

While the voyageur limped across the slopes of their own peak, he revolved in his harried brain the circle of things that had persistently obsessed him during the famine period.

He thought of the women, of fire, of food, and lastly of Dane.

The whole cosmos of existence had come to be embraced in those four ideas.

The snow, the cold, the glaciers, the winter aurora had no part in it. All other attributes and complexities of nature and the universe were extraneous considerations that never troubled him.

Several times, he remembered, Mavor had proposed making a dash on snowshoes across the Pelly basin. As well die in the attempt, he had argued, because death had marked them where they were. But Félix would never hear of it. Such a course would be only throwing themselves to destruction. While here they might crouch from destruction. Here they could make some pretence of eating. Here, at least, they were warm. And always in such counselings the pin point to which Bruneau's hopes drew was the cabin upon the other peak.

He wondered if ever before human stomachs had been so abused. Yet now for him this thing was past. Though racked with pain, he experienced a strange thrill of content. Had he been certain that Dane would arrive in time to save the others, or even in time to save the women, he could have rejoiced.