



## Project Update

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### Jackie Littman

GDMFA Candidate

1111 Park Avenue, Apt 202  
Baltimore, MD 21201

**t** 443 690 6715

**e** littman.jackie@gmail.com

**w** www.jackielittman.com

### SUMMARY OF PROGRESS

I have made much progress on my thesis project over the past few months. I set out to establish best practices in children's app design through research and experimentation while creating an original children's storybook app. I looked at the work of app designers, guidelines for children's apps established by various industry professionals, game design theory, and parental observations of the children's app marketplace while researching. I have synthesized my research into a draft of an essay entitled "On Designing Apps for Children."

I am midway through the creation of my own app, *The Little Bug*, which applies the best practices I uncovered in my research. I am crafting the app from the ground up (you can follow the progress on my blog, [craftinganapp.tumblr.com](http://craftinganapp.tumblr.com)). I wrote the manuscript, which has been reviewed by MICA faculty as well as a children's book author. The narrative follows a little bug, who discovers that each insect he encounters in his garden has a unique quality or special talent. The grasshopper makes music, the katydid can camouflage herself, the ant digs tunnels, and so on. In the end, the little bug discovers his own talent and appreciates the diversity of his insect friends. As the little bug learns about these qualities that make each type of insect unique, like pollination, life cycle and camouflage, young readers absorb facts about insect biology.

The interactivity and animations in the app support the educational content and help young users to engage with the story and retain the information. Interactions include helping honeybees make honey, finding a hidden katydid, looking at the world through the eyes of a fly, making music with grasshoppers, and spinning a web with a spider.

I have developed an illustration style for the story that looks handmade, yet allows me to easily isolate and animate the characters and scenery. I painted a series of watercolor swatches, which I scanned into the computer and manipulated in Photoshop to create digital collages that simulate cut paper. This layered paper illusion is furthered by an effect coded into the app in which the layers of the scene move when tilted to simulate depth, sort of like a shadowbox.

I have created an original typeface called *Katydid* under the mentorship of type designer Tal Leming in the course Graduate Typeface Design. *Katydid* is a friendly, quirky, slab-serif typeface designed to pair with children's book illustrations. Inspired by backyard bugs, the typeface has a hand-drawn yet typographic feel, high and readable x-height, and bouncing baseline. I am using both the medium and bold weight of the font in the app.

I've completed a lot of the work to date, but there is still much more to be done. I've begun to test the app with children and adults and have made adjustments accordingly. I am currently finishing the illustrations and adding sound effects and background music tracks that were composed by my audio designer, Joshua Cipolla. I am also debugging the code and making sure that the app is fast-running and fully functional. I will hopefully have the beta version completed by mid-March.

grasshopper

KATYDID REGULAR

Gossamer-Winged Butterfly

KATYDID REGULAR

PUPPA

KATYDID BOLD

METAMORPHOSIS

KATYDID REGULAR

Crysalis

KATYDID REGULAR

Tettigoniids may be distinguished from the grasshopper by the length of their filamentous antennae, which may exceed their own body length, while grasshoppers' antennae are always relatively short and thickened. The males have sound producing organs (his stridulation) located on the hind angles

They live on trees, bushes, or grasses, often matching the appearance of their surroundings. Many species resemble leaves; leaf katydids of the American tropics precisely mimic partially eaten or otherwise disfigured leaves. Owing to such adaptations and their lack of

