"... I think there is merit in just 'being.' Somehow or other the greatest gift we have is the gift of our own consciousness, and that is worth savouring. Just to be in a place that's so silent that you can hear the blood going through your arteries and be aware of your own existence, that you are matter that knows it is matter, and that this is the ultimate miracle."

– Christopher Pratt, artist

Artist *profiles*

Artist *profile*

Fig. 1 Angela Andrew

Angela Andrew – *Tea Doll Designer*

Innu tea dolls have been created by Nitassinan Innu of Quebec and Labrador for over a hundred years. (The earliest collected examples of tea dolls date back to the 1880s.) But today, Angela Andrew of Sheshatshiu is one of the few craftspeople keeping the tradition alive. She makes as many as 100 tea dolls a year – many of which are sold to art collectors.

Fig. 2 "Innu Family" tea dolls
By Angela Andrew (2002)

Angela learned the art of making tea dolls from Maggie Antoine, a woman from her father's community of Davis Inlet. She learned her sewing skills from her parents, who originally lived a life of hunting and trapping in the bush. Angela played with tea dolls as a child.

She explains that when her family travelled across Labrador, following the caribou and other game, everyone in the family helped pack and carry their belongings - even the smallest children. Because of this, older women made dolls for the little girls and stuffed them with as much as a kilogram (two pounds) of loose tea leaves. Then, when the family needed tea, it was taken from the dolls, and replaced with lichen or moss.

"Mom was constantly sewing, cleaning, and smoking caribou. When I finished school and came home, she would say, 'Come and sit with me and stretch the caribou.' Because she couldn't do it alone — she saved this work for when I come home."

Angela was born in an Innu camp near Tshiaskusheet (Gull Island) in Labrador. Shortly after she was born in 1946, her father decided to get a job at the American Army Base in Goose Bay so his children could get an education. "Way back then people make everything themselves, like snowshoes, candles, toboggans …," Angela remembers. "Mom was constantly sewing, cleaning, and smoking caribou. When I finished school and came home, she would say, 'Come and sit with me and stretch the caribou.' Because she couldn't do it alone — she saved this work for when I come home."

Angela laughs at the memory, "I didn't want to do it. I broke my fingernails stretching caribou." But she always gave her mother a hand with the caribou and other errands like sawing wood and bringing it into the house. "We didn't have running water or electricity. So when my mother was finished completely doing everything she would sit and sew. I felt so good to see her so relaxed and it felt so peaceful to sew. I wanted to be just like my mother."

For Angela, making tea dolls is part of celebrating the caribou hunt and remembering the old ways. It was her mother who taught her how to sew and how to stitch moccasins and her father who showed her how to make the leggings that her male dolls now wear. "My father was so patient," Angela remembers.

Fig. 3 Mother and baby
Provincial Museum, Labrador Interpretation Centre collection

"I decided to try making dolls as a way to encourage younger people to think about their culture," she says, "about who they are as Innu people, and so that they could be proud of themselves."

Angela's tea dolls are made of plain broadcloth and filled with loose tea. They have caribou skin faces, hands, and moccasins. She dresses them the way people used to dress up for special occasions like the Drum Dance: The men would wear black pants and white canvas jackets with rickrack on the bottom, and the women wore long dresses with aprons and red caps. "They don't dress up like that any more," says Angela, "and they don't have drum dances any more. They used to have a special celebration after killing the caribou; the old men play the drum and sing an appreciation song to the animals. People really enjoyed themselves when they sing and dance and they were so happy."

Preparing the caribou skin for her dolls is a long process. Angela explains: "For my caribou skins, I soak them as soon as we kill the caribou, the flesh comes out so easily, and even the fur, and I scrape it. I take the flesh first, and after I take the flesh back to the water, I put it near the stove for three to four days to tan. Then I boil the caribou brain and then I cool it. And I throw the caribou hide in the brain and the water, rinse, dry a little bit and stretch it, and then back in the brain liquid and stretch it a little. Then I dry it and hang it on the roof."

The process requires a very hot fire and lasts as long as a week. The fire is too hot for her to work at home, so Angela tans her caribou hides in a Labrador tent by her cabin in the woods. While she works on her caribou skins, she thinks about her father's father whose name was Maskana. He was a shaman and a great hunter, and lived in Davis Inlet. Angela never met her grandfather, but her father taught his children the legends and wisdom he had learned from Maskana.

Today, Angela is often invited to visit schools and show her tea dolls. When she talks to

Fig. 4 Innu Tea Doll
Margaret Angel collection

the students she tells them the same thing her father told her: "Respect the animal, every animal they have to respect, even fish. And try not to abuse it. People who abuse it think they hurt something and can have problems in the bush. Animals are very spiritual, they know when you abuse them. You can't kill even a porcupine."

Angela enjoys teaching about the tea dolls and explains that preserving Innu culture is one reason why she makes them. "I decided to try making dolls as a way to encourage younger people to think about their culture," she says, "about who they are as Innu people, and so that they could be proud of themselves."

Fig. 5 Innu Tea Doll

Fig. 6 Innu Tea Doll

"Respect the animal, every animal they have to respect, even fish. And try not to abuse it. People who abuse it think they hurt something and can have problems in the bush. Animals are very spiritual, they know when you abuse them. You can't kill even a porcupine."

Try it...

Ask a grandparent or older person to show you how to make or do something that is no longer commonly made or done by hand (for instance, knitting, baking bread, carving, etc.) Share your experience with your classmates.

Reflect...

Think of an item from your childhood that you feel is representative of your culture (even if it is an item from popular culture) that you would like to share with a younger child today.

Artist *profile*

Fig. 1 Émile Benoit

Émile Benoit – *Musician, Composer, Storyteller*

"Faire rire le monde et pis assayer d'mette le monde hereux. C'est euh, c'est ma vie ça ... je me garâcherais à la mer si j'pouvais vous faire assez, vous faire rire. Ouais, ouais. Pis j'sais pas, j'sais pas m'-nager."

– Émile Benoit

[To make people laugh and to make people happy. That's my life ... I would toss myself in the sea if it would make you laugh enough. Yep. And I don't know how to swim.]

Fig. 2 Émile's last album, *Vive la Rose,* was released in 1992

In 1973, a 60 year old fisherman from the Port au Port Peninsula attracted provincial attention in a violin contest in Stephenville. Although he came in second, Émile Benoit would quickly become known as Newfoundland and Labrador's foremost violin player, storyteller, and composer of almost 200 songs.

Émile grew up speaking French. His great-grandfather came to Newfoundland and Labrador from Brittany, France. His mother was an Acadian from Cape Breton. Émile was born March 24, 1913, at Black Duck Brook (L'Anse-â-Canards). He was raised listening to Breton, Acadian, Irish, and Scottish music. An avid storyteller, as well as musician, Émile learned a vast number of tunes and stories from his childhood. His first violin was a wooden toy with no strings, carved by his father. Later, an uncle made stringed violins for him. When Émile was 12, his family gave him his first store-bought violin.

Although Émile was a popular musician and performer on the Port au Port Peninsula, he made his living as a fisher. He began fishing with his father at age nine, after going to school for just three years. Émile's father died when Émile was about 15 years old. This placed Émile in charge of his younger brothers and made him responsible for supporting the family through the inshore fishery.

At age 21, Émile was a married man. His wife, Roseanne, died of tuberculosis after nine years together. Émile raised his four children with the help of his three sisters. When he was 37 years old, Émile married his second wife, Rita, with whom he had nine more children.

By 1973, when Émile competed in the Stephenville music festival, his children were grown up, and he

Fig. 3 Émile performs, c. 1995

Fig. 4

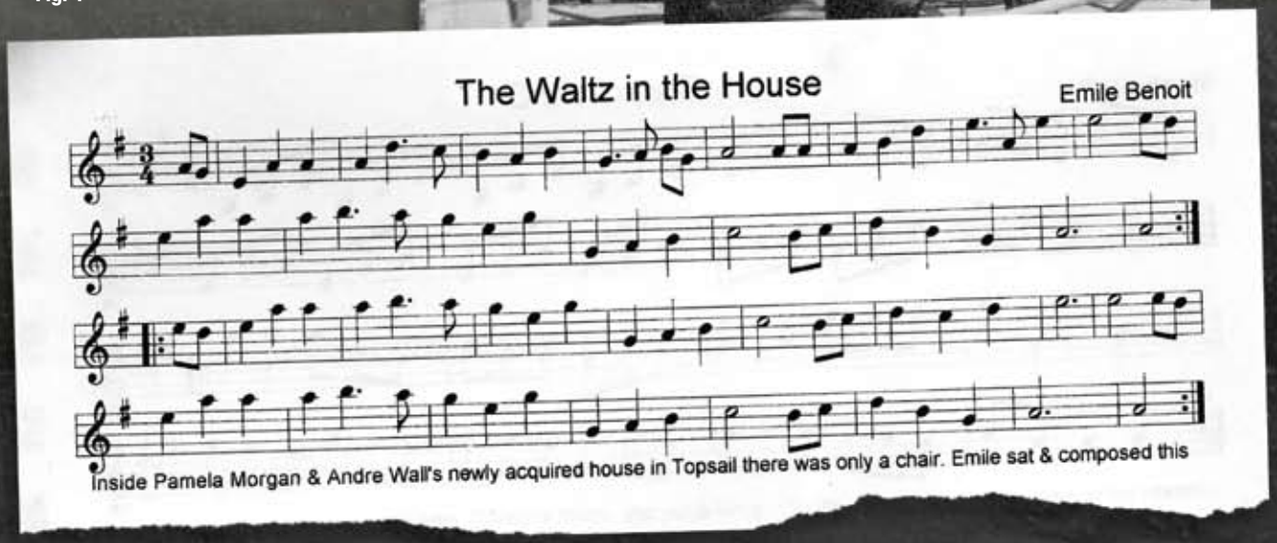
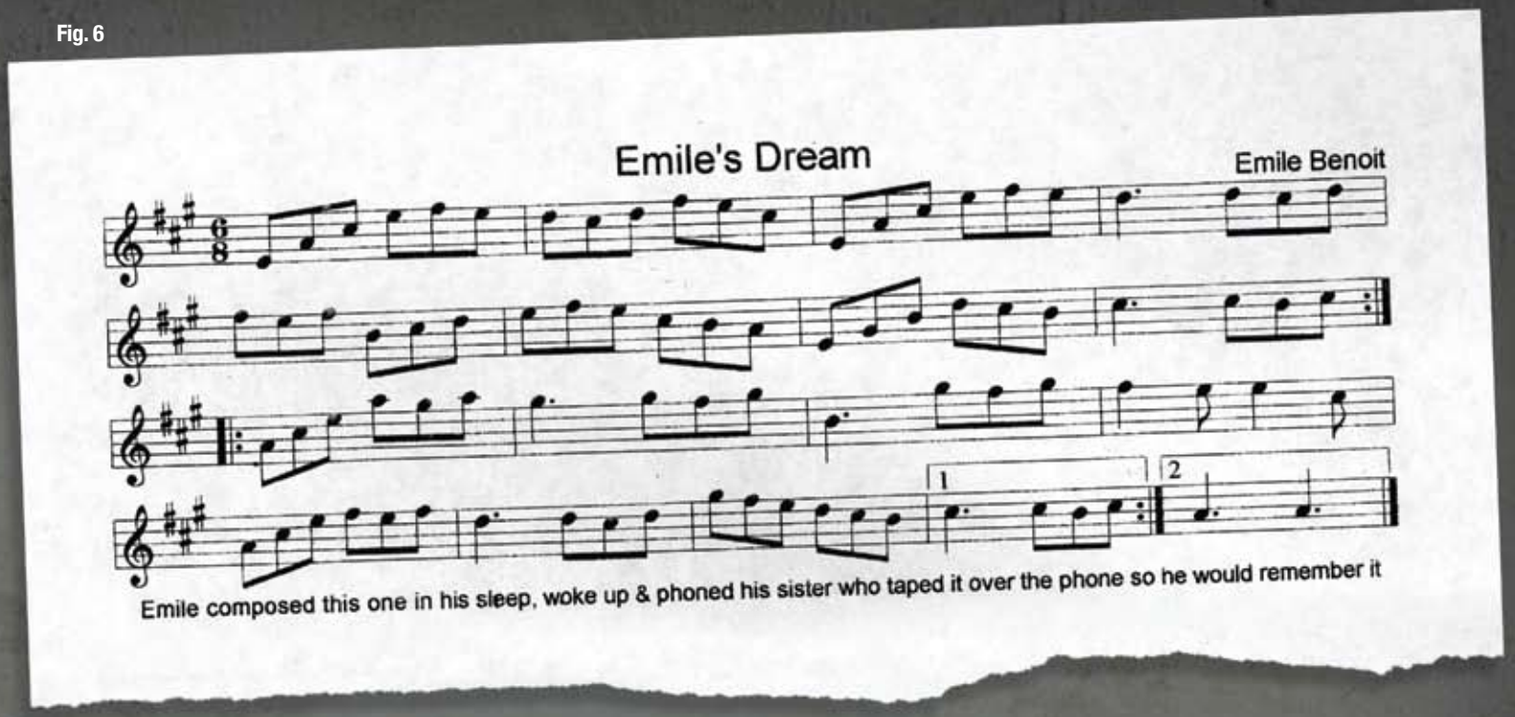


Fig. 5 Émile performs with Rufus Guinchard at the St. John's Folk Festival, 1979

was able to retire from fishing and focus on his music. Although he had retired, Émile's music and stories were drawn from his life as a fisher, farmer, carpenter, blacksmith, dentist, veterinarian, and even midwife. He is remembered as an entertaining performer, who clowned around with his audience and danced with his fiddle.

Émile went on to perform in festivals in New Orleans and Toronto and give shows in France, England, and Norway. In Newfoundland and Labrador he travelled with "Pistroli en Atlantique" and recorded with Figgy Duff. In 1979, Émile released his first album, *Émile's Dream*, followed by *It Comes from the Heart* (1982). In 1992, Émile received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council. He died later that year, but up to two months before his death, Émile was still performing on stage, playing his beloved violin and sharing his music.

Fig. 6



"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."

– Émile Benoit describing how he wrote "Émile's Dream"

Try it...

Think of some titles for a song that could make a good fiddle tune. Explain why it would be a good title and if it would be up-tempo, medium tempo, or slow tempo. *Or* compose a tune which could be played on the violin. Give your tune a name.

Reflect...

How can music help preserve elements of our culture?

Artist *profile*

Fig. 1 David Blackwood

David Blackwood – *Artist*

Today David Blackwood is one of Canada's most successful printmakers with his work in significant collections across the country, including the National Gallery. However, when David Blackwood was a teenager, in his hometown of Wesleyville, his studio was a store that his father wasn't using, and his canvas was torn sheets taken from his mother's clothesline (which he blamed the neighbours' goats for eating).

David kept three paintings on display in the storehouse window, and people would stop by to check them out. People in Wesleyville were interested in David's art because David painted pictures of everything he saw in that community. He even painted people who didn't want their pictures painted. One day, when David got home from school, he learned that one of his paintings had angered the family of the person depicted in it. Hearing that the brother of the man he had painted was on his way over to the store to destroy the painting, David grabbed the family's 12-gauge and ran to his studio. There he removed the painting from the window display and hid it.

Fig. 2 David Blackwood
The Search Party
Purchased by the National Gallery of Canada in 1964, was David Blackwood's first etching.

The brother arrived and knocked on the studio door. When there was no answer, he kicked the door off its hinges. There stood David with the rifle levelled at the angry man.

"Where's the painting?"

"One more step," David said, "and I'm going to let you have it!"

"I'm reporting you to the RCMP!" the man yelled, and he turned and walked away.

David waited for the police – he wanted to tell them that the rifle wasn't loaded. When the police didn't show up, David put the door back on its hinges, and continued to create pictures about the people around him. With the exception of the one man who broke down the door of his father's store, David gives the people of Wesleyville credit for respecting his art. He has said that, while there were no artists as role models in Wesleyville, talents were valued, and the people in his community expected him to put his skill to good use.

Fig. 3 David Blackwood *For Ishmael Tiller: The Ledgy Rocks,* 1990, Intaglio Edition: Artist's Proof 6/15

While art trends in the twentieth century were becoming more abstract, David's work became more illustrative. When he was at the Ontario College of Art (1959 to 1963) he produced his first etching, *The Search Party*, based on stories of Wesleyville men lost during sealing expeditions on the Labrador ice. Developed in Italy in the fifteenth century, etching is suited for artists who work with narratives. (For instance, Rembrandt used etching to portray Biblical stories in the seventeenth century.) Etching also attracts artists who like to draw since it is based on lines.

David uses line to show the texture of woolen mitts, and the wrinkles on a sealer's face. His etchings are filled with dark colours that resonate with the hardships that he often portrays and the stories that he tells – whether they are of the resettled island his mother came from or the suffering of sealers caught in a blizzard. Although David also paints and creates monoprints (single prints created by painting on a hard surface like plexiglass, which are then run through a press), today it is his etchings for which he is the most famous.

"My approach to art is one of exploration and discovery. I'm always, as an artist, constantly a student, and learning. You learn through your own explorations and you learn through other people and in my case, sometimes they are half my age!"

– David Blackwood

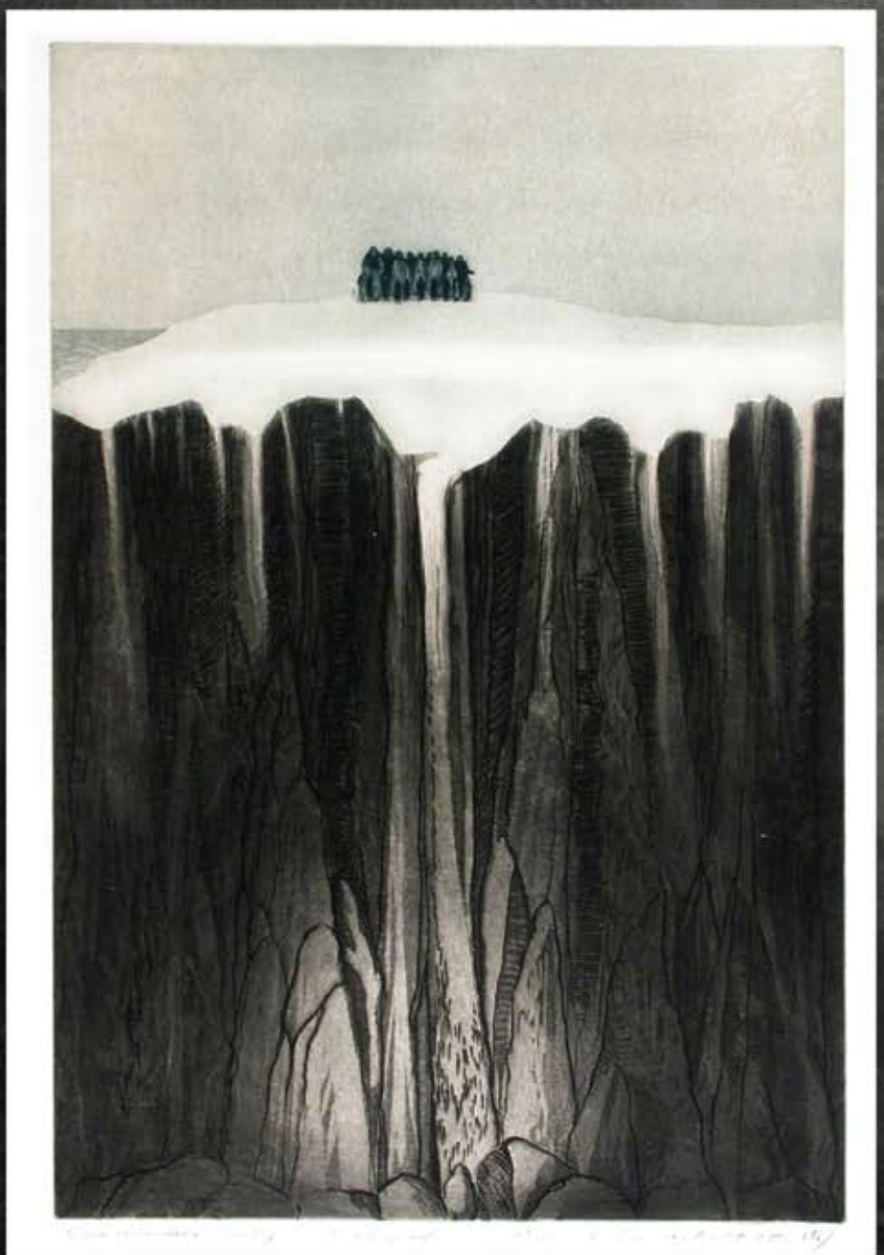


Fig. 4 David Blackwood
Cape Islanders Waiting
Intaglio, Edition AP, 1967

Fig. 5 David Blackwood
Survivor Wandering
Intaglio, Edition AP, 1969

ETCHING

Etchings are created by coating a metal plate with a waxy liquid that hardens to form a thin cover called a ground. Etchers use an etching needle, shaped like a pencil, and draw lines that cut through the ground and expose the plate. Once the drawing is made, the plate is dropped into an acid bath, which bites or etches into the exposed lines (but doesn't hurt the parts of the plate protected by the ground). The printmaker then removes the plate from the bath and cleans off the ground to reveal the image that was etched into the plate by the chemicals.

