

Hilliard laughed an explosive and excited laugh. "No almighty gladder than I shall be to be coming back again," he prophesied.

But to prophesy is a mistake. One should leave the future humbly on the knees of the gods. That night, when Hilliard was lying wakeful in his berth listening to the click of rails, the old trapper lay under the driving snow. But he was not wakeful. He slept with no visions of gold or love, a frozen and untroubled sleep. He had caught his foot in a trap, and the blizzard had found him there and had taken mercy on his pain. They did not find his body until spring, and then Cosme's letter to Sheila lay wet and withered in his pocket.