

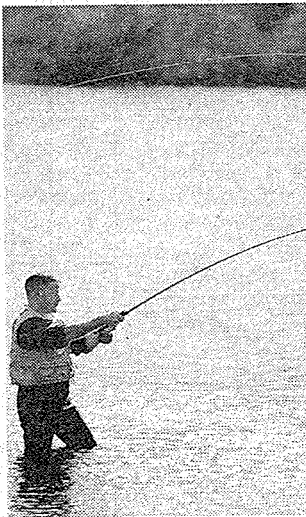
# Memories reveal true reason for chasing Pisces

Season nears end with satisfying melancholy

**D**arkness comes early now, enveloping what was once a summer's eve dream. Cooling water laps the shores where once a lazy haze hung on motionless lakes. Where mayflies once emerged and lit like living sailboats, now blazing leaves drop like tears, as if the trees were mourning the passing of the season. Below the drifting debris, resident fish sink slowly into a torpor, while those whose migratory routes brought them to Nova Scotia complete their journeys and move on.

Rotting apples squash under my feet as I hike through the fields and woods toward a meandering stream. It is quiet: no refrains of crickets or spring peepers in the spicy autumn air. At the edge of the brook I contemplate my experiences this fishing season. Despite my prior research, I have been amazed at the diversity of this province. My adventures have given me a unique perspective on the Nova Scotia natural environment, and on this pastime called angling.

It seems like moments ago that I cast into this rushing spring river, pockets of snow and ice clinging to its banks. Now the anticipation and excitement of opening day has



**FULL CIRCLE:** Joe Fitzgerald casts his line last spring, at the start of angling season.

given way to a satisfying melancholy as the end approaches.

Already, plans for future excursions form in my head, as memories rush by like migrating schools of smelt, shad, and gaspereau. Secret fishing spots and new techniques embolden me to dream of trophy trout and titanic battles with sharks and tuna. I think of pulling eels and catfish from the deep dark velvet of late summer nights, and reeling in striped

bass and flounder from sandy shorelines. I see myself on worn granite, searching surly seas for pollock, mackerel, and bluefish, and floating candy-coloured poppers on weedy backwaters for lurking bass and pickerel. And of course, after entering the elite club of Atlantic salmon anglers, the door to a brand new world has been opened.

Henry David Thoreau once said, "Many men go fishing all of their lives without knowing that it is not fish they are after."

I am brought back to that day of rapture many years ago when I fell in love with angling. Images of fording rivers with my father, road trips with my buddies, and fish jumping in front of wide-eyed children flash across my mind. So do curious foxes, startled deer, and wheeling osprey.

The wind picks up and rustles the crisp leaves, while the brook gurgles on toward the sea. The sun disappears and leaves a lonely aura on the horizon. In this perfect stillness comes a moment of utter peace: the true reason for chasing Pisces.

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## OUT FISHIN'

A feller isn't thinkin' mean,  
Out fishin';  
His thoughts are mostly good an'  
clean,  
Out fishin';  
He doesn't knock his fellow men,  
Or harbor any grudges then;  
A feller's at his finest when  
Out fishin'.

The rich are comrades to the poor,  
Out fishin';  
All brothers of a common lure,  
Out fishin'.  
The urchin with the pin an' string  
Can chum with millionaire an' king;  
Vain pride is a forgotten thing,  
Out fishin'.

A feller gits a chance to dream,

Out fishin';  
He learns the beauties of a  
stream,  
Out fishin';  
An' he can wash his soul in air  
That isn't foul with selfish care,  
An' relish plain and simple fare,  
Out fishin'.

A feller has no time fer hate,  
Out fishin';  
He isn't eager to be great,  
Out fishin'.  
He isn't thinkin' thoughts of pelf,  
Or goods stacked high upon a  
shelf,  
But he is always just himself,  
Out fishin'.

A feller's glad to be a friend,

Out fishin'  
A helpin' hand he'll always lend,  
Out fishin'.  
The brotherhood of rod an' line  
An' sky and stream is always  
fine;  
Men come real close to God's de-  
sign,  
Out fishin'.

A feller isn't plotting schemes,  
Out fishin';  
He's only busy with his dreams,  
Out fishin'.  
His livery is a coat of tan,  
His creed — to do the best he can;  
A feller's always mostly man,  
Out fishin'.

— Edgar Guest  
From *The Path To Home*, 1919