Next, the printmaker smears ink over the plate and removes the excess with a piece of cheesecloth leaving behind just the ink in the etched lines. The inked plate is then laid on the flat surface (or bed) of a printing press and covered with wet paper and blankets. The plate is rolled under a cylinder, which produces thousands of kilograms of pressure and forces the paper into the etched and inked lines on the plate. When the paper is pulled from the plate, a print of the image has been made in reverse on the paper. Each print pulled from the same plate is numbered and the group of prints is called an edition.

Although modern printing presses are a much faster way to reproduce images, traditional etching produces such beautiful lines and luminous colours that it has remained a popular art form. Furthermore, because the artist hand inks and pulls each print, an etching is considered a valuable original artwork.

Fig. 6 David Blackwood
Fire at Sea,
1970, Intaglio Edition: Artist's Proof

Try it...

Try sketching a simple line drawing that you think would translate into a good etching.

Reflect...

Pick one of David's pieces shown here and create a story to go with the image.

Artist *profile*

Fig. 1 Robert Chafe

Robert Chafe – *Playwright*

"Newfoundland. The people who live here. Love."

– Robert Chafe's answer to the question, "What inspires you?"

Award-winning playwright Robert Chafe started university with plans to become a doctor, but his career path changed when he saw a one-man show by John Taylor called *My Three Dads*. The show inspired the 21-year-old to write and perform his own comedic monologue. Staged in 1992, *Urbanite* contrasted growing up in the Goulds with yearnings for the big city life. *Urbanite* was followed by a number of acting opportunities, which began to cut into Robert's class time and ultimately replaced his earlier plans with a new career in theatre.

By the time Robert won the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council Award for Emerging Artist in 1999, he was already becoming popular with audiences for his play writing – although he had originally started writing plays so that he could act. This is not unusual in our province, however, as Robert points out in his essay, "Is Newfoundland Theatre Dead?" published by Riddle Fence. He says that in the Newfoundland and Labrador acting community, most actors work in collaboration and write their own one-man shows and larger company scripts.

Feedback and collaboration are an ongoing part of Robert's process. It can take as long as eight years from the first idea to the first performance of one of his plays. After that performance the play can still be subject to edits and substantial alterations. Continuing from his first play, Robert's writing has been closely tied to the performance of his work. This may be the reason why Robert's plays continue to entertain and surprise his audiences.

Fig. 2 Theatre Newfoundland Labrador's production of *Tempting Providence* with Deidre Gillard-Rollings and Darryl Hopkins.

Fig. 3

Script excerpt from *Tempting Providence*

The following excerpt comes from the beginning of Robert Chafe's play about the life and career of Myra (Grimsley) Bennett, who came to the Great Northern Peninsula on a two-year contract and stayed for the rest of her life.

- - - Characters- - -

MYRA Age 31 years at the beginning of the play, which progresses through approximately ten years of her life. Stern, though caring, serious, though quick witted.

ANGUS Late twenties at the beginning of the play. Thoughtful, playful, charming, down to earth. The perfect man. A working man. A warm heart and dirty hands.

MAN Various distinct male characters, aged fourteen to eighty.

WOMAN Various distinct female characters, aged nineteen to eighty.

- - - Setting - - -

Stage should be relatively bare, with limited use of props and costumes. The play is actor-driven. Myra and Angus are constant characters. Man and Woman denote a variety of characters which become self evident in the dialogue and minor stage directions. It is strongly recommended that these characters themselves be actor-driven, and not be reliant on costuming.

All actors should remain on stage unless otherwise noted. While not in a given scene they should be visible, giving focus to the action. It may be desired to have Myra and Angus in constant character, even when not in scene. Man and Woman may be omnipotent, and at times become watchers of the event.

Set and time change should be executed primarily with lighting, if at all. The play is written to move quickly and swiftly through scenes. The text does the work. Pause should only be taken where noted. Fun, fast, playful, and, above all, theatrical.

TEMPTING PROVIDENCE
- - - Act One - - -

ANGUS alone.

ANGUS

Who knows the answer to that? A person's inner thoughts like that. It's a forbidden domain. She was a thoughtful woman, and a private one. So, as for what she was thinking, what was on her mind, who can say. I don't pretend to know everything. Why she decided to stay, was content to stay. Put down roots here, of all places. Here.

MYRA stares out to sea.

MYRA

Daniel's Harbour.

ANGUS

Smack in the middle of three hundred miles of sparsely occupied coast. Daniel's Harbour.

MYRA

Though there is really no harbour at all. The sharp land as straight and fierce as the long horizon that it dutifully stares down. A collection of houses sit at the top, where the grass begins. A collection of people in front of them. Waiting. I am late. What a horrible way to make a first impression. Three weeks late but only as a result of the ungovernable will of God. Pack ice so thick, and a late spring that has meant that my passage north was to be late beyond being fashionable. The stranger arrives to the strange land. On the SS *Home*.

A weak smile.

The *Home* carries the first provisions the area has seen since the autumn. People scramble for the food first, and then later to me for introductions. A long thin hand falls into mine and its loose skin, its thinness, makes me recall that of my grandmother's. A comforting thought on my first day here if not for the fact that this dainty hand is attached to the arm of a forty-year-old man. Many are sick. They will not tell you such, but it is clear enough. Many near starvation. It takes little of my formal experience and training to identify why I have been placed here. It takes no time at all to see a most urgent need for a nurse.

*For more information on Nurse Bennett, turn to page 339.

**For more information on Émile Benoit, turn to page 590.

Robert often develops his plays closely with directors Danielle Irvine or Jillian Keily. For instance, his play *Butler's Marsh* (2001) was written to be produced by Irvine, who brought her own touches to the play. The suspense-filled play, which weaves in folk tales from Bell Island, follows a woman's experiences as she spends a night in Bell Island's Butler's Marsh – the same marsh in which her mother had a life-altering experience years before. To increase suspense for the audience, Irvine staged the show outside and encouraged people to sit on stumps and rocks near the actors.

Tying in this province's culture and history is a central part of many of Robert's plays. An example of this is *Tempting Providence* (2002), which he was commissioned to write for the Gros Morne Theatre Festival. This play is about Nurse Myra (Grimsley) Bennett*, who for 50 years was the only medical professional along 320 kilometres of coastline on the Northern Peninsula. Before writing the play, Robert read Nurse Bennett's diaries and history books describing medicine in Newfoundland's outports in the 1920s. He also interviewed people in Daniel's Harbour who had known her, including members of the Bennett family. Myra Bennett's son Trevor helped Robert not only with anecdotes, but also with his mother's speech patterns – what she would say and how she would say it. Robert also invited Trevor Bennett to attend an early reading of the play so he could provide feedback.

Another of Robert's plays, *Émile's Dream* (originally called *Vive la Rose*), was commissioned by and co-produced at the Stephenville Theatre Festival in 2008. This play, which was developed with director/producer Jillian Keiley, centres on the story of Émile Benoit**, the famous fiddler from the Port au Port Peninsula. The play's program lists three characters: Émile 1, Émile 2, and Émile 3.

Here's how the script begins:

Three stools, in dim pools of light.

1, 2 and 3 enter with fiddles in cases. They sit and take out their fiddles. They introduce themselves to the audience. Once they are done, they catch each other's eye and begin to play together. ("Diane's Happiness" and "David's Reel"). At some point, 1 stops playing and, while the others continue, he begins to roll up his sleeves. Once completely done he begins immediately to speak…

Émile 1: They're not as handsome, eh? They're not half as handsome as me, eh?

Émile 2: But you will make do with these few I've left you.

Émile 3: They will play my songs.

Émile 2: And they will speak my stories.

Émile 1: And they will use my words.

Émile 2: And where they cannot…

Émile 3: They will do their best.

In this way, Robert Chafe uses Émile Benoit's words and stories, but shares them between three actors who are all playing the same person. It is this kind of innovative playwriting that keeps audiences flocking to Robert's plays.

Fig. 4 A performance of Robert Chafe's *Vive la Rose* (later called *Émile's Dream*)

Fig. 5

Script excerpt from *Tempting Providence*

In this excerpt Myra becomes acquainted with some of the superstitions and folk medicine practices of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Fig. 6 Theatre Newfoundland Labrador's production of *Tempting Providence*
with Deidre Gillard-Rollings as Myra and Darryl Hopkins as Angus Bennett.

MYRA I thought myself fully prepared for any emergency, any medical emergency or situation that would, that could present itself here. And yet this place, these people, in all of their glory manage to surprise me. Not in the condition with which they present themselves, not with the illnesses. But with the stubbornness. The sheer stubbornness when it comes to taking care of themselves, with heeding my words. I had not foreseen having to lecture on the contagious nature of the tubercular patient.

Helen begins to breastfeed Marie.

It is like they think, or want to believe, that I am trying to scare them, assert some sort of authority which they assume I have given myself because of my title. Knowledge is, and has been my only authority. More than anything I want to share it. It is often exceedingly difficult to do so.

At the clinic.

ANGUS Nurse?

MAN Nurse?

WOMAN Nurse?

MYRA One at a time. One at a time. Yes?

WOMAN Nurse, warts. Warts Nurse.

MYRA What about them?

WOAMN My grandmother said to rub a bit of meat on 'em and throw it to the dog. That work?

MYRA Yes of course. If by meat you mean wood file, and by rub you mean saw off. Otherwise you can rub whatever you want for how ever long you want, but the only thing you'll be doing is feeding the dog. Next.

ANGUS Nurse?

WOMAN Nurse?

MAN Nurse?

MYRA Yes?

MAN The wife gets the wicked nosebleeds. She swears to warding it off by tying a green ribbon about the neck.

MYRA Absolutely.

MAN Yeah?

MYRA Just make sure you tie it tight enough.

ANGUS Nurse?

MAN Nurse?

WOMAN Nurse?

MYRA Yes, yes?

WOMAN My youngest got the asthma. Now they says that you should pluck hair from the head, take her height on the wall, put the hair in a hole at just that spot, just at her head height, and plug it up, and once she grows past that hole, the hole with the hair in the wall what was her height, that she'll never have the asthma again. Now. What do you think of that?

Try it...

Create an excerpt from a one-man show which is either a comedic monologue about an event in your life, or a commentary on some aspect of the culture and history of your region or the province. Perform the show for close friends and family.

Reflect...

Why might it be effective to use different actors representing different stages of a person's life in a biographical play? Is this a better way than having the same actor change and age as the play progresses?

Artist *profile*

Marlene Creates – *Artist*

Fig. 1 Marlene Creates

Marlene Creates is a conceptual artist. Her work explores the relationship between human experience, memory, language, and the land, and how they rely on each other. Using photography as a medium, Marlene will sometimes interact with the landscape and then photograph that interaction. In 1982, for instance, she travelled around the island of Newfoundland, sleeping outdoors. Each morning when she got up, Marlene photographed her sleeping place to show how her being there had changed the land. (See Fig. 2 below)

In her series, *The Distance Between Two Points is Measured in Memories, Labrador 1988*, Marlene interviewed Labradorian Elders who were Inuit, Innu, or Metis. She asked these people to draw what she called a "memory map" of how they remembered the environment of their youth. Then Marlene followed these maps to the place each described to photograph it and find an object from the area. The resulting assemblages included a photograph of the person, their memory map, a framed written section of their story in their own words, a landscape photograph of one of the landmarks in the memory map, and an object from that area. (See the next spread for an example from this series.)

"Most of their stories," Marlene writes, "revolve around a sadness at the loss of nature in their lives, now that they live in communities. The increasing urbanization of the world worries me and it was in meeting these people that I got the greatest sense that something has been lost in the way we live now. I don't want to suggest that their lives are romantic; no one would wish that traditional peasant life continue exactly as it was. But these people make sense of their place in nature."

Between 1989 and 1991, Marlene completed a similar project by interviewing her mother's relatives from Lewisporte and Joe Batt's Arm. Having grown up in Montreal, Marlene didn't know most of the relatives she was interviewing. She found it very moving to hear stories about her family that she had never before heard.

Marlene's work has also been influenced by ancient standing stones in the United Kingdom, which are similar to Stonehenge. Early in her art practice, she created her own stone installations. (See facing page) Her work focuses on the influence humans have on our environment and investigates how landscapes, in turn, shape human culture.

Fig. 2 Marlene Creates
Sleeping Places, Newfoundland (1982)
Silver Gelatin Print

(below) A view of Marlene Creates' installation *Sleeping Places, Newfoundland* 1982
(right) An excerpt from this installation.
Medium: a sequence of 25 black & white photographs, selenium-toned silver prints, each framed 51 cm x 61 cm.

"The land is not an abstract physical location but a place, charged with personal significance, shaping the images we have of ourselves."

Fig. 3 Three pictures from Marlene Creates' installation, *Cairn: Shore Stone and Mountain Stone, St. John's, Newfoundland 1982,* located behind the Arts and Culture Centre, St. John's. Original dimensions: 2.4 m wide x 2.4 m long x 0.6 m high.

A view of the cairn in 1986 after it had been in place for four years.

A view of the cairn in 1986 after a light snowfall.

A view of the cairn in 2002 after it had been in place for 20 years.

What is Conceptual Art?

Conceptual art is about the concept or idea that an artist wants to portray rather than about the creation of an art object that is aesthetically pleasing. One of the first influential conceptual artists was Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968).

Duchamp questioned the role of art. With the invention of the camera, he wondered why one should paint an object when it could be photographed. He theorized that the job of an artist is to create ideas in collaboration with the art viewer rather than just creating an art object. Conceptual art is the contemporary name for art that strives to do this.

Conceptual artists often avoid the traditional art forms of painting or sculpture. Instead, many conceptual artists create installations which bring a viewer through a series of experiences. Conceptual art may include text, photographs, or videos, but in all cases the concept is the art work, not the art object.

"If a work of Conceptual art begins with the question 'What is art?' rather than a particular style or medium, one could argue that it is completed by the proposition 'This could be art': 'this' being presented as object, image, performance or idea revealed in some other way."

– Tony Godfrey, in *Conceptual Art*, Phaidon Press, London, 1998

Fig. 4 Josephine Kalleo, Labrador 1988
from the series The Distance Between Two Points is Measured in Memories *by Marlene Creates*

Medium: assemblage of two black and white photographs and one story panel, selenium-toned silver prints; memory map drawn by Josephine Kalleo, pencil on paper; and saltwater grass from Nain.
Installed dimensions: 160 cm high x 152 cm wide, plus floor space.

(Below) Installation view of
Josephine Kalleo, Labrador 1988

I was born here, 1920. That's my home. Really home. Right different now. I miss lots of it. Right changed. When I was small I cooked everything outdoors, outside the house. Not allowed a fire outside now, not here in Nain. Everything gone. Codfish and caplin and bakeapple. Everything gone. I make a little box with that green stuff in the fall. In October. My father's sisters taught me when I was ten years old how to. Grows right alongside the water. The green stuff. I pick them up when they are white. They get that colour. They're green now. It's green in the summer. Called Eveogatsajak in Inuktitut. I pick them up in October and put them in a pillowcase. Make them wet in water, and then sewing that.

Try it...

Think about a place that has been important to you …

- Draw a memory map of that place.
- Link that memory map with a photograph of that landscape and something that is appropriate to take from that place.
- Have someone take a photograph of you (preferably in that place).
- Write a paragraph explaining what it felt like to be in that place.
- Present all five items in an art presentation in class.

Reflect...

How have you shaped your landscape? How has your landscape shaped you?

Artist *profile*

Fig. 1 Barbara Doran

Barbara Doran – *Filmmaker*

"I got into filmmaking through the back door, as many people do," says Newfoundland and Labrador filmmaker Barbara Doran. "I got into it as a social activist and a feminist. It was a way of reaching a larger group of people with ideas that I thought were important and changes that I thought should happen in the world."

Barbara's first experience with the world of filmmaking occurred when filmmaker Gerry Rogers called her to work as a researcher at the National Film Board (NFB) in Montreal. Barbara had no film experience but, intrigued with the medium, she began taking night classes in filmmaking as she went to work as the assistant director of the NFB's women's filmmaking studio.

Soon Barbara was making her own films. Her first works were documentaries, many of which focused on the subjects that had inspired her to be a founding member of the Newfoundland Status of Women's Council and to advocate for the province's first shelter for battered women. For instance, in the mid-1980s and early 1990s, Barbara travelled to several developing countries to film the stories of women living there. Her works about this subject matter include *Speaking of Nairobi* (1986) about the Women's World Conference in that country and the *African Market Women Series* about female entrepreneurs in East Africa. Another of her films, *When Women Kill* (1994), follows the stories of three abused women who killed their husbands when they felt they had no other option for survival.

In the early 2000s, Barbara returned to St. John's to enter a new stage of her career. With more then 20 documentaries to her credit, Barbara began work as a producer of *Random Passage* – the biggest budget miniseries ever to be filmed in Newfoundland and Labrador. Barbara says that all film projects begin with "a good story and idea." With *Random Passage*, she knew that she wanted to film it by the time she was on page 30 of the original novel by Bernice Morgan.

Fig. 2 Barbara Doran and colleagues while filming *Playing the Machines* (2009)

Fig. 3

Excerpt from *Still Rowdy After All These Years*

The following excerpt comes from the script for the documentary *Still Rowdy After All These Years*. Produced by Barbara Doran, this film is a biography of Gordon Pinsent's life and career.

Fig. 4 Barbara Doran chats with Gordon Pinsent on the set of *Still Rowdy After All These Years* (2010)

ON STAGE AND AUDIENCE
10:08:21
Rowe

When you were that 15, 16-year-old boy in Gander, did you have a sense that there was something more for you out there? You didn't really have a lot of cards in your deck to play and yet you, you went.

10:08:35
Pinsent

Well, yes. There was always that feeling, I think, of something else. You know, but whether it was the grass is always greener, I don't know. I've always felt I was part of something larger. I just didn't know what that was.

FILM CLIPS
10:08:51

It was 1948 when I left Newfoundland. It was still a country. I immigrated to Canada. When I arrived in Toronto, I only had two bucks left in my pocket, maybe not even that.

BARRY
10:09:04
Barry

What does a young fella do? You go find a place where you can buy a fella a beer. What, you know? A dime of the two bucks you have. And, uh, and promptly was promised a, promised a job at, uh. But it didn't start until the inspectors were coming. Because they didn't really need him.

PHOTOGRAPHS
10:09:20

It was a job mucking out a basement somewhere. So he showed up on the day the inspector was going to be there. They handed him a shovel. He was digging like a mad thing when the inspector showed up.

