Through a glass darkly: William Kurelek's picture books

Jetske Sybesma-Ironside

William Kurelek's first one-man exhibition at the Isaacs Gallery in Toronto in March, 1960, marked the beginning of his successful career as a painter and illustrator of children's books. In his pictures we recognize our own perceptions of Canada: the Prairie, where farmers cultivate the land with powerful machinery, or where children's games are recurrent motifs in summer or winter season; the North, where man is seen to endure the elements while working in the bush or where a dream of the Christmas story is re-enacted by humble people. Kurelek's gift of capturing momentary actions of man and beast animates his picture books so that the images convey the narrative visually.

The immediate impact of the artist's illustrations is largely due to the realistic, descriptive style in which the objects and figures are drawn. He outlines all his visible objects with an animated contour, establishing a clarity of pictorial form. Kurelek tends to simplify these objects so that minor details are sacrificed for an emphasis on a typical gesture or pose. This style of drawing enhances our instant recognition of a characteristic *gestalt* with a result that the total effect of the pictorial images appears very life-like rather than being photographically accurate.

Although it is often remarked that the artist was influenced by the sixteenth century painter, Pieter Bruegel, who painted children's games, the seasons and the common man active in his daily toil, it seems that Kurelek's style of drawing was largely formed through the so-called "Nicolaides method". In 1952, while cooped up in a small attic room in Montreal, Kurelek crammed the one-year Nicolaides drawing course, *The natural way to draw,* into three months of fervent study.[1] Later, he mentions in his autobiography, *Someone with me,* that the exercises in *The natural way to draw* provided a breakthrough in his development as an artist:[2]

> Essentially, the Nicolaides approach gets the student to appreciate the inner reality of things — their weight, their hardness or softness, their texture and so forth, and teaches him how to report that effectively on paper (135).

The natural way to draw, a how-to book on drawing, emphasizes contour and gesture as essential elements of drawing. It teaches the student that

Contour has a three-dimensional quality: that is, it indicates thickness as well as the length and width of the form it surrounds (12).

Kurelek's approach to drawing indeed aims to imply the three-dimensional bulk of his pictorial forms. This is clearly evident in the cover of his first book, *A prairie boy's winter,* depicting children actively engaged in making snow balls.[3] The artist outlines the snow balls with an animated contour: sometimes his line is thick, as is seen in the shadow areas of the balls, other times it is thin, especially on the high-lighted side of the snow balls. Further, in the drawing of the boys, Kurelek's use of contour indicates the physical action of the body rather than outlining a mere flat shape. This is especially noticeable in the boy closest to the viewer: the lines on his curved back, where the tension is greatest, are thin and those on his shoulder and arm are thick. Actually, this technique correlates with the Nicolaides lessons because in the book the student is urged to combine contour with "gesture".

Like contour, gesture is closely related to the tactile experience. In contour drawing you feel that you are touching the edge of the form with your finger (a pencil). In gesture drawing you feel the movement of the whole form in your whole body (16).

In order to understand the actions of the figure in one's drawing, Nicolaides emphasises that "It is necessary to participate in what the model is doing. . ." (24). Kurelek's most successful picture books, *A prairie boy's winter, A prairie boy's summer, Lumberjack* and *A northern nativity,* are autobiographical and the artist has therefore little difficulty in relating emotionally to his subject matter.[4] Even his tendency to simplify forms clearly reflects the lessons absorbed from the Nicolaides method of drawing:

You are attempting what might be called *simplification,* but I choose to call it *emphasis.* Try to select those lines, those forms, those rhythms, that speak specifically of the meaning of the whole gesture (174).

This search to capture a characteristic gesture is typical of Kurelek's best work. One finds it, for instance, in the stretched-out figure of the boy reaching for the softball in *A prairie boy's summer* (Fig. 1); the tension in young William's body when he strains to stick the pitchfork into the crown of a frozen load of hay in *A prairie boy's winter,* hauling hay (#8); the eating men of the cover of *Lumberjack* or the embrace of the Holy Family as Eskimo on the cover of *A northern nativity.* It appears thus that *The natural way to draw* taught Kurelek not just "to appreciate the inner reality of things" but it formed the style that he used to depict his vivid memories of childhood experiences.

