

## ***Caleb's Crossing* by Geraldine Brooks**

### **Discussion Guide and Resources**

One Book, One San Diego is a community reading program managed by KPBS in partnership with San Diego County Library and the San Diego Public Library. The purpose of the program is to encourage residents to join together in the shared experience of reading and discussing the same book.

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- Review by the Washington Times, page 9
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#### **Section 4: About Other Books**

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  - *Doc* by Mary Doria Russell
  - *22 Britannia Road* by Amanda Hodgkinson
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  - *Illuminations: A Novel of Hildegard von Bingen*
  - *The Autobiography of Mrs. Tom Thumb* by Melanie Benjamin

## About the Author: Geraldine Brooks

<http://geraldinebrooks.com/about>

Australian-born Geraldine Brooks is an author and journalist who grew up in the Western suburbs of Sydney, and attended Bethlehem College Ashfield and the University of Sydney. She worked as a reporter for The Sydney Morning Herald for three years as a feature writer with a special interest in environmental issues.

In 1982 she won the Greg Shackleton Australian News Correspondents scholarship to the journalism master's program at Columbia University in New York City. Later she worked for *The Wall Street Journal*, where she covered crises in the the Middle East, Africa, and the Balkans. In 2006 she was a fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Studies at Harvard University.

She was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in fiction in 2006 for her novel *March*. Her most recent novel, *Caleb's Crossing*, was a New York Times best seller. Other novels, *Year of Wonders* and *People of the Book*, are international bestsellers, translated into more than 25 languages. She is also the author of the nonfiction works *Nine Parts of Desire* and *Foreign Correspondence*.

Brooks married author Tony Horwitz in Tourette-sur-Loup, France, in 1984. They have two sons— Nathaniel and Bizuayehu—a dog named Milo and a horse named Butter. They live by an old mill pond on Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts.

## Q&A With Geraldine Brooks from Penguin

[http://www.us.penguin.com/static/rguides/us/calebs\\_crossing.html](http://www.us.penguin.com/static/rguides/us/calebs_crossing.html)

**Q. In writing a historical novel such as *Caleb's Crossing*, what is the balance between detective work and pure imagination? Could you briefly describe your research and writing process?**

I like to follow the line of fact as far as it leads, so I do a vast amount of research. But I always make sure that the story drives it, which means I wait for the narrative to tell me what it is I need to know. So I write for a while, then go to archives or to interview experts, then I come back and incorporate what I have learned into the fiction. I don't always follow the facts—sometimes the story needs to veer away from them for a while. And that's why I always include an afterword, to set out the truth as far it is known and to show where my novel has deviated from it.

**Q. Your first novel, *Year of Wonders*, also takes place in the seventeenth century. What is it about this time period you find so inspiring? Did any of the information you gained researching that novel help your work on *Caleb's Crossing*?**

It is a rich period to me because the modern mind is emerging from the medieval mind, and you can sense the struggle. When you read some of the writings of people who lived in the mid-seventeenth century, they are recognizable—you understand their predicaments, you get their jokes. Yet at other times you encounter minds formed by a worldview quite alien to our own. It's the time Newton is shaping modern scientific thought, and yet witches are still being burned at the stake. I was familiar with all this from *Year of Wonders*. Anna Frith's small community was largely puritan—the kind of people who might have taken ship for the new England colonies if they'd had the means.

**Q. The relationship between the white settlers and Native American population has always been a difficult one, and the creation of the Massachusetts colony still has political ramifications today. As someone who didn't grow up in the United States, what is your relationship to these events? Are there comparable events in Australian history?**

Australia too has a brutal history of dispossession of its Aboriginal inhabitants. But as I was researching the book, I was astonished to discover that I have a direct ancestor who almost certainly knew Caleb. My some-number-of-greats grandfather was Ephriam Cutter, a glazier in Cambridge in the 1660s. His sister was the wife of Elijah Corlett, the schoolmaster who

prepared Caleb for Harvard. So I had a closer relationship to these events than I had ever imagined.

**Q. As you note in the afterword, the facts of Caleb's life are barely known. What was it about his story that made you think it had the potential to be a novel?**

The questions: Who was this remarkable young scholar? How did he get to Harvard? What was Harvard like in the 1660s? And on, and on. As soon as I learned of Caleb, I was intrigued, and I found that I couldn't stop thinking about him and speculating on what his experience might have been.