BARRY
10:09:28

They signed him into the country, walked away. Gordy gave back the shovel and said, "Don't need to be doing that anymore," and off he went.

FILM CLIP
10:09:37
Pinsent

Somebody at an unemployment agency said to me, "And what kind of work do you want to do?"

PINSENT AND AUDIENCE
10:09:40

I said, "Well, I'm an actor." And they (said), "An actor? Well, we can't get you work at that." They said, "What were you before?" And I said, "I was a shepherd."

And they said, "There are not too many sheep in Toronto." Well, that's all right. Well then you're going to have to get me work as an actor.

With co-producer Jennice Ripley, Barbara began to raise money for the project. Although Barbara often writes and researches the scripts for her own documentaries, she contracted Des Walsh to write the screenplay for *Random Passage* and John N. Smith to direct. As Barbara explains, a producer is involved with all of the filmmaking stages. For Barbara, this includes going into the editing suites with her films. "The producer is the first one in who turns on the light, and they're the last one to leave …," she says. "They're responsible for not only the big picture, but for all the little pixels that make up that big picture."

Producers also assist the broadcasters or distributors with promotion. This can be tricky, Barbara says, as theatrical distribution is determined by "bums on the seats" and television funding is often determined by "eyeballs on the screen." This means sometimes the more serious shows are passed over in favour of what broadcasters and distributors think might have a more widespread appeal.

"We live in a world with inane TV – what we call light entertainment," says Barbara. There's not a lot of meat on the bones of … the latest flasher/zombie film dominating the box office. It seems that the bigger, the noisier, the dumber the show, the more people are watching it. But that's what the broadcasters and the distributers are looking at, so that all questions of national expression are left behind."

With less money coming from broadcasters and distributers, Barbara fears for the future of documentary and big budget feature films in Canada. Despite these difficulties, Barbara still loves working in film. "I need to wake up every day with a new mountain to climb. I get that in film," she says. "I like the freedom it gives me and the necessity for constantly coming up with new ideas. I'm stimulated by it, and also I know that if I screw up there's no one to blame but myself. That's both scary and rewarding."

Fig. 5 Barbara Doran and her crew in Trinity, on location for the filming of *Hard Rock and Water* (2005)

Fig. 6

Excerpt from *Hard Rock and Water*

The following excerpt comes from the script for Barbara Doran's documentary *Hard Rock and Water*, which "follows Newfoundland writer Lisa Moore on a quest to discover the essence of nationhood."

Sometimes I feel like a fake Newfoundlander. I have no connection to the fishery, I'm a townie, I've never even been in a dory, my family never fished. I don't even like salt cod.

But I do know that the closure of the cod fishery in the early nineties was the biggest blow we had since confederation. Fishermen didn't just lose their jobs, they lost a way of life; communities lost their reason for being.

Without the cod fishery, Newfoundland went into an economic tailspin. We had to quickly re-invent ourselves, to develop, among other things, a tourist industry based on another natural resource, one we may be able to control.

Tour boat/Icebergs
Tour Operator: Of course these Icebergs come all the way from Greenland…
… a good chance to get some nice pictures.

We've always had a strong cultural identity, a kind of cultural nationalism that has sparked an incredible outburst of energy in the arts; in books, music, dance and theatre.

Trinity Pageant
Pageant Actor: mind your foot coming down here…
… 1579, The NL trade was swelling
… 120 sail ships annually.

Tourists are coming because they've heard about our unique culture. But they're sometimes looking for something that's like a fly in amber. It's the memory of a way of life we once had. It's as if we're afraid to look into the future so we keep coming back to what connects us to the past.

Pamela Morgan playing guitar. Des singing "It was early next morning…"

Des Walsh is a writer, musician, poet, and a good friend of mine. He spends most of his time in a small outport not far from where his family settled when they arrived from Ireland generations ago.

Des: *My family weren't wealthy people, they were destitute ….*
Country has absolutely no interest in us whatsoever.

Lisa: *the opposite side of that is strong cultural ….*

In 1949 we faced the toughest decision of our lives; whether to keep our status as an independent country or to become part of Canada. Joey Smallwood led the campaign promising everything from Baby Bonuses to Old Age Pensions. He won by the skin of his teeth — by four per cent.

Canadian PM: We have reached an agreement …

With the stroke of the pen, we signed away our nation; The only country ever to do so voluntarily. We signed it away for a slice of bread. In exchange, we gave Canada control over our abundant resources — they got us cheap.

Let's give three lusty cheers for Newfoundland … Hip hip hurray!

Almost half the population had voted to take back their nation. My Grandfather was one of the thousands who wore black armbands to mourn the loss of their country. That sense of betrayal and the ache of shattered dreams still hangs over this place like a thick fog. There's a lingering sense that we gave up something precious; something we didn't really appreciate at the time.

Try it...

Think of a topic you would like to explore as a documentary. Who would you interview? Write five-ten questions you would ask the interviewees.

Reflect...

What can documentaries tell us about our province? our culture? our heritage?

Artist *profile*

Fig. 1 Damhnait Doyle

Damhnait Doyle – *Songwriter and performer*

They called it a Cinderella story. The head of A&R for a new record label heard her singing, and in under a year Damhnait Doyle was in a recording studio working on her first album, "Shadows Wake Me" (1996). Now, after almost 15 years of working in the music industry, Damhnait (pronounced dav-net) has made four solo CDs, two CDs with the band Shaye, and has recorded her first album, "Tonight Tonight," with the band The Heartbroken.

Looking back, Damhnait describes working on her first album as a frightening experience. She says it was like working on the same canvas with six other painters, all more experienced than she was, except that somehow she was the one in charge. To be more prepared for her second album, Damhnait took the time to learn how to play the guitar and develop her songwriting skills by working collaboratively with other musicians.

Fig. 2 A young Damhnait in a production of the musical *Cats* in St. John's, 1995

Damhnait's love of performing was evident from a young age – but it took a stroke of luck to start up her career. After high school, Damhnait was disappointed when her application to the National Theatre School was rejected. Instead, she applied to university and got summer work with Duckworth Distribution Ltd. in St. John's. One day, Damhnait was singing while packaging up music for mailing when a visiting music executive overheard her and ended up listening to her demo tape. Before she knew it, Damhnait was signed on as the first artist on Latitude/EMI Music.

For Damhnait there are two ways to write songs: the way she writes when she's writing by herself and the way she writes when she's writing for or with another artist. When writing on her own, Damhnait often starts with the lyrics, perhaps drawn from a piece of writing or her journals. Then she works on matching the music and melody to the lyrics. It is much rarer for her to start with some music that she's written before tackling the lyrics. Even then, it has to come back to the lyrics, "because if I'm singing this song I really need to fully believe every ounce of emotion that's in it."

Damhnait acknowledges that, like the name of her new band, The Heartbroken, most of her songs are based on themes of love and the loss of love. Although these themes have remained constant in her songwriting, she adds, "but as I get older my heart breaks for very different things – things I've seen on my travels in Africa and Afghanistan.* So it's as if my heartbreaks are bigger and wider."

*Damhnait has made two trips to sing to Canadian soldiers stationed in Afghanistan and has visited Kenya and Rwanda in Africa to help a group called "The Song for Africa" raise awareness about the AIDS pandemic in that continent.

Fig. 3

"Signal Hill"
Written by Damhnait Doyle

It feels a little strange, asking how you've been.
I haven't written in a while, but misery's a funny thing.
I used to lie awake and pray you were the one.
But up on Signal Hill, I'm seeking shelter from the sun.

Chorus:
I can see the world from way up here,
where the air is thin and there is no fear.
Once there stood an army here,
but the army it stood still.
Waiting for a sign up on Signal Hill.

How you feel I cannot tell,
I see only myself in this well.
Deadman's Pond is bottomless they say.
No one knows how many
love lost souls in there lay.

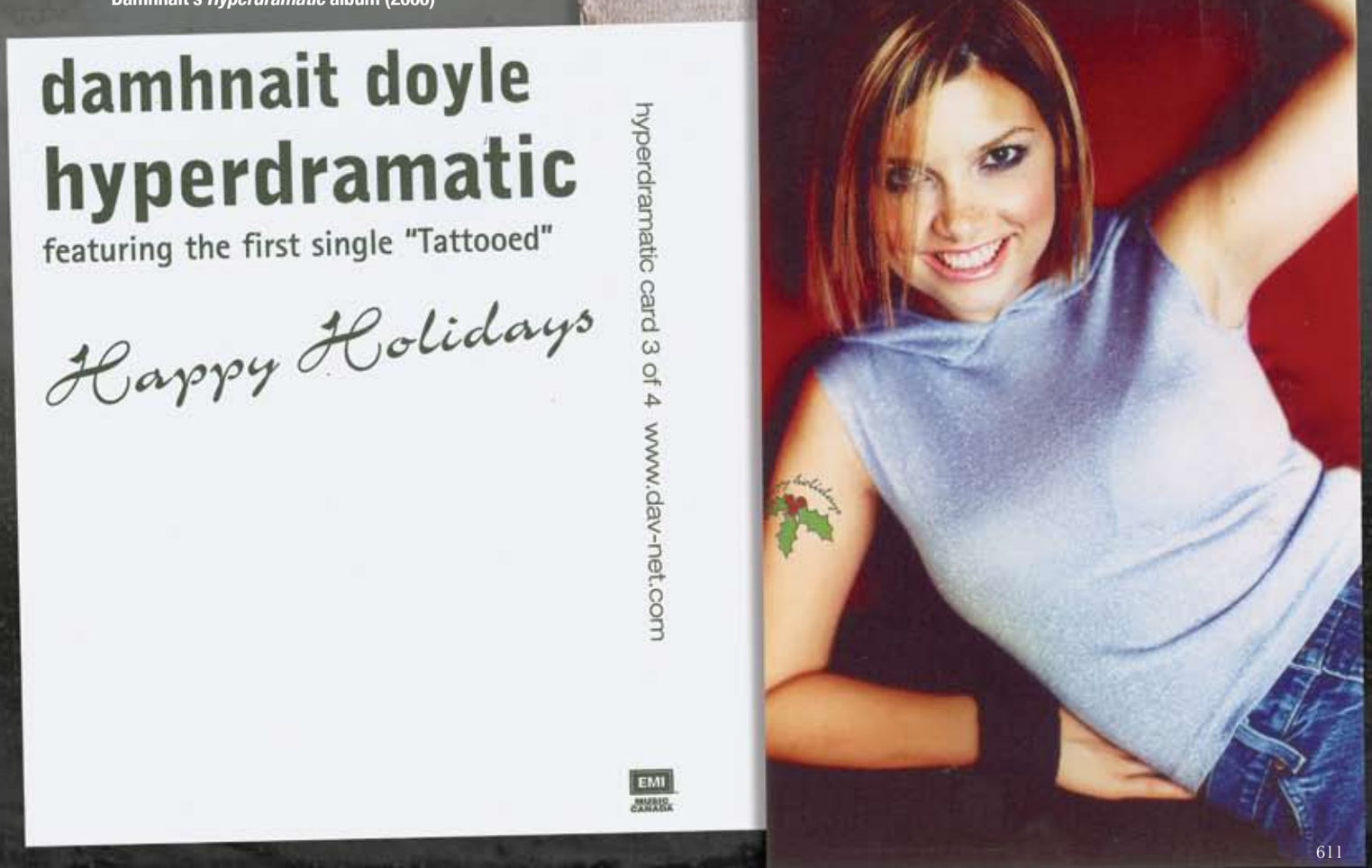
(Chorus)

I lay by this pond holding hearts.
I could have seen this from the start.
Even though it seems you've won,
I know I'll find another one.

(Chorus)

Whose eyes will you be looking through
when this letter gets to you?

Fig. 4 A promotional Christmas card for Damhnait's *Hyperdramatic* album (2000)



"I used to keep two books. One was a journal … (with my) truest, purest, ugliest thoughts and I had another book that I wrote my songs in until I realized that something I had written in my journal was actually a song. So then I just kept the one book. Since that point, all of my lyrics have been completely exposed and honest."

– Damhnait Doyle on her songwriting

The process of writing collaboratively is a different situation, says Damhnait. "When I am writing a pitch for another artist, or for television, I meet my co-writer in a room at 10 in the morning and leave at six that night with a brand new song, completed, and often recorded. It's more of a thinking job than a feeling job."

Although Damhnait doesn't always get to meet the performer for whom or with whom she is writing, she prefers to get to know the artist if she can. For instance, when she learned she was going to co-write a song with Canadian Idol finalist Rex Goudie, they sat down, chatted, and got to know each other. During this time, and unbeknownst to Rex, Damhnait began to write down key things Rex was saying and these turned into the bulk of the lyrics for the song "Like I Was Dying."

Damhnait says she also really loves working with newer artists. "I started out so young, and I couldn't say what I wanted … I didn't have the musical vocabulary. So I want to help younger artists write a song that is 100 per cent them, as opposed to me going in and trying to imprint on them what they have to say."

In addition to writing songs with another individual, Damhnait also has experience with writing songs collaboratively within a band. For seven years, Damhnait was a member of the band Shaye with Kim Stockwood and Tara MacLean and had huge success with their song "Happy Baby." Throughout the years they continued to write songs together, tying in their varying and eclectic musical influences and were very aware during the process to try and represent each singular voice, while maintaining the sound of the group. Damhnait is also enjoying writing with her new band members in The Heartbroken: Blake Manning, Stuart Cameron, and Peter Fusco.

"We are writing as a unit, but it's still a very singular experience in that we were all united towards the one goal musically and all on the same page. It's more like following a very natural progression, with no roadblocks," she says.

"I just love these songs and think that they're the best thing I've ever done but when I look back, I think, 'that's what I thought with every album!'" Damhnait laughs and then becomes reflective. "Each of the records that I've made is a snapshot of that point in time. You take the snapshot and pass on as soon as that moment is gone. But I've realized that it's okay to change and to continue that path of searching."

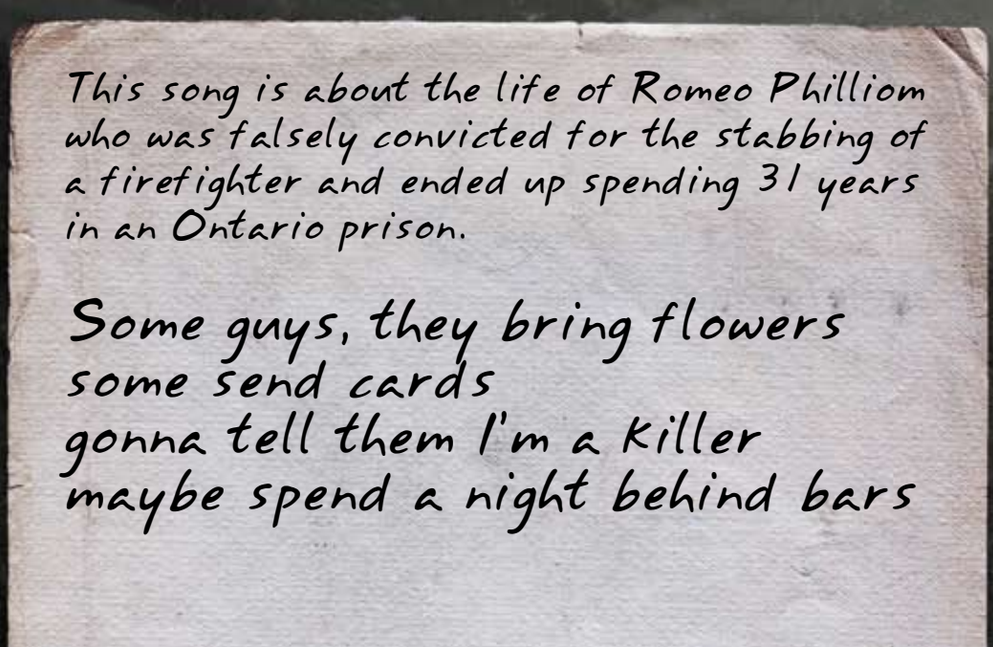


Fig. 5 An excerpt from "31 Years," a song by The Heartbroken (Damhnait Doyle, Stuart Cameron, Blake Manning, Pete Fusco)

Fig. 6 Damhnait Doyle, backed by Cape Breton fiddler Ashley MacIsaac, performs at the 2008 East Coast Music Awards.

Try it...

Write several journal entries which express your thoughts on one or more of the following themes:

- love
- personal loss
- your feelings on a heartbreaking issue or problem in the world today

Using one of these journal entries for inspiration, compose the lyrics to a song. Share the lyrics with friends and family.

Reflect...

Make a list of either your favourite love songs or songs that deal with heartbreak. Consider what it is about these songs that appeals to you.

Artist *profile*

Fig. 1 Jerry Evans

Jerry Evans – *Artist and Filmmaker*

Art has always been an important part of Jerry Evans' life. Born in Grand Falls in 1961, Jerry's family moved a lot when he was young because of his father's work with the provincial government. Each time they moved, it took a while to make new friends. To entertain himself, Jerry spent a lot of time drawing. "I think that's where my seed was planted for art," he says.

At an early age Jerry also knew that there was something different about his family, something that nobody would talk about. Other kids teased them, calling them racist names. When Jerry asked why, his grandfather said they were of Spanish descent and that explained the straight hair and dark skin that kept showing up in his family.

Fig. 2 Jerry Evans, ***Spirit Wind*** **(1996),** Lithograph

Fig. 3 Jerry Evans, *Spirit Tree* (1996)
Lithograph

It wasn't until he was in his early 20s that Jerry heard the truth. His great-uncle Caleb was visiting from Ontario and caught a lift into central Newfoundland to visit relatives while Jerry and his dad went moose hunting. On the drive, Caleb told them some of their family history. He explained that some of their ancestors were Mi'kmaq, although this wasn't talked about much in their family. These Mi'kmaw ancestors had married English settlers at a time when such marriages were considered socially unacceptable.*

For Jerry, his uncle Caleb's story explained the whispered stories and teasing. But even more, he says, it opened a door for him. He wanted to learn everything he could about his Aboriginal ancestry. "I didn't grow up in my culture, learning my language and the ceremonies of my culture," Jerry says now. "It was almost like being reborn."

At the time of Jerry's discovery about his family, he had a certificate in Commercial Art from College of the North Atlantic and a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. As a young artist, it was only natural to explore this new information in his art. "My work is about what it was always about," Jerry says. "Who I am and where I'm from."

Today, the story that had been suppressed for three generations now appears in Jerry's prints. For instance, in the lithography print *No'kmaq – My Relations* (1998), Jerry included photographs of his family members – his great-great-grandfather, great-grandparents, and grandfather – and his own hand print as a symbol of a living connection to this heritage.

In another print, Jerry explored the title of Daniel Paul's book about the Mi'kmaq – *We Were Not The Savages*. Census takers once used the word "savage" when they recorded Aboriginal people in Newfoundland. Jerry's print also includes portraits of Newfoundland Mi'kmaq taken by French photographer Paul-Émile Miot in the late 1850s. When he saw these photos, Jerry wondered if he was looking at some of his own ancestors.

Porcupine quills, beadwork, carved amulets, and other traditional Mi'kmaw and Beothuk imagery sometimes make their way into Jerry's art. But in his search for authenticity, Jerry also avoids the stereotypical images of Aboriginals often used in popular culture. In *Here Across the Waves* (see fig. 6.103 on page 558), for instance, Jerry used a photograph of an anonymous Mi'kmaw woman because she was wearing a traditional peaked cap and beadwork as opposed to the feather headdress that is often pictured for all Aboriginal people, regardless of their affiliation. Another image shows the famous Mi'kmaq hunter, guide, and prospector Mattie Mitchell.

Much of Jerry's training as a printmaker came from his time as the printer in residence at St. Michael's Printshop in

*'Twas, even the census records of the Evans family made no mention of their Aboriginal heritage.