The subject matter of Kurelek's popular children's books often has been tied to the work of Pieter Bruegel. In the early 1950's, Kurelek undertook a pilgrimage to Bruegel's famous paintings of children's games and feasting peasants, located in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, Austria. Short-

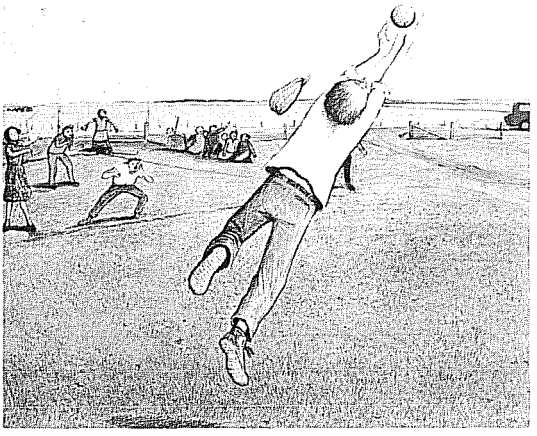

Fig. 1 *Softball, A prairie boy's summer,* (#2), n.p.

ly afterwards, in 1952, the artist was admitted as a patient to a mental hospital in England where he was encouraged to recreate his childhood memories in a painting *Farm children's games in western Canada.* [5] Later, in 1960, he painted *Memories of Manitoba boyhood.* The subjects of these two early paintings, depicting children's games and farm chores, are recurrent themes in Kurelek's art. They are particularly synthesized in his two popular children's books *A prairie boy's winter* and *A prairie boy's summer.* Both books are award-winning publications and have become "classics" among Canadian illustrated children's books.

Reviewers have justifiably praised Kurelek's ability to capture his childhood experiences on the Prairies in animated illustrations; however, not much attention has been given to the content of these childhood memories.

His first book, *A prairie boy's winter,* written and illustrated by the artist, was chosen Best Illustrated Book of the Year and Outstanding Book of the Year in the Annual New York Times Book Awards for 1973. In this book, Kurelek's illustrations and text lead us from the autumn, with the picture *Crows leaving before winter* (#1), through the cold prairie winter months with chores and fun to the end of March where the *Return of the first crow* (#20) indicates to young William that spring has come. The pictures with the accompanying text describe vividly the chores farm children have to do during the icy winter: chasing the cows into the barn is seen in *The first snow fall* (#2), followed by *Calling the pigs to feed* (#3) taking place in a crisp winter landscape, while the next episode, *Fox and geese* (#4), gives one a bird's-eye view of the game. Irma McDonough observed that:

It was his first book, and for children, and though his evocation of childhood is superb, there is evident in the telling a distance and a diffidence that affected his sponaneity.[6]

The reason for this "distance and diffidence" may be found in Kurelek's autobiography, *Someone with me.* The fourth chapter of the revised version of the autobiography is titled "School Days," and covers the time from autumn to spring. Here, Kurelek narrates how he and his brother John were subject to constant bullying at school (49). Particularly their first days at school were traumatic because they could speak only Ukrainian. Kurelek remembers these awful school years plaintively as "I am very, very, unhappy, suffering to the depths of what I have to admit was a hyper-sensitive personality all along" (51).

The text accompanying the illustration *Hockey hassles* (#6) informs us that young William did not like hockey and that he "was a poor skater and preferred not to play on skates, so he was made goalie." This caused him to be often in the heat of the arguments, something he dreaded. Kurelek depicts himself as the child in the foreground of the illustration, surrounded by angry boys. Essentially, the artist portrays himself enduring an unpleasant experience.

