

The Body Hazel

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Abstract

Investigating place-based curriculum and embodied curriculum, the author uses playwriting to explore the body's relationship to land and food. This one-act play penetrates the writings of Ivan Illich, Wendell Berry, and others in an attempt to fictionally integrate conviviality with the modern/industrial life. This is an exploration of how our disconnectedness from the earth that characterizes our daily living and learning affects us bodily.

THE BODY HAZEL

List of Characters

(In order of appearance)

Hazel

Mom (Hazel's mother)

Corylus (a.k.a. Cory)

Quercus

Quince

Persimmon

Rosemary (as a newborn)

Rosemary (as a 5 year old)

Amur (newborn)

Scene I

[Hazel and Corylus's apartment].¹

[Hazel is obviously pregnant and very large. Hazel walks in the door to her apartment, throwing down her keys, purse, jacket, and groceries. Doorbell rings. Flustered, Hazel pushes the groceries into the kitchen and rushes back to answer the door.]

Hazel: Oh hi Mom.

Mom: Hi honey. *[Kisses her on the cheek.]*
How are you feelin- *[Interrupted].*

Hazel: Mom, I just walked in with groceries. I don't really have time to talk.

Mom: I just wanted to see how my grandbaby is- *[Interrupted].*

Hazel: Mom, I *really* don't have time. I'm fine. Baby's fine. I need to eat dinner and grade some papers. I have a job you know.

Mom: *[Disappointed, hurt.]*
Uh, okay. Sorry I bothered you. Maybe I'll try calling...

Hazel: *[Irritated]*
Mom! I'll call if there's any news, okay?

Mom: Okay, okay. I understand. I love you.

Hazel: Yeah, love you too. Bye. *[Closes door quickly.]*²

*[Hazel lets out a heavy sigh, and drags herself over to the grocery bags. She begins to put the groceries away and places a frozen dinner in the microwave. The groceries are all processed foods: boxes and cans.]*³ *The phone rings.]*

¹ The opening setting of the apartment is an important nod to Illich. Illich (1982) writes that apartments are residences for sexual partners, a taxable unit that is made for people, not by people (pp. 120-121). These spaces become overnight storage for economically productive resources (p. 119); I wanted to convey that Hazel and Corylus are merely economically productive resources, working for the economy and not for each other or the household economy. The apartment symbolizes the void of a healthy home: "Healthy homes are transformed into hygienic apartments where one cannot be born, cannot be sick, and cannot die decently. Not only are helpful neighbors a vanishing species, but also liberal doctors who make house calls" (Illich, 1980, p. 39).

² Hazel here is painted as a typical member of the Industrial world: "In short, most of the time we find ourselves out of touch with our world, out of sight of those for whom we work, out of tune with what we feel" (Illich, 1980, p. x). Hazel remains out of touch with her mother, one of the most fundamental relationships of a gendered, convivial commons.

³ Hazel and Corylus represent the industrial eater: "The industrial eater is, in fact, one who does not know that eating is an agricultural act, who no longer knows or imagines the connections between eating and the land, and who is therefore necessarily passive and uncritical—in short, a victim" (Berry, 1990, p. 146).

Hazel: Hello? *[Pause]*
Hi, yes, we met at the conference in New York. How are you?
[Pause. Hazel listens as she is taking off her shoes and letting down her hair.]
Oh, I see. Wow, that's great. I'm really honored. *[Pause.]*
A whole year? I thought it was just for the summer. I ... uh ... I don't know what to say. Can I have some time to think about it? *[Pause.]*
Okay, great. I'll call you within the week. Do you have a number I can reach you at? *[Writes down number.]*
Uh huh, Uh huh. Great. Thank you Dr. Winters. *[Pause.]*
You too. Talk to you soon.

[Corylus enters. Hazel switches the microwaved meal for another, starts microwave again.]

Corylus: Hi Honey. How was work? *[Gives Hazel a quick peck on the cheek.]*

Hazel: *[Sighs heavily again.]*
Oh fine. More papers to grade tonight. Why did I ever agree to teach freshman Comp? *[Smiles.]*
What about you? Stressful day?

