One Book One School One Community Play 2012-2013

Butterfly Eyes and Other Secrets of the Meadow by Joyce Sidman

***Water Cycle Dance*** by Shumake’s dancers

*In the Almost-Light*

(Performed with expressive movement and tableaux. On the backdrop we see either the picture from the book, or a picture of the meadow and dew popping up in tandem with the lines.)

V1: In the dark,

V2: in the night,

V3: in the al-most light,

V4: in the leaf-crisp air just before sunlight,

V5: sprouts a secret,

V6: silent,

V7: sparkling sight:

V8: berries grown on the vines of night.

V9: On the grass,

V10: on the buds,

V11: on the bark of trees,

V12: on the small clear wings of the bumblebee,

V13: on the spider webs and the spiders’ knees,

V14: come the jewels of the dawn in the cool night’s breeze.

V15: And the sun

V16: when it comes

V17: through the purple haze

V18: touches each clear gem with its sidelong gaze,

V19: fingers each clear drop with its lazy rays,

V15 – V20: gathers each one back

V 20: for the summer’s days.

**Scene 1**

Characters: Johnny, Melissa, Grasshopper, Sun

Setting: Early morning in the meadow.

(Johnny wakes up and crawls out of the tent).

Johnny: Melissa, I’m going to go play in the meadow!

Melissa: I don’t care! Just let me sleep! (Johnny runs into meadow.)

Johnny: Why are my feet so wet? (Grasshopper is sitting on the log).

Grasshopper: It’s the dew! It’s the dew!

Johnny: (Surprised) Grasshoppers can talk? And, what’s dew? (Grasshopper motions Johnny to go sit on the log).

Grasshopper: Look around us you’ll see it. (Johnny looks around for it).

Johnny: Is it the little sparkly things? (Grasshopper nods his head).

Grasshopper: They’re the berries grown on the vines of night. (Grasshopper and Johnny admire the dew).

Johnny: Oh! I’ll be right back! (Melissa still asleep. Johnny goes back to tent and grabs camera, the sun comes up and the dew evaporates).

Grasshopper (He performs *Morning Warming*):

Sun

Sunwarm

 sunwarm on back

sunwarm on back legs

sunwarm on back legs loosens

my heart

my heart beats

my heart beats faster

I flex

I flex legs

I flex legs loose with sunwarm

I drink dew from dripping leaves

I beat

Flex

Crouch

Leap!

Johnny: (Where did all the dew go? I was going to take a picture!

Grasshopper: The sun has gathered the dew up into the sky. Don’t you feel the moisture in the air?

Johnny: Yes. Oh yes, I love how the moist air feels on my skin. When will the dew be back?

Grasshopper: Soon. Tonight the sun will set making a beautiful summer painting. The air will cool off, and tiny drops of water will fall out of the sky and land on the meadow just before sunrise.

Johnny: That’s encouraging. I will be looking forward to the dawn.

Grasshopper: The dawn is wonderful, but I love it best when the sun starts to do his thing – like now! Wow! It’s a beautiful day! My heart is beating so fast I feel like I can fly! Look how high I can jump! (Jumps 4 times. Turns around to look at the sun). Thank you Mr. Sun for all of your warmth!

Sun: No problem, it’s my job.

Grasshopper: How do you do it?

Sun: I have all of these explosions inside of me, and they make a special air that heats the world.

Grasshopper: Well it’s amazing! (Sun smiles)

Sun: Look at the time, I’d better go.

Grasshopper: No! Don’t leave! (Grasshopper is crying. Sun is fully set.)

Johnny: What’s wrong grasshopper?(Melissa begins to look for Johnny.)

Grasshopper: The sun’s gone!

Johnny: Look on the bright side, we’ll see the dew tomorrow! (Melissa enters)

Melissa: Johnny, I’ve been looking everywhere for you! Come on were going back to the tent!

Johnny: Bye grasshopper! (Reaching for grasshopper.)

Melissa: Grasshoppers can’t talk!

Johnny: Yes they can!

Melissa: No they can’t!

Johnny: Yes they can!

Melissa: No they can’t!

Johnny: Yes they can!

Melissa: No they can’t! That’s just ridiculous!

Grasshopper: (He hops around and taps her on the shoulder. She turns to him.)Yes, they can. (Melissa faints. Blackout. We hear the sound of rain as they exit.)

**Scene 2**

Setting: Meadow

Characters: Frogs(10), flowers(10),

Projected on the screen/backdrop – “Letter to the Sun” and a cloudy sky

Frog & Flowers: (tableau – frogs in mid-dance & joyful, flowers in despair & begging. They perform Letter to the Sun. )

Flowers: Dear Sun: It’s so wet.

Flower 1: The meadow has turned to

 Fl 1 – 5: bog.

 Fl 6&7: Chill,

Fl 8&9: sinking,

Fl 10: squishy

Flowers: sog.

FL 1 – 5: We long for your face, Sun.

FL 6 – 10: We crave your rays,

FL 2: Those Long, Lovely, Honey-colored days.