In "Fox and geese" (#4) (Fig. 2), the text narrates that "The game was already

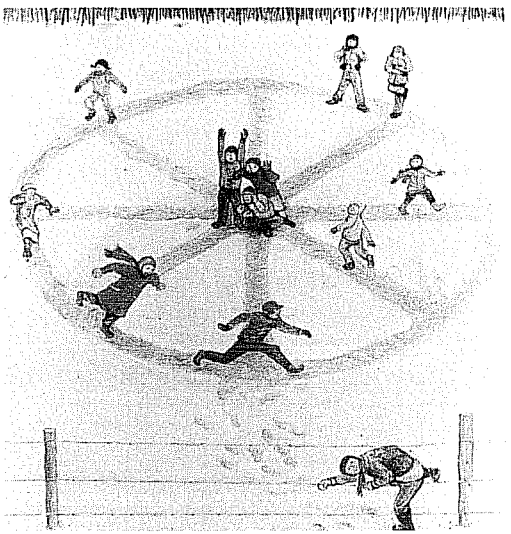

Fig. 2 *Fox and geese, A prairie boy's winter,* (#4) n.p.

in full swing but young William snagged his jacket on the barbed-wire in his rush to join." William is drawn here again in the foreground, separated by a barbed-wire fence from the other children who are having great fun running around the pie-shaped circle. Contrasting to their pleasure, William is so unfortunate as to have torn his jacket and his unhappy face indicates his anticipation of mother's scolding when he returns home. Again, the moment selected

for the illustration of the fox and geese game is an unhappy one for young William.

The autobiography, *Someone with me,* describes the episode of the chicken coop as one of the many unpleasant confrontations occurring in William's life on the farm (64). Once, Kurelek recalls, he left the door of the coop open. His parents became angry about his absent-mindedness and on that occasion his father scolded him severely for being so "stupid". This type of tongue-lashing often took place (63, 77). The father's calling the boy "stupid", "dumb", and "blind" seems to have been very painful for the overly sensitive child. The illustration *Chasing a chicken in the snow* (#11) in *A prairie boy's winter* depicts mother in the open doorway of the chicken coop, shovelling the chicken manure, while William and his little sister try to catch what in the text is called a "stupid" chicken. It seems that Kurelek transposes a traumatic episode from his youth through drawing here what he calls a "stupid" chicken, anxiously trying to escape the two children chasing it. The roles seem here reversed because mother stands in the open doorway of the coop, while William, habitually called the "stupid" one, is trying to capture the frightened hen. That the almost daily scolding by his father must have been a traumatic experience for Kurelek is supported further in the illustration *Stupid as a calf staring at a new gate* (#6) in *Fields,* a book with landscape paintings by the artist.[7] Kurelek describes in his autobiography how his father tongue-lashed him when he learned that young William had left the coop door open:

> There, you see, deaf and stupid as usual. Just like the heifer staring at a new gate, only worse because a heifer isn't expected to know better (64).

The Ukrainian expression became the subject of the seemingly innocent painting *Stupid as a calf staring at a new gate.* The calf and the gate, illustrating literally the father's angry words, are far away in the distance, while the tongue-lash is written on a piece of paper, lying forlorn in the immediate foreground of the picture. Although the appeal of this sunny landscape may captivate the onlooker, this idyllic expanse of Prairie space refers actually to a moment when the inner world of young William was shattered because of his father's harsh words.

This negative, highly personal content in the award winning *A prairie boy's winter* contrasts sharply with the attractive appearance of the illustrations. The text in "Skiing behind the hayrack" (#9) mentions that this was a great sport. The illustration, however, suggests that one could easily be caught in the barbed-wire fences along the snow-covered road, turning the fun into an awful experience. "Skating on the bog ditch" (#12) is an activity young William really liked; however, he draws himself here as the only child who bungles because his skates were caught in the reeds.