Corylus: Not too bad. *[Puts down his briefcase and jacket.]*
A couple new patients came in, but a pretty average day. I might start writing that journal article tonight though, if you're going to be working.⁴

[Hazel places two microwaved meals on the table, pours bottled water into two glasses.]⁵

Hazel: Well that sounds good to me. It can be just like one of our study dates during college.

Corylus: Except we'll actually study? *[Flirtatiously puts his arms around her midsection. She instantly pulls away.]*
Sorry, Hazel. I know you aren't in the mood to be affectionate. *[Steps back from her, giving her space.]*
So how are you feeling today? Are you feeling a lot of kicking?

Hazel: Yeah, kicking, moving. I feel pretty good, just not as energetic as I'd hoped.

[They sit down to eat, Corylus turns on the television.]⁶

⁴ Home in the Industrial society is a place for *consuming*; even the work that is done in the home is work for the market economy, not for the household economy (Berry, 1990, p. 180).

⁵ Here, I show first how food remains abstract and disconnected from the earth for the industrial eater. "For them, then, food is pretty much an abstract idea—something they do not know or imagine—until it appears on the grocery shelf or on the table" (Berry, 1990, p. 146). I also reveal that Hazel and Corylus fall into the Industrial mindset that work is only worthwhile when it is sold (Berry, 1990, p. 185). The couple values work only when they are paid for it through their jobs; work in the household economy is nearly worthless because no one pays them to do it. No one in this home "works" to prepare food. Two minutes in the microwave is about all the work they are willing to give.

- Hazel: So can I tell you about the phone call I got just now, or is the television more entertaining?
- Corylus: Sorry. Habit. So who called? *[As he turns down the volume.]*
- Hazel: Well, first my mom stopped by, bugging me about the baby. I had to be a little forceful in telling her to go.
- Corylus: Hmm. *[Sarcastically.]* That's surprising. She's just excited.
- Hazel: Well, she probably does have good intentions. I just don't have time tonight to deal with it. So anyway, I got a call from Dr. Winters. He's head of the English department at Columbia. Do you remember me telling you about him?
- Corylus: Oh, he was the one who really liked your conference paper, right?
- Hazel: Yeah. That's him. Anyway, he called to tell me that they'd like me to come there for a year, to teach a few classes and maybe co-write with some faculty there. Isn't that great?
- Corylus: Wait, this guy just calls you out-of-the-blue and offers you a job?
- Hazel: Well, it's more like a year-long fellowship, and the fellow usually gets a full faculty position afterward. And it wasn't totally out-of-the-blue. I did apply. I just never thought I'd be considered.
- Corylus: *[Voice raising.]*
WHAT? You applied without telling me, AND it's for more than a summer? When were you planning on telling me any of this?
- Hazel: Dear, please don't be angry. I never thought I would have anything to tell. I honestly thought I had no chance. But now ... I mean, this is the opportunity of a lifetime! Columbia!
- Corylus: Hazel, have you lost your mind? You're about to give birth, any day now. How would you start a new job, move from Illinois to New York, oh, and by the way, not be anywhere near your husband while you take care of a newborn?
- Hazel: *[Walks away from the table, leans over kitchen sink, looks out window as she talks.]*

⁶ In an industrial house, the members find entertainment through consuming, not through each other. "For entertainment, the inmates consume television or purchase other consumable diversion elsewhere" (Berry, 1990, p. 181).

Corylus, I thought we talked about this already. We both decided that neither one of us wanted to give up our careers. We already talked about day care.⁷

Corylus: Yeah, we talked about daycare, as in you would have your same job, take time off when the baby is born, and go back to work after a few weeks. We never discussed you moving to New York.

Hazel: Well, I was hoping you'd consider moving with me.

Corylus: Oh, right. I'll just give up my family practice that I've worked so hard to build up.

Hazel: So I have to give up the biggest opportunity of my career so you can keep your family practice in the suburbs?⁸

Corylus: *[Calming down, voice more relaxed.]*
Well maybe this is a conversation we should have had several months ago, not when our baby is due any day. Are you actually considering packing and moving when you're 8 ½ months into a pregnancy?

Hazel: Hey, I didn't choose to get pregnant.

Corylus: No, Hazel, you didn't. But you are. This baby is coming, and it's going to need a lot from us.

