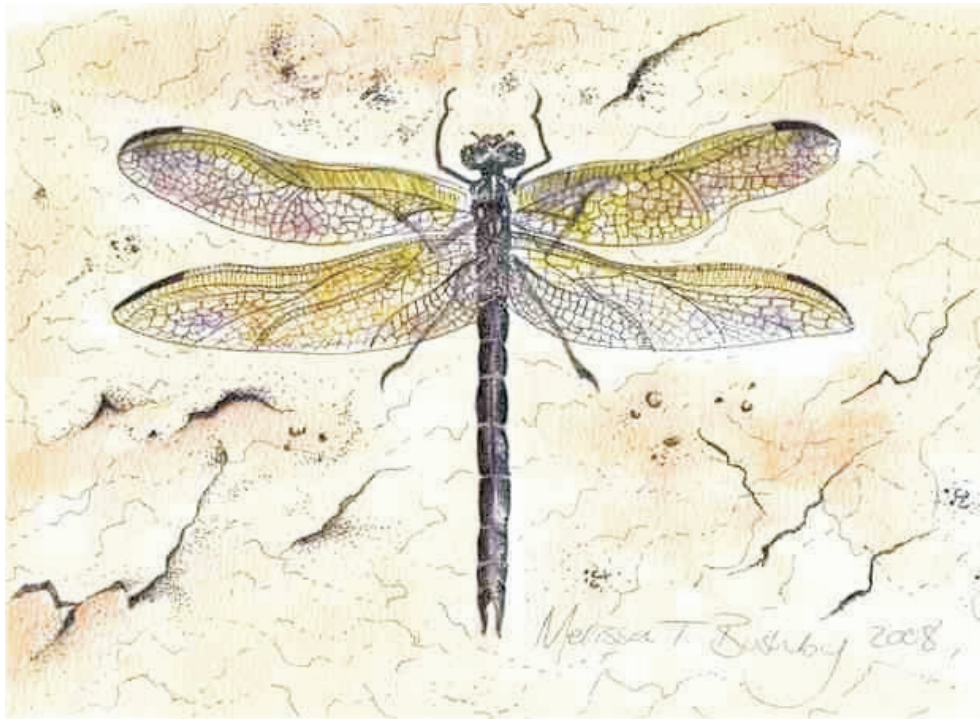


The DRAGONfly

.with illustrations by Mellissa Bushby



A story which may help children understand what happens after death, using the story of the life-cycle of the dragonfly.

Down below the surface of a quiet pond lived a little colony of water bugs.

They were a happy colony, living far away from the sun. For many months they were very busy, scurrying over the soft mud on the bottom of the pond.

But every once in a while they noticed that one of their colony seemed to lose interest in going about with its friends.

Then, clinging to the stem of a pond lily, the water bug would gradually move out of sight of his friends and would be seen no more.



"Look", said one of the water bugs to another.

"One of our colony is climbing up the lily stalk.

Where do you suppose she is going?"

Up, up, up it went slowly, and then the waterbug disappeared from sight.



It's friends waited and waited, but it didn't return.

"That's funny!" said one water bug to another.

"Wasn't she happy here?" asked a second water bug.

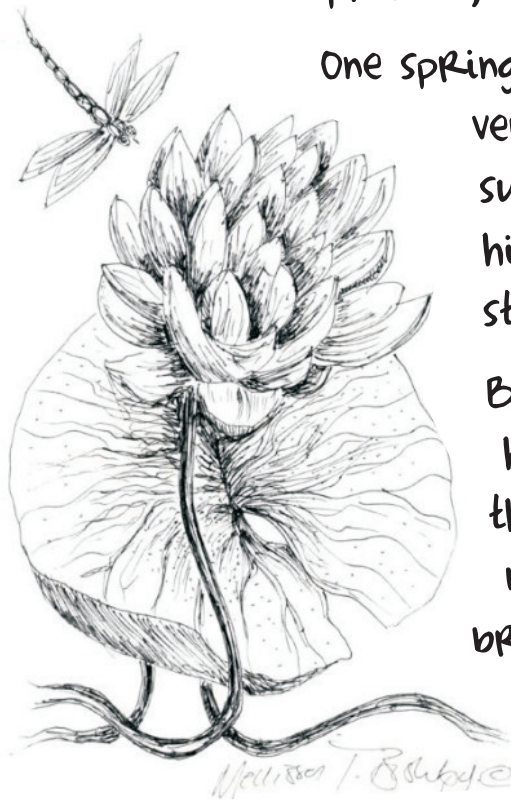
"Where do you think she went?" wondered a third.