The close parallel between Kurelek's autobiography, describing his traumatic

and deeply unhappy childhood, and the content of *A prairie boy's winter* is further evident in the chores, such as "Watering cows in winter" (#10). Kurelek mentions in the text that "mother thawed out the pump with a kettle of hot water so that fresh water could be pumped in." An almost identical passage can be found in the autobiography. However, here the passage is prefaced with

> At times I had the uncanny feeling that I was actually sabotaging farm operations. As if some secret part of me wanted to harm both me and father. The time I froze the water pipeline to the barn was a case in point. I must explain that we used to have to drive the cows to the water trough at the pumphouse each day (73).

In the illustration *Watering cows in winter,* the cows are struggling through the snow on their way to the water trough in the foreground. William is hacking ice from the sides of the trough, while water runs in the trough at the lower left corner of the picture. The subject of this illustration shows, to the naive onlooker, one of the activities of farm children in the prairie winter. For the artist, the image refers to a confrontation with his domineering, ruthless father. However, in the illustration, water flows freely into the trough, indicating that young William did not botch the water line this time. In general, Kurelek indicates clearly in the text of *A prairie boy's winter* that he was not fond of these winter chores where man had to fight the elements of nature. He further gives the impression that he never really enjoyed the games children played in winter; he was either teased or bullied, or he was so clumsy that his enjoyment would be spoiled in one way or another. Although this award-winning picture book is visually appealing because of the animated drawing style of the artist, this visual charm masks the often negative memory of the artist's childhood experience.

Kurelek's later picture book, *A prairie boy's summer,* complements the seasonal activities of *A prairie boy's winter.* The author reminds us that he "half regretted" the summer, "for summer always meant a lot of farm work, a lot more than in winter." (#1)

Like a medieval Calendar of the Labours of the Month, Kurelek draws here a variety of summer activities, such as *Pasturing cows* (#7), *Burning quack grass and harrowing* (#8), *Haying* (#9), *Plowing* (#15), *Cutting grain* (#16) and others.

Callie Israel reviewed the book and found that "William Kurelek's cool green grass, shimmering gold wheat fields and blue expanses of the Prairie sky all reminded us of boy's life on a Manitoba farm in the 30s."[8] She observed that "Kurelek's honest, straightforward text and vivid detailed paintings give the book an integrity that comes from real understanding and affection." The merit of this picture book has been recognized more than once; for instance, in 1976, it was chosen as the Canadian Association of Children's Librarian's Best Illustrated Book.

The first four pages of *A prairie boy's summer* depict activities mainly related

to "field day", the last day of school. William dreaded that day because he was not good at athletics or baseball. The summer activities of a boy on the prairies take place amidst the vast expanse of land and sky. In this Eden, the human activities again recall often the humiliation and pain Kurelek must have experienced as a child.

In the episode entitled "Catching baby killdeer" (#6), young William is not allowed to waste time with cuddling a young bird. His unaffectionate mother shouts from the garden "Hey, get those cows in!"

Haying (#9), used for the book's cover, depicts a team of horses pulling the sweep away from the observer. In the golden distance people are actively enaged in building a hay stack. The text refers to the time when the eleven-year-old John, William's younger brother, had to drive the sweep for the first time. Unfortunately, the horses started to run, wrecking the machine, while the boy was nearly killed. In his autobiography, Kurelek remembers that "Father flew into a rage not only because we'd wrecked the sweep — we half-expected that — but because we hadn't stopped our 'silly bawling' and examined the sweep to see what repairs were needed!" (75). Father, apparently, had more concern for the sweep than for the well-being of his boys who were shaken after this terrifying experience. In the illustration, Kurelek draws the youngster on the sweep, looking back to the observer, while his team of horses remains under his control.

William enjoyed the swimming hole east of his father's farm but he hated having his clothes hidden by his playmates. Alone, in the foreground to the right of the illustration *The swimming hole* (#13), one finds William lifting a sod and staring at an ugly crayfish, while, at the left, a pair of teasers put a frog in someone's shoe. As in the images depicting fun and games in *A prairie boy's winter,* Kurelek implies in *The swimming hole* that moments of pleasure can be instantly spoiled by something nasty occurring unexpectedly.

