

Because Halloween comes at the end of October, we must look at some frightening books now. In the Children's Department at the Pine Bush Area Public Library we have a doozie. It is a book of poems, called **Nightmares: Poems to Trouble Your Sleep**. The poems are by Jack Prelutsky who regularly produces books of poems, and the illustrations are by Arnold Lobel. I thought Arnold Lobel drew innocuous, sweet illustrations in **Frog and Toad Are Friends**. I must now re-evaluate Mr. Lobel's work. The pictures in **Nightmares** make my hair stand up!

It's a poetry book in the non-fiction section. Look for it under the number 811. (At least it's not under 666!)

The poem that gets me the worst is "The Haunted House." A few of its stanzas read: On a hilltop bleak and bare/Looms the castle of despair,/ only phantoms linger there/within its dismal walls./ Though the dark they're creeping, crawling, /sprawling, calling, caterwauling/ through the dusky halls....Revenants on misty perches/ taunt the ghost that lunges, lurches/as it desperately searches/for its vanished head./Shapeless wraiths devoid of feeling/hover blindly by the ceiling/ranting, chanting, shrieking, squealing/ promises of dread.

The pictures that go with this make my flesh creep. Lobel's picture of the headless ghost is gruesome! "Poems to Trouble Your Sleep!" I am so freaked out, I think I am too scared to ever sleep again!

In an attempt to calm my jagged nerves, I turned to the next book, **The Boy and the Ghost**. It doesn't sound any better, but it is. Robert San Souci has adapted a classic ghost story that has come to us possibly via Spain. In "A Note to the Reader" it says, "Very likely, the tale of a hero and a ghost who appears a little at a time traveled from the Old World to the New with colonists and immigrants, and handed down...they in turn, shared it with new listeners in a new land, the haunted European castle was changed to a haunted plantation house in the American South, and the brash Spanish tinker became a brave little boy. Gradually, the story took on a fresh new feel and became part of American folk literature."

This is a picture book, on the other side of the room from **Nightmares**, look under JP SAN. It is illustrated by J. Brian Pinkney, and does not scare me to little bits. In it, Our Hero, Thomas, goes off to raise money to help his family who have a little house on a farm in the South, where