

## *Unit 3*

# *The COUNTRY GROWS*

# OVERVIEW

Chapter 4 of this unit begins with an examination of the problems which limited the ability of the fishery to remain the primary economic activity, and consequently government attempts to diversify the economy of Newfoundland and Labrador. The building of a railway across the island of Newfoundland was seen as crucial to opening up the interior, and accessing the resources found there.

New industries, especially forestry and mining, created new towns in the interior of Newfoundland. The new industries impacted the lifestyle and culture of Newfoundland and Labrador, and created a shift in the geographical distribution of the country's population, as thousands of people moved to regions that offered greater economic opportunities. The population of Newfoundland and Labrador continued to increase throughout the first half of the twentieth century, despite significant emigration to Canada and the United States. New groups of immigrants, especially those of Chinese, Lebanese, and Jewish origin, immigrated to Newfoundland and Labrador from the late 1800s to the 1920s.

Major lifestyle changes were experienced in many communities, as the result of advancements in communication, transportation, education, and health care. Life in Labrador in the late 1800s and early 1900s differed in many ways from life on the island. Further encroachment of Europeans into territory inhabited by Aboriginal peoples continued to change the lifestyles of these peoples.

The labour movement was slower to develop in Newfoundland and Labrador than in many North American cities. Unionization and the earliest examples of formal workers' unions in the country will be studied.

Chapter 5 outlines Newfoundland and Labrador's many contributions to the First World War, and the resulting social, political, and economic effects on the country. There were several campaigns for women's suffrage which culminated in 1925,

when women won the right to vote and run for political office. During the 1930s the worldwide Great Depression was a time of widespread poverty and suffering in Newfoundland and Labrador.

In 1933 an Imperial Royal Commission was appointed by the British government to examine and report on conditions in Newfoundland and Labrador. This commission produced the Amulree Report, which called for the end of responsible government and the establishment of a Commission of Government. This government, which lasted from 1934 until 1949, introduced reforms in the fishery, education, public health, welfare, and law enforcement.

The Second World War lasted from 1939-1945. As was the case in the First World War, Newfoundland and Labrador played a major role in the war. Foreign military bases were established in Newfoundland and Labrador. The war had economic, social, and political impacts on the country.

The Great Depression and the worldwide drop in fur prices in the 1930s adversely affected all Aboriginal groups. There were also other challenges to living a traditional lifestyle.

In the early 1940s, it was recognized that the Commission of Government would likely end when the war was over, but the question was what form of government would replace it. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador would decide their own political fate. Representatives were elected to a National Convention in 1946, which would recommend what forms of government would be placed on a referendum ballot. The three options on the ballot were responsible government, continuation of the Commission of Government, and confederation with Canada.



# *Experiencing* The Arts

*Exploring art forms and artistic techniques*

## *Songwriting*

*“... we have been writing songs for 500 years ... These songs were written to document the lives of the people who wrote them. They were poets who wrote about things in their lives, about their communities ... This is who we are and this is where we came from, and this is where we live and why.”*

– Ron Hynes, singer/songwriter



# A Look at Our Songwriting History

As long as humans have inhabited “this place” there has been music. The earliest known grave in our province contained a flute-styled whistle made from bird bone. This archaeological data provides evidence that the Labrador Archaic culture (7000-1500 BCE) enjoyed music as part of their way of life.



Fig. 1 The bodhran, used centuries ago in Ireland, is still used in Irish Newfoundland music.



Fig. 2 Drum dancers, Nain

## Traditional Music

Songs have been passed down from generation to generation for thousands of years as a part of human history. For example, Innu, Inuit, and Mi’kmaq still use drum dancing and singing as part of their traditional rituals; Inuit also continue to use throat singing. Music and songs were a primary means of knowledge transmission among Aboriginal people.

Early immigrants from Europe and other areas also brought music traditions with them. Performers of Irish music, for instance, still use the **bodhran**, while French performers continue to play the accordion and fiddle. Music, it may be argued, is central to our being.

Early European settlers in Newfoundland and Labrador sang songs around the fire in the evenings. Often these were traditional songs or new lyrics set to old tunes. Folk historians also have identified songs that are uniquely Newfoundland and Labradorian in both melody and lyrics. One of these is “She’s Like the Swallow,” which was first written down in the 1930s by an unknown

songwriter. Composed in the tradition of a tragic love song from England, it has no matching English tune.

There was very little formal music training in most Newfoundland and Labrador communities. As many communities did not have musical instruments, such as pianos, most songs were sung unaccompanied or **a capella**. These tunes often were composed to tell a part of the community’s history.\* Over time, these songs were often embellished as various singers told the story.

Around 1875, Henry LeMessurier, then deputy minister of customs in St. John’s, followed the tradition of putting new words to old tunes when he took the English capstan shanty “Spanish Ladies” and wrote new words to describe the life choices of a fisher named Bob Pittman. However, he did borrow and adapt one line from the original chorus of the song: he replaced the phrase “We’ll rant and we’ll roar like true British soldiers” with “We’ll rant and we’ll roar like true Newfoundlanders.”

\*Many songs were written about disasters, as they were very much a part of the lives of people who lived by the sea.

# How One Song Inspired Another

Almost 150 years ago, Henry LeMessurier used the tune and a few lines from the song “Spanish Ladies” to create “The Ryans and the Pittmans.” Look at

the first parts of the original song and the “new” song to see how one song inspired another.

## Spanish Ladies

Farewell and adieu to you,  
Spanish Ladies,  
Farewell and adieu to  
you, ladies of Spain;  
For we've received  
orders for to sail for ol' England,  
But we hope in a  
short time to see you again.

We'll rant and we'll roar  
like true British sailors,  
We'll rant and we'll roar  
all on the salt sea.  
Until we strike soundings  
in the channel of old England;  
From Ushant to Scilly  
is thirty-five leagues.

