Today was a "reading day" at Nana’s house. It was too cold and rainy to be outside for long so Ryder climbed into my lap and asked that I read to him—one book after another. I realized then how grateful I was for a personal library full of wonderful books. And yet, if you are a book collector like I am or want to have a core group of books that your young one can look at over and over, the cost of books comes into play. Besides online, new and used book stores, I have found one of the best sources for children’s books to be “Goodwill” and our local “Snowline Hospice Thrift Stores”.

Thrift stores are very inexpensive (usually from $.50-$2.00/book) and usually have a wonderful selection...there is only one draw back—it can take up to 1 ½ hours to go through all of the titles...so be prepared to spend some time and go alone! Many of the titles I have recommended were found in this way, including some of the following gems:

1. **The Dragons Are Singing Tonight** Written by Jack Prelutsky, Illustrated by Peter Sis. One of the most beloved of children’s poets, Prelutsky, has a great time writing rhyme after rhyme about a variety of dragons: “Tonight is the night all the dragons—Awake in their lairs underground,—To sing in cacophonous chorus—And fill the whole world with their sound.”

2. **A Rainy Day to Remember** Written by Kitty Fross and illustrated by Jennifer Oxley. “Oh, no!” said Little Bill, “It can't be raining! Not today!” This little gem from Scholastic's "Little Bill" series is all about the fun you can have on a rainy day if you just use your imagination.

3. **Vroom! Vroom!** Is published by DK books and is one of a series of “Noisy Peekaboo” titles. Acen, my 18 month old grandson, loves this book which is filled with photographs, flaps and a number of sounds resembling horns, sirens, etc. It is cleverly done and has many learning opportunities hidden within.

4. **Mr. Carey’s Garden** by Jane Cutler, illustrated by G. Brian Karas. Since my father is “Mr. Carey”, we of course had to get this for him to read to great-grandson Ryder during his Christmas visit; it turned out to be a very sweet story about finding beauty in unique places.
“They stare at stately snails crisscrossing Mr. Carey's garden, at their glistening trails that shine like silver ribbons in the moonlight.”

5. *Mother Earth and Her Children: a quilted fairy tale* by Sibylle von Olfers, illustrations by Sieglinde Schoen Smith and translation by Jack Zipes. “Illustrated” by Smith doesn’t even begin to describe how these magical pictures came into being...the artist, an award-winning quilter, actually created a quilt that retells her favorite childhood story about the changing of the seasons. “Brushes and colors, are set to go, to paint the beetles, see how they glow!” This picturesque line comes to life as you see Mother Earth’s little children brushing the golden coats of the honeybees and giving the ladybugs and beetles a new coat of paint. Exquisite!