



This collection of classic and contemporary poems will send shivers up and down the spine of any reader brave enough to open the book.



MONSTERS
GROWLING IN
THE BACKGROUND
ILLUSTRATED BY
MARTIN ONTIVEROS

REYCRAFT
BOOKS

ADVANCE
READING COPY

MONSTERS



ILLUSTRATED BY
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GROWLING IN THE BACKGROUND

HALLOWEEN POEMS FOR THE BRAVE

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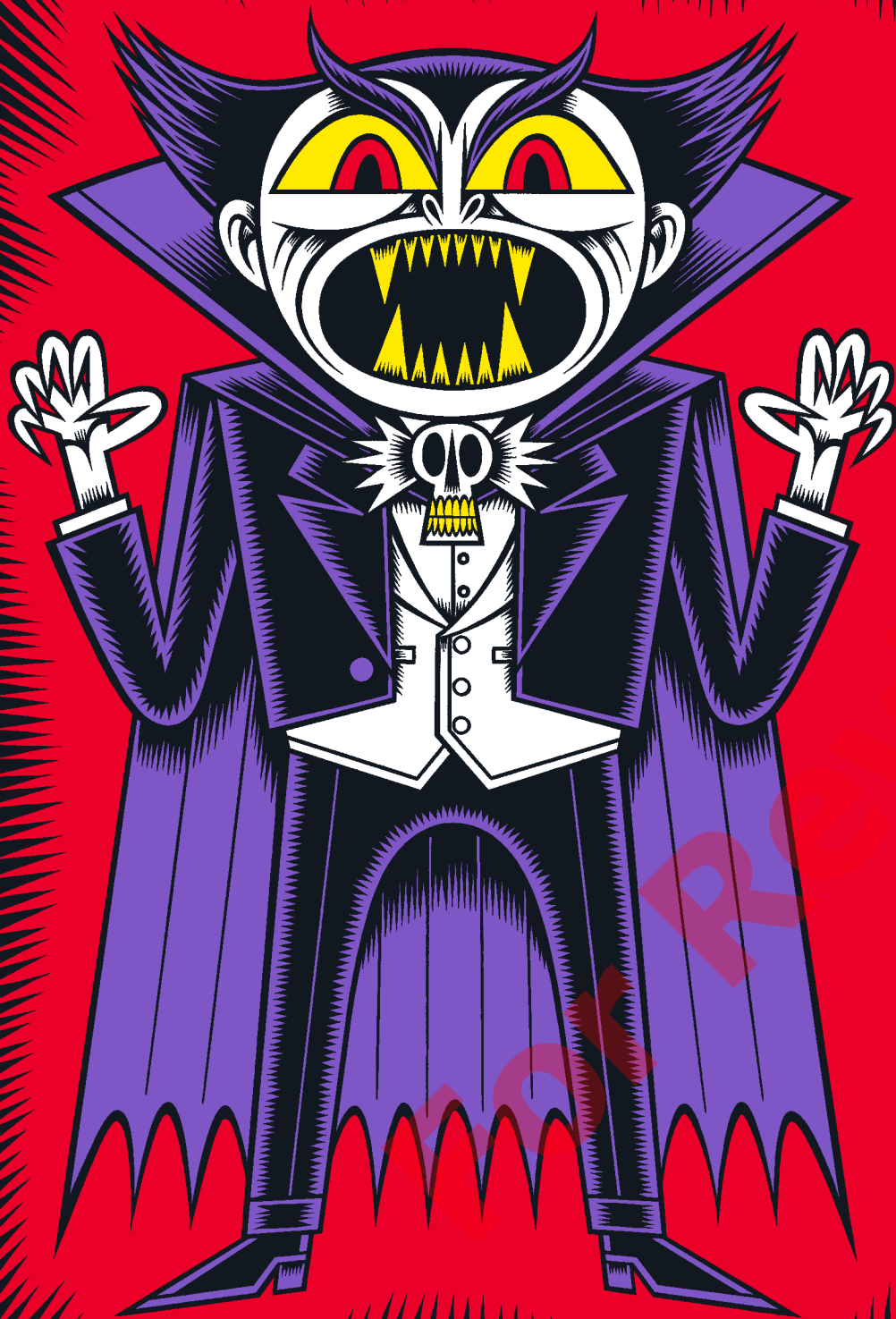


It was a dark and stormy night, as all good Halloween nights should be. My friends and I threw on our costumes, ready for candy and some creepy fun. One was a superhero. Another a clown. The last a famous movie villain and I dressed as a pickle.

As we crossed the street in front of the cemetery, we noticed dark figures rising from the graves. Then strange shapes appeared on the dimly lit sidewalk in front of us. The sounds—distant, unfamiliar, and growing louder—were the sounds of monsters growling in the background. We turned to run, but as we did a creature with dripping, red fangs blocked our way. I let out a shriek that started deep in my gut and exploded into the darkness. A tingling, like a thousand tiny spiders, moved up and down my spine and shot out of my legs as I fell to the ground.

That's the last thing I remember about that night.

I have collected these poems—some as old as a rotting corpse in a grave, others as new as a baby goblin—to capture what we felt that night. I suggest you read them with the lights on or ...just maybe... with them off. But only if you dare!



HALLOWEEN PARTY

by Kenn Nesbitt

We're having a Halloween party at school.
I'm dressed up like Dracula. Man, I look cool!
I dyed my hair black, and I cut off my bangs.
I'm wearing a cape and some fake plastic fangs.

I put on some makeup to paint my face white,
like creatures that only come out in the night.
My fingernails, too, are all pointed and red.
I look like I'm recently back from the dead.

