe?

I waited until I was six months pregnant to tell my parents. After two years of fertility treatments, I was focused on a healthy pregnancy and worried that the stress of their response would affect me. So, I waited.

Many years before this moment, when I came out to my mother, one of her arguments was "but you would be such a good mom." I assured her, "I can still be a mom." To which she replied "a child deserves both a mother and a father." After I married my wife, once we started the fertility process, I tried to ease my parents into the fact that we would indeed one day be having a child.

In the summer heat, I put on my tennis shoes and walked my almost third-trimester bump around the neighborhood. I gave myself a pep talk trying to pluck up the courage to call them. Starting the conversation was always the hardest. I rehearsed my lines. I reminded myself I am a married, meaningfully employed, home-owning, 35-year-old woman. Shouldn't they be proud of me? Instead, I felt like a teenager figuring out how to confess shocking news.

Kids ran by me waving their pool noodles, flip flops slapping the concrete. My neighborhood is the perfect cozy, suburban community for raising a child. I remember when we first looked at our house; the tall oak out of what would be the nursery window was turning red and orange, bikes rested in front lawns, and I pictured us becoming three here.

I rested my hand on my belly, passing a neighbor walking their dog. I said a quick hello and unlocked my phone. I called. I told them what should be "good" news. My father filled the silence with questions. My mother didn't say a word, and I wouldn't hear a word or see a word from her until after Iris was born. A text. The morning she was born to be exact. Incredible timing.

Now as I mother my own daughter, I feel a new pain for my mother and a new pain for myself. For the desert between us. Sometimes, often, the fruit is bitter.

A large persimmon tree in my neighbor's backyard spills over the gate and onto the sidewalk. My brother says we should gather some. I bring them home, cut one when ripe, hand a slice to my toddler, and watch for her reaction.

Sometimes, sweet.