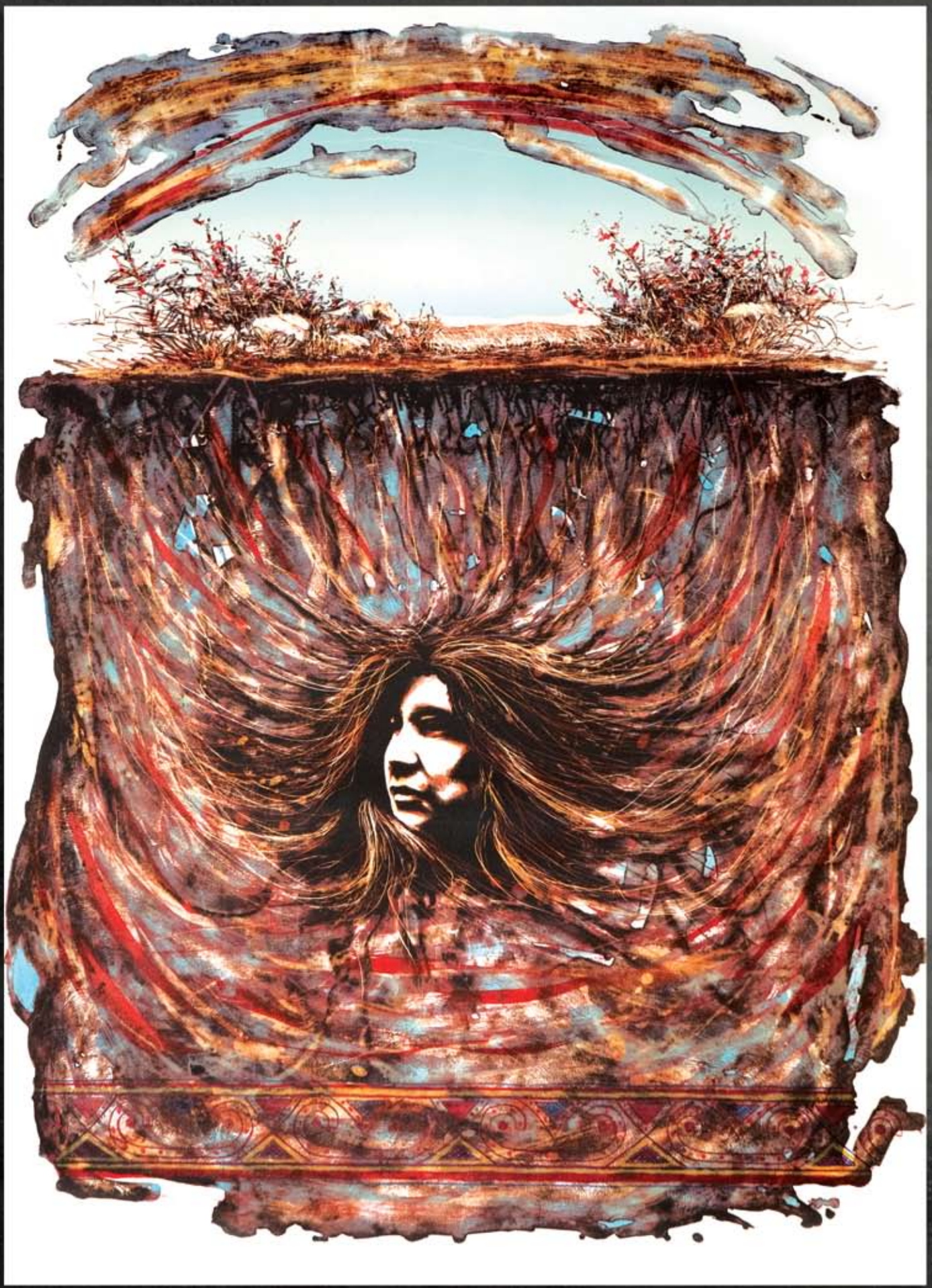


Fig. 4 Jerry Evans
***Wistgamu Kiju – Earth Mother* (2001)**
Lithograph

Fig. 5 Jerry Evans
***Migration Cycles* (2002)**
Lithograph

St. John's. Jerry specializes in the print form of stone lithography. Following a system of apprenticeships and training established in the Middle Ages, Jerry became a "Master Printmaker" in 1992. Under the supervision of Anne Meredith Barry* and Otis Tamasuskas, he earned his "chop" – an embossed seal that indicates his mastery of his craft.

Recently, back problems and other health issues have led Jerry to take a break from printmaking. Instead, he is creating more paintings and learning filmmaking. Jerry's first short film is based on the same theme as his lithography prints. Titled *Red Ochre: Mekwisiqwan*, it shows footage of Jerry growing up in a Canadian culture. Black and white photographs of family members are interspersed with video of Jerry creating a collage. This approach helps to contrast the two sides of his background. For instance, an image of Jerry as a baby dressed in a button-up shirt with a little bow tie is juxtaposed with a contemporary video of himself dressed in leather, porcupine quills, and feather regalia at a pow wow. The video also includes a scene where Jerry's son, who is wearing a baseball hat, peeks out from a traditional Mi'kmaw shelter.

Today Jerry's Mi'kmaw culture is a central part of his spirituality and he always participates in the annual Conne River Pow Wow. Even though the modern-day pow wow is not a Mi'kmaw tradition, Jerry says it is a way for all Aboriginal people to get together with old friends, meet new ones, and "openly celebrate and embrace our culture." After three generations of keeping their Mi'kmaw heritage a secret, Jerry Evans is proud to be a member of an Aboriginal family and is proud to pass this tradition on to his son and family.

Try it...

Some of Jerry Evans' works of art incorporate photographs. Try creating your own piece of art that uses both photographs and at least one other medium.

Reflect...

Jerry Evans says, "My work is about what it was always about. Who I am and where I'm from." If you were going to create a piece of artwork to illustrate who you are and where you come from, what would you want to portray? What kind of imagery would you use to express this?

Artist *profile*

Fig. 1 Elsie Holloway

Elizabeth (Elsie) Mary Holloway – *Photographer*

Newfoundland and Labrador's first female professional photographer, Elsie Holloway, was 16 when she received her first cheque for publishing a photograph. It was May 1899 when Elsie went down to the Outer Battery with her father and some other girls to photograph an impressive iceberg in the mouth of St. John's Harbour. Elsie's father, Robert Holloway, was an enthusiastic amateur photographer and allowed her to use his large field camera. Ducking under the black cloth that blocked the light from the viewfinder, Elsie composed her shot and pressed the shutter – taking the shot that later would be published in the British periodical Pearson's Magazine.

Born in 1882 in St. John's, Elsie was raised in an interesting household. Her father, a principal at the Methodist College, also was one of the pre-eminent Newfoundland photographers of his generation. He shared his love of photography with his daughter and son, Bert. Many of Robert Holloway's photographs were taken around St. John's and on summer travels throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, accompanied by his family.

Fig. 2 Brigus, c. 1940
Elsie often took her camera along on her travels.

Fig. 3 Night time on Water Street, St. John's, 1936 as captured by Elsie Holloway

Upon completing high school, Elsie went to London, England to take courses in retouching and tinting portrait photographs. However, she learned the art of photography from her father. In an *Evening Telegram* interview in 1946, she noted: "Father taught us all he knew, and photography was his hobby. I did take a course in retouching, but that was all. The rest I just picked up myself. I was always fascinated by photography."

In 1904, Elsie's father died and the family moved from the principal's residence at the Methodist College to a new home in St. John's. Immediately, Elsie and her brother, Bert, set up a darkroom on the top floor. There, the Holloways made plans to open their own photography studio. To finance their venture, they finished and sold a book of their father's landscape photographs that he had been working on prior to his death, as well as individual prints from the thousands of glass plate negatives that they had inherited from him.

Fig. 4 Sliding in St. John's, c. 1920s by Elsie Holloway

In 1908, Elsie and Bert opened the Holloway Studio in St. John's. While Elsie focused on portrait and group photography, which formed the base of their studio's business, Bert showed his father's enthusiasm for adventurous travel. He booked passage on sealing vessels and took some of the best photographs we have of the seal hunt. He also made a photo record of the Newfoundland Sealing Disaster of 1914 when the casualties and bodies were brought off the ships in St. John's.

Elsie soon proved that while she was a patient and careful photographer, she could also be innovative. At a time when photographs were very formal, Elsie liked to capture her subject's personalities, especially children. In her spare time, Elsie returned to landscape photography in the communities where her family had travelled when her father was alive. In 1914, she visited the International Grenfell Mission in St. Anthony, and travelled north along the Labrador coast. Many of her pictures from this trip have survived.

When the war started in Europe, Elsie found her subjects showing up in military uniforms. Some of the young men she photographed, like Sergeant Tommy Ricketts, would become heroes. Others, like her brother, would never return. In April 14, 1917, Bert Holloway was reported missing in action at Monchy-le-Preux; his body was never found.

Fig. 5 Lieut. Robert (Bert) Holloway, 1916
Elsie Holloway was well known for her portrait work. She took this portrait of her brother before he left to fight in the First World War. Bert Holloway never returned from duty.

With her brother's death, Elsie became the sole owner of Holloway Studio. Before 1916, it is sometimes difficult to tell if a photograph signed "Holloway" was Elsie's or Bert's (or even her father's), but we know that in 1919 it was Elsie who recorded every stage of Alcock and Brown's departure from St. John's as they began the world's first non-stop transatlantic flight. Elsie was also there to record when Amelia Earhart left from Harbour Grace in May 1932 to complete the first solo transatlantic flight by a woman; and she was the official photographer of the Royal Visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth to the colony in 1939.

In 1946, at the age of 65, after 30 years of operating a thriving business, Newfoundland's first female professional photographer sold Holloway Studio and retired. Elsie Holloway died in 1971, but her work remains as a way for us to catch glimpses of life in Newfoundland and Labrador that would have otherwise been lost.

Fig. 6 Capturing a historic flight
Elsie captured the start of the world's first non-stop transatlantic flight, which left from St. John's in July 1919. (top left) Crowds gather at Lester's Field, St. John's to watch the plane take off. (top right) Pilot Capt. John Alcock and navigator Lieut. Arthur Whitten prior to takeoff.

Fig. 7 HM King George VI and Queen Elizabeth leaving Holyrood, June 1939
Elsie was the official photographer for this royal visit.

Fig. 8 Filling a water cask, c. 1930 by Elsie Holloway

Try it...

Take several photographs of your environment and select one which you could enter in a magazine section entitled "This is my Newfoundand and Labrador." Explain why you chose that photograph.

Reflect...

Why is our province "a photographer's dream?" When you travel throughout the province, do you take lots of photographs? What happens to the photographs you take?

Artist *profile*

Fig. 1 Ron Hynes

Ron Hynes – *Songwriter and Performer*

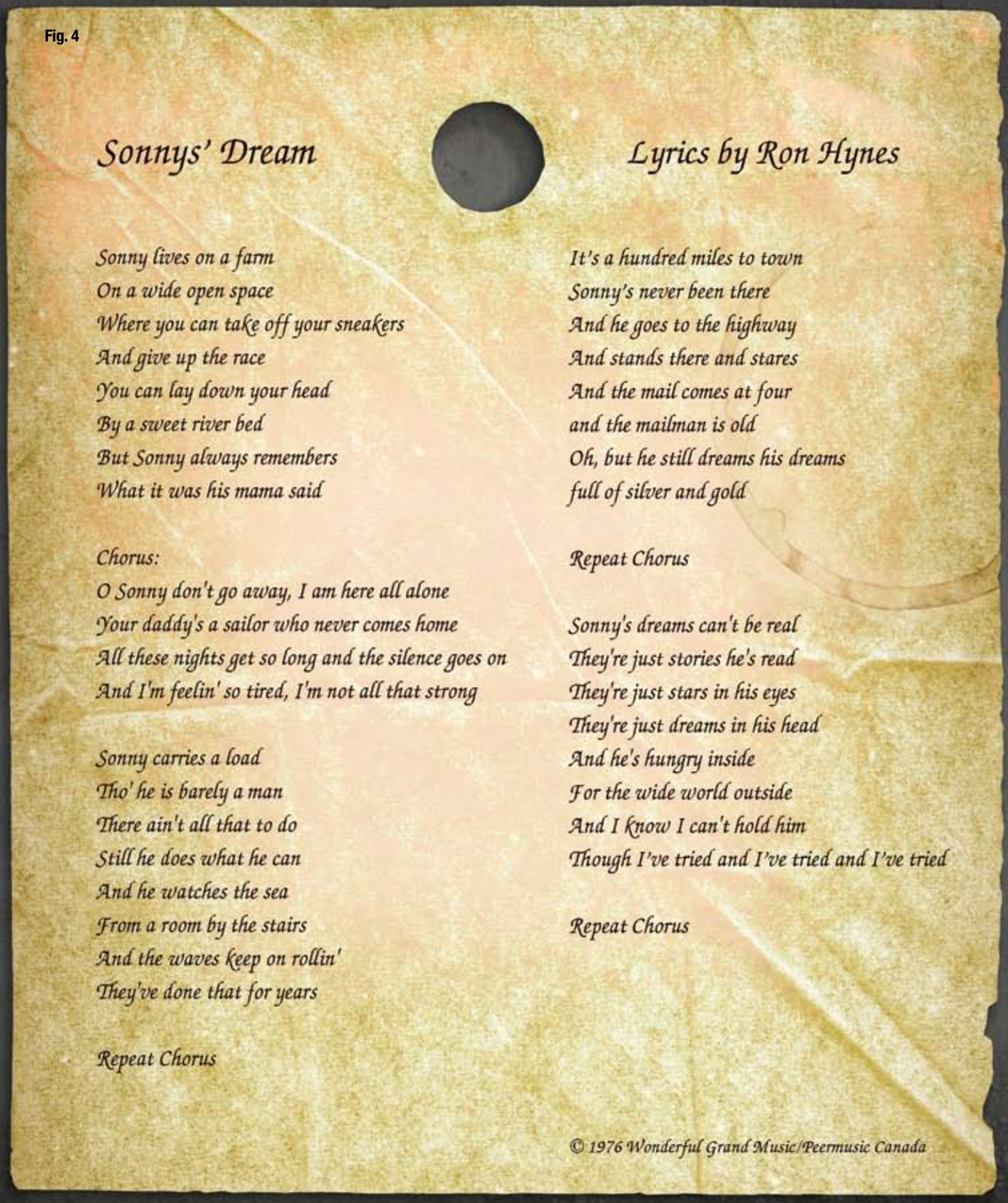
"I come from a really good discipline of songwriting in Newfoundland and Labrador," Ron Hynes says, "because we have been writing songs for 500 years before there was a music industry. And these songs were not written to get a publishing deal or to get on Much Music. These songs were written to document the lives of the people who wrote them. They were poets who wrote about things in their lives, about their communities. And they wrote things that say, 'This is who we are and this is where we came from, and this is where we live and why.' So, I came by my trade honestly."

Fig. 2 Ron Hynes (centre front) with cast of *Hank Williams – The Show He Never Gave*

At the age of nine, growing up in Ferryland, Ron knew he wanted to be a songwriter and singer. He was surrounded with music, but it was his mother's youngest brother, Sonny O'Neill, who taught him how to play the guitar on a Gibson J50 when Ron was 13. Sonny loved the music coming out of Nashville at that time: Marty Robbins, Johnny Cash, Hank Williams, and he passed that love of music on to his nephew.

Fig. 3 Ron Hynes in Ireland for the filming of *Ron Hynes: The Irish Tour*, c. 1997

Fig. 4



Sonnys' Dream

Lyrics by Ron Hynes

Sonny lives on a farm
On a wide open space
Where you can take off your sneakers
And give up the race
You can lay down your head
By a sweet river bed
But Sonny always remembers
What it was his mama said

Chorus:
O Sonny don't go away, I am here all alone
Your daddy's a sailor who never comes home
All these nights get so long and the silence goes on
And I'm feelin' so tired, I'm not all that strong

Sonny carries a load
Tho' he is barely a man
There ain't all that to do
Still he does what he can
And he watches the sea
From a room by the stairs
And the waves keep on rollin'
They've done that for years

Repeat Chorus

It's a hundred miles to town
Sonny's never been there
And he goes to the highway
And stands there and stares
And the mail comes at four
and the mailman is old
Oh, but he still dreams his dreams
full of silver and gold

Repeat Chorus

Sonny's dreams can't be real
They're just stories he's read
They're just stars in his eyes
They're just dreams in his head
And he's hungry inside
For the wide world outside
And I know I can't hold him
Though I've tried and I've tried and I've tried

Repeat Chorus

When Ron looks back at his career, he acknowledges that he "jumped in with both feet" right after finishing high school. In 1972, Ron released his first album, *Discovery* which was the first recording of completely original material by an artist from Newfoundland and Labrador. Four years later, Ron's international hit, "Sonny's Dream",* was written somewhere in Alberta while Ron was touring with the Mummer's Troupe in a Volkswagen bus. His inspiration was the uncle who first taught him to play guitar. He started thinking about his grandmother's relationship with his uncle Sonny and the lyrics came to him in only 10 minutes along with the beginnings of a melody. That's the way Ron still prefers to write songs, although very few come that fast.

*As of 2010, there are over 100 cover versions of "Sonny's Dream" by various artists worldwide.

Fig. 5 The cover of Ron's seventh solo album, *Ron Hynes* (2006)

"The lyric comes first," Ron says of his songwriting. "Then I wait for the lyric to sing back to me. The lyric will have a certain attitude to it, whether it be a love ballad or a funny story or a tragedy. It will dictate the tone of the melody, whether it's up-tempo, medium tempo, or quiet and introspective. Then I may go to the piano, or a ukulele, or a guitar. But my favourite thing is to walk away from the instruments altogether and sing it a cappella. I'm always editing as I go, singing it over and over again, until the phrasing seems to work its way out. That's the only way I know how to do it, and I've done it that way for almost 40 years now."

Although Ron has released his seventh solo album, *Ron Hynes*, and received awards and accolades for many of his songs throughout his career, Ron says his best song is "Atlantic Blue," which was written six years after the loss of 84 lives on the Ocean Ranger in 1982. Ron adds that he likes to write songs based on stories. For instance, his song, "My Father's Ghost" was influenced by a ghost story his grandmother used

Fig. 6

St. John's Waltz

Lyrics by Ron Hynes

Oh the harbour lights are gleaming
And the evening's still and dark
And the seagulls are all dreaming
Seagull dreams on Amherst Rock
And the mist is slowly drifting
As the storefront lights go dim
And the moon is gently lifting
As the last ship's coming in

All the sailors got a story
Some are true, some are false
But they're always wrecked and they're up on the deck
Dancin' the St. John's Waltz.

Oh we've had out share of history
We've seen nations come and go
We've seen battles rage over land and stage
Four hundred years and more
For glory or for freedom
Or for country or for king
Or for money or fame but there are no names
On the graves where men lie sleeping

All the nine to fives survive the day
With a sigh and a dose of salts,
And they're parkin' their cars and packin' the bars
Dancin' the St. John's Waltz

Oh my heart is on the highway
And I'm sold on goin' to sea
All the planes fill the skyway
All the trains run swift and free
So leave the wayward free to wander
Leave the restless free to roam
If it's rocks in the bay or it's old cliché
You'll find your way back home

So don't question or inquire
What's been gained, what's been lost
In a world of romance don't miss out on the chance
To be dancin' the St. John's Waltz

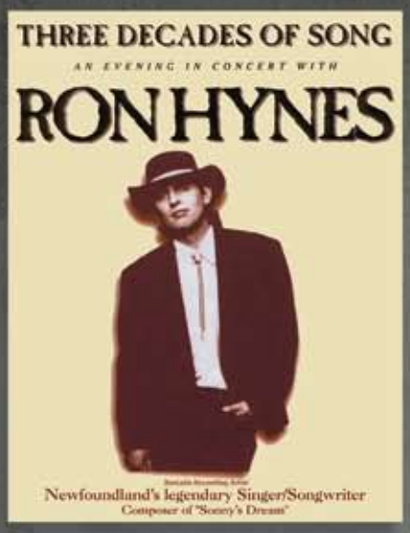


Fig. 7 Ron has been writing and performing music for over 30 years.

to tell him and contains symbols of his grandmother's Catholic faith and Gaelic superstition.