Hazel: *[Returns to table, sits slowly, begins to cry.]*
It just isn't fair. I've worked so hard, and I might never get an opportunity like this again.⁹
[Heavy sigh.]
Anyway, I have papers to grade. I guess the dishes and laundry can wait until one of us has time, right?¹⁰

⁷ Hazel's disregard for her own fertility and reproductive cycle is symbolic of her disconnect from the earth, and the earth's fertility and reproductive cycle (i.e. land and food). As Wendell Berry (2002) shares, "The pharmacist or the doctor will look after the fertility of the body, and the farming experts and agribusinessmen will look after the fertility of the earth. This is to short-circuit human culture at its source. It is, in effect, to remove from consciousness the two fundamental issues of human life. It permits two great powers to be regarded and used as if they were unimportant" (p. 128).

⁸ Marriage in the industrial society becomes mostly focused on division and consumption. "Marriage, in other words, has now taken the form of divorce: a prolonged and impassioned negotiation as to how things shall be divided. During their understandably temporary association, the 'married' couple will typically consume a large quantity of merchandise and a large portion of each other" (Berry, 1990, p. 180).

⁹ Here, Hazel reveals how she feels useless without her career: "Wherever the shadow of economic growth touches us, we are left useless unless employed on a job or engaged in consumption" (Illich, 1980, p. ix). Hazel and Corylus both find that a career "confines them to survival through being plugged into market relations" (Illich, 1980, p. vii). Hazel, like so many women in industrial society, believes that a woman only finds worth when she works outside the home and contributes to the market economy. "An active woman who runs a house and brings up children and takes in those of others is distinguished from a woman who works, no matter how useless or damaging the product of this work might be" (Illich, 1980, p. 53).

Corylus: You don't think we should talk about this more?

Hazel: No, not right now, Cory. I just want to get my work done and go to bed.

Corylus: Dear, are you sorry we got pregnant?

Hazel: *[As she's taking dinner dishes to the sink.]*
What kind of question is that? I never said that.

Corylus: You didn't have to. I can see you're miserable, and you've been really distant with me ever since you found out you were pregnant.

Hazel: *[Now leaning over sink again.]*
Well, you know it's always been my dream to be an English professor at a top university. I'm just not willing to give up that dream yet. Why should I? Why should you be able to have the career you want while I stay home and change diapers? How is that fair?

Corylus: You're right. It's not fair. *[Pause.]*
Whoa! Was that a kick? *[Stands, moves toward Hazel to feel her belly.]*
That was huge!

Hazel: *[Backing away.]*
Corylus, please don't touch me. Not now. *[Starts walking out of the room.]*
I'll be in bed working. Maybe you should work out here at the computer. I'll use the laptop.¹¹
[Exits.]

*[Corylus stands, slumps, then sits down again with his head in his hands.
Curtain closes.]*¹²

¹⁰ Again, Hazel reveals that the only work worth doing is the work that is sold (Berry, 1990, p. 185); Hazel's professorial work, the work for the market economy, is sold, whereas the dishes and laundry, the work for the household economy, cannot be sold and therefore has no value.

¹¹ The computers are another metaphor for Hazel and Corylus's disconnect from the earth and the environment. See Wendell Berry's *Why I Am Not Going to Buy a Computer* (in Berry, 1990, pp. 170-177).

¹² This scene reveals the all-too-common severed lives that many members of an industrial society face. As Wendell Berry (2002) describes, "Any severance produces two wounds that are, among other things, the record of how the severed parts once fitted together" (p. 106). The disintegration of marriage reflects and completes the disintegration of community (Berry, 2002, p. 113).

Scene II

[Next morning, sunshine coming in the window of Hazel and Corylus's bedroom. Hazel is asleep in bed, Corylus enters the bedroom, holding a fast food bag.]

Corylus: Good morning sunshine. How about breakfast in bed for my favorite pregnant lady?

[Hazel sits up in bed, still waking up.]

Listen, Hazel. I know I was upset last night, but I don't want to fight with you. I'm sorry I got upset with you. It all just took me by surprise—a lot to digest all at once, you know?

Hazel: *[Begins eating the fast food breakfast Corylus brought in.]*¹³
I know. I'm sorry too. I should have told you about it, even if I thought I didn't have a chance. *[Takes another bite.]*

Corylus: There must be some way for us both to be happy in our careers. Maybe there's a compromise we haven't thought of.