## The Ryans and the Pittmans

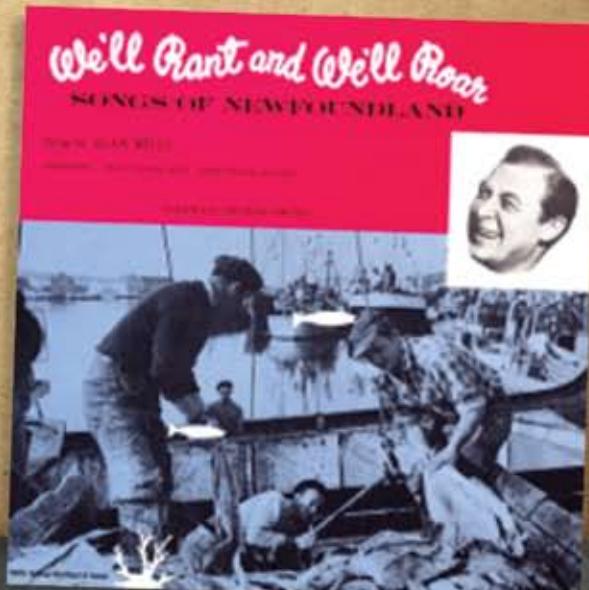
My name it is Robert,  
they call me Bob Pittman;  
I sail in the Ino with Skipper Tim Brown.  
I'm bound to have Dolly or Biddy or Molly  
As soon as I'm able to plank the cash down.

### Chorus:

We'll rant and we'll roar  
like true Newfoundlanders,  
We'll rant and we'll roar  
on deck and below  
Until we see bottom inside  
the two sunkers,  
When straight through  
the Channel to Toslow we'll go.

**Fig. 3 We'll Rant and We'll Roar: Songs of Newfoundland, 1958 record album**

Although written in the late 1800s, “The Ryans and the Pittmans” has remained popular over the years.



Many English songs, such as “Spanish Ladies” mentioned above, describe the landmarks that sailors would have seen as they travelled through the English Channel. In a similar way, Newfoundland and Labrador fishers wrote songs to memorize their own region’s navigational sites. An example of this would be “Wadham’s Song.” Written in 1756, this song describes in 11 stanzas the sea route from Cape Bonavista to Fogo Harbour. An example from this song is:

When Joe Batt's Arm you are abreast,  
Fogo Harbour bears due west;  
But unkind fortune unluck laid  
A sunken rock right in the trade.

Other traditional working songs establish a rhythm for pulling large objects. An example of this is “Tickle Cove Pond,” written in the late 1800s by Mark Walker. This song describes pulling out a horse that has fallen through the ice while pulling a load of logs.

Oh, lay hold William Oldford,  
Lay hold William White,  
Lay hold of the cordage  
And pull all your might ...



**Fig. 4** An example of acculturation: an Inuit brass band in Hebron, c. 1935-45

Playing instruments provided by the Moravians, this Inuit band performed mostly German chorale texts. On special occasions, they played outdoors.



**Fig. 5** Cast of "Abie's Irish Rose," St. John's, 1929

Operettas such as this one were entertaining audiences by the end of the 19th century.

## Formal Music Education

Most traditional songwriters learned about music from their family or other community members. In contrast, formal music training arrived in Newfoundland and Labrador with military bands and the establishment of churches in the eighteenth century.

One of the first examples of this occurred when the Moravians came to Labrador from Bohemia via London and Greenland. They brought instruments, such as violins, clarinets, and trombones. Many Inuit adopted these instruments, along with choral singing, to the extent that traditional Labrador Inuit music was almost completely lost. Another example of church influence is the introduction of hymns to the North Shore by Methodists.

Although many people in Newfoundland and Labrador already knew how to play instruments, the first formal

music education on the island was established by the Roman Catholic Presentation Sisters in Harbour Grace in 1851. This teaching order provided music instruction and arranged for students to be certified by what would later become the Trinity College of Music\* in London.

In the nineteenth century, Harbour Grace competed with St. John's to become the centre of musical performance on the island. Contemporary European compositions and classical music were performed in both towns by visiting bands and performers, as well as by local talent in variety concerts. While some considered operatic music more sophisticated than traditional folk songs, old-time music survived in kitchen parties and rural variety shows.

\*Today, many students take the Royal Conservatory of Music exams based in Toronto.

## Preserving Our Music

In 1927, businessman and nationalist Gerald S. Doyle printed the first of three songbooks titled *The Old Time Songs and Poetry of Newfoundland*. Later editions followed in 1940 and 1955. In his introduction, Doyle wrote that his intention was to “preserve and perpetuate” the songs of his country. Doyle’s publications were the first time many of these songs had been printed. Where possible, Doyle recorded the name of a song’s writer; however, by the time he published his songbooks, the origins of many traditional songs were already unknown. For newer songs, Doyle tended to have more information. For instance, in a note for the song, “Huntingdon Shore,” Doyle wrote: “This song was written in the sixties. It was written by a St. John’s fisherman named Doyle, a native of Riverhead. Young Goodridge, mentioned in the song, was a well-known merchant of the day.”

Two other well-known songwriters/song collectors from this period are Johnny Burke\* and James Murphy. One of the reasons we know of their work today is because they printed copies of their compositions in one-page editions called “broadbards.” They also compiled several other songbooks they referred to as “songsters,” as these publications included both collected songs and original compositions.

**Fig. 6 Sharing our songs**

In the first half of the 20th century, several printed collections of the colony’s songs appeared. These helped to spread and popularize traditional Newfoundland and Labrador music. One of the most popular songbooks, Gerald S. Doyle’s *The Old Time Songs and Poetry of Newfoundland*, was published in 1927.

### *The Old Time Songs and Poetry of Newfoundland*

“Uncle Joe Driver from Island  
Came  
With his hatchet, his hammer,  
his chisel and plane,  
The wind from the westward, it  
vane on to blow,  
And Uncle Joe Driver got  
bogged in the snow.”

Songs of  
FOOLSCHE  
HUMOR.  
TRAGEDY and  
HISTORY.  
From the Days  
of Our Forefathers

Printed by the Publishers of  
“THE FAMILY FIRESIDE”  
November, 1927, for  
**Gerald S. Doyle**  
317 Water Street, St. John’s, Nfld.

↗ Doyle means the 1860s!

\*Burke wrote the famous song  
“The Kelligrews Soiree.”

