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