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## The Lost Meadow

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## THE LOST MEADOW

There is a meadow in my mind  
where the cats  
live in peace with the birds;  
where the wildflowers grow  
to six feet tall,  
and I once again feel like  
the diminutive child who sashayed  
barefoot through  
the green-gold sheaths, searching playfully  
for my best friend,  
to whom I wasn't speaking  
yesterday.

I knew exactly why they were called  
*Brown-Eyed Susans*.  
The daisies were my favorites —  
sunshine, they were — white petals, the rays  
radiating from the yellow balls of sun.  
The grasses were thick and dense,  
capped with feathery seed heads —  
I'd pull them up from the soil and theatrically  
chew on them,  
pretending I was a "country child,"  
or what I imagined one to be.

I attentively gazed with wonder as  
the bees flit above the purple clover,  
the colors contrasting sharply in the sun  
as I watched; I just the right height to peer  
directly at them — silently, frozen —  
a time to learn  
about the important things.

I made bridesmaid's dresses for dolls  
from the hollyhocks and my hairpins,  
brightly colored flowers their silken skirts,  
swollen buds for heads —  
Scarlett O'Hara would be envious —  
and, delicate bracelets from the white clover  
and the tall grasses, woven  
carefully together by the  
hand of a child to encircle  
her own dainty wrist.

I was dressed in a sunburn  
and mosquito bites,  
a pink polka-dotted angel,  
sun-drenched hair a suppositious halo.

My ears heard only the songbirds and crickets  
and never my mother calling me.

Random flashes of golden lightning bugs at dusk,  
nature's silent fireworks —  
I'd catch a jarful to light the way home!

Thrice ten summers have passed and  
it was only a field next door.  
Now a single concrete facade  
casts a huge shadow from the same sun,  
banishing the tall grass descendants.  
It seems a thousand miles away,  
a thousand years —  
but I quickly return by closing my eyes  
and wondering at the discovery  
and adventure  
in my Lost Meadow.

— Mary Kathryn Murphy