Hazel: *[Drinks juice.]*
Cory, I don't really want to discuss this right after I woke up.

Corylus: Okay. Fair enough. I was going to take a quick shower. Can I get you anything first?

Hazel: No, but thank you. *[Touches his hand and looks down at it.]*
I think I'll go for a walk at the forest preserve. The doc said I could keep going for walks.

Corylus: Oh, would you like company?

Hazel: No, that's okay. I'll be home in an hour, and maybe we could go to a movie this afternoon or something.

Corylus: Okay. I'd like that. It's been a long time since we went out. Maybe I could take you to a nice dinner, and maybe we could talk more about this New York issue too.

Hazel: Not now, please. Can I just have my walk before we start arguing again?

Corylus: Sure. *[Begins to walk out of room.]*

¹³ Again, the fast food reveals the couple's disconnect from their food, a metaphor for how they are disconnected from each other and the earth.

Hazel: *[Gets up to change clothes.]*
 Thanks for breakfast by the way. *[Corylus is already gone; doesn't hear.]*

[Lights darken as she changes clothes. Set change. New set: Forest with a trail. Off to one side are two hazelnut trees growing close to each other and a small pond in front of them. Hazel walks onto set, on trail.]

Hazel: *[To herself.]* Uhg. I don't feel so good. Of all the days to forget my phone.
 [Pulls a granola bar out of her pocket, begins to unwrap it.]

[Woman appears among the trees, not on trail. Appearance is other-worldly. Carries a basket.]

Quercus: Greetings dear one! *[Hazel halts, looks surprised.]*
 Oh my, you are indeed with child. Are you well?

Hazel: *[Shocked, worried.]*
 I ... uh ... I'm actually *not* feeling well. I thought maybe some food would help.
 [Holds up granola bar. Laughs nervously.]

Quercus: Food? That is not food. Here, try these. *[Offers her basket toward Hazel.]*
 I'm Quercus by the way.

Hazel: Hazel. What's in here? It smells delicious.

Quercus: Hazel ... interesting. *[Pause, studies Hazel while smiling mysteriously.]*
 These are roasted acorns. They don't come out of wrappers; they're from a very
 sacred oak tree.¹⁴

Hazel: *[Tasting the acorns.]*
 Mmm ... wonderful. But, really, who has time to roast anything?¹⁵

Quercus: I see. *[Saddened look.]*
 Your food has no connection to the natural world.
 It expresses the darkest parts of your identity.¹⁶
 You want to have anything, any time you want it.
 Your food has no seasonality.¹⁷
 Am I right?

Hazel: *[Bending over in more pain now.]*
 Um ... what? You hate granola bars or something?

¹⁴ Food, rather than becoming our "most direct link with the nurturing earth," becomes "mere merchandise by which we fulfill [our] role as 'good' consumer" (Moore Lappé, 1991, p. 8). Quercus becomes the person that points out to Hazel how food makes her a good consumer rather than connecting her to the earth.

¹⁵ The industrial eater is passive and uncritical (Berry, 1990, p. 146).

¹⁶ Food expresses our identity and our relationship to the natural world (Pollan, 2008, p. 8).

¹⁷ "Consumers don't want seasonality; we think we can have anything we want any time we want it. The market is totally out of sync with nature. ... Our menus should adjust to the seasons" (Pollan, 2006, pp. 252-3).

[Begins breathing more heavily.]

Quercus: Dear Hazel, you are in pain. Your child is eager to enter our world. But this pain you feel—it is perhaps teaching you something.¹⁸

Hazel: I ... I don't understand. *[Still bent over in pain.]*

Quercus: Come child, sit. *[Reveals a cleared area next to a tree.]*
Your pain may be a lesson for you. Let me explain. *[Hazel sits, leans back against a tree.]*
Our eating is our profoundest enactment of our connection to the world.¹⁹
Food creates a chain that connects us to our soils and makes us dependent on relationships.²⁰
These acorns were part of this very oak tree and part of the sun not that long ago.²¹

Hazel: *[Eating more acorns.]*
It's been a long time since I've tasted such flavor.

Quercus: And a long time since you felt any connectedness? To your soils, your community, your family? *[In a softer voice.]* To your child?

Hazel: *[A few tears appear.]*
You're right. *[Pause.]*
I haven't felt close to my husband, my mom, this baby...