Making a smudge (#14) illustrates in the foreground of the picture how horses are protected from the mosquitoes by standing in smoke. In the background is a herd of cattle. Kurelek mentions in the text that "The cows knew the horses were bullies so they moved out of the way before they were bitten or pushed aside." In his autobiography, the artist remarks that

> growing up with farm animals I began to see animal imagery in human behaviour as eventually this furnished the basis for much of the symbolism in my message paintings" (68).

In the illustration *Making a smudge,* the horses might express the bullying of William's classmates who constantly picked on him and his brother.

Plowing (#15) shows William struggling with the fuel for the tractor. The text mentions that it was difficult to siphon the distillate from the barrel into the fuel can. In his autobiography, Kurelek remembers his father's wrath when he accidentally let the oil run out of the tractor crankcase (74). Fortunately,

the illustration *Plowing* does not depict William bungling, although the text describes various frustrating confrontations between William and the tractor.

Similarly, on the next page "Cutting Grain" (#16) refers to young William, who, as a twelve-year-old, was expected to learn to operate a tractor in one day. This episode is amplified in the autobiography where he writes:

> Yet suddenly in the summer of 1939, I was placed on that black monster, the McCormick-Deering, and was expected to start it, drive it in a straight line, make proper turns at the corners of the field, even service it — all in one day (72).

That year his father had two old binders rigged up behind the tractor driven by William. Kurelek remarks in his autobiography that when the machinery broke down or when he misunderstood the commands, his father bellowed above the noise of the tractor, his father's "glare was so fierce I'd have sworn he was ready to murder me" (73). The following year his father had bought a new tractor, a green one, so that the job of cutting grain became much easier. The illustration, *Cutting grain* (#16), (Fig. 3), has a green tractor in the middle distance, while in the foreground a big black dog chases a frightened rabbit, running for its life. At first sight, this illustration does not indicate the conflict between Kurelek and his father, experienced as a twelve-year-old cutting grain. The text, referring to the old black tractor, conceals what in the autobiography is called "that black monster", which, like his menacing father, frightened him (72). In addition, the text mentions that while harvesting in 1939, war planes "practiced dropping their bombs far out on the bog to the

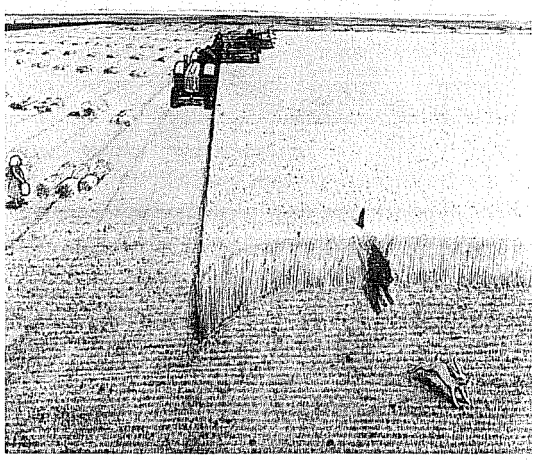

Fig. 3 *Cutting grain, A prairie boy's summer,* (#16) n.p.

east. . . ." This frightening memory of cutting grain as a twelve-year-old is expressed here in the life and death race between the dog and the rabbit and in the bombers, high overhead in the seemingly peaceful sky. This picture certainly does not come from "real understanding and affection", as Israel sees it, but it disguises in the prairie landscape a terrifying struggle between life and death in the absence of affection.

In the beginning of September, during recess time or after school, the boys went out gopher hunting (#19). Kurelek describes vividly in the text how a miserable gopher is clubbed to death by the boys; an activity shown to take place in the pasture by the school — the same pasture where William frequently was bullied by his class mates.

In *A prairie boy's summer,* after all these unpleasant and often painful memories of his childhood, depicted as taking place under the idyllic rural sky, Kurelek, finally, on the last page indicates that he excelled the others in a new sport, archery, which he introduced. He proved to be the best bow carver and made excellent arrows, so that he became respected by his school mates. This last page perhaps symbolizes how William Kurelek was able to liberate himself from the mental maze in which his ruthless father had trapped his mind. Ultimately, after his treatment in a mental hospital in England, the artist became a converted Catholic, putting his trust with ardor in God rather than in man and became a respected artist.