She stood inside the doorway
and she turned towards the cove.
She took down the blessed crucifix
and she burned it in the stove.
And we all stood in the kitchen
like travellers in the rain
waiting on some platform
to board some lonely train.

Ron Hynes is very aware of how his own history has shaped his songwriting. But he is also aware of how songs written by people like him shape this province. "More than anything else, as Newfoundlanders, our songs define us," says Ron. "We are connected by them."

"It wasn't until I had put in twenty years, until I was thirty, that I knew how to write … I think that's true of any discipline … it takes twenty years for it to have your stamp on it. That was when my songs sounded like me and no one else, so that when someone hears your song on the radio they can say 'that's a Ron Hynes' song' and not a Bob Dylan song or a Johnny Cash song."

- Ron Hynes

Try it...

Take 10 minutes and jot down some possible lyrics for a song. These lyrics should come from a personal experience. You may wish to use a graphic organizer.

Reflect...

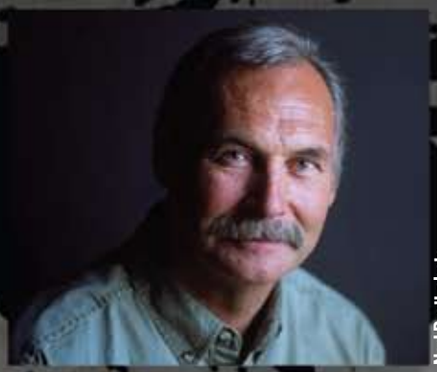
Are most of your favourite songs your favourites because of the lyrics or because of the music?

RON
THE PERFORMER

In addition to being a songwriter and singer, Ron Hynes can also add "actor" to his resume. Although some of his acting gigs have combined his musical talent with his dramatic flair, he has also done several acting roles for both film and television. In 2010, Ron completed the film *Ron Hynes - The Man of a Thousand Songs*, in which he played himself. His other acting roles include a lead role in the movie *A Secret Nation*, the role of Johnny Shea in the television series *Dooley Gardens*, and principal roles in the theatre productions of *The Bard of Prescott Street* and *Hank Williams: The Show He Never Gave*. In addition, Ron was a founding member of The Wonderful Grand Band and completed two albums and over 40 half-hour episodes of the show *Wonderful Grand Band* with them.

Fig. 8 *The Bard Of Prescott Street*, 1976
Mary Walsh, Ron Hynes, David Ross

Artist *profile*



Ned Pratt photo

Fig. 1 Harry Martin

Harry Martin – *Songwriter and Performer*

Harry Martin has four generations of European settlers on one side of his family and countless generations of Inuit on the other. These cultures and traditions make up the theme of most of this songwriter's music. As a symbol of this, for many years Harry carried three feathers on the neck of his guitar: one to represent the Innu and Inuit who make up the Aboriginal peoples; one for the European and Aboriginal mix which created the Metis; and one for the settler culture in Labrador. The feathers also represented his interest in protecting nature.

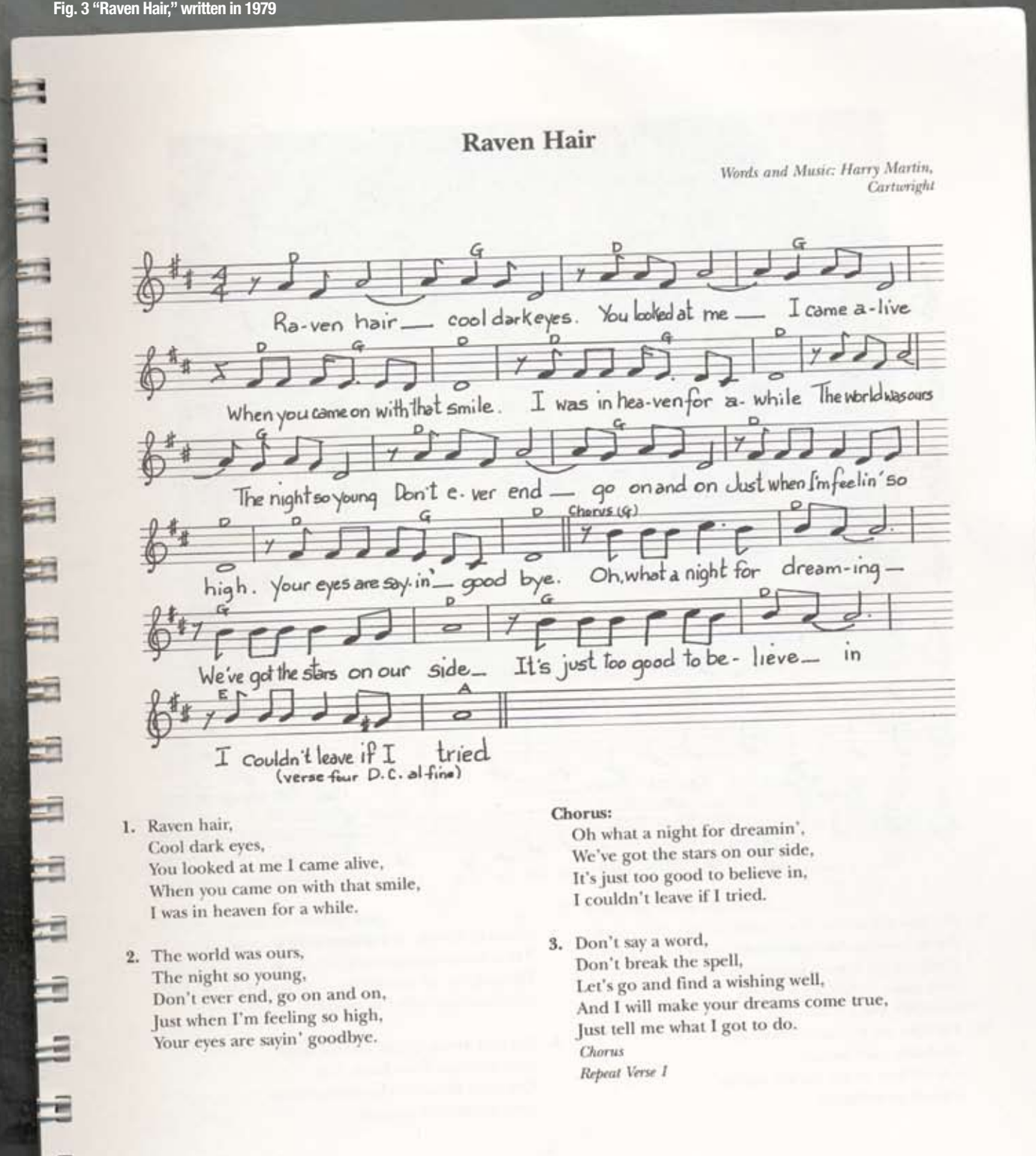
Fig. 2 Opening ceremonies at the Labrador Winter Games in Happy Valley-Goose Bay

Born in Cartwright in 1948, Harry was raised playing music. At an early age he played the accordion, and learned three chords on the guitar when he was 13 years old. A few years later, an American serviceman stationed at the radar site in Cartwright taught Harry how to play finger-style on a guitar.

For a brief period in the late 1960s, Harry made a living playing in bands in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, but found that playing music professionally "took the fun out of it." He joined the Canadian Armed Forces and thought that he was leaving his guitar behind. But two years later, while still in the service, Harry picked up the guitar again. He began playing cover tunes with bands, but also tried his hand at writing his own songs. He later recorded one of his compositions, "Raven Hair." In 1981, that song topped the charts on Goose Bay's CFLN Radio for a week. Harry realized that people from Labrador liked hearing songs by one of their own about their own lifestyles.

Harry realized that people from Labrador liked hearing songs by one of their own about their own lifestyles.

Fig. 3 "Raven Hair," written in 1979



Raven Hair

Words and Music: Harry Martin, Cartwright

Ra-ven hair — cool dark eyes. You looked at me — I came a-live
When you came on with that smile. I was in hea-ven for a- while The world was ours
The night so young Don't e-ver end — go on and on Just when I'm feelin' so
high. Your eyes are say-in' — good bye. Chorus (G) Oh, what a night for dream-ing —
We've got the stars on our side — It's just too good to be- lieve — in
I couldn't leave if I tried
(verse four D.C. al fine)

1. Raven hair,
Cool dark eyes,
You looked at me I came alive,
When you came on with that smile,
I was in heaven for a while.

2. The world was ours,
The night so young,
Don't ever end, go on and on,
Just when I'm feeling so high,
Your eyes are sayin' goodbye.

Chorus:
Oh what a night for dreamin',
We've got the stars on our side,
It's just too good to believe in,
I couldn't leave if I tried.

3. Don't say a word,
Don't break the spell,
Let's go and find a wishing well,
And I will make your dreams come true,
Just tell me what I got to do.
Chorus
Repeat Verse 1

After leaving the service, Harry became a conservation officer. In the 1970s, the provincial government introduced many new rules and regulations on trapping and hunting. Harry was in charge of enforcing these new laws along more than 500 kilometres of Labrador coastline and 80 kilometres of rivers in southern Labrador. Later he would admit that it was not an easy job.

Many hunters and trappers he dealt with had maintained traditional trap lines for generations. They believed the wildlife that had sustained their fathers and grandfathers should always be there to hunt and trap. Although there were people who saw the need for hunting quotas and humane trapping regulations, some saw them as a nuisance. For Harry this meant that sometimes "during the day I would come into a situation where someone was committing a minor infraction … and in the evening I'd find myself at that same person's house … (at) a party."

This gave Harry the idea to use his music as a bridge between himself and the hunters and trappers with whom he had to work. He started organizing musical events. People would show up for the music, and then Harry would slip a rule or regulation into the mix. This worked because Harry admired the hunters and trappers he knew. His songs began to tell their stories. For instance, the song "Take Me to the Country" was inspired by Henry Mesher, a fur trapper from Paradise River whom Harry had met. In this way, Harry's 30-plus-year career as a conservation officer inspired much of his music.

Fig. 4 First public concert performance. Official opening of the Cartwright Community Hall, 1967

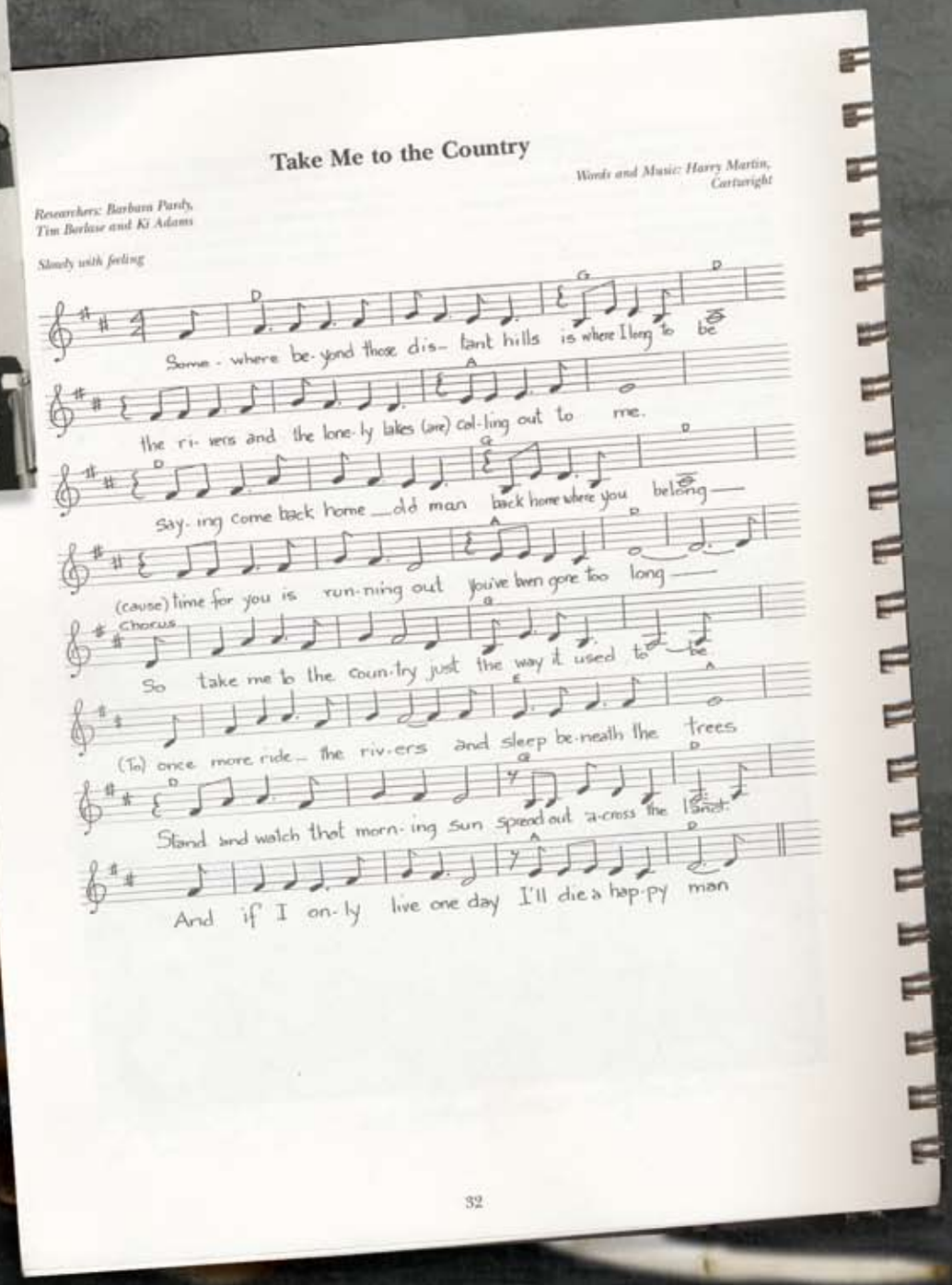


Fig. 5 "Take Me to the Country," written in memory of the late Henry Mesher, 1983

With the realization that many children in Labrador didn't know how their grandparents had lived and, in some cases, didn't respect the traditions they had inherited, Harry started to take his songs into schools. "I could sometimes point to a kid in the room and say, 'This song is a story about your grandfather.' For a little while that kid would be a hero in the eyes of his friends, who would say things like 'Wow! Your grandfather did all that?'"

Harry's music also celebrates his love of nature. For instance, one of his songs, "Broken Wings," was written to raise awareness of the declining population of eider ducks. He says this song "ties the type of work I'm doing with the music I love to do … and it sent out the message that if we don't take care of the things we have in nature, we'll lose them. It's a pretty simple message, but a strong one."

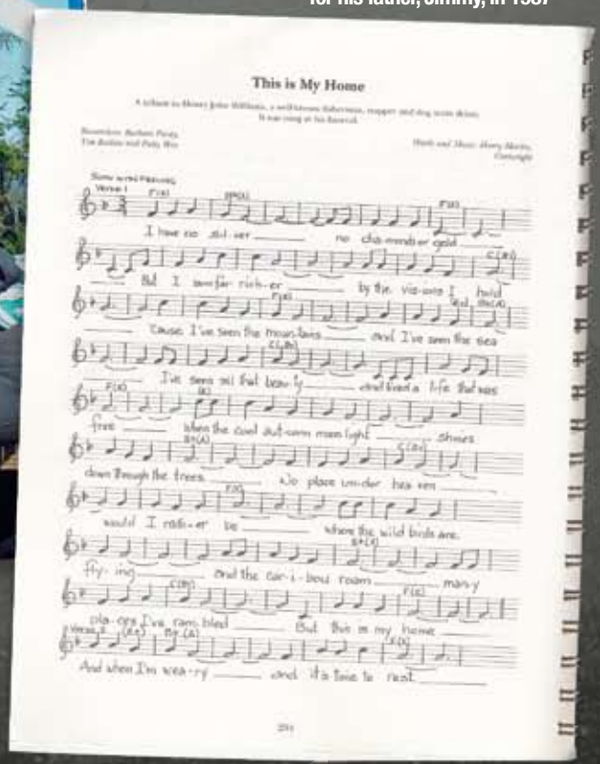
Today, Harry continues to work as a Wildlife Enforcement Officer for Environment Canada in Labrador. He has received several awards for both his music and his conservation work and has released four recordings: *Harry Martin* (1980), *Visions Of This Land* (1994), *Broken Wings* (2000) and *Full Circle* (2005). Harry continues to perform in venues across the country, but adds that he still gets invited to local trappers' events and is honoured to have sung at funerals of Elders.

"My songwriting was two-fold: it was an effort to preserve the Labrador culture and heritage and also to promote responsible wildlife conservation practices. So it was both tied in together there."

– Harry Martin

Fig. 6 Chatting with the late Gordon Davis, Sr. whose generation of trappers and hunters inspired many of Martin's songs

Fig. 7 "This is My Home," written for his father, Jimmy, in 1987



Try it...

Using either an existing melody, or one that you have created, craft a song based on one of the following themes:

- your culture and heritage
- the beauty of "this place"
- something that you believe in strongly

Share your composition with friends and family.

Reflect...

Make a list of your favourite songs related to the theme of (i) culture in general or (ii) Newfoundland and Labrador in particular. Rank your list to identify the three songs that speak most strongly to you. What ideas in the lyrics, or other aspects of the music (melody, harmony, rhythm, or form) do you find most compelling? Why?

Artist *profile*

Fig. 1 Michael Massie

Michael Massie – *Artist*

Michael Massie's art combines modern and traditional elements, and reflects his mixed Inuit, Metis, and Scottish ancestry. Michael loved creating art from an early age. When he was growing up in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, art was not offered after grade 6, so Michael taught himself to draw from comic books.

In 1991, after studying European art forms in St. John's, Stephenville, and Halifax, Michael took a workshop in Inuit carving techniques from sculptors Mattiusi Iyaituk and Charlie Kogvik, both of whom had learned the craft from family carvers. Michael created controversy in the Inuit stone-carving world by introducing non-traditional materials like wood and European techniques like silversmithing.

"I am part Inuit and part Qablunaaq," Michael has said, "I might as well combine the two and come up with something different."

Michael's silversmithing honours his Scottish grandfather, David Massie, who came to Labrador in the early 1900s to work for the Hudson's Bay Company. His imagery of owls, shamans, and uluks are drawn from his Inuit heritage. Since 1992, Michael has also created many elaborate and decorative tea sets, which are a fond homage to his Metis grandmother's love of tea. For Michael, tea is an act of hospitality, which represents his love for his family – an underlying theme in much of his work.

The modern artists Pablo Picasso and Salvador Dali have influenced Michael's contemporary designs. But his art also incorporates humour that comes from Aboriginal stories where shamans turn into trickster animals to teach important lessons. In addition, many of Michael's sculptures are based on stories. His compact stone carvings have a strong connection to traditional Inuit stone carvings. At the same time, the exaggerated features of some of his pieces speak of his early appreciation of the pop art form of cartoons.

