

the PARIS REVIEW



Published October 8, 2010 | ARTS & CULTURE

SARAH PETERS: APPEAL TO HEAVEN

By Sarah Peters



Sept 6, 1520, 2010, ink and pen on paper

While drawing, I imagined myself on the Mayflower, looking out into darkness and seeing only water and sky. I thought about waves and drowning and being surrounded by everything unknown. I thought about how it feels to walk on an unstable surface. When I looked out into the ocean and the harbor in Provincetown, I understood, like the Pilgrims, what it meant to feel alone.



Sept 8, 1620, 2010, ink and pen on paper

The passengers' experience on the Mayflower is documented by William Bradford: They were huddled under the deck, without privacy, and they were seasick. There was hostility between the Pilgrims and the other passengers. Adding to their misery, the mainmast cracked in the middle of the voyage.

the PARIS REVIEW



Sept 24, 1520, 2010, ink and pen on paper

William Bradford describes a crew member taunting the Pilgrims, saying that he would relish throwing them overboard as they died from illness. He was described as haughty, cursing and swearing bitterly. The seaman's own death is noted by Bradford as "the just hand of God upon him."



October 5, 1520, 2010, ink and pen on paper

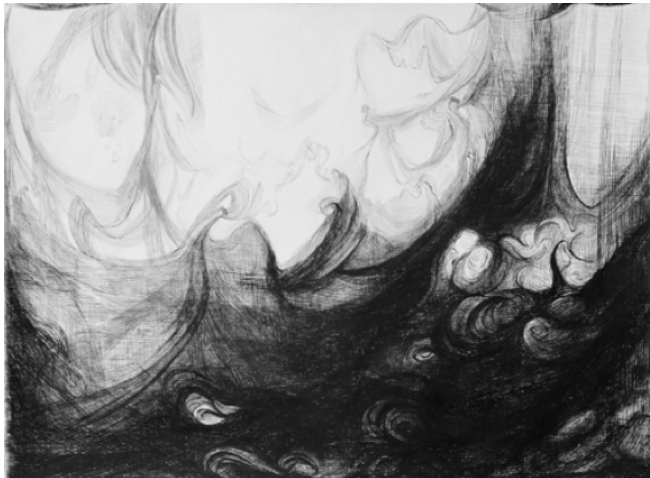
Only one passenger died during the Mayflower's voyage across the Atlantic, William Button, a young servant of Samuel Fuller. He died three days before they sighted land. One child was born during the journey, to Elizabeth Hopkins. He was named Oceanus.

the PARIS REVIEW



October 12. 1520, 2010, ink and pen on paper

The Pilgrims first saw land on November 9th, 1620. They arrived in Provincetown harbor in the early morning of November 11, after three thousand miles and sixty-five days at sea. There, they signed the Mayflower Compact.



October 21. 1520, 2010, ink and pen on paper

“Being thus passed ye vast ocean, and a sea of troubles before in their preparation (as may be remembered by yt which wente before), they had now no friends to wellcome them, nor inns to entertaine or refresh their weatherbeaten bodyes, no houses or much less townes to repaire too, to seeke for succoure.” —William Bradford

the PARIS REVIEW



November 9, 1620, 2010, ink and pen on paper

On December 7, 1620, while the boat was anchored in Provincetown harbor, Dorothy May Bradford fell from the Mayflower into the freezing, shallow waters below. Her husband, William, was on an expedition to find good ground for settlement. Some speculate that the fall was not accidental. William Bradford never mentions her death in his extensive writings, perhaps due to the shame of her suicide.