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When Sheep Sleep

Donna Cardon

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Numeroff, Laura. *When Sheep Sleep*. Illustrated by David McPhail. Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2006. ISBN 0810954699. \$15.95. 32 pp.

Reviewer: Donna Cardon

Reading Level: Toddler

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Picture book; Poetry;

Subject: Bedtime--Juvenile fiction; Sleep--Juvenile fiction; Animals--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

It would be hard to go wrong with an author/illustrator combination like Numeroff (*If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, Laura Geringer, 1985) and McPhail (*Edward and the Pirates*, Little Brown, 1997). Together they have created a bedtime book that is so soporific that it ought to carry a warning label "Don't read before operating heavy equipment." In the rhyming story a child wonders what to count if all the sheep are asleep. As she goes from animal to animal, all are snuggled in dreamland. In the end she drifts off as well.

In each stanza of the sing-song poem Numeroff makes a rhyme with *sheep*. Most are quite good, but a couple are a little awkward like, "Their mom watches closely, / Their safety to keep." The repeated rhyme adds to the sleepy rhythm of the text. McPhail's watercolor and pastel illustrations reinforce the mood. They are done with muted lines in warm tones. All the animals portrayed look soft, gentle and blissfully asleep. This is a must-have for harried parents who want a sure-fire bedtime book and a great gift for new mothers.