

Read Aloud Ideas

by Marty Layne
www.martylayne.com

October 2008

October – changing weather with skies of brilliant blue and v-shaped wedges of migrating ducks and geese, a time of harvest, and of course Halloween. With the gathering of the harvest comes a time for reflection and giving of thanks. Although in Canada we just celebrated Thanksgiving, I wanted to share this poem by Aileen Fisher entitled *All in a Word* that I've enjoyed over the years.



All in a Word by Aileen Fisher

T for time to be together, turkey, talk, and tangy weather.

H for harvest stored away, home, hearth, and holiday.

A for autumn's frosty art, and abundance in the heart.

N for neighbors and November, nice things, new things to remember.

K for kitchen, kettles' croon, kith and kin expected soon.

S for sizzles, sights, and sounds, and something special that abounds.

That spells THANKS— for joy in living and a jolly good Thanksgiving.

Aileen Fisher was an award-winning author of over one hundred children's books, including poetry, plays, short stories, picture books and biographies. She died at the age of 96 in 2002 in Boulder, Colorado where she spent most of her adult life. Her poems reflect an appreciation of the wonders of nature through the eyes of a child. Whenever I read her poetry I am transported back into my own childhood memories of playing outside as a child.

Jack Prelutsky is another poet I've enjoyed. If you haven't read *It's Halloween* by Prelutsky, you're in for a treat. Thirteen poems tell the story of a Halloween night. Here's an example.



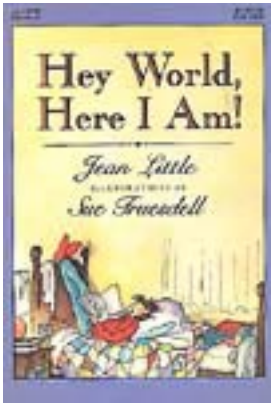
It's Halloween! It's Halloween!
The Moon is full and bright
And we shall see what can't be seen
On any other night:

Skeletons and ghosts and ghouls,
Grinning goblins fighting duels,
Werewolves rising from their tombs,
Witches on their magic brooms.

In masks and gowns
we haunt the street
And knock on doors
for trick or treat.



I enjoy reading poems aloud. I love the rhythm and the rhyme. Some poems have been turned into songs such as Edward Lear's *The Owl and The Pussycat* which I can't even say without singing. One of the important things to remember about poetry is summed up in Jean Little's poem below.



After English Class (from *Hey World, Here I Am!*)

By Jean Little

I used to like “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening.”
I liked the coming darkness,
The jingle of harness bells, breaking—and adding to
—the stillness,
The gentle drift of snow. . . .
But today, the teacher told us what everything stood for.
The woods, the horse, the miles to go, the sleep—
They all have “hidden meanings.”
It's grown so complicated now that,
Next time I drive by,
I don't think I'll bother to stop.

Jean Little is a Canadian author who has written many books – both poetry and fiction, and two autobiographies. She is partially blind and has a Seeing Eye dog. She's worked with children with disabilities and includes a character with a disability in most of her stories. I especially enjoyed *The Journal*, often, in poetry form of Kate Bloomfield a young teenager. Delightful, poignant observations of life.

As the leaves on the oak trees in my yard start to fall and pile up, I sing this song (from my [CD *Brighten the Day – songs to celebrate the seasons*](#)) as I rake them up

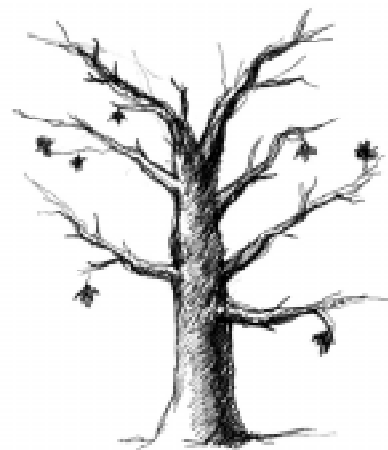
Come Little Leaves

Words: G. Cooper Music: Unknown

“Come little leaves,” Said the Wind one day,
“Come o'er the meadows with me and play;
Put on your dresses of red and gold
For summer is gone and the days grow cold.”

Soon as the leaves heard the Wind's loud call,
Down they came fluttering, one and all;
Over the brown fields they danced and flew,
A-singing the glad little songs they knew.