## THE STORY BEHIND THE SQUID JIGGIN’ GROUND



**Fig. 7 Arthur Scammell, c. 1944.**

Gerald S. Doyle’s books not only launched a revival of old-time music, but also encouraged songwriters who were his contemporaries. In 1940, his second book included a little-known song written in 1928 called “Squid Jiggin’ Ground.” This song had been a school project written by a 15-year-old boy, Arthur Scammell from Change Islands, who had spent the summer fishing with his father. Scammell wrote his words to be sung to the Irish fiddle tune “Larry O’Gaff.”

“Squid Jiggin’ Ground” quickly became the most popular song in Doyle’s songbook. In 1943, “Squid Jiggin’ Ground,” the first Newfoundland folk song to be commercially recorded, was released by Hank Snow. Over the next 37 years, Scammell earned \$35 000 in royalties for sales of the record and sheet music from this one song. Throughout his life he continued to write songs describing the disappearing lifestyle of traditional Newfoundland outports.

## More Recently

During the first half of the twentieth century, it became easier for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to listen to music from outside their communities. The introduction of radio and later, the presence of American and Canadian soldiers stationed here, influenced local music tastes. Country, jazz, rock and roll, and other popular music made a big impression on young musicians. Wilf Doyle formed a big band, The Solidaires, who performed swing music. Jimmy Linegar became one of Newfoundland and Labrador's first country singers.

With the arrival of television, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians began watching their own music on CBNT's locally produced show *All Around the Circle*, which aired from 1964-1975. In mainland Canada, expatriate Newfoundlanders and Labradorians filled dance halls in Ontario and the Maritimes to hear Dick Nolan and Harry Hibbs, who started performing in Toronto in 1958 and 1968 respectively. These musicians blended dance music with traditional Irish and Newfoundland songs. At one point, Harry Hibbs sold over 1.5 million recordings, breaking Canadian sales records.



**Fig. 8 Harry Hibbs, 1971**

With record sales of over 1.5 million, Harry Hibbs is one of the top-selling Canadian artists of all time.



**Fig. 9 The cast of *All Around the Circle***

This weekly half-hour program featured music from Newfoundland and Labrador. Originally a local show, it went national when it became part of CBC's lineup in 1969.

The 1970s brought a folk revival movement that spread across Europe and throughout North America. Its impact was also felt here. Some of the musicians influenced by it include Anita Best, Ron Hynes, Harry Martin, Pamela Morgan, and the bands Figgy Duff and The Wonderful Grand Band. Often these musicians and groups combined traditional music with rock and roll. As Pamela Morgan once said, “When I was young, traditional music was considered to be representing a backward way of life, which people were trying to forget in favour of a more modern lifestyle. Nowadays, people embrace and celebrate their culture and their music; partly influenced by the cultural revolution in the 70s ...”

Today, Newfoundland and Labrador musicians use a wide variety of musical forms in their original compositions. Amelia Curran sings about her life experiences in alternative and folk melodies, while Tim Baker from Hey Rosetta! combines classical music with rock and roll and pop sounds. The Idlers and Jim Fidler are examples of reggae musicians from our province. This generation of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians is following the example of their ancestors as they put words to music they love.

**Fig. 10** Hey Rosetta!, a popular indie rock band from Newfoundland and Labrador

**Fig. 11**



### *Experiencing The Arts*

To learn more about songwriters Ron Hynes and Harry Martin, turn to pages 622 and 626.

## ***Exercise One:***

Listen to five traditional songs about “this place.” What types of stories are being told?

Fig. 12



# How to Write a Song

Think about all the songs you know. You probably have a playlist in your head of over a hundred songs. You may also carry around hundreds of tunes on an MP3 player. Your great-great-grandparents didn't have that technology. In fact, many songs back then weren't even written down and few people had a formal music education. However, that didn't stop people from creating and sharing new music. In this chapter, you are asked to try your hand at songwriting. This may seem intimidating, but don't worry! The process that follows is directed towards the beginning composer with little or no musical background.

## General Approaches

Songwriters generally use one of three approaches when creating songs:

1. Compose the music and then compose the lyrics
2. Compose the lyrics and then compose the music
3. Compose the lyrics and the music at the same time ... singing and playing the words and the melody until the two seem to fit

In this chapter, you will use a modified version of the first approach – you will select an existing melody and then compose your own lyrics. However, before you begin crafting your lyrics, there are several points to consider.

## How it Happens

Lyrics are frequently written in two main ways. The first is sometimes referred to as inspiration. The songwriter experiences a brainwave and quickly writes the song.\* For example, Eric Clapton wrote “Wonderful Tonight” in the space of 15 minutes while he waited for his wife to get

dressed for a dinner party. However, many artists say while inspiration does strike occasionally, most of the time they have to work to create their art. While it is called by different names, we will refer to this method as **workshopping**.

*\*This is more likely to happen with an experienced songwriter who can draw on various songwriting techniques that he or she has used before.*