Seen in the perspective of his autobiography, *Someone with me,* the two award-winning books, *A prairie boy's winter* and *A prairie boy's summer,* have all the ingredients of Canadian prairie fiction. Kurelek's father figures as an awesome patriarch whose aim is to dominate the land, his hard earned property. This father, who totally demoralized his overly sensitive son, fought with the effects of the Great Depression: the hailstorms, the grasshopper plague, the failure of outdated machinery.

Barely covered by the appealing surface of Kurelek's two most famous children's books, where life is acted out in the setting of the ever expanding prairie landscape, the artist reveals man's struggle against the external forces of nature. In addition, the text and images of these two books reveal that young William Kurelek, unlike Brian O'Connel in W.O. Mitchell's *Who has seen the wind,* a text Kurelek illustrated in 1976, was a tragic child whose internal landscape of the mind was torn because of the impact of his terrifying father.[9]

Lumberjack, another award-winning book by Kurelek, describes and illustrates vividly the artist's experience in a lumber camp. The style of the drawings is consistent with that used in the two previously discussed books: the artist implies a three-dimensional mass of his figures by means of an intermittent contour and a light surface texture. The predominant colours are combinations of the primaries: red, yellow and blue, together with green and neutral tones, often greyish ochre. The colour is applied thin and uneven, so that it tends to suggest a surface texture rather than a flat, solidly painted plane.

This handling of line and colour is particularly evident in the close-up depictions of people, comprising about half of the total number of illustrations.

In *Lumberjack,* Kurelek mentions that initially his father was furious when he learned that his nineteen-year-old son, a college student, had rebelled against him by signing up for a summer job in the bush.[10] Father predicts disaster and certain failure, but William demonstrates his independence and stays the full summer. His decision to work in a lumber camp marks the transition between his childhood dependency on his parents and manhood, where he can do a man's work and earn a living.

Although the content of *Lumberjack* refers to hard work and chores, the human relationships are here quite positive. There is no menacing father. Instead, in "Driving" (#6), the father figure could be Pete Rodvick, a Lithuanian foreman. Pete is "the biggest and the most admired man in the camp" and when Pete addresses William in Ukrainian, his friendly gesture inspires him to work twice as hard. "Big George," an Ukrainian foreman, mentioned briefly in "Dynamiting a Log Jam" (#7), is in charge of the detonator of dynamite. Perhaps Kurelek transposes in "Big George" his own Ukrainian father, who continually destroyed his emotional stability.

Ambivalent human relationships are implied in the episode described in "Relaxing" (#20), which takes place in the bunkhouse, where Tony, a Pole who could speak some Ukrainian, chose the bed next to William. In spite of this gesture of comradeship, Kurelek mentions that Tony's lurid tales about women embarrassed him. Occasionally this ambivalent tendency, quite evident in *A prairie boy's winter,* crops up in the illustrations for *Lumberjack.* In *Cook shack with bears* (#2), the cook enters the meat shack, unaware of the black bear rummaging just around the corner. "Piling a cord" (#12) is an essential activity of any lumberjack; however, the artist depicts it as a potentially dangerous activity because at night unseen forces might cause the cord to slip apart. In "Washing up" (#15), (Fig. 4), Kurelek tells us that he stopped stripping to the waist while washing because ". . . one of the former Nazis in the camp began counting my ribs and teasing me for being so skinny." The activity of "Sharpening the saw" (#16), an important tool for any lumberman, was one of Kurelek's failures. He recalls in "Axe grinding" (#17), that his fatigue made him careless so that he broke axe handles at work. In all these vignettes the morbid fear of an unsound mind infiltrates the attractive drawings.

