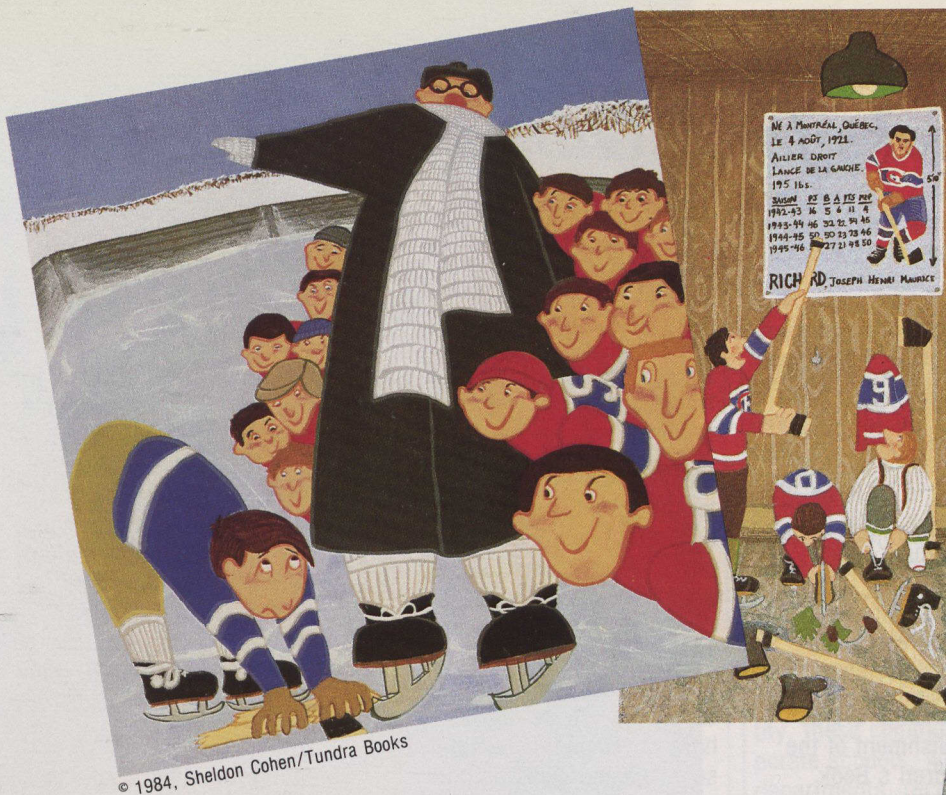


Munsch decided that he would spend his life working with children. He studied early childhood education and took a job in a non-profit day-care centre, where he began telling stories. It was at this centre that he met his wife Ann. Together they came to Canada to work in the Department of Family Studies at the University of Guelph, 80 km south of Toronto. When the director of the department heard Munsch telling his stories to children, he encouraged him to have them published. Munsch sent off some manuscripts and a month later was signed by Annick Press of Toronto.

Today, more than 1.5 million of Munsch's books have been sold and interest in the author is increasing all the time. (Some 425 000 books sold in the first six months of 1988 alone.) His stories have been translated into every major language and are available on tapes and records. Since his debut in 1979 with *The Dark*, Munsch has published two and sometimes three books each year. They are consistently winners of the "Our Choice" award from the Canadian Children's Book Centre and, for one of his albums, *Murmel, Murmel*, Munsch won the 1985 Juno Award for children's Album of the Year.

One of his stories, *The Paperbag Princess* (more than 500 000 copies sold), has achieved such cult status that other writers have referred to it in their books. Munsch's stories are primarily about contemporary urban, domestic life. The words of the stories are simple and rhythmic and the stories themselves so popular because they deal with familiar, recognizable childhood experiences.

In one amusing Munsch story, *Thomas' Snowsuit*, a school teacher tries to put a young boy, Thomas, into his snowsuit. Instead, the teacher herself ends up wear-



Roch Carrier's *The Hockey Sweater*: a classic that continues to delight young and old alike.

ing the snowsuit, leaving Thomas in the teacher's dress. Then, when the principal arrives on the scene and tries to get the snowsuit on Thomas, the principal ends up in the teacher's dress and the teacher in the principal's suit, with his pipe in her mouth! Thomas, of course, remains without his snowsuit.

Full of contemporary references, from computers and chewing gum to snowsuits and cheeseburgers, Munsch's books also have a folk-tale resilience and robustness that make them contemporary classics. And like folklore, the stories have a life of their own outside the picture-book format. Munsch, you see, gives live performances for children where he engagingly tells his stories aloud. Two recordings by Munsch, *Munsch: Favourite Stories* and *Murmel, Murmel*,

Munsch: More Outrageous Stories, show that the written versions are really like scripts or musical scores.

Today, Robert Munsch is so popular that his shows are sold out months in advance. He is considered to have the potential to eclipse all others in his field.

William Kurelek

Eleven years after his death, William Kurelek's reputation as a writer continues to grow and his children's books are now more popular than ever. This is due in large part to *A Prairie Boy's Winter* (1973) and *A Prairie Boy's Summer* (1975) — two classics that continue to win new audiences both in Canada and around the world. To date, more than 400 000 copies of Kurelek's books have been sold worldwide and rights have been sold to Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Greenland, West Germany, the United States and Great Britain.

Since its first publication in 1973, *A Prairie Boy's Winter* has won more awards than any other Canadian book. It was the first Canadian book to be chosen "Best Illustrated Book of the Year" by the New York Times and the first to be featured in Graphis' prestigious selection of the best illustrated children's books of the preceding four years.

A Prairie Boy's Winter and *A Prairie Boy's Summer* are reflections upon Kurelek's childhood years. *Lumberjack* (1974) recounts, on 26 beautiful canvases, Kurelek's own experience as a lumberjack in the Canadian North. *A Northern Nativity* (1976) is the unique account of a boy, William, who dreams that the Nativity takes place in northern snows and that the Christ Child is born to Inuit.

Kurelek's books for children have won numerous major international awards and