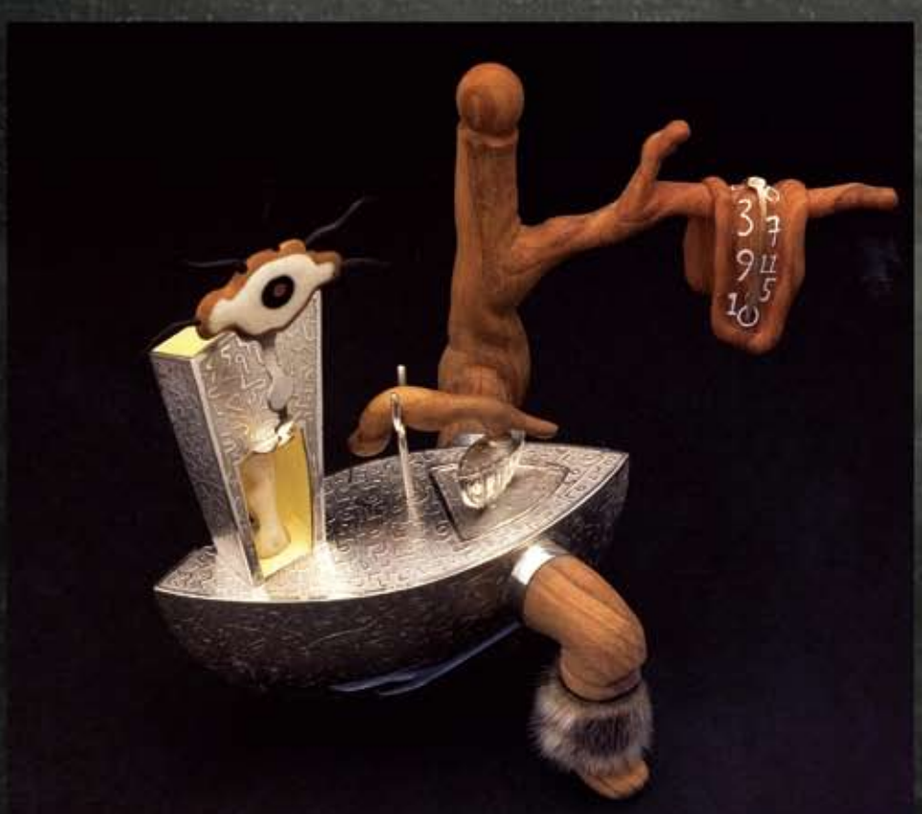


Fig. 2 Michael Massie
***Enigmas of a teapot* (2002)**
etched sterling silver, olive wood, horse hair, musk ox horn, ebony, ivory, seal skin, enamel, and sinew - 19.68 x 24. 13 x 14.22 cm
This piece deliberately combines Inuit and surrealist motifs. (Note the melting ulu on the lid.) Traces of eight well-known surrealist artworks are incorporated. The surface of the piece is etched with Inuktitut syllables, drawings of eyes, and free-form shapes.

Fig. 3 Michael Massie
***The look of confidence was apparent on his face as he was about to strike* (2003)**
limestone, cocobolo wood, ivory, bone, and sinew - 50.8 x 33 x 18.42 cm

"Remember what you know and always leave the door open for something new."

– Michael Massie

Fig. 4 Michael Massie
***Grandfather I have something to tell you* (2004)**
anhydrite, bone, bird's eye maple, mahogany, and ebony
17.25 x 9.25 x 12 inches

Fig. 5 Michael Massie
Detail of *Grandfather I have something to tell you* (2004)

Grandfather I have something to tell you:

A story from my past. When I was 12 or 13, my father and my mother's father took ... (us) camping to Mulligan, Labrador for a week. One day my Dad and Grandfather left camp to go get more supplies ...

Going outside for a minute, I noticed a small bird ... which landed not far from where I was standing. I quickly went into the cabin and grabbed the pellet-gun and went back outside. Now Grandfather had always told us not to kill any animals that we didn't eat ... but I aimed and pulled the trigger – and watched as the bird turned ... (face up) – dead. Stunned and riddled with guilt and fear over what I had just done, I picked up the little bird and brought it into the cabin to show the boys ... and was roundly told off for it.

Grabbing a little spoon, I ran out to bury the little bird. I never could tell Grandfather or Dad what I had done and I have always regretted doing that ... and this is my confession in stone, some 30 years later.

In the design, having the one leg standing and the other kneeling is me standing to accept responsibility for what I had done – while also kneeling to say a prayer or confessing to it all. The gloved hand represents the fact that I have hidden something, while the ungloved one says that I am baring all or confessing. The Xs for eyes is a whimsical way of saying something is dead.

Fig. 6 Michael Massie
***Walrusty* (2005)**
sterling silver, kingwood, lignum vitae, ebony, and bone - 22.86 x 20.96 x 17.15 cm
Michael says the inspiration for the design of this piece "came from something I saw one night as I switched off the TV ... just that split second before the screen goes black, there was a shape that caught my eye (the shape that is now the negative space between the handle and the spout). As soon as I was back in the shop, I began to sketch that shape — and lo and behold this is what came from it."

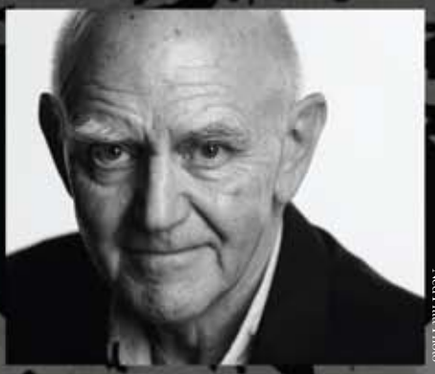
Try it...

Find a story in your culture and tell it in a work of visual art. Consider creating a carving from plaster of paris to represent the story.

Reflect...

Think about your own influences as they relate to your art work. Who, or what, influences you? How are these influences reflected in your creations?

Artist *profile*



Ned Pratt Photo

Fig. 1 Christopher Pratt

Christopher Pratt – *Artist*

Today, Christopher Pratt is one of this province's best-known visual artists. However, as a teenager, Christopher showed more interest in fishing, hiking, and camping than in art. This changed when he was hospitalized to have his appendix removed, and his grandfather gave him a book on how to paint with watercolours. This marked the beginning of Christopher's painting. Although his early work showed talent, it would be a while before he decided to pursue art full time.

Christopher, who was born and grew up in St. John's, first enrolled at Memorial University as an engineering student, then transferred to Mount Allison in New Brunswick to study pre-med. Although the head of Mount Allison's Fine Arts Department urged Christopher to enroll in the school's Fine Arts program, Christopher wasn't ready to do that. Instead, after a year at Mount Allison, he returned to St. John's where he painted on his own, selling his watercolours for $35 to $75 a piece.

"… Anyone who looked was going to see young Christopher being serious, pursuing art as a grave and noble purpose, not an easy, carefree life."

Fig. 2 Christopher Pratt
***Benoit's Cove: Sheds In Winter* (1998)**
oil on board

Fig. 3 Christopher Pratt
***Cape St. Mary's* (1975)**
Serigraph

In 1957 Christopher married his Mount Allison classmate, Mary West, and enrolled in the Glasgow School of Art in Scotland. He found that Glasgow offered discipline and exacting standards that forced him to grow as an artist. Students at Glasgow were required to draw for three hours every morning, first from wooden geometric shapes and then plaster casts, before being allowed to draw from live models. After Christopher completed the two-year foundation program, the Pratts returned to Mount Allison School of Fine Arts, where both earned a Bachelor of Fine Art degree.

In 1961, Christopher accepted a position as a Specialist in Art at Memorial University. He served as a curator at the University gallery and taught art classes to adults in the evenings. But he was unhappy with how much time his salaried work was taking from his artwork. In 1963, after the birth of the third of their four children, Christopher resigned from his job at Memorial and the Pratts moved their family to a summer cottage on the Salmonier River. For the next seven years, Christopher painted and entered exhibitions.

"… My art … is not about art; it may not seem to be about life either, but it originates there. I am preoccupied with the fact of existence. I depend on the redemption of light. Light is life."

MINIMALISTS, ABSTRACT ARTISTS, AND PRECISIONISTS

With the invention of the camera in the nineteenth century, artists wondered if photographs had replaced painting. Abstract artists decided that art was not a window on the world, through which the viewer looked. Instead they painted pictures that, while sometimes representing reality, were more about the elements of art such as colour, dot, line, shape, space, texture and value.

At the same time as the Abstract Expressionism movement was starting, a group of artists began the American Precisionist movement. Their art was a technically challenging form of high realism. Precisionists painted objects removed from any emotional context as a way to portray the art elements.

Like abstract painters, another group of artists, minimalists, rebelled from realistic pictures, and, like precisionists, they rebelled from the expressionism of abstract art. Minimalists focused on highlighting art elements and minimizing everything else. A line, a dot, or a texture could be the single element featured in one large canvas.

Christopher Pratt's work has been labelled as high realism, precisionism, and minimalism, but he rejects these labels. He once wrote, "The subject matter is important to me. I am not immersed in the world of philosophies of art … My art … is not about art; it may not seem to be about life either, but it originates there. I am preoccupied with the fact of existence. I depend on the redemption of light. Light is life."

Fig. 4 Christopher Pratt
***American Monument: Radio Room, Argentia ca. 1999 (Argentia Series)* (2005)**
oil on paper

A turning point for Christopher occurred when he met art dealer Mira Godard in 1969. The next year, Christopher Pratt had his first show at her commercial art gallery in Montreal. Although Christopher admits he was very lucky to meet an eminent art dealer early in his career, he also notes that he and his former wife, artist Mary Pratt, had taken significant risks, and that he had developed a strong body of work. In his memoir, *Ordinary Things: A Different Kind of Voyage*, Christopher wrote: "When I quit university and later my job at Extension Service, and decided not to go into my father's business, I was adamant that no one would accuse me of being too lazy to be responsible. Anyone who looked was going to see young Christopher being serious, pursuing art as a grave and noble purpose, not an easy, carefree life."

It is noteworthy that Christopher began his career as a realist painter at a time when much of the art world had fallen in love with abstract work. However, Christopher's work is not realist in the sense that the viewer can recognize specific landscapes. Some reviewers have called it "magic realism" because his work is removed from the messiness of real life. His buildings have a pristine quality, his grass grows straight, and his waves are symmetrical. Some who have analyzed Christopher's work have even labelled it as abstract or minimalist as the real focus in Christopher's art is line, shape, and colour.

Christopher's art is distinctly about Newfoundland and Labrador. He has always painted the things he is interested in – such as imaginary landscapes, buildings, boats, roads he has travelled, and the horizon on the Northern Peninsula where he drives several times a year.

Fig. 5 Christopher Pratt
***Trout River Hills 2: Blizzard at Winterhouse Brook* (1999)**
oil on masonite

In 2005, the National Gallery of Canada organized the second retrospective of Christopher's work. (The first was 20 years earlier and organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery.) The show opened in Ottawa and toured Halifax, St. John's, Winnipeg, and Quebec City. As 2005 was also Christopher's 70th year, he was very aware that he was looking at the product of a lifetime of art. At one point during the show, he wrote the following in his diary:

"The bottom line is that I want to keep my eye on the prize: to savour and celebrate my existence, and to guard and maintain whatever quality I am capable of bringing to my work. Through this retrospective, as in 1985, I have had the opportunity to determine what is strong and what is weak, what is worthwhile and what is a waste of time in my work … At seventy-one, a twenty-year plan seems overly optimistic. The danger is of thinking of it as a 'wrap,' but I will not."

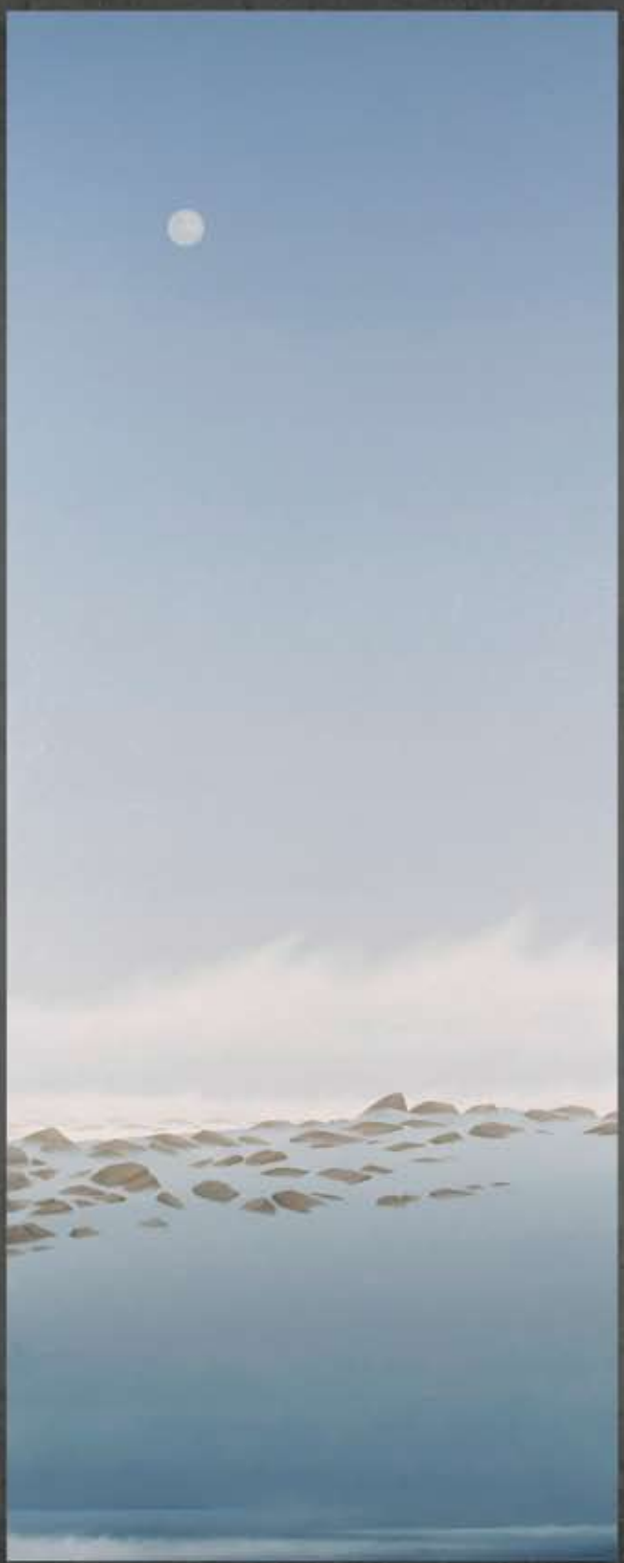


Fig. 6 Christopher Pratt
***Trout River Hills 5: Winterhouse Summit with Moon by Day* (2000)**
oil on masonite

Try it...

Many of Christopher Pratt's pieces focus on a simple part of a larger scene (for example, a section of a building). Select a part of the room you are in and try sketching it in style similar to the artwork shown in this profile

Reflect...

How would you describe Christopher Pratt's artwork? Is he a realist, a minimalist, or a precisionist? In what way is his art different from all these movements?

Fig. 1 ***Statue of a Beothuk woman*** by artist Gerald Squires

Artist *profile*

Recording Artists – *Windows into the Past*

Some works of art are less interpretive or conceptual and are more literal – capturing events and practices in a style known as realism. The works of realist artists are especially important when the viewer seeks to have a deeper understanding of the past before the invention of the camera. In fact, these works often serve as a carefully preserved "window" into the past, providing us with an understanding that goes beyond a written description. Here are three artists who have done just that.

Shanawdithit

In the fall of 1828, William Cormack presented Shanawdithit, the last known Beothuk, with paper and black and red lead pencils. Shanawdithit, who was in her late 20s, was staying with Cormack after having been captured six years earlier by some fur trappers. Despite having no prior experience using these art materials, Shanawdithit immediately adapted and created many drawings.

Some of Shanawdithit's sketches show artifacts, mentifacts, and sociofacts from her culture. Others illustrate specific events that she witnessed and capture the topography of the land where Beothuk lived. Her drawings were in response to Cormack's questions about Beothuk lifestyle. The written descriptions of the pictures are in Cormack's handwriting. Today Shanawdithit's drawings are a valuable record of a culture that no longer exists.

Cormack was the president of the Boeothick (Beothuk) Institution of St. John's.

If you could draw only three or four things to represent your culture, what would you choose?

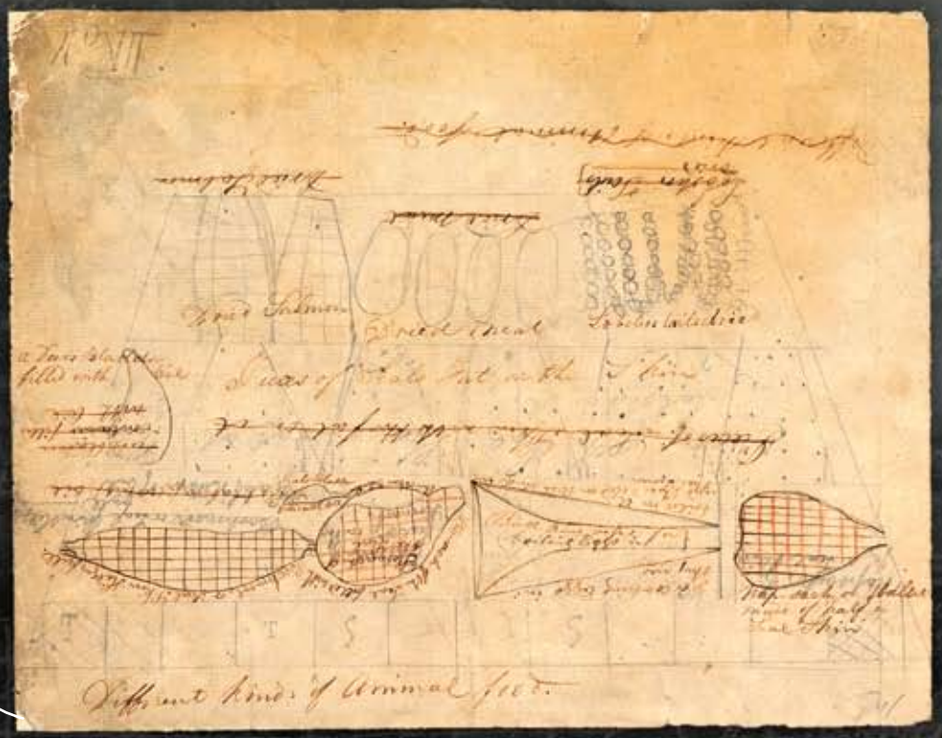


Fig. 2 ***Shanawdithit's Sketch VII.*** This shows different kinds of animal products eaten or used by Beothuk. On the top row, Shanawdithit has shown dried salmon, dried meat, and dried lobster tails. Underneath this is a deer bladder filled with oil and pieces of seal fat on the skin. The bottom row shows a seal skin, bladder, and fillet; a birch vessel for boiling eggs; and a knapsack made of seal skin.

"The Beothuk, the aboriginal inhabitants of Newfoundland, were hunters, gatherers, and fishers who moved seasonally between the coast and the interior. With the influx of European settlements and fisheries in the 1700s the Beothuk found their territory increasingly reduced and conflict between the two groups escalated. The Beothuk declined steadily in numbers and by the early 1800s they had ceased to exist as a viable cultural group. Shanawdithit, the last of her people, died in 1829."