**Q. Both Caleb and Bethia are placed in set roles by society because of his race and because of her gender. In looking at their respective journeys in the novel, would it be fair to say that Caleb's struggle is to exist between two worlds while Bethia's struggle is to try to flourish within one?**

Yes, I think that is a very apt way to describe it.

**Q. As a narrator, Bethia creates a warm and intimate relationship with the reader, despite the formal structure and vocabulary of her seventeenth-century English. How were you able to develop such a unique and historically accurate voice without compromising the reader's ability to relate to her?**

It took a long while to feel assured about her voice because there are no female diaries extant from that period to draw upon, to prime the pump, as it were. But in the end, after reading what I could in verbatim court records, letters, wills, and other documents, she did begin to speak to me. After that it's a kind of channeling that goes on. I just hear the voice very clearly.

**Q. Bethia mentions being inspired by the accomplishments of the poet Anne Bradstreet. This is not a name most readers might recognize. Were you familiar with her work prior to writing the novel?**

Yes, I was because I love poetry and read it voraciously. She is North America's first published poet, after all. She deserves to be celebrated!

**Q. While we get hints from Bethia as to what she's like in her old age, how do you see the rest of her life progressing after the events of the novel? What could Caleb have accomplished had his story not ended so early?**

I think I have let Bethia speak for me on this. He might have had an immense impact. The fact that Thomas Danforth, who was an esteemed jurist and political leader, had charge of him at the time of his death is highly significant. Danforth would not have been involved unless Caleb was considered a promising young man. And Caleb's own achievements as a scholar support that view.

**Q. As a writer, your work includes both fiction and nonfiction, covering seventeenth-century America to modern life in the Middle East. As a reader, are your interests as broad or do your tastes remain more constant? What is your favorite book?**

At this moment in my life I would have to say *Gilead* by Marilynne Robinson. I do read widely, including children's and young adult literature, which I read to and with my sons. I admire these books a great deal because they understand the virtues of great plotting and the fundamental importance of story.

**Q. What are the different emotional costs and rewards that come with writing fiction as opposed to journalism? Do you feel that your strengths as a journalist are the same as your strengths as a novelist?**

To be quite frank I think my greatest strength as a journalist was being able to talk my way into tough situations and put up with uncomfortable conditions for weeks on end. If you could actually show up—be there for the coup or the firefight or the disaster—that was 90 percent of it. The events were so dramatic, the human predicaments so poignant and tragic, it didn't actually require much skill to write about them.

**Q. What is your next project?**

Another historical novel. And that's all I have to say about it at this point.

## About the Book: Book Reviews

**New York Times review, May 13, 2011**

**Geraldine Brooks's Pilgrims and Indians**

**By Jane Smiley**

Geraldine Brooks's new novel, "Caleb's Crossing," her fourth in a decade, is a short and seemingly modest historical work — no kings, no famous events — told by an equally modest narrator who does not go on to become acquainted with, say, the infant Benjamin Franklin. Bethia Mayfield's given name means "servant of Jehovah," and Bethia means to abide by the rules of her family and her Puritan religious affiliation. But even as she begins writing her confession on precious scraps of scavenged paper, she is transgressing the boundaries her father and older brother consider appropriate for a woman — and they have God's word on this.

It is 1660. Bethia is part of a community that has broken away from John Winthrop's colony in Massachusetts Bay and settled on Martha's Vineyard. Her father is the village "liberal" who doesn't believe in stealing from or slaughtering the local Indians, but he faces tensions from both sides. Some of the Wampanoag are distrustful, and another influential family, the Aldens, would like to get rid of the indigenous population altogether.

Bethia's concerns are at first domestic ones: her beloved mother has died in childbirth, leaving Bethia in charge of the baby and the household. Her father is burdened with farm work, with missionary work and with preparing his son, Makepeace, for matriculation on the mainland, at Harvard. Bethia knows she is likely destined for an arranged marriage to a good-natured local fellow, Noah Merry. Given her upbringing, she is not entirely in touch with her feelings, but she does recognize that she is quite fond of an Indian boy she meets and talks to from time to time, Cheeshahteumauck, the nephew of the most powerful (and suspicious) local pawaaw, or priest-healer. Bethia thinks it may be this friendship, and the Wampanoag rituals she has allowed herself to witness out of curiosity (or what we may call intelligence and a sense of adventure), that has caused God to punish her by killing her mother.

