

"Moss, moss," whispered the breathless woman.
 "To stow and carry your little shaver in. . . ."

The twilight seethed black before Gail's eyes. He tried to formulate the ghostly self-accusation of how far more ruthless and persistent was the furtive, humble instinct of creation in woman, than its once-heightened counterpart in him, a man. But his mad groping only melted into the resigned syllables:

"Let's sleep — like the others. . . . Fi . . . the morning."

And next he and Clara, side by side, were shouldering down into their sheep-skin bags.

The cloth walls loomed out phosphorescent in the moonless night. They tinged with silver, into a fretted web; edges of the rents burned in gold — at last a pallor. No one arose or spoke. Bleven tossed, crackling with the fever of his blood-poisoning. Occasionally a groan broke Arlene's muteness. Once Pete had sobbed. . . . Anon it was night again. Anon the tent was a house iridescent.

Clara had swung bolt upright.

"It was only the rest we needed," she sighed drearily.
 "Didn't I see birches in a draw beyond here? . . . A woman may think she wants to die, but life — the life in her — is too strong."

She withdrew from her bag, picked up the axe. Gail followed her, silent, in a vague access of awe at her unquenchable ache to survive. Motherhood, by its very genius, could not concede succumbing. The divinity of sex! . . . Hardly an atom of frost burred over the three remaining bags, usually so white and crusted. But outside, in the fusing blare of noon, the day was warmer.

Then Clara and Gail were alternately hurling the axe