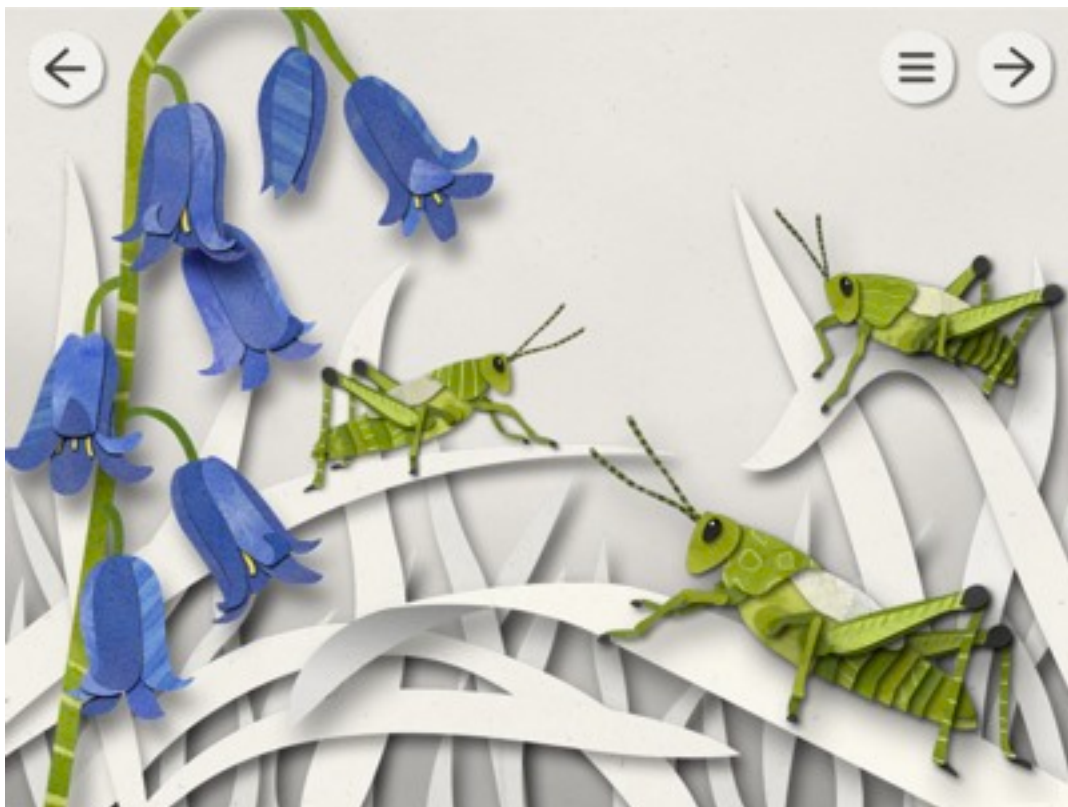
KATYDID REGULAR & BOLD

2,357 POUNDS OF RAW HONEY

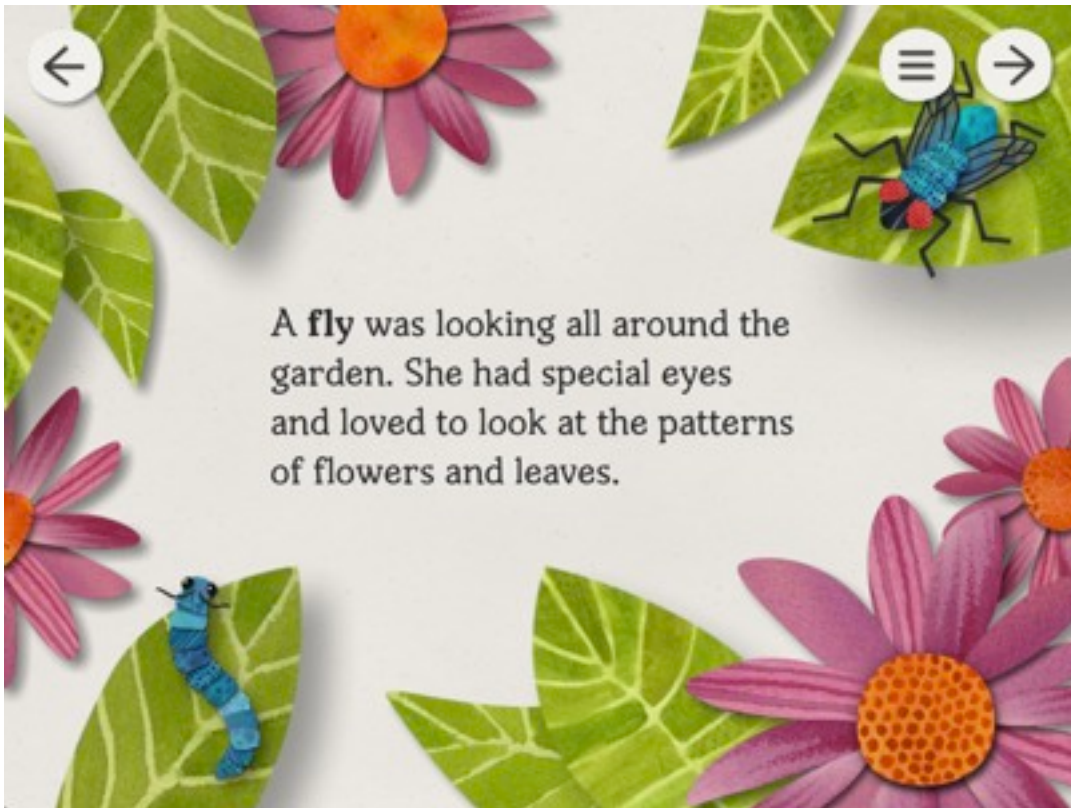