His almost fanatic, self-imposed work schedule forced him to work twelve hours during all possible weather conditions. *Working in the rain* (#21), depicts William as a lonely figure in the wilderness, sawing wood during a downpour. The text, however, refers to an occasion when his father's predictions of accidents and failure almost became true: a tree snapped off and pinned his foot under its butt. William is shown here to have overcome the negative influence of his father since he draws himself active at work, in spite of adverse weather conditions.

The text, in combination with the illustrations of *Lumberjack,* provides the reader with an insight into activities in a lumber camp during a time when the timber was hand cut. For the artist, the content of this children's book carries a personal victory of outgrowing the effects of his destructive father. In this context, *Lumberjack* is emotionally a better balanced book than either *A prairie boy's winter* or *A prairie boy's summer.*

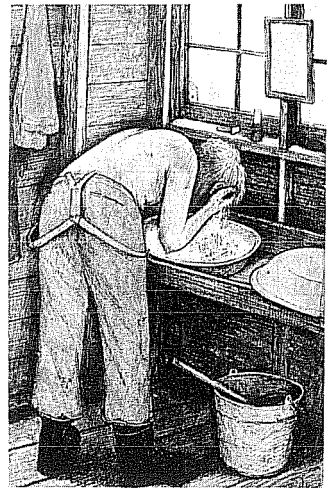

Fig. 4 *Washing up, Lumberjack,* (#15), n.p.

A final book under consideration is *A northern nativity,* a publication selected for several prestigious awards. In this book, Kurelek narrates his childhood dreams of the Nativity taking place across Canada in the bitter winter cold. The idea of the dream is suggested in the lower left hand corner of the cover, where the head of a sleeping boy is barely visible in the blue shades of the half-igloo (Fig. 5). The focus is on the Eskimo mother and child, protected in the arctic night by the igloo shelter. Haloes of divine light glow around the heads of the mother and her child, as well as around a third figure hitching up the dog sled in the distance; they can therefore be identified as the Holy Family.

The twenty episodes of the book are placed in a variety of settings across the provinces: Mary and the Child huddle in a shed in cattle country (#2); the Holy Family in the guise of Indians (#4) knocks on the door of a modest hut of a native trapper in northern Quebec; resting in the snow across the river from the Parliament buildings in Ottawa (#9), where the dazzling, man-made electrical lights on the architecture in the background contrast with the divine light of the haloes around the Virgin and Child in the foreground. A sleeping hobo, unaware of the divine Presence, lies at the feet of the Christ Child: it is young Bill Kurelek, not yet receptive to Christianity. The motif of the Last Supper seems to be transformed into a Christmas dinner at the Salvation Ar-

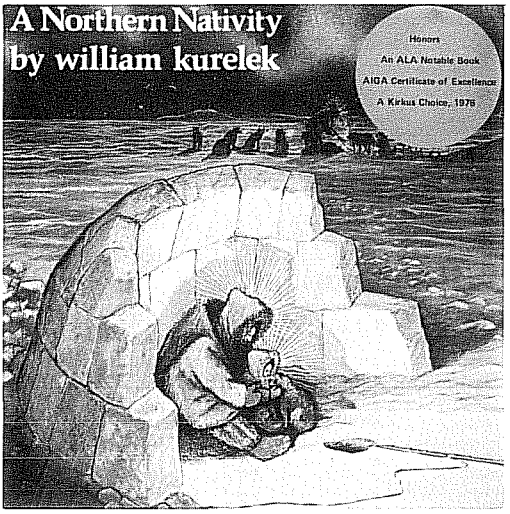

Fig. 5 *The holy family as Eskimo, A northern nativity,* (#1) and cover, n.p.

my hostel in Halifax (15). In this story, the Holy Family is presented as blacks. Eskimos, Indians, Negroes, Ukrainians and poor Caucasians, Kurelek hopes, will one day receive, like him, the universality of the Christmas message.