Quercus: And it's not you, Dear hazel. Your world makes everyone indifferent to connections, blind to severed parts.²²

Hazel: My world? What- *[Interrupted by rustling in the leaves.]*

[Another woman appears, also looks other-worldly, but at the same time "modern."]

Quercus: Quince. What do you wish with us?

¹⁸ Ivan Illich discusses how pain is something we can learn from, and give an individual response to, or we can succumb to the anesthesia of the medical professions (Illich, 2002). Hazel must choose here if she will feel her human pain or choose the dehumanizing anesthesia that separates her from this major life event. This dilemma is symbolic of Hazel's choice to remain in her role as industrial worker, or build a convivial life with her husband and new child.

¹⁹ "profoundest ... world" (Berry, 1990, p. 152).

²⁰ (Pollan, 2008, pp. 102-103).

²¹ (Pollan, 2008, p. 99).

²² "The industrial mind is a mind without compunction; it simply accepts that people, ultimately, will be treated as things and that things, ultimately, will be treated as garbage. Such a mind is indifferent to the connections, which are necessarily both practical and cultural, between people and land; which is to say that it is indifferent to the fundamental economy and economics of human life" (Berry, 1987, p. 168).

- Quince: I wish no harm dear Quercus. Perhaps the young lady needs my help?
- Hazel: You two know each other? Do you live here in the forest or something? Are you ... homeless?
- Quince: *[Laughing strangely.]*
Dear one, what is your name?
- Hazel: Hazel.
- Quince: Well, Hazel, we do, indeed, live here, but we are not homeless. We are- *[Pause.]*
Did you say *Hazel*? *[Looks at Quercus, surprised.]*
- Quercus: Leave her alone, Quince.
- Quince: No, no. *[Smugly.]*
This is perfect. *[Excitedly.]*
Let me guess, you have a really great job, and you make decent money. I bet you don't have to cook your own food, do you? I bet you have other people to watch this new baby for you. I envy you, not living in this forest.
- Quercus: *[Hisses.]* Quince!
[Darts up, grabs Quince, pulls her by the arm out of sight. Quercus is speaking—inaudible—to Quince as they leave the stage.]
- Hazel: What in the world?
- [Suddenly, another woman appears, with strikingly young features. She is also other-worldly in appearance.]*
- Persimmon: Hello blessed Hazel. Are you in need of anything?
- Hazel: *[Frightened, trying to get up.]*
How do you know my name?
- Persimmon: I am Persimmon, aid to Quercus. As she is detained, I will be at your assistance.
- Hazel: Listen, I don't know what's going on here, uh...
- Persimmon: Persimmon.
- Hazel: ... Persimmon, but I don't really need you or those other two ladies. I just need you to call the hospital, if you don't mind. I'm afraid this baby might come soon.
[Breathes heavily, panting.]
- Persimmon: No telephones here. My apologies.

Hazel: Great. How am I supposed to have this baby?

Persimmon: We are fully equipped here to help you deliver your child.

Hazel: You have a doctor here?

Persimmon: No, Hazel. We are all women. Bringing new life into the world is part of who we are. We live in engendered bodies and we leave behind a trail of new life.²³

Hazel: *[Enunciates each word, condescendingly.]*
Uh, okay, but how can I get to a doctor?

Persimmon: Hazel, you don't need a doctor. You allow your needs to be met by professionals, but we are offering you something beyond the sterilization and separation of a hospital birth.²⁴

Hazel: I can't believe... you're saying I'm going to have a natural birth in the middle of the forest because you don't have a phone?

[Quercus reappears, smoothing out her clothes.]

So what was that? You all live in this forest together but you don't like Quince?

Quercus: Well, Quince is still very disconnected. She needs to restore a few connections.

[Pauses, looks over at Hazel.]

Hazel, maybe it would be good for you to walk.

Hazel: *[Sarcastically.]*
Well, you're the doctor.

[Persimmon helps her up, the three begin walking very slowly.]

Quercus: Hazel, where do you live Dear?

Hazel: On Division Street, by the Starbucks. Why?

Quercus: Division Street? And how long have you been living in division?

Hazel: I'm sorry, but why do you need to know this?

²³ "engendered ... life" (Illich, 1982, p. 122).

