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Look Back!

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

It is good to see something by Trish Cooke and it is good to see something by Caroline Binch and doubly good to see them working together in this story drawn from Dominican folk tale. Here Granny tells Christopher how, as a girl, she was sent to take some food to an old lady and, coming back at night, heard footsteps following her. Running and falling down, she was convinced she saw the eyes of Ti Bolam watching her from the long grass: 'He has a big head and two big black eyes and when you walking alone at night, minding your own business, Ti Bolam walks behind you.' But when she looked in the long grass, he was not there. 'You see Ti Bolam make you know he there and then he make you *think* you dream him.' But then Granny digs a trap and, sure enough, Ti Bolam falls in it. But, when she looks, no, he isn't there, because he's dug down deeply and out. Finally, she carries a mirror with her when she goes on her errand only to drop it when a dog barks. She never looked for Ti Bolam again, but she is convinced he is still about, and when Christopher goes to bed, sure enough, he hears Ti Bolam's footsteps following him. What happens next is perhaps a little disappointing, at least in Binch's illustration of (Christopher's dreamed) Ti Bolam, but, before that, there's plenty to enjoy. The mystery and implied danger in Cooke's story is nicely held in check by the realism of Binch's richly detailed portraiture: and Binch's affectionate rendering of the relationship between both Granny and Christopher and granny as a girl and the old woman, Ma Constance, to whom she takes food, implies a beneficent universe in which even the slightly scary Ti Bolam can be a friend.

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