In "Caleb's Crossing," Brooks returns to the time period and some of the issues she explored in "Year of Wonders," a novel that takes place in a 17th-century English town ravaged by the plague, told in the first person by a young servant girl. The setting of this new novel is, however, not an earthly hell but a version of paradise, fertile and beautiful. For most of the

narrative, Bethia's conflicts are internal: how can she teach herself to exist within the narrow confines of the lives women in her world are expected to lead?

The important difference between this novel and "Year of Wonders" is that in "Caleb's Crossing" Brooks gives her narrator not only a voice but writing tools. What makes this novel utterly believable is Brooks's mastery of the language Bethia employs in her confessional diary. Bethia's inner conflict, for example, is clearly expressed by her automatic use of phrases like "already the Lord's Day is upon us" or "I went on, dutiful, trying to keep in mind what father preached, that all of this was God's plan, not his, nor his father's nor any man's." But she also calls sheep "tegs" and barrels "butts" and the Indians "salvages." Her archaic usages ("misliked," "alas") bring the reader much more fully into her consciousness and her world than the plainer and less well-researched style more common to popular historical novels, where the characters seem to be much like ourselves, although wearing weirder clothes. A serious historical novel like "Caleb's Crossing" always proposes that consciousness is at least in part a function of language, and that as language changes, so does thought, understanding, identity. The triumph of "Caleb's Crossing" is that Bethia succeeds as a convincing woman of her time, and also in communicating across centuries of change in circumstance, custom and language. She tells a story that is suspenseful and involving. It is also a story that is tragically recognizable and deeply sad.

We know that the Wampanoag did not retain control of their lands. When Cheeshahteumauck elects to change his name to Caleb and study English, Latin, Greek and Hebrew with Bethia's father, it is in some ways a natural choice for him. Like his uncle, he is interested in power, and he understands that the "Coatmen" have powers the Wampanoag do not. But he is a young man, strong and athletic, and he doesn't foresee the costs of those powers. He only knows that he excels: he's a much more apt student than Bethia's brother, and once he gets to Cambridge he takes to his lessons more readily than most of the white students. More important, he allows his different forms of learning to coexist; he observes the monotheistic doctrines of the whites, but thinks he can live outside them, still cognizant of the culture that has shaped him. Brooks depicts Caleb with a light touch; he's an intelligent boy, but still a boy, as much a rube, in his way, as Bethia.

It comes as no surprise that Brooks, who won the Pulitzer Prize in 2006 for her second novel, ["March,"](#) is sublimely proficient at both the details of language and the dynamics of storytelling. Based on the life of Bronson Alcott and, like "Caleb's Crossing," a first-person narrative, "March" is a persuasive and moving depiction of both the Civil War and a complicated marriage. Her third novel, ["People of the Book,"](#) is a tour de force that dramatizes turning points in the history of an illuminated parchment manuscript as they are manifested in tiny bits

of evidence — a trace of salt, a wine stain. Brooks is as adventurous a novelist as she once was a journalist, reporting from the Balkans in the 1990s and writing about the lives of Muslim women in “Nine Parts of Desire.” Her investigative reporting has evolved into exhaustive and meticulous literary research, but her journalistic sense of story has remained vibrant. I can only suppose that years of listening to people talk, of hearing them tell their stories, have given her the same flair Bethia has for eavesdropping on what’s going on around her and learning much more than her companions realize.

Brooks’s intense focus on Bethia doesn’t require that the reader contemplate the larger implications of her narrator’s experience. By the novel’s end, Bethia has attained a measure of freedom and wisdom, the Indian genocide is still in the future and the Puritans’ sense of themselves as the chosen people is still essentially a local inconvenience. Bethia and her family live at the easternmost edge of a continent as yet unconquered. But Brooks, in her luminous and suggestive way, doesn’t seem to mind if the reader infers that all the issues Bethia wonders about have been present in our nation since the very beginning, that they remain today and that an honest depiction of them is a good thing.

“Caleb’s Crossing” could not be more enlightening and involving. Beautifully written from beginning to end, it reconfirms Geraldine Brooks’s reputation as one of our most supple and insightful novelists.