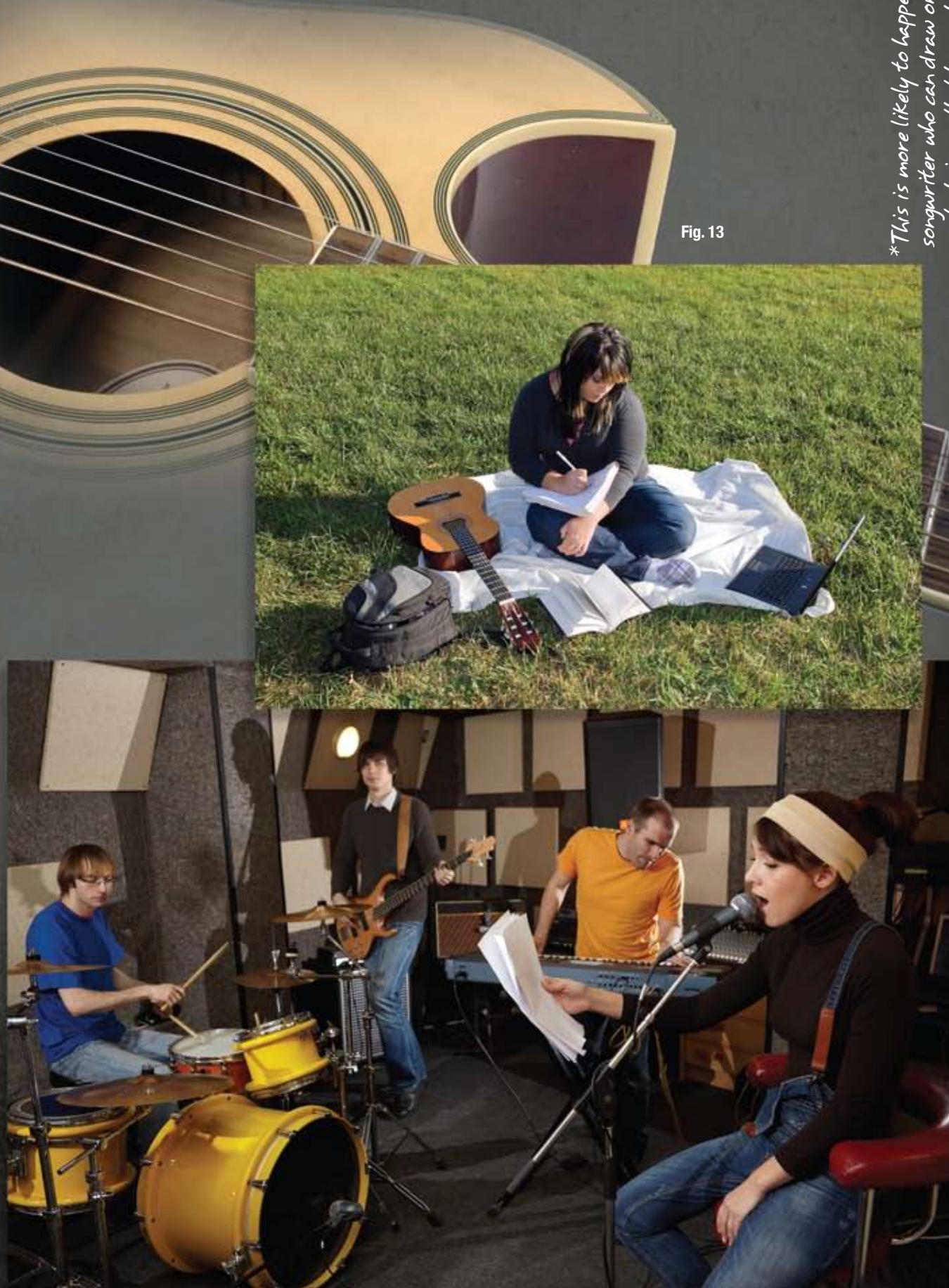
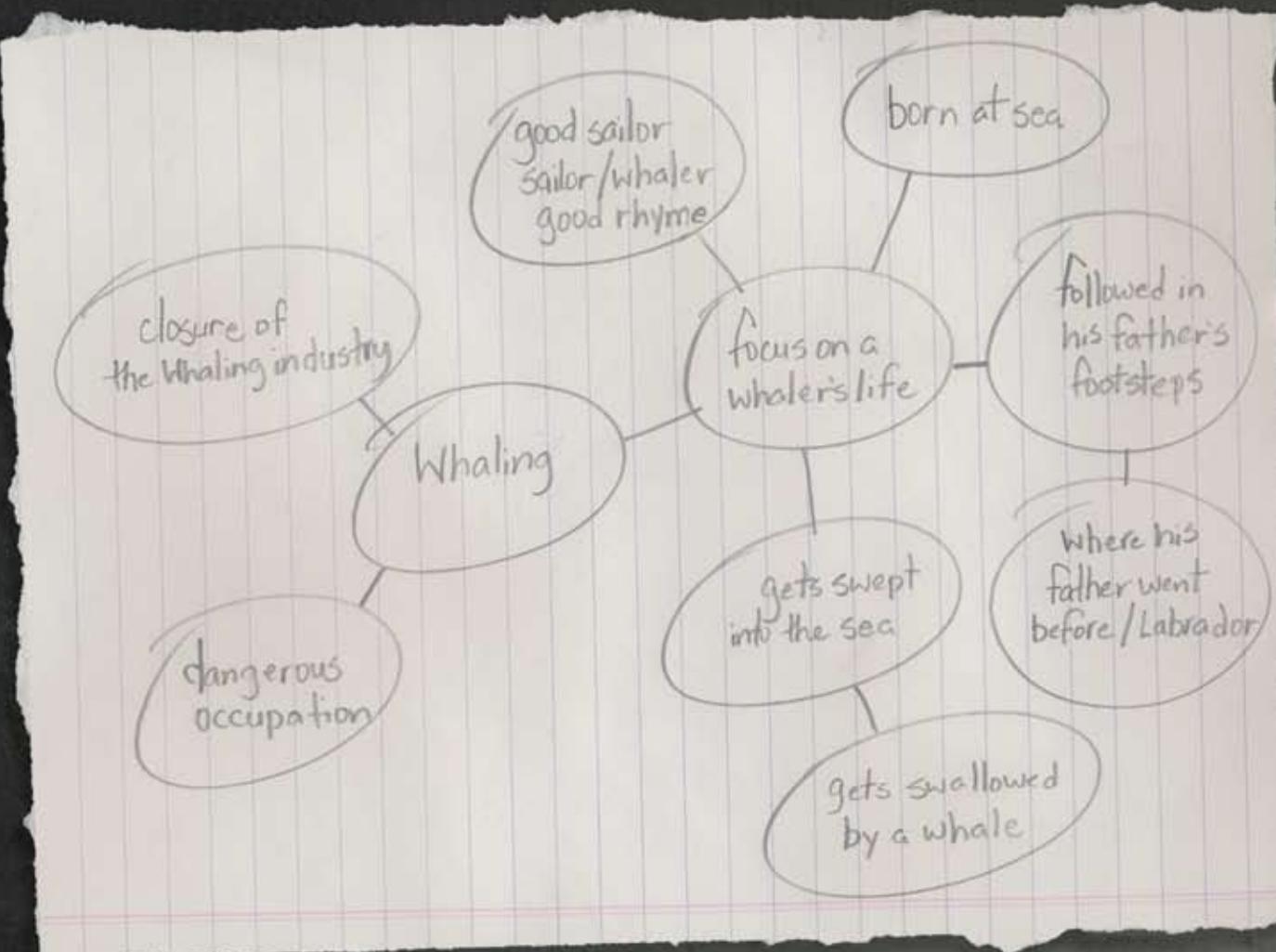


Fig. 13



**Fig. 14** An idea web that might be an inspiration for a traditional Newfoundland and Labrador song.  
Can you guess which one it is?