My mom drops me off, and I run into school
and suddenly feel like the world's biggest fool.
The other kids stare like I'm some kind of freak—
the Halloween party is not till next week.



THE NIGHT WIND

by Eugene Field

Have you ever heard the wind go "Yooooo"?
'Tis a pitiful sound to hear!
It seems to chill you through and through
With a strange and speechless fear.
'Tis the voice of the night that broods outside
When folk should be asleep,
And many and many's the time I've cried
To the darkness brooding far and wide
Over the land and the deep:
"Whom do you want, O lonely night,
That you wail the long hours through?"
And the night would say in its ghostly way:

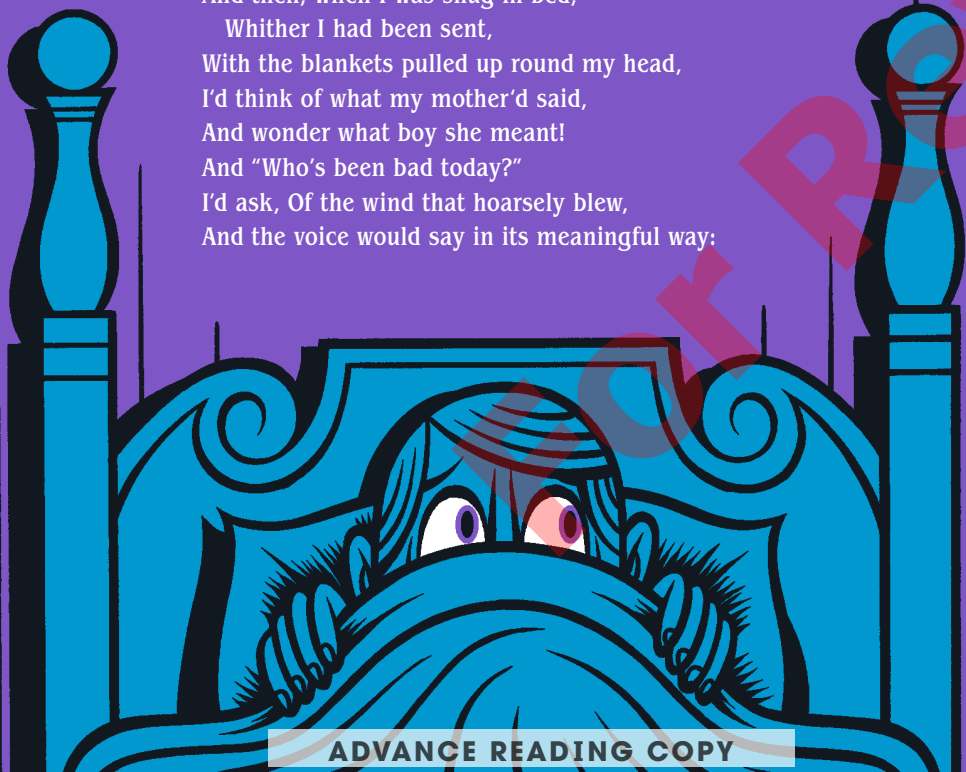
"YOOOOOOOOO! YOOOOOOOOO!
YOOOOOOOOO!"

My mother told me long ago
(When I was a little tad)
That when the night went wailing so,
Somebody had been bad;
And then, when I was snug in bed,
Whither I had been sent,
With the blankets pulled up round my head,
I'd think of what my mother'd said,
And wonder what boy she meant!
And "Who's been bad today?"
I'd ask, Of the wind that hoarsely blew,
And the voice would say in its meaningful way:

"YOOOOOOOOO! YOOOOOOOOO!
YOOOOOOOOO!"

That this was true I must allow—
You'll not believe it, though!
Yes, though I'm quite a model now,
I was not always so.
And if you doubt what things I say,
Suppose you make the test;
Suppose, when you've been bad some day
And up to bed are sent away
From mother and the rest—
Suppose you ask, "Who has been bad?"
And then you'll hear what's true;
For the wind will moan in its ruefullest tone:

"YOOOOOOOOO! YOOOOOOOOO!
"YOOOOOOOOO!"



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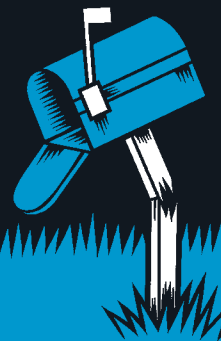
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THE GHOST

by Richard Jones

I live in a house with no windows
a black curtain hangs on my door.
The voices of conscience torment me
I live in a room with no floor.
There's dirt in the corner I can't see
there's water that runs down the wall.
There're mice in the attic above me
and rats playing games in the hall.
I live in a house with no windows
and sleep in a room with no heat.
The darkness of life that surrounds me
keeps out the sounds of the street.
I wake when the shadows have fallen
and walk when the memories cease.
When purpose in life has no meaning
and only the wicked find peace.
Each night you sense that I'm by you
you feel my breath as you sleep.
You hear the faint creak of the floorboards
as out from the shadows I creep.
I live in a house with no windows
I live in a house that's now yours
It's my voice you think that you're hearing
for I died in this room with no doors.





SONG OF THE WITCHES:
"DOUBLE, DOUBLE TOIL AND TROUBLE"

by William Shakespeare
(from Macbeth IV.i 10-19; 35-38)

Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and caldron bubble.
Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the caldron boil and bake;
Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg and howlet's wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and caldron bubble.
Cool it with a baboon's blood,
Then the charm is firm and good.