

Nathaniel Hawthorne and Sophia · Ann Struthers

At the Old Manse, so as not to be distracted by the view—
willow trees next to the house,
orchard below, river beyond—he built
a folding desk large enough for inkpot and paper
into the blank wall by the fireplace.

They kept a journal together, answering and adding to
each other's entries. After her miscarriage
they stood by the study window, watching
sunset wrinkle across the water. She inscribed
the glass with her diamond,
"Man's accidents are God's purposes.
Sophia A. Hawthorne, 1843." He responded,
"The smallest twig leans clear against the sky."
She added, "Inscribed by my husband at sunset.
April 3rd. In the gold light."

From the beginning the two Puritans
were astonished to find sex fulfilling,
delightful. They discovered company
with each other more satisfying than the garden
of pears and quinces, their limbs entwined,
passion growing, but the fruit
would not be excluded. ". . . the thump
of a great apple was audible, falling without a breath
of wind from the mere necessity of perfect ripeness."

In July he wrote in the journal, "God bless us
and keep us; for there is something more awful
in happiness than in sorrow."