²⁴ Ivan Illich (1982) describes that genderless medical care sterilizes and separates women from others during childbirth (p. 124).

Quercus: Hazel, you are very clearly indifferent to food and indifferent to the land.²⁵
These severed connections always lead to more problems, with your self and others.

Hazel: Hey, I'm doing just fine. So I'm feeling a little distant from others right now, so what? I have a career to build up, and I'm doing pretty well at that.

Quercus: *[They pause in their walk so Quercus can look directly at Hazel.]*
Dear Hazel, you find you are invisible to yourself and others. You find no equality in the economy, and you don't recognize yourself in your own gender.²⁶
By buying products, you replace yourself.²⁷
You are severed from others and the earth.²⁸

Hazel: Well maybe I'm no Zen-filled fruitcake, but I do have a solid marriage and a baby coming any minute.

Quercus: As for the baby, you have no gendered connection to it. It is simply another patient, a disconnected part to be managed²⁹ ... in day care I presume?

[Hazel nods, thinking it over.]

Quercus: And as for your marriage...

[Hazel looks up at her, wiping a tear away. The three women sit again.]

You have been mobile, unsettled, and without dwelling.³⁰
Just as you see fractures in the community from this disconnection to land, you see the failures in your own marriage.³¹
You and your husband are consenting to an economy that exploits everyone and everything.³²
Marriage and the care of the earth are each other's disciplines. Each makes possible the enactment of fidelity toward the other.³³

[Hazel appears saddened and pensive, looking off in the distance.]

Quercus: Hazel, when you lose respect for your body, you lose respect for all bodies: the bodies of your family members, animals, plants, the earth itself.

²⁵ (Berry, 1987, p. 168).

²⁶ (Illich, 1982, p. 178).

²⁷ (Berry, 1990, p. 190).

²⁸ (Berry, 2002, p. 106).

²⁹ (Illich, 1998, p. 6).

³⁰ (Berry, 2002, p. 119).

³¹ (Berry, 2002, p. 113).

³² "consenting ... everything." (Berry, 1990, p. 185).

³³ "Marriage ... other." (Berry, 2002, p. 126).

All of your relationships become competitive and exploitive rather than collaborative and convivial.

All bodies are members of each other, but the body is degraded and saddened by being set in conflict against the earth.³⁴

Hazel, you have the opportunity to heal, to restore connections—from the earth hazel [*points to hazelnut tree*], to the food hazel [*points to hazelnuts*], to the body Hazel [*gestures toward Hazel*].

Persimmon, why don't you and I go fetch some towels and hot water before Hazel's water breaks?

[Persimmon nods, stands.]

Quercus: Hazel, you just sit and rest. We'll return shortly. [*Kisses Hazel on the forehead.*]

[Quercus and Persimmon walk off stage, talking to each other indistinctly.]

Hazel: Oh, Corylus, I wish you were here.

[Quince appears.]

Quince: Okay, kiddo, you're all set. I flagged down some guy in a car who says he can drive you to a hospital.

Hazel: What?

Quince: Oh come on, you weren't seriously thinking of letting those two Betty Crockers deliver your baby, were you?

Hazel: Well, I didn't think I had much choice. Ow! Ahh! [*Leans over in pain.*]
I think I'm having contractions and I think my water just broke.

Quince: Well, then let's get you to a hospital. You need a professional right now Hazel, not Mopsey and Dopsey. Besides, the faster you get to the hospital, the faster you get back to your job—what was it again?

Hazel: I'm an English profess- OW! [*Another contraction.*]

Quince: An English professor! You've worked so hard for your career. Now all you need is to get this delivery over with so you can keep moving up the ladder. Let's get you to that hospital.

Hazel: I don't think I'm going anywhere. This baby is coming now. Ah!

[Another contraction, Hazel curling up in pain.]

³⁴ "when you lose ... earth." This is a reworded quote from Wendell Berry (2002, p. 101).

Quince: But don't you want an easy delivery, with the drugs? The nurse can take care of the baby while you sleep. You could be back to work the next day!³⁵

Hazel: I don't know what I want. There's just so much pain!

[Quercus reappears, Persimmon behind her with supplies.]

Quercus: Quince! I told you to stay away from her.

