

Jimmy Mahoney

## Home

Gazela took me home – literally. My sisters and I knew it was Newfoundland when we were kids but it was never called that. It was “home”, “up home” and the “home people.” Apart from the neighbors and the kids in the driveway that’s all we knew, the home people: Uncles and Aunts, all ironworkers and housewives, except Aunt Alice. She worked at Crown Cork & Seal in the factory. Her husband Murph fell when she was pregnant with their first and only child Billy.

I loved to hear tell of the stories about cod and squid jiggin’, icebergs and hoppin’ pans of ice for seal. “Someday” I’d say, “Someday.” Then after a couple of years volunteering I got a call from Ray Bender: “Look, You’ve never sailed yet. Gazela’s going to Newfoundland this summer. You might not get another chance like this.” My mom just died some months before and I thought it right to make the pilgrimage, to sail the same seas and retrace the route Bill Mahoney and MaryAnn McGrath had taken so many years before. And so with tar on my hands and tears in my eyes I sailed through the Narrows into St. John’s Harbor. Gazela had taken me home.