3. Thomas Morton Praises the New English Canaan, 1632

The Authors Prologue.

If art & industry should doe as much
As Nature hath for Canaan, not such
Another place, for benefit and rest,
In all the universe can be possess,
The more we prove it by discovery,
The more delight each object to the eye
Procures, as if the elements had here
Buie reconcil'd and pleas'd it should appear,
Like a faire virgin, longing to be sped,
And meete her lover in a Nuptiall bed.
Deck'd in rich ornaments t' advance her state
And excellance, being most fortunate,
When most enjoy'd, so would our Canaan be
If well employ'd by art and industry
Whose offspring now shewes that her fruitfull wombe
Not being enjoy'd as like a glorious tombe,
Admired things producing which there dye,
And ly fast bound in dark obscunity,
The worth of which in each particular.
Who list to know, this abstract will declare.

In the Moneth of June, Anno Salutis: 1622. It was my chaunce to arrive in the parts of New England with 30. Servants, and provision of all sorts fit for a plantation: And whilsts our housewes were building, I did endeavour to take a survey of the Country: The more I looked, the more I liked it.

And when I had more seriously considered of the bvely of the place, with all her faire indowments, I did not thinke that in all the knowne world it could be paralleld.

For so many goodly groves of trees; dainty fine round rising hillcups: delicate faire large plains, sweete crystall fountains, and cleare running streams, that twine in fine meanders through the meads, making so sweete a murmuring noise to heare, as would even lull the senses with delight a sleepe, so pleasantly doe, they glide upon the pebble stones, jetting most jocundly where they doe meeete; and hand in hand runne downe to Neptunes Court, to pay the yearly tribut, which they owe to him as soveraigne Lord of all the springs. Contained within the volume of the Land, Fowles in abundance, Fish in multitude, and discovered besides; Millions of Turtledoves one the greene boughes; which sate pecking, of the full ripe pleasant grapes, that were supported by the lusty trees, whose fruitfull loads cause the armes to bend, which here and there dispersed (you might see) Lillies and of the Daphnean-tree, which made the Land to mee seeme paradise, for in mine eie, t'was Natures

Master-piece: Her cheifest Magazine of, all where lives her store: if this Land be not rich, then is the whole world poore. . . .

The Salvages are accustomed, to set fire of the Country in all places where they come; and to burne it, twice a yeare, vixe at the Spring, and the fall of the leafe. The reason that moves them to doe so, is because it would other wise be so overgrown with underweeds, that it would be all a copice wood, and the people would not be able in any wise to passe through the Country out of a beaten path. . . .

And least their firing of the Country in this manner; should be an occasion of dammifying us, and indangering our habitations; wee our selves have used carefully about the same times; to observe the windes and fire the grounds about our owne habitations, to prevent the Dammage that might happen by any neglect thereof, if the fire should come neere those howses in our absence.

For when the fire is once kindled, it dilates and spreads it selfe as well against, as with the winde; burning continually night and day, until a shouer of raine falls to quench it.

And this custome of firing the Country is the meannes to make it passable, and by that means the trees growe here, and there as in our parks: and makes the Country very beautifull and commodious.

4. William Wood Portrays Indian Women's Housing and Horticulture, 1634

Of Their Women, Their Dispositions, Employments, Usage by Their Husbands, Their Apparel, and Modesty

[Women's] employments be many: First their building of houses, whose frames are formed like our garden-arbors, something more round, very strong and handsome, covered with close-wrought mats of their own weaving, which deny entrance to any drop of rain, though it come both fierce and long, neither can the piercing North wind find a cranny, through which he can convey his cooling breath, they be warmer than our English houses; at the top is a square hole for the smoke's evacuation, which in rainy weather is covered with a pluver; these be such smoky dwellings, that when there is good fires, they are not able to stand upright, but lie all along under the smoke, never using any stools or chairs, it being as rare to see an Indian sit on a stool at home, as it is strange to see an English man sit on his heels abroad. Their houses are smaller in the Summer, when their families be dispersed, by reason of heat and occasions. In Winter they make some fifty or threescore foot long, forty or fifty men being inmates under one roof; and as is their husbands' occasion these poor tectonists are often troubled like snails, to carry their houses on their backs sometime to fishing-places, other times to hunting-places, after that to a planting place, where it abides the longest: an other work is their planting of corn, wherein they exceed our English husband-men, keeping it so clear with their Clam shell-hoes, as if it were a garden rather than a corn-field, not suffering a choking weed to advance his audacious head above their infant corn, or an undermining worm to