*Jane Smiley is the author of “Private Life,” “A Good Horse” and many other works of fiction and nonfiction.*

Washington Times review, July 29, 2011

**Caleb's Crossing Review**  
**By Stephanie Peutsch**

Australian-born [Geraldine Brooks](#) began her career as a journalist and has found considerable success in this country as a writer of fiction. Her first novel, "Year of Wonders," was set in a small town in 17th-century [England](#) during an outbreak of the plague. She won a 2006 Pulitzer Prize for "[March](#)," in which she imagined the adventures of the absent Army-chaplain father and the inner life of the careworn mother from "Little Women" (a book she has said in interviews that she cherished during her girlhood). "People of the Book" was an ambitious work, weaving together the journeys of a brilliantly illustrated ancient Haggadah and the young rare-book expert hired to evaluate it in war-torn Sarajevo.

Her new book, "[Caleb's Crossing](#)," has a similarly exotic subject. It is, according to the author's note with which it begins, "inspired by the life of [Caleb Cheeshahteumuck](#), a member of the Wopanaak tribe of Noepe (Martha's Vineyard), born circa 1646, and the first American Indian to graduate from Harvard College."

Little is known about the real-life [Caleb](#), though the simple fact of his graduation from [Harvard](#) in 1665 intrigues. The university had been established six years after the founding of the Massachusetts Bay Colony with the purpose of educating "English and Indian youth." One of its early sources of funding was a missionary group hoping to spread Christianity to create young leaders who could take its message back to their American Indian communities.

In fact, another Martha's Vineyard Indian attended [Harvard](#) along with [Caleb](#), his friend [Joel Iacoomes](#). On a visit home shortly before graduation, he was shipwrecked and killed. At its 360th commencement in May, the university awarded an honorary diploma in his name. By an extraordinary coincidence, just as "[Caleb's Crossing](#)" was appearing this spring, a young woman named [Tiffany Smalley](#) became the first Martha's Vineyard Wopanaak Indian since [Caleb](#) to receive an undergraduate degree at [Harvard](#).

[Caleb's](#) crossing from his American Indian culture to membership in the educational elite of Colonial society is seen through the eyes of a fictional character, [Bethia Mayfield](#), the island-born daughter of an English clergyman. As a child, she meets and secretly becomes friends with [Caleb](#), who later seeks out her father to request instruction from him and comes to live with the family. [Bethia's](#) own life is circumscribed by work (her mother has died, and at age 12,

she runs the household) and by her father's conviction that the learning she craves is for boys only - in particular, her despised elder brother Makepeace.

**Bethia** tells her story in language rich in archaic and Indian words - she eats in the "garth," sets out "the scraps for bever and supper," performs tasks that are by turns "frigging" and "cackhanded" and, at night, sleeps in a "shakedown." Later, she takes employment in Cambridge, where "since the townsfolk do not trouble where they tip their slops, the air reeks, and everywhere the middens rise, rotting in steaming piles of clutter and muck." Canoes are "mishoons," Indian spiritual leaders are "pawaaws," and their homes are "wetus." On almost every page are richly evocative and often unfamiliar words.

Despite this archaic language, **Bethia** thinks like a modern girl. She frets that "from birth, others [have] ordained my life's every detail" and wonders if the man she marries will "put a bridle on my mind and a branks upon my tongue?" She chafes not just at the multiple constraints on her life but also against the conviction among the English that the practices of their Indian neighbors are diabolical. When she happens upon an Indian celebration, what she observes strikes her not as strange or wicked but as "stately, dignified, entirely graceful." She finds in it "power, spiritual power" which speaks to her far more than her own community's "austere worship."

This cultural clash between 17th-century Calvinism and American Indian spirituality is the fascinating subject at the heart of "**Caleb's Crossing**." To many readers, though, the mindset of **Bethia's** Puritan community will seem as foreign as the Indian religion of **Caleb's** people. **Bethia**, with her frustrations at home and her attraction to **Caleb**, seems to be more a mouthpiece for modern attitudes than a flesh-and-blood character.

Certainly women have long struggled with the expectations placed on them for mild manners, docile faith and willing subservience - **Jo March** comes to mind. But **Jo** is a character so real she practically leaps off the pages of "Little Women." **Bethia**, whose thoughts "veer wildly," who feels "the ground shift uncertainly," whose cheeks are often "on fire," and whose heart "flutters" and "thunders," never shakes off these platitudes to become the living, breathing character who might help us understand a compelling aspect of our history or, more important still in a work of fiction, truly move us.

## Review by the American Indians in Literature, January 9, 2012

### CALEB'S CROSSING By Debbie Reese

Prompted by a friend, I finally read *Caleb's Crossing*. Written by acclaimed author Geraldine Brooks (she won the Pulitzer Prize in 2006 for *March*), I found it more than disappointing.

