

Nurse Lugton's Curtain

VIRGINIA WOOLF

Illustrations by JULIE VIVAS

Gulliver Books/Harcourt, \$16.00 cloth, ISBN 0-15-205048-5

Those of us who, as children, always suspected that other worlds came to life while we slept will appreciate Virginia Woolf's tale. While awake, Nurse Lugton stitches on a length of "blue stuff" full of animal patterns. When she sleeps, the animals come to life and cavort around a lake, through a forest, and down to a town full of people. Yet this is more than a simple tale of a picture coming to life; Woolf plays with the idea of Nurse Lugton as an unlikely all-mother. The townsfolk live with a giant ogress whose thimble shines as the sun and whose snores roar like a wind through the trees. The warm, vivid illustrations by Julie Vivas also play with the shift in perspective as we move from Nurse Lugton stitching her curtain printed with tiny animals to a colorful town shadowed by a huge head. The porous borders between this world and Nurse Lugton's, of sleeping and waking, are reflected in watercolors that move from gemlike clarity to smudged edges that run away into mystery. Readers of all ages will have fun getting their heads around the telescoping perspectives, and Woolf provides plenty of opportunities to count (it's always at Nurse Lugton's fifth snore that the animals come to life), pronounce interesting animal names, and alliterate, with descriptions of penguins and pelicans who waddle and wade. This story was found among the pages of Mrs. *Dalloway* and was written for a visiting niece. ■

REVIEWER: **Kay Ackerman** is associate professor of history at Wilson College.