

## THE LITTLE TOWNS OF BETHLEHEM

BY JOHN TERPSTRA

For unto us  
                                   in Aklavik  
 is born a child, in  
                                   Attawapiskat  
                                   Gaspé  
                                   Cornerbrook, Newfoundland.  
 And a son is given, in  
                                   Westaskiwin  
                                   Bella Coola  
 Flin Flon.  
                                   And the future of the whole earth  
 is placed upon the shoulders of the daughter of  
 Tuktoyaktuk  
                                   Tignish  
                                   Swan Lake.  
 And the place of their birth is called  
                                   Vermilion  
 Temiskaming  
                                   Nain.  
                                   Picture Butte

An angel of the Lord appears in the night sky  
 over Rankin Inlet, over  
                                   Iqaluit, saying  
 This shall be the sign: you will find the babe  
 wrapped in cast-off flannel, lying  
 on a bed of straw, in  
                                   Esther, Alberta  
 in a winter feeding stall  
 an open boxcar, outside  
                                   Kindersley, Saskatchewan.

And sure, several hours north  
 from Hogg's Hollow, just this side  
                                   Englehart  
 you see one, sleeping in its mother's arms  
 on the soft shoulder, where their car broke down.  
 And the dark highway shines  
                                   imperishable life  
 while helping them  
                                   beneath these northern lights  
 and driving on, through  
                                   Cochrane  
                                   Kapuskinging  
                                   Hearst  
 past Nipigon, and on  
                                   to the little town of Emo  
 Rainy River Region,  
                                   and least among the little dots  
 that lie scattered as stars  
                                   and litter the map  
 of Northwest Ontario,  
 where they're expecting you,  
                                   as in so many other  
 of these least likely dots  
                                   this expectation  
 also is; in  
                                   Miniota  
                                   Pickle Lake  
                                   Ohswegen  
                                   Glance Bay.

For unto us.  
 For into all  
                                   this night  
 is born a child, this night  
                                   bearing each,  
 and the places of their birth,  
                                   and nativity is given  
                                   every name.

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