FL 6: O Dear Sun, We’re huddled in our buds,

FL 7: Waiting to bloom.

FL 2: Please come soon…

FL 3: The only ones still singing

 Frogs: Are the frogs.

Flowers: Signed, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(The chorus sings *Singing in the Rain,* Frogs dance with umbrellas while the flowers huddle together and watch.)

Flower 1: Please come and shine down on us.

Frog 1: Sun, please don’t come back no more.

Flower 2: Sun, come back so I can bloom.

Frog2: No! I want to play in the rain.

Flower 2: Why?

Frog 2: I love to jump in the mud puddles, dance, and sing!

Flower1: We need the water too, to grow but we also need the sun.

Frog 3: On No! Sun, stay away!

(Frogs exit singing and dancing, flowers huddle back into a tableau. Lights fade to black. Flowers change their tableaux to one of wilting. The backdrop is a bright sun. they perform Letter to the Rain. )

Flowers: Dear Rain:

F1: Sun has outstayed her welcome.

F2: Grass is crunching,

F3: berries shriveling,

F4: the earth is a brick of dust.

Flowers: Rain,

F5: even the ants are tired.

F6 – 10: We hate to bother you in this heat,

F1: but could you send some of those

F2&F3: big

F4&F5:fat

F6- F10: drops

F1: that splat

F2: and drum

F3: and puddle?

F1: Even a drizzle would do.

Flowers: Signed, \_\_\_\_\_\_

Flower 1: (Drooping) I’m so dry. My petals are falling off.

Flower 2: Sun, thank you for answering our plea, but now you’ve been here too long, no offense.

Flower 3: Please don’t think we’re not grateful, but you know what they say, “moderation in everything.”

Flower 4: (Moving slowly) Please rain come back! I need a drop of water.

Flower 5: Please rain, it has been so long. I need some water. We flowers are about to collapse and turn to dust.

Flower 6: Rain, you might think we weren’t grateful for your presence earlier, but we were – we were just missing the sun. I hope you didn’t take it the wrong way – we DO love you!

Flowers: Frogs! Can you help us? (Frogs dance in with an attitude, and rap and step the following song.)

Frogs: (Rapping, dancing. The flowers dance back up.)

You say goodbye

We don’t need you no more

Go live your life

It’s the rain we adore

You say goodbye

This heat is insane

We want to come out

And play in the rain

You say goodbye

You are a drain

We are longing to feel

Those fat drops of rain

(Crack of thunder – they all look up, black out.)

**Scene 3**

Characters: Mama, Papa, Baby, Grasshopper, Hawk

(Sound of snoring/lullaby being hummed. The flock is asleep and cuddled together)

Baby: Good morning sun (whispers). Wow, everyone is still snoozing. Don’t they know the early bird gets the worm? I’m a funny one. (Sees the grasshopper leaping around.) Good morning Mr. Grasshopper!

Grasshopper: Good morning Goldy!

Baby: (flies down to him.) Tag—you’re it!

Grasshopper: Hey Goldy, look over there!

Baby: (she looks behind her—he leaps over and tags her.) Hey now! That’s cheating!

Grasshopper: You looked before I leaped – haha!

Baby: Very funny! Okay, I have a joke for you. Knock, knock.

Grasshopper: Who’s there?

Baby: Mr. Owl.

Grasshopper: Mr. Owl who?

Baby: Hoo hoo!

Grasshopper: That is not a joke.

Baby: Oh come on, it’s hilarious!

Grasshopper: (To audience) Little kids just don’t get knock knock jokes.

Baby: Oooh… apple seeds, yum! Do you wanna share?

Grasshoppers: Grasshoppers don’t eat apple seeds – but you have yourself a party. I’ll sip on some dew while you munch. (They talk in mime, lights up on mama and papa birds, the flock, who are walking and stretching.)

Mama: Oh, What wonderful flying weather! Good morning everyone!

All: Good morning Myrna!

Mama: Where is my little one (sing song)?

Papa: (playfully) Goldy? Are you hiding?!

Mama: Pete, She’s not here!!!

Sun: Myrna, Pete—look over yonder—She’s with Gideon grasshopper.

Mama: (other birds are preening etc.) She’s textbook ADD.

Papa: ADD—easy as one, two, hey, look at that airplane!

Mama: She’s got to learn—perhaps she didn’t believe you yesterday—

Papa: She’s already forgotten our heart to heart conservation let’s go. (They fly over to Goldy and Gideon.)

Goldy: Hello parental unit! Want some apple seeds? They’re fabulous. (Parents look at her and shake their heads.) How about some thistle?

Papa: Goldy, do you recall the conversation we had yesterday?

Goldy: Which one—we talked and sang all day!

Mama: The conversation you and your dad had about how the flock must stay together.

Papa: And not just because we have fun together…

Goldy: And sing together!

Mama: That’s right. There is another reason.

Goldy: Oh! Now I remember. I’m such a bird brain!

Papa: Tell us why.

Goldy: Well—the horrible hawk and such that view us as lunch.

Mama: That’s right Goldy.

Papa: We have to stick together. (They begin to fly off.)

Gideon: See you later Goldy!

Goldy: Later Gator! (Finches gather together and begin to dance; the hawk appears.)

*Always Together/ An Apology to My Prey*

Goldfinches: We tumble

 we twitter

 we dip

 float

 and flitter

Hawk: I am deeply sorry for my huge orbs

 of eyes, keen and hooded,

 that pierce your lush

 tapestry of meadow,

Goldfinches: On thistle

 we rustle

 and whistle

 and bustle

 Dip-dodging

 leap-frogging

 we’re birds

 of a feather

Hawk: And my wings: I regret their slotted tips

 that allow such explosive thrust;

 their span that gathers wind

 effortlessly, and of course their

 deadly, folding dive.

Goldfinches: Like ripples

 like petals

 like clouds

 in wet weather,

Hawk: Let me offer an apology, too,

 for my talons, impossibly long

 and curved, sliding so easily

 through fur and feathers,

 seeking, as they do,

 that final grip.

Goldfinches: like

 bright

 chips

 of sunlight

Hawk: And last, of course, the beak.

 It does tend to glitter, I know—

 a merciless hook,

 a golden sickle poised over

 your soft, helpless heart.

Goldfinches: flung

 skyward

 forever

Hawk: I’m so sorry. For you, that is.

 All this works out quite well

 For me.

Goldfinches: we’re always

 we’re always

 we’re always together. (Hawk looks sharply at goldfinches, they look

 sharply at him. Black out. )

*The Gray Ones*

Deer 1: We are the tall ones with crowns of velvet

 the high-steppers

 the flag-wavers

Deer 2: We are the silent ones that browse at dusk

 the bud-nibblers

 the ear- flickers

Deer 3: The gray one that linger at woods’ edge

 Swift Still

 Here Gone

Deer 4: Eyes of glass

 Hooves of stone

Deer 1: We are the ghosts

 of those

 who have come before

All Deer : The gray ones

 Leaping

Deer 4: Gone

(Black out.)

**Scene 4**

Characters: Mama, Baby, Fire, trees, Flowers

 (Meadow with mama deer and baby deer wandering around and flicking ears. Prancing and tagging each other).

Baby Deer: Mama, how did the meadow get created?

Mama Deer: Are you sure you want to know? It is kinda scary.

Baby Deer: Ooh! A scary bedtime story! (baby shivers)

Mama Deer: Do you *SERIOUSLY*want a scary bedtime story?

Baby Deer: I’m tough.

Mama Deer: Okay Clover. You tell me if you want me to stop. Once upon a time, there was a forest. In this forest grew tall trees, small trees, ferns, and flowers. Mushrooms and moss flourished everywhere. It was our home, and we loved it. It protected us from the noon day sun, and sheltered us from the freezing rain. When danger was near, it hid us in its branches. We played on its hills and drank from its streams. Then one day, everything changed… (Lights shift.)

(Music – Burning Down the House)

Fire: This place looks nice to burn! It’s time for fun!

Trees: Please don’t burn us! (Scared.)

Fire: Whatever. (Burns trees.)

Flowers: Don’t burn us sir!

Fire: Nah, I want this whole place burned. (Burns flowers)

(Fire dance)

Tree: Fire! Why are you burning us down? We’ve lived here so long.

Fire: Mother Nature had me born so I could burn! I’m nature’s wrecking ball! I’ve done my job. I’m outta here! (Lights shift.)

Mama Deer: I’ll never forget that day. I wondered what would become of us.

Baby Deer: And what did become of you?

Mama Deer: At first, we mourned the loss of our forest. But soon grass, flowers, and beautiful plants began to grow and form the meadow that has become our home. (Plants and flowers swirl around, grow, and take their places. The trees remain in their burned positions.)

Baby Deer: And what about the trees, and the other animals who lived in the forest?

Mama Deer: Well darling, nothing is permanent. What was forest, became meadow, and what is now meadow, will one day become forest, again.

Baby Deer: When Mama?

Mama: A long time from now darling. It’s time to go to sleep.

Baby Deer: I’m going to dream of the forest.

Mama: Your dreams will be sweet ones then. Good night, sweetheart.

Baby Deer: Good night Mama.

(The trees rise up and speak the poem.)

*We Are Waiting*

T1: Our time will come again,

All Trees: say the patient ones.

T1: Now is meadow,

T2: but not for long.

All Trees: Say the patient ones:

T3: sunlight dazzles,

T2: but not for long.

T4: Seedlings grow amongst the grass.

T3: Sunlight dazzles

T5: and the meadow voles dance,

T4: but seedlings grow amongst the grass.

T6: Forest will return.

T5: Meadow voles dance

T7: where once was fire,

T6: but forest will return.

T1: We wait patiently.

Once was fire.

Now is meadow.

We wait patiently.

Our time will come again.