Workshopping a song can be similar to writing a story idea in English class. First you identify a theme around which to craft a story or song. Then you need to research the facts around the experience or event and establish a way to explore it in the story or song. For instance, Bob Dylan's "Hurricane" and Damhnait Doyle's "31 Years" are both examples of songs that explore the experience of those wrongfully accused of murder. Frequently, during the research stage the writer or composer takes time to brainstorm his or her idea. In fact, techniques such as creating an idea web are very helpful. After this preparation has taken place, the task of composing the actual lyrics begins.

This process of writing a song can either be a solitary exercise – where you think about and explore a particular event, idea, or theme alone – or it can be done with another individual or as part of a larger group. You may need to experiment to see which way works best for you. In either case, it is important to have a clear goal in mind.

Sometimes all it takes is one main idea or “hook” to

drive a song. Once you start thinking about songwriting, you may find that you are hit with an idea for a composition at unexpected times. To take advantage of these moments of inspiration, it is helpful to keep a notebook with you. Having a notebook dedicated for this purpose helps avoid situations when you say, “Gee, I had a great idea yesterday, and now I don’t quite remember what it was ...” Whatever happens, don’t let your inspiration slip away. Pop star Britney Spears has said that when she thinks of a melody, she calls up her answering machine and sings it so she won’t forget it. Similarly, Newfoundland and Labrador musician Émile Benoit once told the story of how he wrote the song “Émile’s Dream”:

*At 3 o’clock in the morning, I woke up and here was the tune in my mind. So, I got up and I took my violin and I played it. I had no tape recorder so I called my sister and told her that it was an emergency and she had to tape my jig over the telephone because if I went back to bed, I might forget it. So I went back to bed, and sure enough when I got up, the jig was gone. A good thing I called my sister.*



**Fig. 15** Songwriting can be a solitary exercise or done in a group.

## Sharing Your Songs

As you craft your own compositions, take time to share your work with others. Doing this usually helps to clarify your own ideas and refine your music. Friends and family can be good sources of feedback. It is also useful to attend songwriting circles. These events are usually formal opportunities for songwriters to get together and sing songs

that are completed or in progress. Usually the songwriters provide commentary on their songwriting process and the inspiration behind the songs. This kind of interaction often provides ideas for new songs. Also, it is a good opportunity to meet other songwriters with whom you might want to collaborate.

# The Theme/Topic Approach

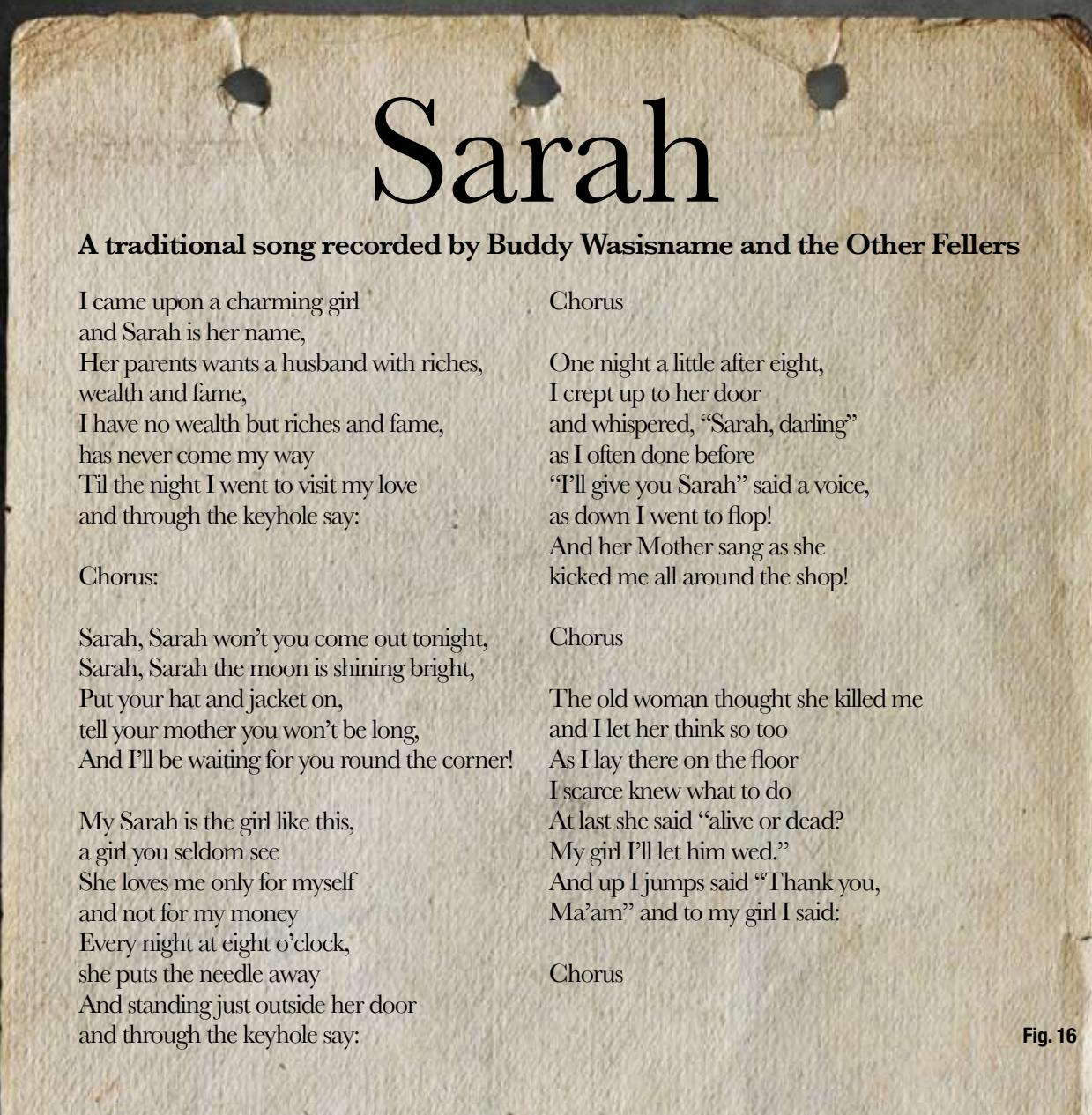
There is no right or wrong way to go about writing the lyrics of a song; nor are there any magic formulas. However, there are several approaches that songwriters use when they are workshopping a song. In this “How To” we will feature one technique that is frequently used – the theme/topic approach.