5. Anne Bradstreet Eulogizes Nature, 1650

"Contemplations" [Verses 18–20]

18

...When I behold the heavens as in their prime,
And then the earth (though old) still clad in green,
The stones and trees, insensible of time,
Nor age nor wrinkle on their front are seen;
If winter come, and greene ness then do fade,
A spring returns, and they more youthful made;
But man grows old, lies down, remains where once
he's laid.

[19]

By birth more noble, then those creatures all,
Yet seems by nature and by custome curs'd,
No sooner born, but grief and care makes fall
That state obliterates he had at first:
Nor youth, nor strength, nor wisdom spring again
Nor habitations long their names retain,
But in oblivion to the final day remain.

20

Shall I then praise the heavens, the earth
Because their beauty and their strength last longer
Shall I wish there, or never to have birth,
Because they're bigger, & their bodys stronger?
Nay, they shall darken, perish, fade and dye,
And when unmade, so ever shall they lye,
But man was made for endless immortality.


6. Edward Johnson Describes the Transformation of the Wilderness, 1654

...The chiefe Edifice of this City-like Towne is crowded on the Sea-banke, and
wharked out with great industry and cost, the buildings beautifull and large, some
fairly set forth with Brick, Tile, Stone and Slate, and orderly placed with comly
streets, whose continual enlargement presages some sumptuous City. The wonder
of this moderne Age, that a few yeares should bring forth such great matters by so
meane a handfull, and they so far from being infracted by the spoiles of other Nations,
that the states of many of them have beene spoiled by the Lordly Prelacy, whose
Lands must assuredly make Restitution. But now behold the admirable Acts of
Christ; at this his peoples landing, the hideous Thicke in this place were such,
that Wolifes and Beastes runne up their young from the eyes of all beholders, in those
very places where the streets are full of Girles and Boys sporting up and downe,
with a continued concourse of people. Good store of Shipping is here yearly built,
and some very faire ones; both Tar and Mastes the Country affords from its own
soile; also store of Victual both for their owne and Foreigners-ships, who resort
hither for that end: this Towne is the very Mart of the Land, French, Portugall and
Dutch come hither for Trafficke.

...The Lord is pleased also to compleat this Commonwealth abundantly beyond
all expectation in all sorts of needful occupations, it being for a long time the
great fear of many, and those that were ended with grace from above also, that this would
be no place of continued habitation, nor want of a staple-commodity, but the Lord,
whose promises are large to his Sion, hath blest his peoples provision, and satisfied
her poor with bread, in a very little space, every thing in the country proved a staple-
commodity, wheat, rye, oats, peas, barley, beeck, pork, fish, butter, cheese, timber,
mast, tar, sopo, plank-board, frames of houses, cladboard, and pipes of wood, iron and
lead is like to be also; and those who were formerly forced to fetch most of
the bread they eat, and beer they drink, a hundred leagues by Sea, are through the blessing
of the Lord so encreased, that they have not only fed their Elder Sisters, Virginia, Barbados, and many of the Summer Islands that were prefered before her for fruitfulness, but also the Grandmother of us all, even the firtile Isle of Great Britain, beside Portugal hath had many a mouthful of bread and fish from us, in exchange
of their Madeira liquer, and also Spain; nor could it be imagined, that this Wilderness
should turn a mart for Merchants in so short a space, Holland, France, Spain, and
Portugal coming hither for trade, shipping going on gallantly till the Seas became
so troublesome, and England restrain'd our trade, forbidding it with Barbados, etc.
and Portugal stopp'd and took our ships; many a fair ship had her framing and finishing
here, besides lesser vessels, barques, and ketches, many a Master, beside common
Seamen, had their first learning in this Colony. Boston, Charles-Town, Salem,
and Ipswich, our Maritain [maritime] Towns began to increase roundly, especially
Boston, which of a poor country village, in twice seven years is become like unto
a small city.

From Edward Johnson, Johnson's Wonder-working Providence, ed. J. Franklin Jameson. New York: