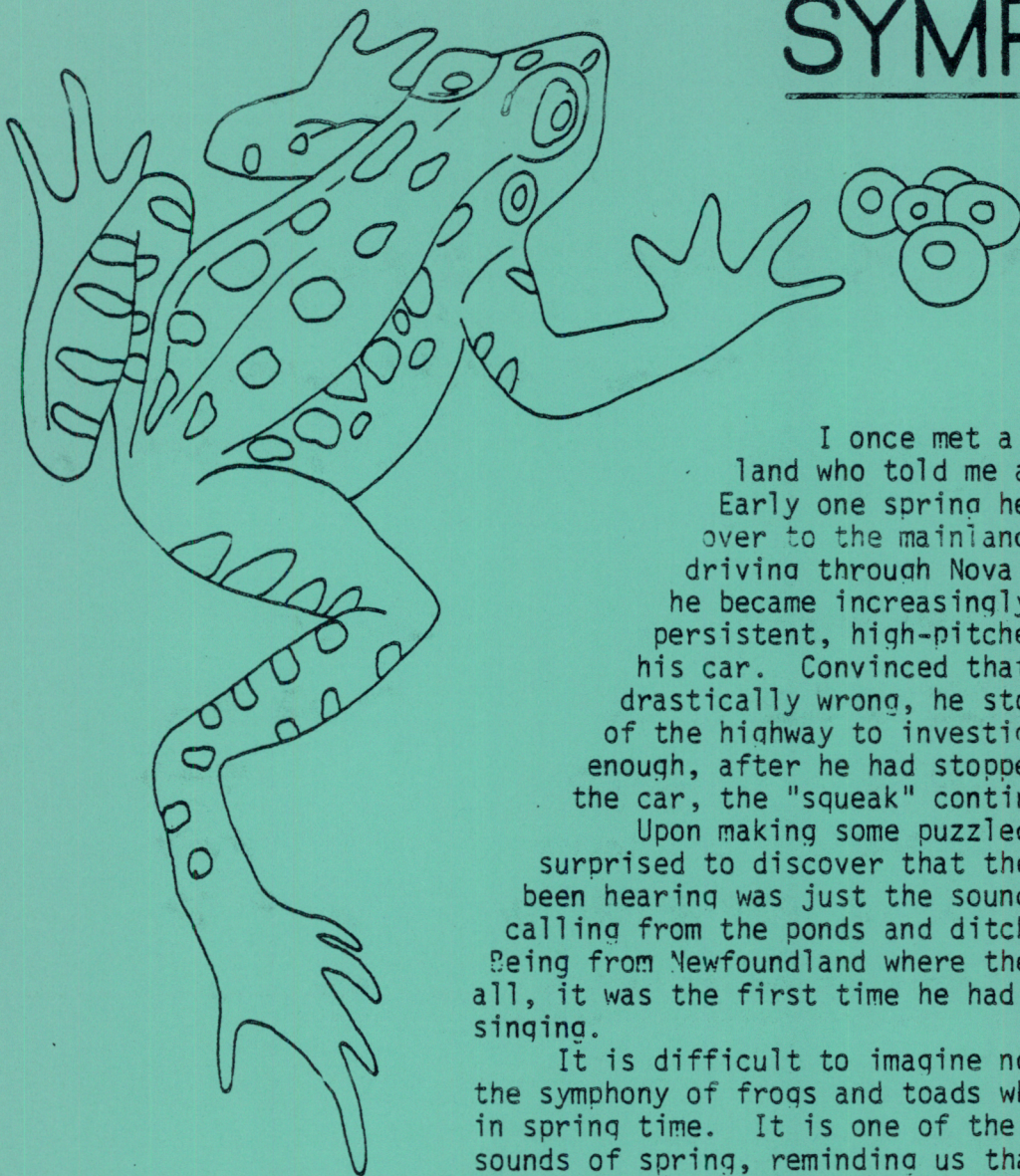


# SPRING SYMPHONY

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I once met a man from Newfoundland who told me a rather curious tale. Early one spring he took his first trip over to the mainland. While he was driving through Nova Scotia after dark, he became increasingly alarmed by a very persistent, high-pitched squeak coming from his car. Convinced that there was something drastically wrong, he stopped along the side of the highway to investigate. Strangely enough, after he had stopped and gotten out of the car, the "squeak" continued!

Upon making some puzzled inquiries, he was surprised to discover that the "squeak" he had been hearing was just the sound of Spring Peepers calling from the ponds and ditches along the road. Being from Newfoundland where there are no frogs at all, it was the first time he had ever heard them singing.

It is difficult to imagine not being able to hear the symphony of frogs and toads which fills the air in spring time. It is one of the most exhilarating sounds of spring, reminding us that summer is on its way - and that love is in the air! For all the joyful singing coming from every pond, ditch and swamp around is being done with a definite purpose in mind.

As the weather begins to warm up and the ice begins to melt, the frogs and toads awaken from their long winter hibernation and make their way instinctively to the nearest pond in order to mate. Once in the ponds, the males begin to sing their mating calls out loud and clear to attract potential mates. Each species has its own characteristic call which helps them to attract females of their own kind. Their calls also serve them in staking out small mating territories by announcing their presence to other males.

Not all frogs begin to call at once. Each species returns to the ponds to mate at a slightly different time. Local weather conditions will affect the timing to some extent each spring, but generally once the "symphony" begins, the same musical progression takes place - each species piping in when its time has come.