## Step 1: Create a Title

The first step in this songwriting approach, as with many art forms, is to decide what subject you want to explore. In this course you have been exposed to many different ideas and themes that relate to “this place.” Your challenge will be to select one story/event/experience from this material around which to craft a song. As this exercise will take some time to complete, you should select an area which interests you. In fact, many songwriters suggest that it is helpful to write about something that you know well, that you are passionate about, and that you think is important.

Once you have identified the focus of your song, you need to create a title for it. This theme/topic will guide your work as you craft your song and, ideally, be included in the song’s lyrics. Here are some examples of song titles that reflect the way of life in our province:

- “The Kelligrews Soiree” – a song about a community gathering
- “Sarah” – a whimsical love song
- “Wave Over Wave” – a song about being at sea
- “Out From St. Leonard’s” – a song about resettlement



**Sarah**

**A traditional song recorded by Buddy Wasisname and the Other Fellers**

I came upon a charming girl  
and Sarah is her name,  
Her parents wants a husband with riches,  
wealth and fame,  
I have no wealth but riches and fame,  
has never come my way  
Til the night I went to visit my love  
and through the keyhole say:

Chorus:

Sarah, Sarah won't you come out tonight,  
Sarah, Sarah the moon is shining bright,  
Put your hat and jacket on,  
tell your mother you won't be long  
And I'll be waiting for you round the corner!

My Sarah is the girl like this,  
a girl you seldom see  
She loves me only for myself  
and not for my money  
Every night at eight o'clock,  
she puts the needle away  
And standing just outside her door  
and through the keyhole say:

Chorus

One night a little after eight,  
I crept up to her door  
and whispered, “Sarah, darling”  
as I often done before  
“I'll give you Sarah” said a voice,  
as down I went to flop!  
And her Mother sang as she  
kicked me all around the shop!

Chorus

The old woman thought she killed me  
and I let her think so too  
As I lay there on the floor  
I scarce knew what to do  
At last she said “alive or dead?”  
My girl I'll let him wed.”  
And up I jumps said “Thank you,  
Ma'am” and to my girl I said:

Chorus

**Fig. 16**

*You have covered a lot of themes and ideas so far in this course. If you find it challenging to narrow your focus to one topic, take a few minutes and scan through the table of contents or the index of this book for ideas. You might also find it helpful to glance through the book and identify some of your favourite visuals.*

## Step 2: Research and Brainstorm

Now that you have established your theme/topic, you need to write what you know about your topic. This doesn't have to be in the form of an essay – jot notes will work just fine. In your notebook, record what you know about the experience you have chosen.

Assuming that your title relates to a story/event/experience, create an outline of the details you want to include in your song. After you have completed the outline, review it to look for gaps. You may need to complete some research to fill in any information you are missing.

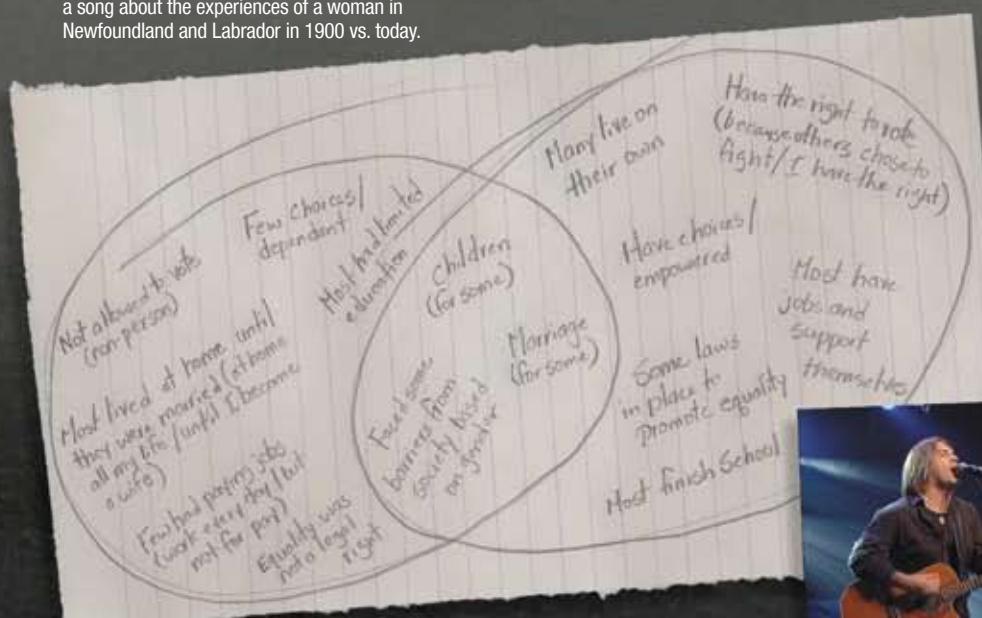
When reviewing your outline, you may find that asking yourself the following questions will help you to fine-tune it:

- What happened in the story/event/experience you will be writing about?
- To whom did it happen? Who was involved?
- When did it happen?

- Why did it happen?
- Has something similar ever happened before? Is it likely to happen again?
- How did the participants feel while it was happening?
- Was the story/event/experience considered a good or bad thing? If there are different perspectives on this, which one are you going to take?
- What happened as a result of the story/event/experience? Was it significant?

Once you have a solid outline for your story, you can work on creating a palette of words or phrases that you can use in your song. Use your notebook to record your ideas as you engage in various brainstorming activities. You may want to create an idea web (like the one on page 276) or another graphic organizer to help you select the best phrases to use in your song.

**Fig. 17** This Venn diagram explores ideas for a song about the experiences of a woman in Newfoundland and Labrador in 1900 vs. today.