Dancing and whirling the little leaves went;
Winter had called them and they were content;
Soon fast asleep in their earthy beds,
The snow laid a coverlet over their heads.



Noah Layne, graphite 2000

Because I teach rhyme and fingerplay classes to parents and caregivers of babies 2 – 24 months old, my mind is often filled with poems and songs like the following:

October Time

October time is pumpkin time, the nicest time of the year.
When all the pumpkins light their eyes (encircle eyes)
And grin from ear to ear. (big grin)
Because they know at Halloween they'll have lots of fun,
Peeking through the windowpanes (put hands over eyes and look)
Watching children run!



Jack-O-Lantern Sung to: "I'm a Little Teapot"

I'm a little pumpkin Round and stout
Packed full of seeds that you can scoop out
When I get all carved up Then I'll be
The cutest Jack-o-Lantern you ever did see.

Three picture books for Halloween



Scary, Scary Halloween

By Eve Bunting Illustrations by Jan Brett

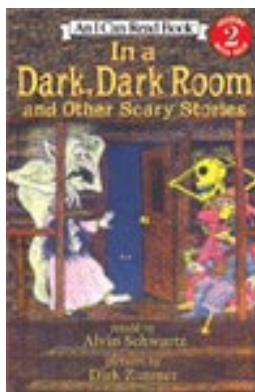
A Halloween story sure to be enjoyed year-round by children looking for scary books. The rhymes are full of repetitions that are chant like. We see creature marching along a winding country road - a devil, skeleton, ghost, etc. The effect is exciting but not sinister or fear-inspiring. The creatures are a troupe of spirited trick-or-treaters. Surprise ending that children will enjoy.



Corduroy's Best Halloween Ever!

Based on Don Freeman's character by Lisa McCue

A sweet book suitable for 2 and up about getting dressed up in costumes, carving a pumpkin and having fun.



In A Dark Room And Other Scary Stories An I Can Read Book

Creak...
Crash...
BOO!

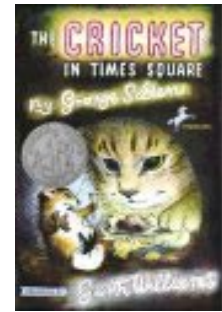
Shivering skeletons, ghostly pirates, chattering corpses, and haunted graveyards...all to chill your bones! Share these seven spine-tingling stories in a dark, dark room. Fun read aloud collection of old folk tales.

Chapter books:

The Cricket in Times Square by George Sedden

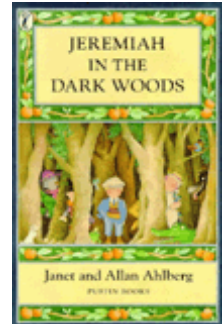
A very friendly easy-to-read story for 4

Chester the Cricket finds himself in New York by mistake after hitching a ride in a picnic basket. This story tells of the friendship between Chester and two animal residents of the Subway Station under Times Square and the boy, Mario whose family runs an unsuccessful newsstand. With the help of Chester, Tucker, the mouse and Harry, the cat, the newsstand run by Mario's parents becomes successful and is saved. Short chapters.



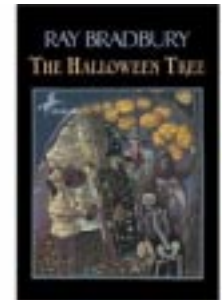
Jeremiah in the Darkwoods by Janet and Allan Ahlberg

Delightful adventure story to read to 4 and up about the search by the main character, Jeremiah Obediah Jackanory Jones, for “the no-good robber who stole my granny’s tarts.” Filled with familiar nursery tale characters – three bears, seven dwarfs, five gorillas, a frog prince, some sleeping beauties, a wolf, a dinosaur, a mad hatter, a steamboat, four firemen on a fire engine, a large number of beanstalks – it is a mystery story with a lot of humor and fun.



The Halloween Tree by Ray Bradbury

A great tale to read to 10 year olds and up about friendship and the history that leads to our present day celebrations of Halloween. Scary, exciting, and has a positive end. A group of twelve-year old boys go on a journey through time to rescue their friend, guided by the mysterious man who lives in a house shrouded in mystery that holds the Halloween tree.



Feedback and comments are always welcome.
Please [click](#) here if you'd like to make a donation.
Happy Reading!

Marty