No one had an answer. They were greatly puzzled.

Finally one of the water bugs, a leader in the colony, gathered its friends together.

"I have an idea. The next one of us who climbs up the lily stalk must promise to come back and tell us where he or she went and why."

"We promise," they all said solemnly.



One spring day, not long after, the very water bug that had suggested the plan, found himself climbing up the lily stalk. Up, up, up he went.

Before he knew what was happening, he had broken through the surface of the water, and rested on the broad, green lily pad above.

When he awoke, he looked about with surprise.

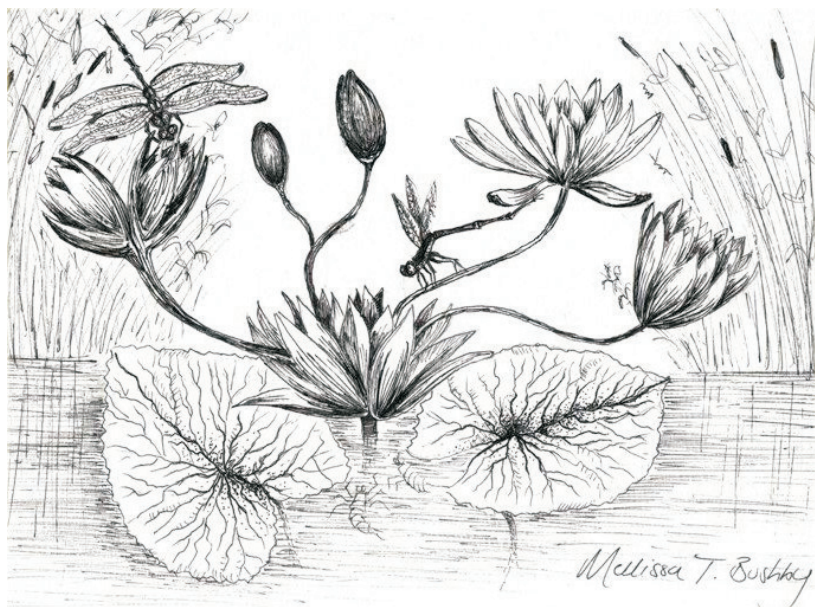
The water bug couldn't believe what he saw. A startling change had come to his old body. He now had four silver wings and a long tail!

The warmth of the sun soon dried the moisture from his new body, and as he moved his wings again, he suddenly found himself up above the water. He had become a dragonfly!

Swooping and dipping in great curves, he flew through the air. He felt exhilarated in the new atmosphere. By and by, the new dragonfly lighted happily on a lily pad to rest.

That was when he chanced to look below to the bottom of the pond. Why, he was right above his old friends, the water bugs! There they were, scurrying about, just as he had been doing some time before.

Then the dragonfly remembered his promise to return and tell his friends about the top of the lily stalk.



Without thinking, the dragonfly darted down. But when he hit the surface of the water he suddenly bounced back off. Now that he was a dragonfly, he could no longer go into the water!

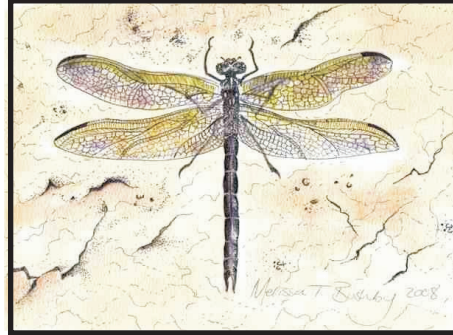
"I can't return!" he said in dismay.

"At least I tried, but I can't keep my promise. Even if I could go back, not one of the water bugs would know me in my new body. I guess I'll just have to wait until they become dragonflies too. Then they'll understand what happened to me, and where I went."



And the dragonfly winged off happily into its wonderful new world of sun and air.

This story was sent to me by Di Everard, a Christian from East London and a teacher in a local primary school. She found this story a few years back and wanted to share it



While it may be particularly helpful to younger children when explaining death, Di especially wanted to share the feelings of a couple who lost their 16 year old son who told her that they too found it so reassuring.

Melissa Bushby from BushBaby Ink kindly provided the illustrations, commissioned especially for this story.

This is dedicated from Di to the Warren family, especially to read to Courtney.

Deborah

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