

C. H. JOLLEY

THE MEN OF HUNTSVILLE

*And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.*

Tennyson

The men of Huntsville proper
Found her there —
Halfway down the Glacier's eastward face
With three thick feet of glacial glass
Separating Huntsville's Priesthood
From its past.

They had not often walked
The frozen body that lay between
Their homes and those of the Brigham Saints
(Who were sent to that far place
To civilize the Savage and grow wheat
For a Mormon Prophet who died.
The Prophet gone,
Wheat enough grown in the easier valleys,
And the Lamanite long since dead of his savior's pox,
The people of Brigham had remained
To bear their children,
Fill their tiny chapel's yard,
And walk the umbilical path
To Huntsville.)

John Jacob McKay was the first to know
The naked body and crystalline shroud,
Whose existence not one man of Huntsville
Would publicly allow,
But, quiet, in the later evening, wondered at,
While longing for the Glacier's eastward height,
And the naked woman,
And John McKay's memory.
So John Jacob walked the Glacier
And searched the ice where he'd been before —
To prove the point
And make right what the Priesthood wrongly hoped —
But could not find her
Nor any trace of what he knew he'd known.
Whether shifting frost,
The floe's further slide down the mountain,
Or snow-blind memory was to blame,
John Jacob McKay stumbled back from the Glacier,
After three fruitless years of desperate search
Between Huntsville and Brigham,
To die.

Now and again other men,
Lost in its ecstasy of white and counterfeit heat,
Wandered out of the Glacier
To babble nonsense stanzas
Of a Desdemona and her caucasian lover
Snared in passionless embrace.
And with each new telling of the incredible tale
The men of Huntsville wondered
From behind their bolted doors
(The rough-hewn pioneer portals
Which contained the men and passion
That should have, elsewhere, leaped into the streets,
Through the town, and up the slopes —
To melt the mountain if they must,
But to see,
To see!
To know the naked creature
As they dreamed McKay had known her
Long before)
In the quiet night,
In Huntsville,
And alone.

Until, oneday, word was sent from Brigham —
Down the path that traced the Glacier's southern edge —
That a boy was lost somewhere on the mountain
And they who dug the graves of Brigham
Would search westward down to Huntsville,
While the Huntsville Saints should scout eastward to them,
With the Glacier
(The Glacier!)
The Glacier and its treasure
In between.