Quince: Hey, it's her life. I'm just reminding her of her choices.

Quercus: Hazel, I feel I should tell you something important. Since Quince and I were young, the Great Spirit has foretold of your coming. Do you see those two hazelnut trees growing together? *[Points. Hazel looks, though breathing heavily.]*

Hazel: Sure. *[Panting.]* What about them?

Quercus: We knew a Hazel would one day come, bearing the offspring of the other Hazel. What did you say your husband's name was?

Hazel: Corylus.

Quercus: Exactly, another name for Hazel.

[Hazel looks up, confused. Still breathing heavily.]

Quercus: We knew this Hazel would need our assistance, and that she would only find restored connections with our help. Unfortunately, Quince has lost these connections herself and does not have your best interests in mind.

Quince: Hey, I just want out of this forest and into the real world, where people actually have jobs and don't spend their lives cooking. There's nothing wrong with that.

Hazel: I don't really know what you two are bickering about, but this baby is coming NOW!

[Quince exits, unnoticed by the others.]

Quercus: Oh, Hazel, push!

³⁵ Here, we see how childbirth has become industrialized (Illich, 1980, p. ix.). The tools that professionals use to perform this service should be equally accessible in the home (Illich, 1980, p. 36). The medical profession changes a meaningful life event into professional service. "In his teaching, as in writing his 'pamphlets,' Illich refuses to participate in the medical ethics concocted by professionals who 'feel responsible for a life, from sperm to worm, or from fertilization to organ harvest, rather than for a suffering person'" (Prakash, 2002, p. 146).

Persimmon: *[At birth canal.]*
Push!

[Hazel grunts, screams in pain.]

Persimmon: Push again!

Hazel: I don't think I can do this! It's too much pain!

Quercus: You can. You must, Hazel.

Persimmon: The head is out! One more big push, Hazel!

Hazel: Ahhhh! Ahhhhh!

[Sounds of baby crying.]

Quercus: You did it Hazel! You have a daughter!

[Quercus hands baby to Hazel as Corylus appears, standing next to the two Hazelnut trees.]

Corylus: Hazel! You're okay! Is that our...

Quercus: *[To Corylus.]* You have a beautiful new daughter.

Corylus: Oh Hazel, she's beautiful. *[Kisses Hazel, holds hand of baby.]*

Persimmon: Come with us to the pond and we'll wash her off. *[Takes child.]*

[Corylus helps Hazel over to the pond.]

Quercus: Have you a name for this child?

Hazel: *[Pauses for a minute, noticing that they are standing next to the two Hazelnut trees.]*
Are these the two hazelnut trees you mentioned?

Quercus: Yes, Dear.

Hazel: And what is this growing between them?

Quercus: *[Looks down, surprised.]*
You know, these were never here before today. It's rosemary.

Hazel: Cory, what do you think of the name Rosemary?

Corylus: It's perfect.

[Kisses her again, then takes the swaddled baby from Persimmon.]

Rosemary. *[Kisses the newborn's forehead.]*

Quercus: Amazing. Even the Great Spirit did not foretell of this new rosemary. Your daughter is indeed a miracle in every way. *[Bends over, picks up two hazelnuts.]*
Hazel, Corylus, each of you take a hazelnut and toss it into the pond.

[Hazel and Corylus each take one and toss it in the water.]

Quercus: See there, how they bob in the water, yet remain close to each other? It is a good sign. You both are going to see life anew. You will restore all that was severed. Persimmon, it is time for us to leave.

Persimmon: Hazel, it has been my pleasure. Blessed be. *[Kisses Rosemary's forehead.]*

Quercus: Dear Hazel, remember all we talked about here today. You can begin anew. Blessings to you both, and your dear little Rosemary. You belong to each other now.³⁶ *[Kisses Hazel and Corylus each on the cheek, kisses Rosemary.]*

[Quercus and Persimmon walk off.]

Corylus: What was all that? They were kind of mysterious huh?

[Music. We hear a recorded vocalist singing a haunting Celtic melody as the light softens.]

Hazel: Shh. *[Puts her finger to his lips. Kisses him passionately while the baby sleeps.]*

[Curtain closes.]

³⁶ "There are, however, still some married couples who understand themselves as belonging to their marriage, to each other, and to their children" (Berry, 1990, p. 181).