The Caleb in the title is Caleb Cheeshahteumauk. He was the first American Indian to graduate from Harvard, way back in 1646. But, as Brooks tells us, Cheeshahteumauk was the *inspiration* for the Caleb in her story. She's careful to tell us this is fiction. She's making up all kinds of things about him.

Her Caleb gets that name from Bethia, the protagonist. She names him. He calls her Storm Eyes. It is her teachings that bring him to the notice of her father (a minister) who brings him into their home for education and enlightenment. They rescue and convert this heathen salvage (oh, I forgot... her father insists they call them by their tribal name rather than salvage).

The real Cheeshahteumauk died soon after he graduated from Harvard.

In *Caleb's Crossing*, Bethia saves Caleb on his death bed. She does that by visiting his pagan uncle and going through a ceremony that she cannot disclose (cleverly can't disclose). After that, she goes to Caleb and whispers to him, in Wampanoag, verses she's learned from that pagan uncle. This comforts him tremendously ("the lines of pain of a sudden all erased" p. 297) and then she lights a bundle of herbs and waves them around the room. Last, she puts a wampum belt on his chest. With his last breaths he sings his death song.

That isn't the first time Bethia goes Native. She did it early in the novel, too, when she comes upon a village where the people are dancing. She removes her sleeves, hose, and shoes and "found the rhythm. Thought ceased, and an animal sense drove me until, in the end, I danced with abandon." (pp 30-31).

Early in the book when I read the passages where Bethia first looks at the Indian she would name Caleb, it was like reading one of those bodice rippers you get at the grocery store, where a white woman gazes at the body of the Indian man shown on the cover. It was hard, in other words, for me to take this novel seriously.

I asked colleagues who study Native literature about *Caleb's Crossing*, and of the several who responded, nobody defended it. Indeed, one pointed to the USA Today review that said the novel is a mashup of *Avatar* and *Dances with Wolves*. (For those who don't know, both of those films are much derided within Native circles.) Click [here](#) to read the review in USA Today.

I don't know why the novel is called *Caleb's Crossing*. It is far more about Bethia than Caleb. The answer may be on page 230, where Bethia and Master Corlett (he runs the prep school that Caleb goes to prior to going to Harvard) are talking about President Chauncy (he runs the Indian College at Harvard) who, Corlett says "has come to think of the entire venture as a kind of milch cow" (p 230).

Looking at the reviews of the novel, I think that Caleb is a milch cow for Brooks and her publisher! I wish she hadn't used Caleb Cheeshahteamuak as she did. She could have chosen a different name for that character and still told the story she tells. In the Author's Note (page ix), she writes:

I have presumed to give Caleb's name to my imagined character in the hope of honoring the struggle, sacrifice and achievement of this remarkable young scholar.

Unfortunately for all of us, I think her book dishonors him and his achievements in the same ways that stereotypical mascots are said to "honor" American Indians. The thing is that people do really want to know about American Indians. There are better places to go for that knowledge and there are ways to become more informed and critical readers of these 'honorable' portrayals. One place to start is by reading articles in journals like *Studies in American Indian Literatures*. If more writers and editors spent time with critical works like those found there, the result would be better literature for all of us.

## Discussion Questions from Penguin

[http://www.us.penguin.com/static/rguides/us/calebs\\_crossing.html](http://www.us.penguin.com/static/rguides/us/calebs_crossing.html)

1. In discussing the purchase of the island from the Wampanoag, Bethia's father says, "some now say that [the sonquem] did not fully understand that we meant to keep the land from them forever. Be that as it may, what's done is done and it was done lawfully" (p. 9). Do you agree with his opinion?
2. With that in mind, examine Caleb's view of the settlers on p. 143-144. Why does he say that the sound of their "boots, boots, and more boots" (p. 143) moved him to cross cultures and adopt Christianity? Contrast this with Tequamuck's reaction to the settlers' arrival (p. 295). Placed in their situation, what would you have felt?
3. Look at Bethia's discussion of the question "Who are we?" at the top of p. 57. Of the options that she offers, which seems most true to you? Are there other options you would add to her list?
4. On p. 285, Joseph Dudley discusses the philosophical question of the Golden Mean, which suggests that the ideal behavior is the middle point between extremes. But he then goes on to argue against this belief, stating that, in fact, there is no middle point between extremes such as "good and evil, truth and falsehood." Which perspective do you agree with?
5. Compared with those in her community, Bethia is remarkably unprejudiced in her view of the Wampanoag. Did you grow up surrounded by prejudices you disagreed with? How did this affect you? Conversely, did you have prejudices in your youth that you've since overcome?
6. Bethia sees her mother's silence as a great strength and tool in dealing with society, particularly as a woman in a male-dominated culture. However, while Bethia repeatedly tries to emulate this behavior, she's often overcome by her own passionate opinions. Find an example where Bethia's boldness in stating her mind is a good thing, and an example where it brings her trouble. Have you ever wished you had spoken when instead you stayed quiet -- or wished you had stayed quiet instead of having spoken your mind?

