

Two Annes

by [Diane G. Scholl](#) in the [August 12, 2008](#) issue

(For Hutchinson and Bradstreet)

One took the colony by the heels, slapping its flank
until it issued a broad cry of rage. Tall and forbidding,
she waxed both sharp and sweet, flying in the angry
face of magistrates, chafing the tender hearts
of the unregenerate gently with her tireless voice.
She coaxed as women labored in their cramped beds of pain.

The other fashioned quills and parsed her poems in clean
white sheets. Still, her clumsy child shamed her,
walking on stumbling feet, as real a “monstrous birth”
as the first Anne’s tissue of stubborn clots. What was it
she tried to say, poet in a wife’s starched linen,
submitting to her tasks and thanking God without
conviction for each bitter loss? Sarah, Hagar
in exile, she too never went back; the stormy Atlantic
roiled, keeping her margins, her heart rising
within her and rising, rising again.