**Fig. 18 Great Big Sea in concert**

Sean McCann of Great Big Sea says, "Our music is of Newfoundland. It would be impossible to do what we do if we were from anywhere else. Our songs come from the sea and the cliffs and the rocks and all the other natural beauties our province provides. Without her we simply couldn't exist."



# Let Me Fish Off Cape St. Mary's

by Otto P. Kelland

Take me back to my Western boat,  
Let me fish off Cape St. Mary's  
Where the hagdowns sail and the foghorns wail  
With my friends the Browns and the Clearys.  
Let me fish off Cape St. Mary's.

Let me feel my dory lift  
To the broad Atlantic combers  
Where the tide rips swirl and the wild ducks whirl  
Where Old Neptune calls the number  
'Neath the broad Atlantic combers ...

Let me sail up Golden Bay  
With my oilskins all a streamin' ...  
From the thunder squall when I hauled me trawl  
And my old Cape Ann a gleamin'  
With my oil skins all a streamin' ...

Let me view that rugged shore,  
Where the beach is all a-glisten  
With the Capelin spawn where from dusk to dawn  
You bait your trawl and listen  
To the undertow a-hissin'.

When I reach that last big shoal  
Where the ground swells break asunder,  
Where the wild sands roll to the surges toll.  
Let me be a man and take it  
When my dory fails to make it.

Take me back to that snug green cove  
Where the seas roll up their thunder.  
There let me rest in the earth's cool breast  
Where the stars shine out their wonder,  
And the seas roll up their thunder.

The first verse of "The Hills of Old Wyoming" goes:  
Let me ride on a trail  
In the hills of old Wyoming  
Where the coyotes wail in the gloamin'  
For it's there where my heart's at home.

And it appears this song was likely an adaptation of an even older song called "The Ballad of Barbara Allen"!

## Step 3: Select a Melody/Craft the Lyrics

Now that you have established a focus for your song, you are ready to choose an existing melody around which to craft your lyrics. In the future, you may wish to create your own unique melody for your lyrics. However, as this exercise is focusing on the process of lyric writing, we are asking you to select a tune that you already know for your song. This method was used by Otto Kelland in 1947, when he wrote the well-loved song "Let Me Fish Off Cape St. Mary's," based on an existing melody from "The Hills of Old Wyoming."

Remember that the tune you select should help reflect the intent of what you want to share with the listener. If it is a song about loss, then a slow melody might be best to use. For example, the melody of "Wave over Wave" or "Out from St. Leonard's" might better lend itself to a sad song than would the lively melody of a song like "The Ryans and the Pittmans."

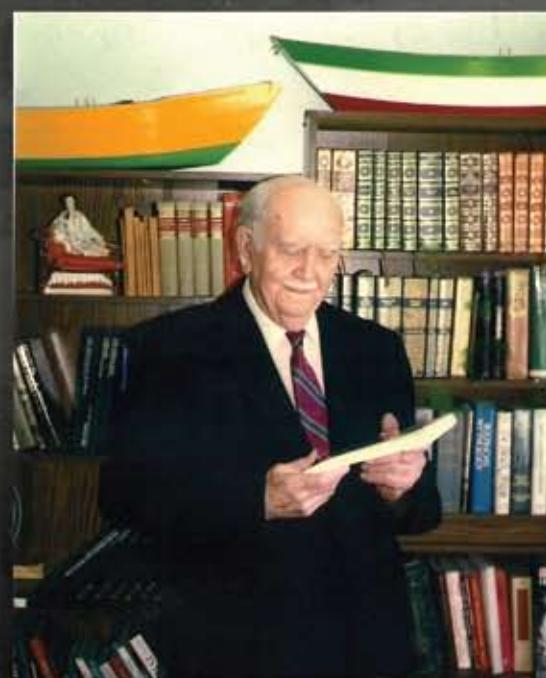


Fig. 20 Otto Kelland wrote the lyrics for the well-loved song "Let Me Fish Off Cape St. Mary's."

Before you craft your lyrics around a melody (a process known as **phrasing**), you need to understand the structure of the tune you have selected. Listen carefully to the melody you have chosen and answer the following questions:

1. What is the form of your song? Does it have a chorus? If so, note when it appears.
2. What is the pattern for the **rhythm** contained in each verse/chorus?
3. How many syllables are there in each line?

4. Does the song need to rhyme? If so, what is the rhyming pattern? Hint: You'll know the song needs to rhyme if a pattern in the melody repeats itself. For example, tap out the first two lines of "Jack Was Every Inch a Sailor." The first two lines have the same rhythm pattern and, therefore, rhyme: Jack was every inch a **sailor**/ five-and-twenty years a **whaler**.



**Fig. 21 The Flummies**

Leander Baikie of The Flummies says, "Traditional songs of this province are inspired through life experiences while travelling on the land, over the water, or in the community. Our lyrics are stories put to music, and (they) only become special when the next generation discovers their true meaning."

Once you have your mind wrapped around the overall composition of your melody, you have two more decisions to make: what voice and tense are you going to use in your song? If you use a first-person voice, you will be writing as if the event or experience in the song is happening/has happened to the narrator. If you use a third-person voice, the narrator of the song will be describing what is happening/has happened to someone else. You also need to decide if you are going to be describing the event/experience in the present tense – that is, while it is occurring – or if you are going to be talking about something that occurred in the past.

Once you've made these decisions, look back at your notes from your researching and brainstorming in step 2, and you'll probably see that you've already written one or more phrases that you can use as you craft your lyrics. As you compose, you'll probably find it helpful to

have a thesaurus and dictionary at your fingertips. You can also pull out some of the literary devices that you've encountered in other courses – such as rhyme, imagery, alliteration, metaphor, personification, and simile.

You may have noticed that this essay has frequently used the word craft. This is done intentionally, as most songwriters take many hours (or even days or months) revising and experimenting with words until they feel that their lyrics "work." Many view songwriting as similar to the act of creating something with physical materials, such as wood or clay. To create a finished form, an artist must take time and energy to shape and mold the raw materials – changing and cutting away parts that do not work and adding or rearranging other bits – until they serve the desired purpose. So don't worry if your song doesn't come together right away. Just relax and play with the lyrics until they flow.



