JAMESTOWN, VIRGINIA, 1611
John Howard, Ship’s Boy
I wonder what I’m doing here so far from home. I came along to find the gold and go home rich. That was our aim. There was no gold, no food as well, and many of us died from drinking water full of salt brought in with every tide. Then Captain Smith told us at last that only those who work will get to eat. So gentlemen pitched in and did not shirk their duty. Soon John Rolfe brought us those Caribbean seeds he said would grow to be the “gold,” for every man who heeds his words, and every man set out to plant and weed and hoe. And soon we found our “gold” to plant and weed and hoe. What could the word mean? “Croatoan” on a post—colonists’ farewell.

PLYMOUTH, 1620
in sonnet form
Our fathers signed a contract on the boat before they let our families step on land. They promised to obey the laws men wrote, yet not forget to follow God’s commands. And now we give Him thanks and heartfelt praise that He has brought us through the time of need when many of us starved. We learned the ways the natives fished & clammed & sowed their seed. Squanto brought corn and fish to fertilize our crops. All year the natives spied to see how many of us died before their eyes, waiting till our colony would cease to be. But now we thank our God on bended knees, free in this land to worship as we please.

THE LOST COLONY, 1587-1590
as haiku
They set sail with hope to colonize the New World. Waves crested and fell. Land and baby named “Virginia,” honored their queen. Dense woods welcomed them. They waited for White. Returned with supplies, he found wind-swept empty fields. What could the word mean? “Croatoan” on a post—colonists’ farewell.

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Cover collage by Jan Keough
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