– *A History and Ethnography of the Beothuk*, Ingeborg Marshall

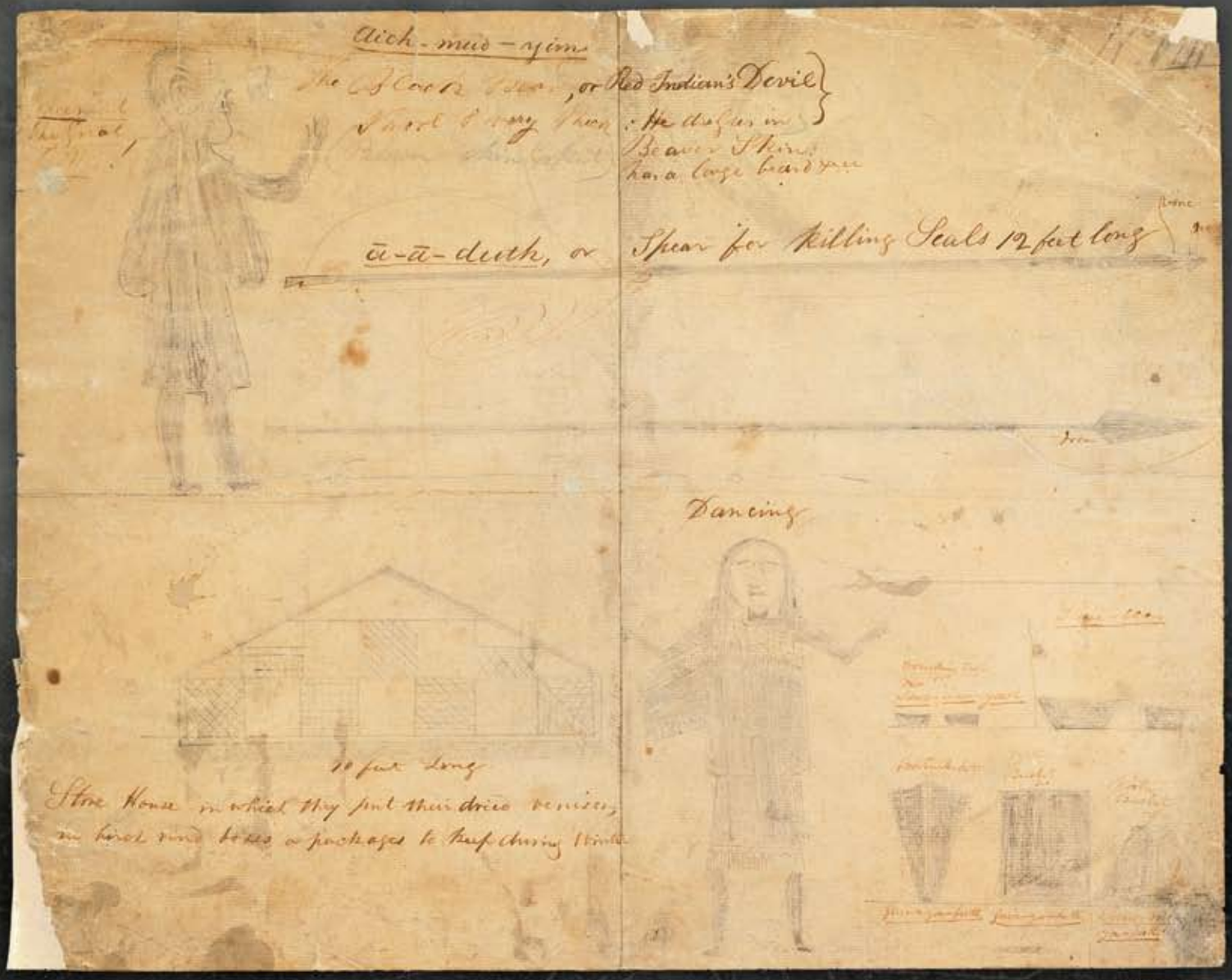


Fig. 3

Fig. 4 William Hind

Fig. 5 *The Start*
Engraving. George Pearson, engraver, wood engraving, vignette, 5 x 9.2 cm (image) Explorations I, 6

William Hind

In 1861, artist William Hind was invited by his geologist brother Henry to join 11 men on an expedition to explore the Labrador interior. Like the scientists on the trip, William was primarily an observer and recorder of everything he saw, including the environment, First Nations and Inuit he encountered during the expedition, and the rigours of travelling throughout the region.

It is likely that William used a Camera Lucida on this trip, as his sketches have a traced quality. A Camera Lucida, a device used by many artists at the time to speed their drawing and increase accuracy, was a series of lenses that made it easier for the artist to "trace" what he or she saw onto a sketchbook. However, few admitted to owning one as their use was considered "cheating."

When William returned to Toronto, and then to England, he created studio paintings and pen and ink drawings from his sketches. Commercial artists converted his pen and ink drawings into wood engravings, like the one shown in Fig. 5. These wood engravings were printed with raised type to illustrate Henry's two-volume book *Explorations in the Interior of the Labrador Peninsula: The Country of the Montagnais and Nasquapee Indians.** Other commercial artists copied William's paintings onto lithography stones, and printed colour illustrations separately, to be added to the black and white text and engravings. Today wood engravers and lithographers are considered artists in their own right. But in the nineteenth century they were anonymous craftspeople.

Henry Hind may have considered his brother's art to be less important than the scientific work he was doing as a geologist. However, William put a lot of artistic energy into his paintings. The lithograph shown in Fig. 6, based on his painting *Resting on the Potage Path*, is very expressive and has merit as a work of art in its own right.

*These are terms that were once used to refer to Innu living in Labrador.

Fig. 6 *Resting on the Portage Path*
Lithograph, William L. Walton (lithographic draftsman) colour lithograph, 11.2 x 18.5 cm (image) Explorations I, facing 43

Fig. 7 Rhoda Dawson

Fig. 8 Rhoda Dawson
Dr. Old's medical clinic in Twillingate

Rhoda Dawson

In 1930 another young artist in search of adventure arrived in Labrador from England. Rhoda Dawson was an employee in the Grenfell Mission's Industrial Department. She was one of a number of artists who designed mats and oversaw the creation of crafts for sale in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Coming from a home where both parents were artists, and with her degree in art, Rhoda invested her own artistic sensibilities into her work. She created hooked rugs, drew with charcoal, and painted in watercolour. In 1934 Rhoda taught school in Payne's Cove, where she may have made the watercolour sketch *Fish Flakes in an Outport* (see Fig. 9). In 1936, before returning home to England, Rhoda visited Dr. Old's medical clinic in Twillingate, where she probably created the charcoal and watercolour sketch shown in Fig. 8.

Typically the word "sketch" implies something that is a preliminary work and created quickly. But Rhoda's works on paper are filled with the energy of the places they record and the vigour of the artist. Sometimes, as in the work of William Hind, sketches are clearly a step between the subject matter and the artist's final artwork. However often these original drawings capture a spontaneity that is lost in studio-created painting. Today many value the artistic merit of sketches as a raw and honest statement of the artist's world.

Fig. 9 Rhoda Dawson
Fish Flakes in an Outport
watercolour sketch

Try it...

Today some visual artists continue to make sketches of their subjects and then use the sketches to help them create a painting or drawing. It is also becoming increasingly common for an artist to work from photographs of his or her subject.

Make a photograph of a subject and use the photograph to help you create a work of visual art in a medium that may be new to you, such as charcoal or pastel. Work quickly, allowing perhaps no more than 30 minutes to create your image. Consider the advantages and disadvantages of using a photograph in this way.

Reflect...

Which of the works presented in this section do you find most engaging? Have the works changed how you think about that time period? How does viewing the work of these artists help?

Artist *profile*

Fig. 1 William Ritchie

William B. Ritchie – *Artist*

In 1976, when William Ritchie was 21, the Ontario-born graduate of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design travelled to Nain for what was supposed to be a two-month visit. He stayed there six years. Because of his interest in learning about the region, William was taught how to hunt, make his own clothes, and survive in the north by an Inuit friend.

His friend was artist Gilbert Hay, (see page 108 for an example of Hay's work). In return for Gilbert teaching him his traditional skills, William taught Gilbert how to print lithographs. The two men formed a partnership and created a series of illustrations for a book of Inuit legends, which is still unpublished. Although William moved to a cabin on the southern shore of the Avalon Peninsula in 1992, his time spent in remote parts of Canada and his friendship with Gilbert and Gilbert's family, continue to shape his practice.

Currently William spends five months of every year managing a printmaking studio in Cape Dorset which

Fig. 2 William Ritchie
***Ookpik the Believer* (1985)**, Lithograph Ed. A/P

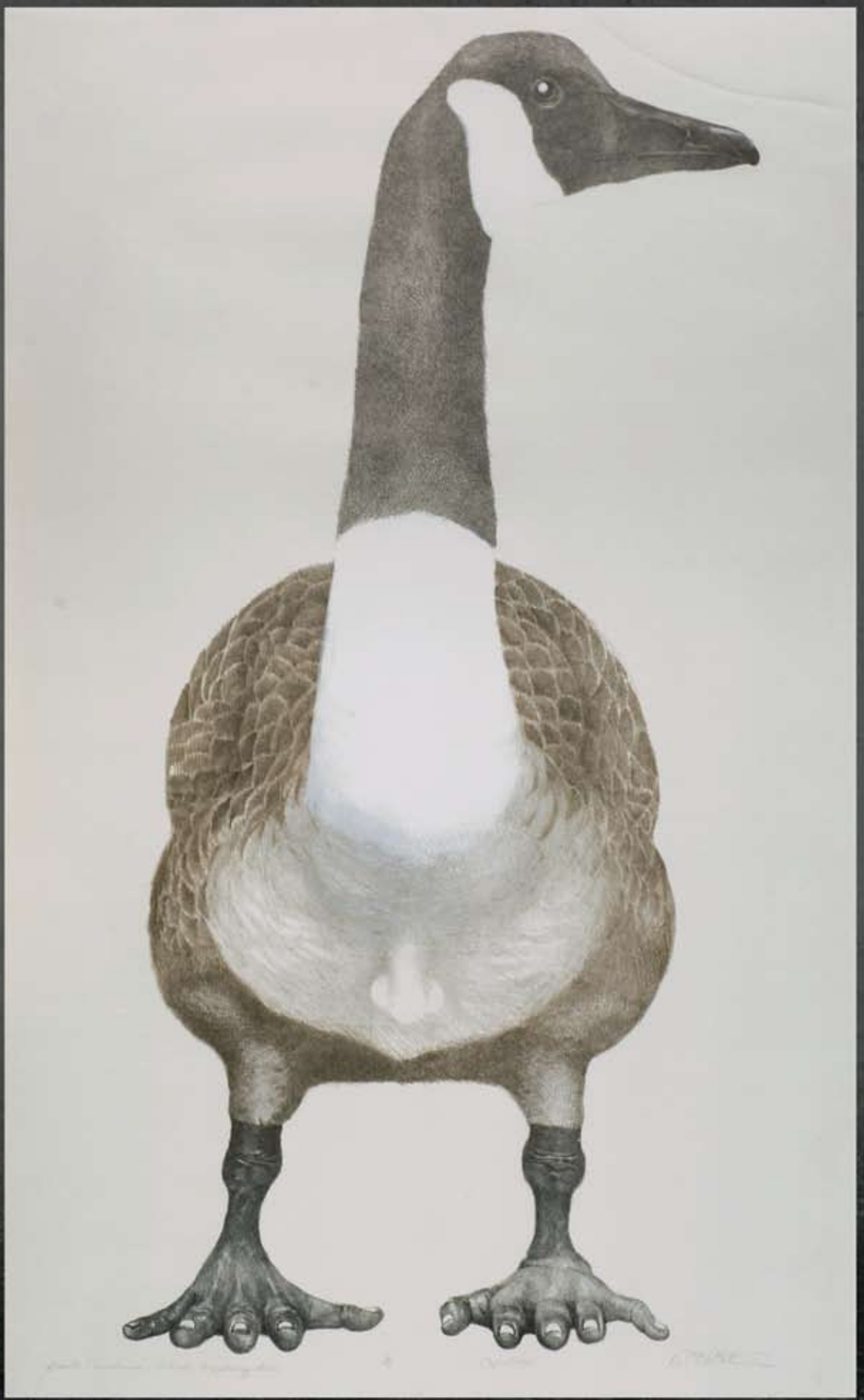


Fig. 3 William Ritchie
***Labrador Mythology Series: Branta Canadensis* (1983)**, Lithograph Ed. 6/15

is the working space for several famous Inuit artists. Several of William's paintings of Aboriginal peoples from Newfoundland and Labrador's past are used in this text book. He based the faces of these people on Innu and Inuit people he knows, since he assumes that they are related to Maritime Archaic and Beothuk peoples.

William's art is heavily influenced by the attitude that Labrador's Aboriginal peoples have towards nature. "Some people study art history," says William, "and some people study specific artists, and they become their visual clues. I live among nature and I look to it for my clues. I'm always watching for beautiful colour combinations, and texture. That's what informs me … I think that's what drew me to Aboriginal people, the way they draw from the land for their clues to live."

For William, an art project is something that follows from an intense experience in nature, a canoeing trip, or a hike in a blizzard. He has often found himself reflecting on this experience in a cabin or shelter in the wilderness, before beginning to paint or draw. Then William floods his paper with a thin wash of watercolour. When the wash dries, William starts looking for images in the wash. With a pencil, he draws the animals, birds, fish, leaves, rocks, and water that are suggested there. William's art reflects his interest in animals. His animals are always transforming, like Inuit shamans, into human figures or other animals.

It is the transformation of nature, from season to season, that inspires William's images. Nature is not a single entity that stands still for the artist to capture it. Instead, William records the journey he has taken through nature and the shifting essence of his constantly changing subject.

"My first encounters with a place – the smells in the air, the sounds of the birds, the unusual vegetation, the land I can't recognize – are precious moments."

– William Ritchie

Fig. 4 William Ritchie
***Labrador Mythology Series: Luma* (1981)**, Lithograph Ed. 2/10

Fig. 5 William Ritchie
***Labrador Mythology Series: Trout* (1983)**, Lithograph Ed. 4/20

Try it...

Take a hike, go canoeing, or sit by the shore. Look at the natural world around you. Quickly sketch what you see. Don't worry about the arrangement of subjects on your paper – simply allow your lines to flow from one subject to another. Fill your paper.

Reflect...

What is the most peaceful place that you have visited in nature? What was it about the experience that you found relaxing? Describe the experience in a few brief phrases.

Artist *profile*

Rug Hooking

Fig. 1

In the not too distant past, people in Newfoundland and Labrador did a much better job at recycling than we do today. Objects were seldom thrown away. For example, adult-sized hand-me-downs were ripped apart at the seams and made over into children's clothing. When those clothes were too worn to wear they went into a rag bag along with other saved materials, such as the burlap bags that food came in. Sometimes these fabric scraps found new life as part of a floor mat – an item of necessity, but also a form of cultural expression.

The making of these rugs often started during the stormy months of February and March. A man in the family might make a wooden frame and stretch a piece of cut burlap (or brin, as it was called) over it. Another family member would then use a charcoal stick from the fire to draw a design. Next, a woman would cut her rags into strips about a centimetre wide and, with the help of a bent nail in a wooden handle, hook the strips in loops through the holes in the brin. Each strip was tied on the back and then trimmed. This continued until the brin was covered. The completed mat was then placed in the appropriate area of the house.

Traditional mat designs were often geometric and very colourful. The designers created their dyes from onion skins, berries, and bark. Mat designs were passed on, modified, and innovated. Some rug hookers also used quilting designs or borrowed floral patterns from items such as teacups. Sometimes mats commemorated events like a local marriage or a royal visit, or even pictured a family pet.

Fig. 2 A hooked mat
From Newfoundland and Labrador, mid-1900s

The tradition of creating hooked mats for one's own household use evolved into a cottage industry in Newfoundland and Labrador in the 1900s thanks to Dr. Wilfred Grenfell, who ran the Grenfell medical mission in northern Newfoundland and the southern Labrador coast. In 1906, Dr. Grenfell met Jessie Luther, an occupational therapist who was using arts and crafts as part of a recovery treatment for sanitorium patients in the United States. Grenfell invited Luther to teach the women at his mission how to weave – both as occupational therapy for patients and to provide cash supplements to fishing families dependent on credit. A few years later, Luther suggested that Grenfell add hooked mats to the crafts the women were producing. He agreed.

Fig. 3 A couple next to some hooked rugs and a spinning wheel, west coast 1935
When strips were hooked randomly in lines, the pattern was called "hit or miss" or "scrappie" and the rug would be relegated to the hallway or the kitchen.

Hooked mats, once created to fulfill a functional need and later as items for sale, are in modern times seen as an art form.

Fig. 4 Example of Grenfell hooked mat

Fig. 5 Grenfell hooked mat: *Dog Team with Shadows.* Brin base, hooked with dyed stocking and cotton. Prototype design c. 1939 by Stephen Hamilton.

Scenes of polar bears, Inuit dog sleds, and fishing villages were very popular with the Grenfell Institute's English, Canadian, and American customers. Different artists from the United States and Great Britain who came to work at the Institute added their designs over time. Dr. Grenfell also created some designs for the mats.

Fig. 6 A Grenfell hooked mat produced 1930-1950.

Kits with stamped Grenfell patterns, donated silk stockings dyed in subtle vegetable dyes, and suggested colour samples pinned to burlap, were distributed among craftswomen. When an individual completed a mat, it was returned to the Grenfell mission and then sold. Initially the individual who had hooked the mat was paid in the form of goods, such as clothing or food. Later they were paid in cash. Women who produced Grenfell mats were very proud of their craftsmanship and of their ability to contribute to their family income.

Today, the story of rug hooking continues in Newfoundland and Labrador. Hooked mats, once created to fulfill a functional need and later as items for sale, are in modern times seen as an art form. Many contemporary artists have chosen hooked mats as their form of artistic expression. At the same time, they have a symbolic cultural connection to the thousands of women who worked to sustain their families and way of life.

Fig. 7 Modern artists like Helen Murphy, Barbara O'Keefe, and Frances Ennis use this art form much as they would use paint and canvas to create art work which will be hung on the wall and to tell a story. This rug, *Women Of Vision*, was created by the three artists to commemorate their friend, Sister Marie Ryan, who died in 2008. They note: "It celebrates her life and the Presentation Sisters 175th Anniversary in Newfoundland and Labrador. It also captures a little of the voyage of the first four Sisters … who set sail from Ireland in 1833 to live out their vision of a society where girls and young women would have access to education."

Fig. 8 Sometimes one form of cultural expression can influence another. This piece, *The Boat from Bacon Cove* (1990), by Kathleen Knowling is inspired by the designs of hooked mats crafted by outport women, but is actually oilstick and coloured pencil on watercolour paper that has been coated with black acrylic paint.

Try it...

Think about a rug you might like to hook. Will you use a traditional design or make up your own? Present your choice to your class, explaining your choice of design. If possible, hook your rug. See if there are individuals in your community with experience with rug hooking who can teach you how to hook a rug. Once you complete your rug, how will you use it?

Reflect...

Look around your home and community for other examples of individuals who have created works of art that are also used as functional items in their daily life. Photograph what you observe and add it to your portfolio.

Artist *profile*

Fig. 1 Ted Russell

Ted Russell – *Storyteller*

Ted Russell had many jobs throughout his lifetime – but he is most famous as a writer and master storyteller. His career as a "professional" storyteller began one night when he was sitting with friends telling stories. One of the people in the room was a CBC Radio producer, who asked Ted to come into the studio and record some of his stories.*

So was born *The Chronicles of Uncle Mose,* whose narrator was a retired fisherman from Fortune Bay, living in the fictitious community of Pigeon Inlet. Uncle Mose spoke with Ted's warm voice and had the slow drawl of Ted's home community, Coley's Point.

From 1953 to 1961, without interruption, Ted told over 500 six-minute stories, sometimes twice a week, to a devoted radio audience listening to him on the CBC Radio's *Fishermen's Broadcast.* Ted also wrote several radio plays for the CBC during that time.