**Fig. 22 Ennis**

is a Newfoundland and Labrador group with a contemporary voice flavoured by traditional music. They play both their own original music, as well as interpretations of traditional tunes and ballads. Maureen Ennis says, "As a group Ennis brings Newfoundland to the world by performing Newfoundland music. The folk songs of our heritage are wonderful and necessary, but there is little of the female perspective in them. As a female and a songwriter, informed by our past, I use my own history and experience to write about this place as I see it."

## Literary Devices in Songs

"Jack Was Every Inch a Sailor"

'Twas twenty-five or thirty years

Since Jack first saw the light

*This is an example of alliteration.*

Examples of rhyme from "Saltwater Joys" by Wayne Chaulk.

I was born down by the water,  
it's here I'm gonna stay.  
I've searched for all the reasons  
why I should go away.  
But I haven't got the thirst  
for all those modern day toys.  
So I'll just take my chances  
with those saltwater joys.

Following the little brook  
as it trickles to the shore  
In the autumn  
when the trees are flaming red

Strong visual imagery!

Kicking leaves that fall around me  
Watching sundsets paint the hills  
That's all I'll ever need  
to feel at home.

How can I leave those mornings  
with the sunrise on the cove  
And the gulls like flies surrounding Clayton's wharf Simile  
Platter's Island wrapped in rainbow  
in the evening after fog  
The ocean smells are perfume to  
my soul.

Metaphor

Personification is used here.

### "Trinity Cake"

As I leaned o'er the rail of the Eagle,  
The letter boy brought unto me,  
A little gilt-edged invitation,  
Sayin' the girls want you over for tea.  
Sure I knew the O'Hooligans sent it,  
And I went just for old friendship sake,  
And the first thing they gave me to tackle,  
Was a slice of the Trinity Cake.

This song is written in the  
first person voice

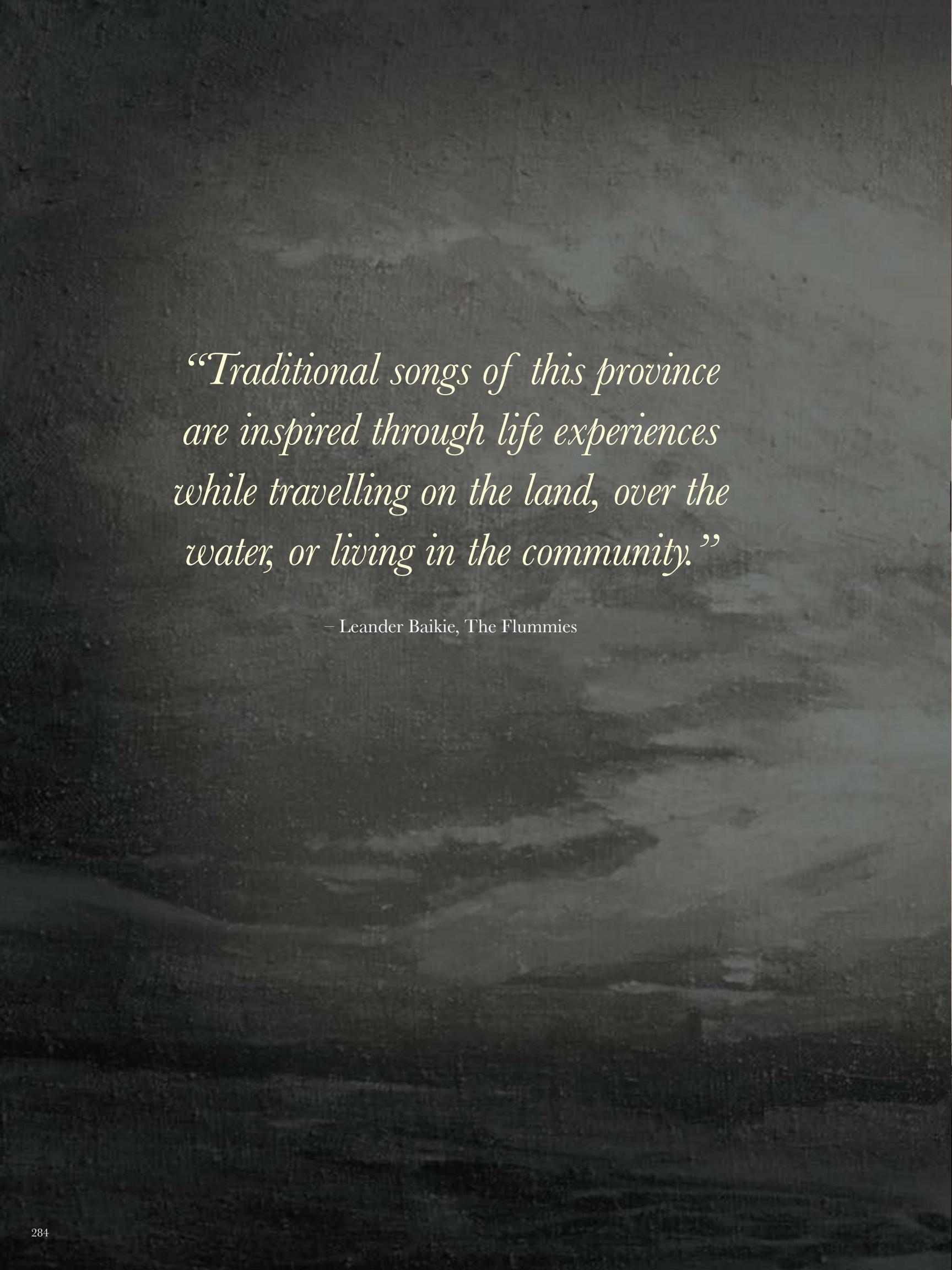
More examples of rhyme

Fig. 23 Literary devices in songs

## Exercise Two:

Select three songs that tell a story or explore an experience related to Newfoundland and Labrador. Analyze each song's structure to determine:

- the song's form or structure in terms of verses and, if relevant, the chorus
- the pattern for the rhythm contained in each verse/chorus
- the number of syllables in each line
- the poetic devices used



*“Traditional songs of this province  
are inspired through life experiences  
while travelling on the land, over the  
water, or living in the community.”*

– Leander Baikie, The Flummies