Scene III

[Again in the forest. Hazel and Corylus walking on trail with now 5-year-old Rosemary between them. Hazel is again pregnant.]

Hazel: Here it is, Rosemary, the spot where you were born. Right there, under that big oak tree.

Rosemary: Really? Was Daddy there?

Corylus: I found your Mom just as you were coming out. You were a little miracle. *[Hugs Rosemary affectionately.]*

Hazel: Actually, two nice ladies helped me. I remember one of them carried a basket *[Stops, sees the basket by the oak tree.]*
No... couldn't be.

Rosemary: What Mommy?

Hazel: That basket by the oak tree. It's just like the one that lady carried, with fresh acorns. I can't believe it's still here.

Rosemary: Can I go play with it?

Hazel: Uh, sure. I guess.

[Hazel smiles at Corylus. They kiss romantically.]

Corylus: You know, I looked up the names of those women. Did you know they're all tree names?

Hazel: What? *[Looks confused.]*

Corylus: Yeah, remember you said my name is another name for Hazelnut tree? Turns out Quercus means oak, and Quince is a poisonous rose tree. Persimmon is a tree too.

Hazel: Huh. And the ladies aren't here any longer, but their trees are. I wonder what that all means. Were they ever real? Did I just imagine them? I guess it doesn't make much difference to me now. I'm just grateful I had that encounter, real or imagined. I remember how much things changed after that day.

Corylus: *[As they both watch Rosemary singing and dancing with Quercus's basket.]*
That's an understatement! We both quit our jobs, and now we run a farmers market, and grow our own food—all because of your encounter with those

women in the forest.³⁷ I remember it was really difficult at first, such a big transition. It was really worth it though. *[Pause. Reflects on past.]*
Remember when we went home that first night?

Hazel: Yeah, I wouldn't let her out of my arms. She stayed in my arms until she could walk.³⁸

[Hazel and Corylus smile at each other tenderly, clasp hands.]

Corylus: And now we have another one on the way.

Hazel: Well, I picked Rosemary's name. Maybe you should pick this one.

Corylus: *[Long pause, turns to look at the two hazelnut trees.]*
Do you see that Hazel?

Hazel: *[Turns.]*
What? Our trees?

Corylus: No look, down by the rosemary plants. It's a little honeysuckle tree sprouting.

Hazel: Oh, no. Forget it. *[Chuckles.]* I'm not naming my daughter *Honeysuckle*.

Corylus: Well, it's actually an Amur Honeysuckle. What do you think of the name Amur?

Hazel: Amur ... I like it. *[Rubs her belly.]*

Rosemary: *[Runs up to Hazel and Corylus.]*
Mommy! Daddy! Can we go home now? I'm hungry.

Hazel: Of course honey. Maybe after lunch we could pick some blueberries from the back yard. We'll see if Grandma wants to come help.

[The three exit, hand-in-hand. Quercus appears, watching them exit.]

Quercus: No longer living in division, they truly belong to each other.³⁹

³⁷ Hazel and Corylus have found a way of healing through restoring connections (Berry, 2002, p. 106). They are connecting their lives to their food and to the earth, and simultaneously reconnecting to each other. They are living their lives in equality, in a gendered commons, not through a genderless economy (Illich, 1982, p. 18, pp. 90-93). Wendell Berry (2002) discusses this process of healing and healthiness. "Only by restoring the broken connections can we be healed" (p. 132). "The parts are healthy insofar as they are joined harmoniously to the whole" (p. 106). "Healing is impossible in loneliness; it is the opposite of loneliness. Conviviality is healing" (p. 99). Hazel and Corylus have begun this journey back toward conviviality and healing.

³⁸ Here, I refer to the works of Thevenin (1987) and Liedloff (1977). In many pre-industrial and pre-modern cultures, women still keep children in their arms and in their beds until children are ready for independence. In our industrial society, we put children into cribs, strollers, and various other contraptions to give the mother "freedom." This freedom is often the mere freedom to do more paid work for the market economy.

Together, they create a whole which cannot be reduced to the sum of equal, merely interchangeable parts; a whole made of two hands, each of a different nature.⁴⁰

The End.

³⁹ (Berry, 1990, p. 181).

⁴⁰ "Together ... nature." (Illich, 1998, p. 4).

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