The settings in *A northern nativity* depict diverse winter landscapes across Canada: the picturesque cliffs in Newfoundland (#12) contrast with the crumbling slagheaps of an iron mine in Manitoba (#5), while the billowing smoke stacks of the mine are the antithesis of the clear, unpolluted sky of the Rockies on the next page. In these illustrations, night skies, clear winter days and evening clouds express in colour and tone the time of day. On other pages, feathery snowflakes (#2) or streaking blizzards (#20) imply the fickleness of our winters. However, the visual richness of these landscapes is absent in the rendering of the figures. The majority of the figures in this book lack the visual energy of the actors in *A prairie boy's winter*. Particularly the illustrations of Mary and the Christ Child seem often incidental to the composition (Fig. 6). The bent-over figure of Mary hardens into a stereotyped pose. The once lively contour tightens into an un-expressive outline. Gestures tend to become stiff, with the exception of *The Holy Family as Eskimo* (#1) and *Flight into a Far Country* (#20), where the people will convey a vibrant energy.

In this pious book, William Kurelek seems to have outgrown the destructive forces of his father, for Joseph is portrayed here as a caring parent. On the wake of this personal victory, one might conjecture that this deterioration of the rendering of the figures implies Kurelek's own physical condition and foreshadows his death in 1977, one year after the publication of this book.

This interpretation of Kurelek's classic, award-winning children's books contrasts with the naive praise by reviewers who missed the connection between

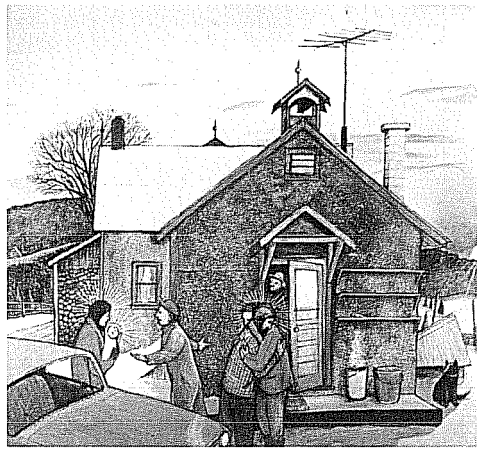

Fig. 6 *The welcome at the country mission, A northern nativity,* (#19) n.p.

the drawings and the human turmoil of the artist's childhood, hinted at in the text of these picture books. Admittedly, without the confirmation of the text and the autobiography, *Someone with me,* it would be difficult to discern in the drawings a content referring to Kurelek's traumatic youth and his struggle to find himself through religion. The attractive appearance of these illustrations frustrates precise interpretation because the viewer tends to concentrate on the reality of the situation overtly expressed and does not perceive the covert representation of bad memories.

NOTES

[1]Kimon Nicolaides, *The natural way to draw* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969).
[2]William Kurelek, *Someone with me* (Itaca, 1973, rev. ed. Toronto, 1980). The revised edition of 1980 is used here in all references except in footnote 5.
[3]Kurelek, *A prairie boy's winter* (Montreal: Tundra Books, 1973).
[4]Kurelek, *A prairie boy's summer* (Montreal: Tundra Books, 1975. Kurelek, *Lumberjack* (Montreal: Tundra Books, 1974). Kurelek, *A northern nativity,* (Montreal: Tundra Books, 1976).
[5]*Someone with me,* 1973, p. 307.
[6]Irma McDonough, *In Review: Canadian Books for Children,* Winter, 1975, p. 34.
[7]William Kurelek, *Fields* (Montreal: Tundra Books, 1976).
[8]Callie Israel, *In Review: Canadian Books for Children,* Winter, 1975, p. 35.
[9]W.O. Mitchell, *Who has seen the wind* (Toronto, 1976).
[10]*Lumberjack,* Foreword, n.p.

Jetske Sybesma-Ironside *teaches the history of Renaissance art and modern art in the Department of Art and Design at the University of Alberta. She is a practicing artist.* Professors Ironside and Muriel Whitaker *combined forces to write and illustrate a picture-story book,* Pernilla in the perilous forest *(Ottawa: Oberon Press, 1979).*