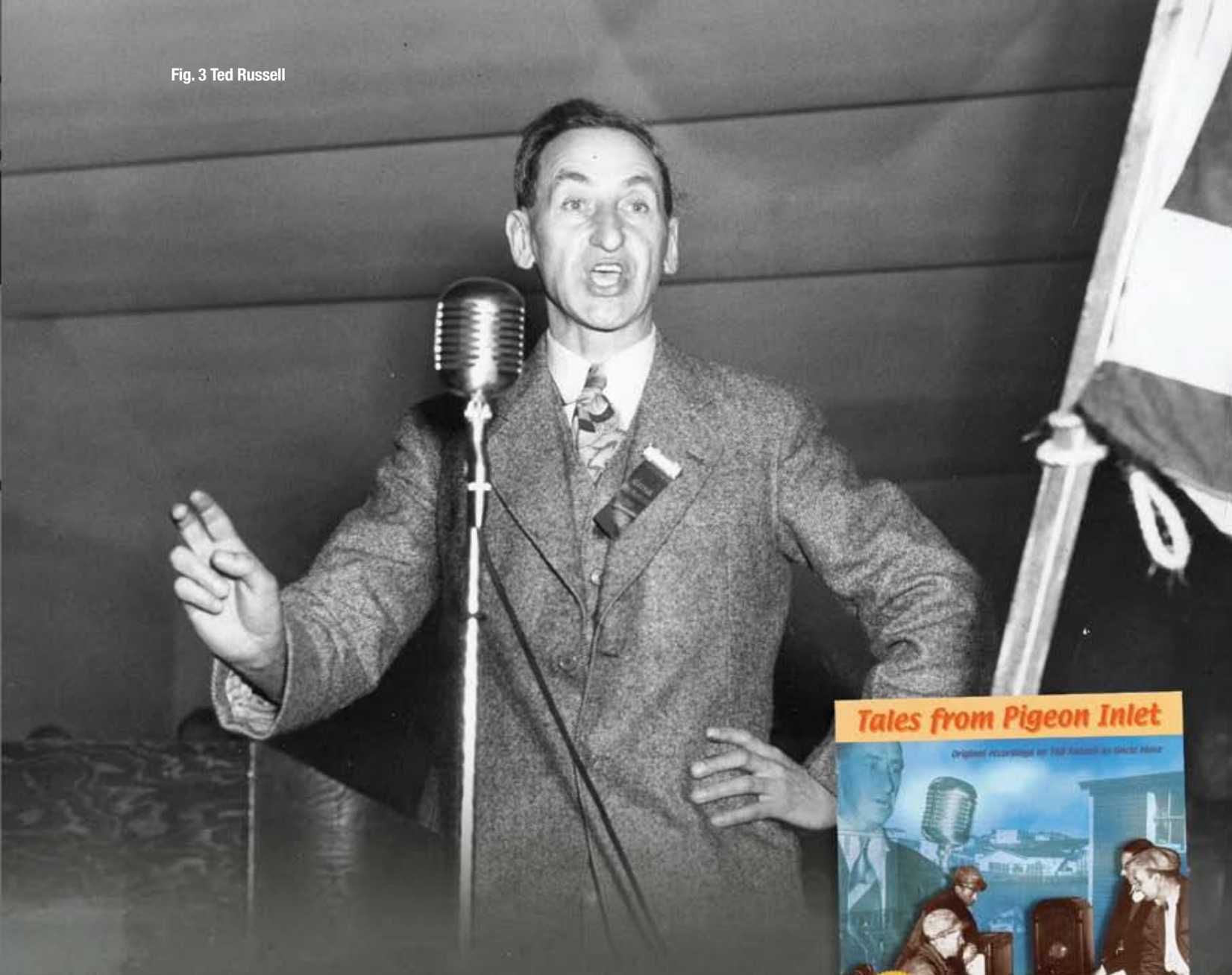
"The aim I had in mind, I suppose, was just to tell stories – stories I knew were basically true – not factual, but true – about Newfoundland people," Ted once said.

His stories reflected the life he knew in rural Newfoundland. He knew what it was like to grow up as the son of a fisherman and he drew on his experiences from his past jobs – including his time as a magistrate. Ted hadn't always enjoyed the duties of this job, describing the time as "the hungriest years of the hungry thirties." However, one of his funniest stories was of a rural magistrate, who had to make a most difficult decision – how to deal with "Uncle Sol Noddy (who) stole … two holes from Skipper Lige Bartle."

Fig. 2 Ted Russell and his wife, Dora (nee Oake)

*Ted's career included being a teacher, a magistrate, and Director of Co-operatives for the Commission of Government. He was also Minister of Natural Resources under Smallwood for a short time and a university professor.

Fig. 3 Ted Russell



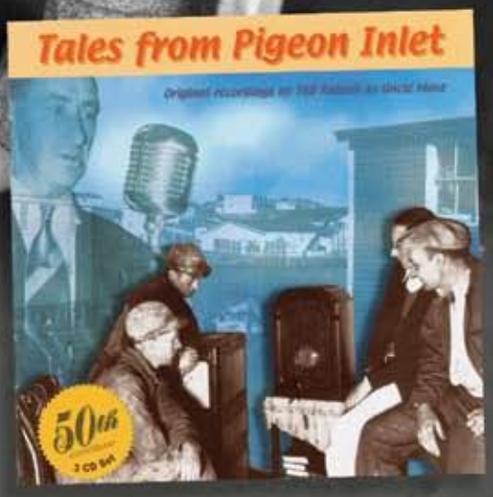


Fig. 4 *Tales from Pigeon Inlet*
Fifty years later, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are still enjoying Ted Russell's stories.

It was Ted's uncanny ability to portray the personality quirks of his characters and his descriptions of a rural lifestyle that was already disappearing that attracted a loyal audience. He also immortalized the Newfoundland and Labrador tall tale in his poem, *The Smokeroom on the Kyle* (see page 104). His play, *The Holdin' Ground*, was the first Newfoundland and Labrador drama to be performed on television. But it is his tales of idyllic life in the town of Pigeon Inlet that remain Ted Russell's most enduring legacy.

"The unique trait of [Ted Russell's] monologues was the use of folk talk ... incorporating vernacular language, conventionalized topics of conversation, traditional oral genres (beliefs, sayings, gossip, narrative) that people of the region think of as their own and give residents a sense of place."

– Dr. Peter Narváez, Memorial University of Newfoundland

Fig. 5

Stealin' the Holes

A Pigeon Inlet Story by Ted Russell

In all the years that Skipper Bob Killick was Magistrate along this shore, the shrewdest piece of courtwork he had to handle was the time when Uncle Sol Noddy stole the two holes from Skipper Lige Bartle.

Now what good, you might say, is two holes? Not much nowadays since most people give up keeping dogs. But years ago, well how else can a man set a herring net under the ice? You cut two holes, eight or ten feet apart, tie a rope to one end of a flake longer, poke it down through one hole and hook it up through the other with a hand gaff. Oh yes, if you want to set a bigger net, you cut three holes, or even four.

But two holes was enough to serve Skipper Lige Bartle's purpose that evening he was coming home down the Arm on dogteam from his rabbit slips. He chopped his two holes, then hurried home to get his net and a flake longer so as to have it set and home again before night overtook him. He didn't even stop for a bite to eat. Just grabbed a pair of dry cuffs and was off again, a spry man.

But spry as he was, Uncle Sol Noddy was spryer. Uncle Sol was already there and had just finished setting his net in Lige's holes. Well, Lige ordered Sol to take that net out of his holes. Sol said they was his 'cause he'd found them. Lige said they was his 'cause he chopped them. Well, Sol said, be that as it might, he owned them now 'cause possession was nine points of the law.

Skipper Lige was a younger man than Uncle Sol, and a bigger man. And if he hadn't been a church going man besides, he said after as how he'd a tied Uncle Sol to his own rope and reeved him down one hole and up through the other. As it was, he went home and he wired Skipper Bob Killick, the Magistrate, to come immediately, or a bit quicker than that if 'twas

possible. Skipper Bob wired back that he'd come and have courtwork in May, when navigation opened.

Public opinion was one-sided. Skipper Lige was a respectable man whereas Uncle Sol was the worse miserable hangashore on the coast. And to make matters worse, Uncle Sol was doing real well with the herring and even offered Skipper Lige a meal for his Good Friday dinner. I can't repeat Skipper Lige's answer but it made him feel so low that he didn't have the face to go to church on Easter Sunday.

Well, Pigeon Inlet School was packed for courtwork when Skipper Bob Killick come on his rounds in May and he read out the charge how Uncle Sol had stolen the property of Skipper Lige: namely and to wit, two holes.

Then Uncle Sol, instead of having the common decency to confess what he done and take what was coming, had the impudence to look the Magistrate right square in the face and say he didn't know whether he was guilty or not, and what he would like to know was, "What was the law concerning holes?" Well, Skipper Bob was took right aback for a minute and he said he allowed the law concerning holes was like the law concerning anything else: you mustn't steal them. Then Uncle Sol, brazener than ever, asked, "How could you steal a hole anyway?" And when Skipper Bob said what did he mean how could you steal a hole, Uncle Sol said 'cause a hole, well a hole was nothing, only a hole.

All this time poor Skipper Lige was sitting there saying nothing but swelling up like a gurnet, ready to bust. Then he said as how a hole might be nothing to the hangashore that stole it but 'twas something to the man that had to chop it. But Skipper Bob called him to order so Lige kept quiet but he swelled bigger, if that was possible, until Skipper Bob ruled that on his first point, Uncle Sol had lost out and a hole was something.

"Alright then," said Uncle Sol, "I only borrowed the use of his holes, never intending to keep them, and now he can have them back again." Skipper Lige said the holes was drove out the Bay when the ice went out, but Sol maintained that holes was only fresh air and water and they were still up there in the Arm and Lige could have them and ten thousand welcomes.

Well, Skipper Bob had to call a fifteen minute recess on that, but after it was over he come back and he ruled as how Uncle Sol was wrong on account of how, in what he called the common law, a hole couldn't be a hole unless there was an edge around it.

Then Uncle Sol tried his last dodge. He said as how a man couldn't steal anything without shifting it from where he'd found it in the first place and that he hadn't shifted these holes an inch. Skipper Lige said no, Sol hadn't shifted 'em, not 'cause he wouldn't but 'cause he couldn't and if he could've he'd a slung the two holes over his back quick enough and gone off with them. Sol said be that as it might, the fact was he hadn't shifted them and on that point, Skipper Bob Killick the Magistrate had to agree with him.

He give his verdict that, although Uncle Sol hadn't actually stolen the holes, he had trespassed on them and he asked Uncle Sol what he had to say before sentence was passed. Well, Uncle Sol said, right cheerful-like, that if all he'd done was trespass against Skipper Lige, then no doubt Skipper Lige, as a churchgoing man, would be only too ready to forgive those, including Uncle Sol, who had trespassed against him. And Skipper Lige bust right out then for sure and he said he'd forgive Uncle Sol when Uncle Sol give him back his holes, edges and all, and with that, Skipper Bob delivered his judgement.

He ordered Uncle Sol to cut two holes the following winter, in the same place, for Skipper Lige to set his herring net in and that was the end of it as far as the law was concerned. Of course, Uncle Sol got the best of it in the long run but that's another story, and like Skipper Bob his own self said the following summer, after he'd heard the outcome, he doubted very much if even the Supreme Court could do much to cure a hangashore like Uncle Sol Noddy, 'cause he was one miserable hangashore if ever there was one.

Try it...

Create a brief monologue based on your own life experience – feel free to use fictional content, exaggeration and hyperbole as you craft you story.

Reflect...

Think back on the various experiences you have had in your lifetime. What memories stand out? Why? Which stories from your childhood and youth will you want to pass on to your children?

Artist *profile*

Wallace Ryan – *Comix Artist*

Fig. 1 Wallace Ryan

Wallace Ryan thinks he must have been three years old when he first developed a fascination with comics. He loved the colourful superheroes.

"I used to make little comics when I was a kid and sell them to my dad. But superheroes only go so far. It was something about the art and the storytelling elements combined."

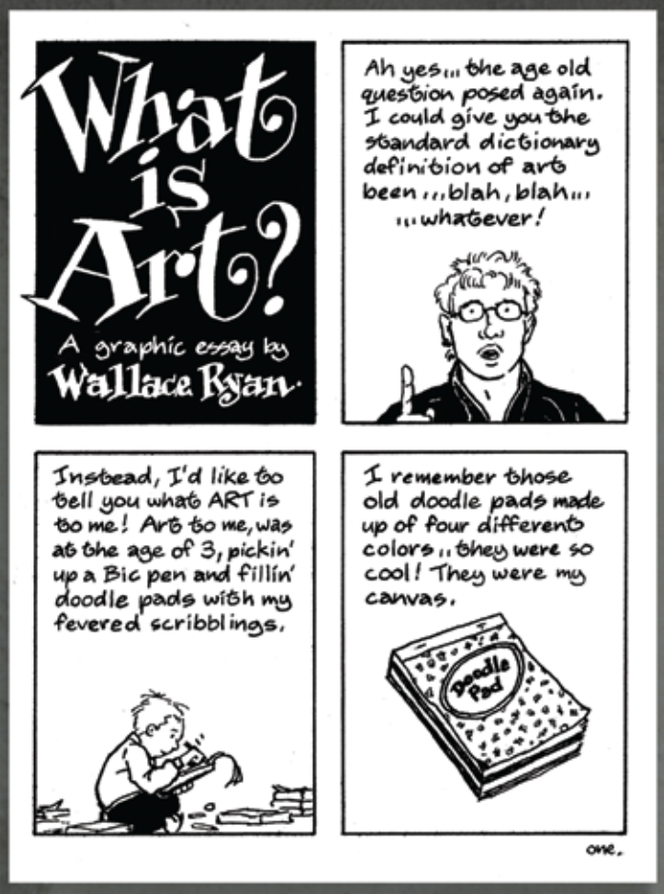
Fig. 2

Wallace was really impressed when the magazine *Heavy Metal* came out and showed him the potential of comic books. In 1978, when Wallace was a teenager, he and a friend, Gerry Porter, created *Zeitgeist*, probably the first comic book to be produced in Newfoundland and Labrador.

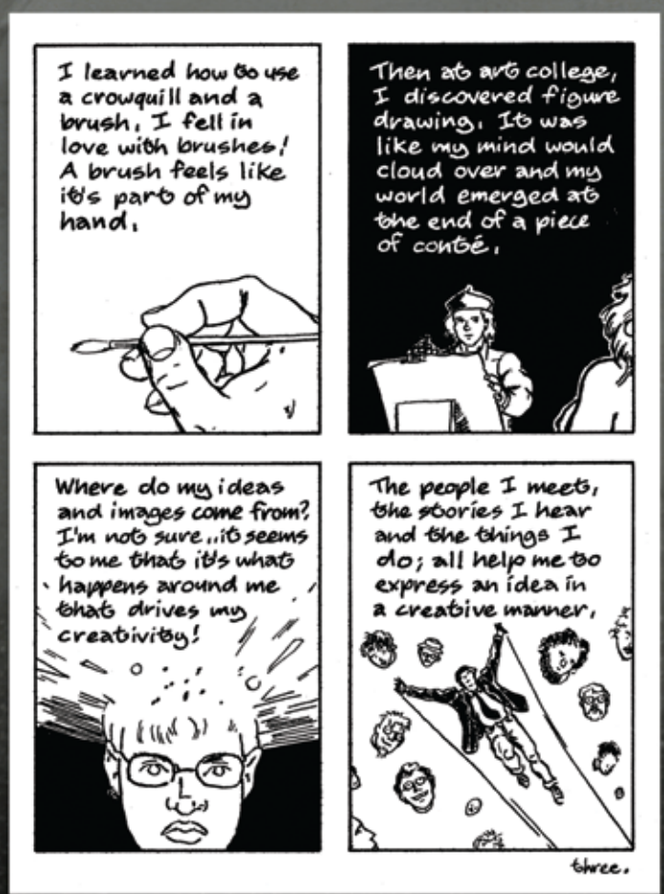
Wallace would become one of the first Newfoundland and Labrador comic book artists. But his best-known work of art started as a poster that he pasted up in downtown St. John's in 1981. Fourteen years later, when the Living Planet Company started, Wallace sold his poster design to the owner. Now "Free Newfoundland" T-shirts are one of the store's best selling products.

Wallace's career as a comic strip artist started after graduating from the Ontario College of Art, when he began working with Memorial University's student newspaper, *The Muse*.

"Zeitgeist" means "spirit of the times."


What is Art?
A graphic essay by Wallace Ryan.
Ah yes... the age old question posed again. I could give you the standard dictionary definition of art been ...blah, blah... ...whatever!
Instead, I'd like to tell you what ART is to me! Art to me, was at the age of 3, pickin' up a Bic pen and fillin' doodle pads with my fevered scribblings.
I remember those old doodle pads made up of four different colors... they were so cool! They were my canvas.
Doodle Pad
one.


...Anyway, I soon discovered that by folding an 8½ x 11" sheets of paper in half... you got four pages like a book... a COMIC book!!
So, I made little comic books... stacks of them! I soon found that if I put a 5¢ sticker on them, that my Dad would buy them!!
5 CENTS
CANADA
1964
But I jacked the price up to 25¢ and my Dad stopped buying them. That didn't stop me. Even then, art to me, was a compulsion.
As a teenager, my art consumed all my time. I had a close friend with whom I spent a lot of time drawing comics and drinking tea.
two.


I learned how to use a crowquill and a brush. I fell in love with brushes! A brush feels like it's part of my hand.
Then at art college, I discovered figure drawing. It was like my mind would cloud over and my world emerged at the end of a piece of conté.
Where do my ideas and images come from? I'm not sure... it seems to me that it's what happens around me that drives my creativity!
The people I meet, the stories I hear and the things I do; all help me to express an idea in a creative manner.
three.


Expressing myself is easiest through my pencil and brush. Easy as breathing... That is what my art is to me. It is who I am and is something without which...
...I would not be a whole person.
THE END.
four.

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

Real Heroes

Wallace Ryan

If you read or watch the news long enough, you'll see life imitate art sooner or later. In early 2004, I found a trio of stories of real life superheroes!

The first was about two mystery men posing as Batman and Robin in Reading, England. On Easter Sunday this year they were seen chasing streakers off the field at the Jack Taylor TRS Trophy football final.

Later that day, Michelle Kirby of Whitley was rescued by the dynamic duo when her car ran out of gas. She told the press that Batman and Robin pushed her car to a nearby gas station. They then disappeared down a street on foot.

The Reading Evening Post has set up a "Bat-phone" for people to report sightings of the pair. An anonymous caller claimed the heroes confronted somebody who was "intimidating" him. As of late April, they have yet to be identified.

I kinda' like it that way.

In the 1990s Wallace worked in advertising, created editorial cartoons for *The Telegram*, released two comic books called *Toxic* with a colleague, and ran a store in St. John's where he bought and sold comic books. Wallace remembers that at the end of four years his brother sat him down and said, "You haven't lost any money, but you haven't made any either!" He decided his best option was to close his shop.

While continuing to pursue his career as a freelance graphic designer, Wallace started creating a graphic novel about his grandfather's experiences in the Royal Newfoundland Regiment in the First World War. He says he has been influenced by the storytelling skills of Jack Kirby, the "King of Comics," and writers like comic book journalist Joe Sacco, who created the prize-winning graphic novel *Palestine*.

Jack Kirby was an American comic book artist, writer, and editor. He created the superhero Captain America and co-created several comic characters such as the Fantastic Four, the X-Men, and the Hulk.

Wallace says his life fell apart on July 4, 2005 when his wife passed away. "We had been married for eight years," he says, "and we were very much in love." Wallace moved to New York to work in advertising, but he turned to his art to cope with his grief. In December 2005 he started keeping a diary. Wallace pulled from diary entries and e-mails to friends to create a book called *The Mad Widower (or How I Lost My Wife and Almost Lost My Mind)*.

Currently (2010), Wallace is continuing his work on the Royal Newfoundland Regiment graphic novel and fine-tuning *The Mad Widower*, which needs to be pared down from its original 60 000 words. "Most people argue about what's more important in comics – the words or the art," he says. "But I would argue it's both of them. It's a combination of the two to create what we call storytelling. "

"Comic book art is not being an artist or a writer," Wallace says. "It's being a storyteller."

Try it...

Think of a significant experience in your life or that of a family member or close friend. Produce a journal entry about this experience using comic art as your medium. While it is not necessary to share this work with your classmates, keep it as part of your portfolio.

Reflect...

Why might comic art and other visual works be more effective than text alone when telling a personal story?

"Of course, we must have artists:
but what are we as artists contributing?
If we know what the 'wrongs' are in society,
we must decide whether our art
is sufficient to right them ... "

– Rae Perlin, Artist