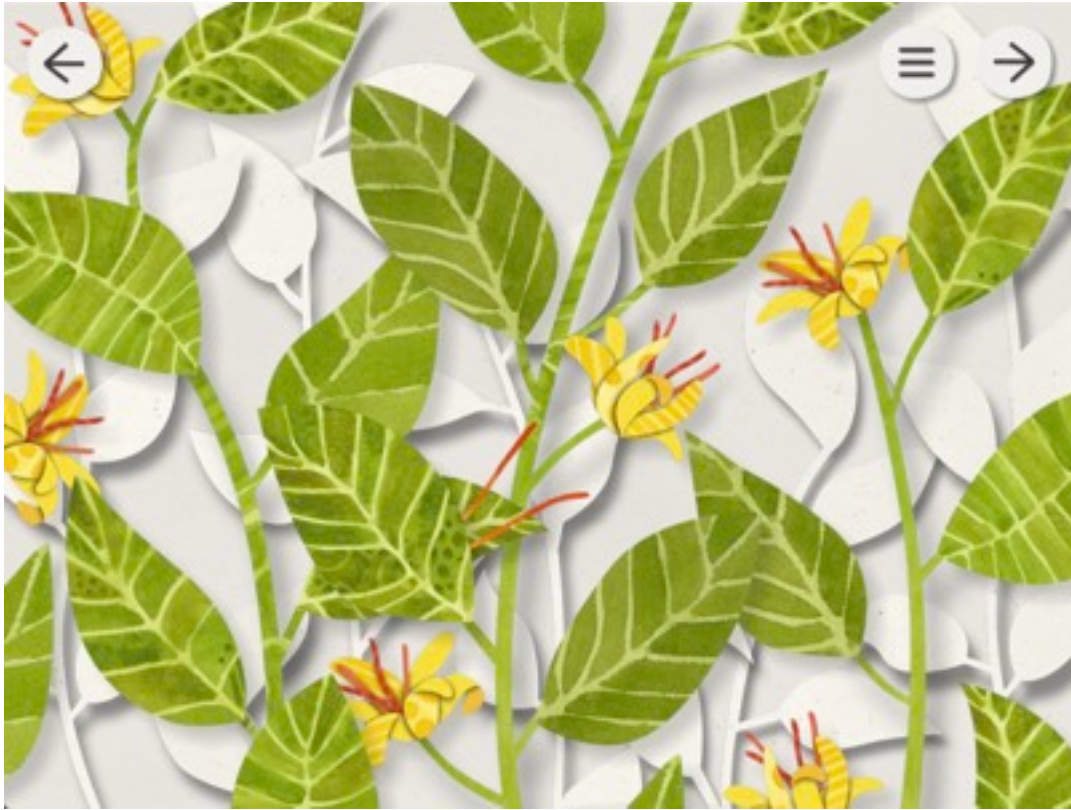
KATYDID REGULAR

Abdomen & Thorax

KATYDID BOLD







Supporting Materials > App Still Images