7. The Wampanoag and the Puritans have very different views on raising children. Describe the differences you see between the two and which method you believe is healthier. Are Caleb and Bethia the typical product of their respective societies?

8. Bethia acknowledges that her own religion could seem as crazy to Caleb as his does to her: "Of course, I thought it all outlandish. But...it came to me that our story of a burning bush and a parted sea might also seem fabulous, to one not raised up knowing it was true" (p. 35). In the end, Caleb does come to accept Bethia's religion, and she develops a kinder attitude toward him. Have you or anyone you know ever converted religions? Have you grown interested in or accepting of religions or practices that initially struck you as strange or foreign?

9. When visiting Italy, Bethia writes of feeling overwhelmed by how different it was from her own home. Have you ever had a similar experience when traveling somewhere new? Did your travels make you see your own home in a new light? Does Bethia's visit to Italy change her beliefs or behavior?

10. Unlike Bethia, her son has no interest in traveling to older countries like Italy, saying that "everything there is done and built and finished. I like it here, where we can make and do for ourselves" (p. 274). Is this sense of independence and potential still true of the United States today?

11. Both Bethia and Caleb struggle against the limits and expectations placed on them by society. How are their experiences similar? How are they different? Who faces the greater challenge?

## Book Summary from Penguin

[http://www.us.penguin.com/static/rguides/us/calebs\\_crossing.html](http://www.us.penguin.com/static/rguides/us/calebs_crossing.html)

Living in the isolated Puritan settlement of Great Harbor on Martha's Vineyard, Bethia Mayfield, the bright young daughter of the local minister, balances her strict religion with a passionate love of nature and a growing curiosity about the culture of the Wampanoag tribe that populates the island. When Bethia secretly strikes up a friendship with a young Wampanoag named Caleb, she unknowingly begins a journey that will shape her life. Intelligent, independent, and kind, Bethia is the narrator and the heart of Geraldine Brooks's stunning new novel, *Caleb's Crossing*, the story of Caleb Cheeshahteumauk, who in 1665 became the very first Native American to graduate from Harvard.

Torn between her commitment to her religion and her family and her longing for freedom and intellectual fulfillment, Bethia is a young woman built of contradictory desires. With Caleb, she finds an escape from her stern and pious community in which women are expected to be silent and subservient, the community that denies Bethia an education simply because of her gender. But for all the freedom that Caleb inspires in her, he struggles to understand her dogged sense of duty and deference. Even as he chooses to adopt her religion, he encourages her to rebel and questions the obedience at the root of her faith.

Their relationship is soon upended as Caleb comes to live with Bethia's family so that he can be groomed to enter a preparatory school in Cambridge along with her elder brother, Makepeace. Living under the same roof yet forced to keep their earlier friendship hidden, Bethia watches Caleb blossom under the tutelage she so craves. When a tragedy befalls the Mayfield family, Makepeace's hope for entering Harvard suddenly rests on Bethia's shoulders, demanding that she sacrifice her pride and her freedom to make his education possible. The shifting boundaries of Bethia's complex and profound relationship with Caleb change with their arrival together in Cambridge; as he enters school, Bethia becomes an indentured servant, and while their lives move in markedly different directions, their friendship endures.

*Caleb's Crossing* follows Bethia and Caleb from Grand Harbor to Cambridge and beyond, charting not only their crossing of the stretch of ocean between island and mainland but of the vast—and sometimes unbridgeable—expanse between Native American and white settler, between pagan and Christian, and between male and female. Brooks has built a world of emotion, struggle, and natural beauty in which the balance between the traditions of the past and the potential of the future are captured in the lives of two young friends.