Nana's Literary Corner #12

For my final recommendations of the year, I have chosen a real hodge-podge of titles! Each has its own charm and should bring some fun to your summer. Don't forget to check with your local library about their summer reading programs - often there are sessions just for pre-schoolers and toddlers.

1. **Elves and Fairies** Stories and Poems selected by Jane Werner with illustrations by Garth Williams. First published in 1951, this Giant Golden book is a treasure trove of fanciful tales about all kinds of little folk. Read one of these stories or a poem or two and then go out for a hike in the woods or even play in the yard - it will open your little one's eyes to all kinds of imaginations. One of my favorite poems is about "The Second-Hand Shop", " She sells lost thimbles-for fairy milk pails-and burnt-out matches- for fence posts and rails.- She sells stray marbles-to bowl on the green,-and bright scattered beads -for the crown of the queen."

2. **Once There Was a Tree** Written by Natalia Romanova and beautifully illustrated by Gennady Spirin. This nature story tells about an old stump in the forest and the life it supports. "The warm sun dried the tree stump, and soon a new occupant had moved in-an earwig. Liking nothing better than the shade, he crept under the bark to sleep." After describing one inhabitant after another, the author ends with, "But who really owns the tree stump? The bark beetle that gnaws tunnels inside it? The ants that travel through the tunnels? The earwig that sleeps under its bark?.....

3. **Over the Hills & Far Away** Retold and illustrated by Chris Conover. "Tom played his pipes with such a fine skill,-that those who heard him could never keep still;-as soon as he played, they began for to dance,-even pigs on their hooves would after him prance." Tom, a little otter that wears a top hat, gathers bunnies, raccoons, pigs, a horse, fish, and a wife as he journeys across the countryside playing his pipes. At the end of the book is the notation for this beloved folk song, so grab your flute (piano, recorder, etc.) and join in!

4. **Prince Nautilus** Written by Laura Krauss Melmed with beautiful watercolor illustrations by Henri Sorensen. This fairy tale-like story is about two sisters, one vain and selfish, the other kind and gentle. It
revolves around a prince, who has been entrapped within a nautilus shell by an evil sorceress and the sisters' efforts to free him from the spell. Of course, thoughtfulness and compassion win out in the end. (I would recommend it more for the 5-7 year old.)

5. **Trolls** Written and delightfully illustrated by Rolf Lidberg. "But when father troll and Morten sat down to eat their sandwiches, the birds returned. A little tit, not being at all afraid, landed on father troll's sandwich and started pecking at it." This story about the changing of the seasons, gives the reader a glimpse into the activities and life experienced over a year by a kindly family of trolls.

6. **Oh Say Can You Say?** Written and illustrated by Dr. Seuss. Though not my favorite illustrator, I had to add this book of "Terrible Tongue Twisters!" to my list. "What would you rather be when you grow up?... A cop in a cop's cap? Or a cupcake cook in a cupcake cook's cap? Or a fat flapjack flapper in a flat flapped-jack cap?" By the time I have tried to read this book to Ryder, we are both in stitches! "Pete Briggs pats pigs, Briggs pats pink pigs, Briggs pats big pigs..."

Have a great summer reading!

Nana (Janet) Langley