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The Rift

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THE RIFT

We stood quite still at first. They said nothing, only their eyes beseeching, saying all. Clinging to one another by means of hand holding hand, they fused into one. I could no longer discern man from woman, husband from wife.

The earth began at last to shake. I sighed with relief and sank to my knees. It started quite gently with a gradual movement, no more noticeable than the good-night-sleep-tight message of the day lily. It just started, that's all. But it grew quickly and as it strengthened I took its shifting into my spine and held it there, wincing at its pain and unspeakable beauty. At the climax I heard something like my voice cry out with terror. My hands were bloodied as I lifted them to cover my face.

Later, men and women gathered about me, murmuring adulations and eulogies. I shivered in hearing them speak thus. Feeling strong man-hands on my arms I began the resistance. Light crawled in through my eyelids and tempted me to behold her boldly and without fear. I yielded and smiled at what lay before me.

All was green and silver where I knelt. Though I saw no one about me, I felt their body-warmth and heard the strains of their voices. Stillness, save the voices, prevailed. Then I turned my head in time to my favorite child tune with a movement full of love for its rhyme and melody.

Just beyond the crevice they stood in the same posture as before. Fog and blur engulfed their image and their outline was indistinct. Multiplying my stare, their eyes took on a singular golden cast. It first pierced my forehead, then my head and heart, finally racing through my veins. With a movement that was really no movement, they began to sink into the earth. I lifted my hands with the now dried blood clutching at the palms hoping to delay them with pity of my pain. I saw they crumbled oblivious to my mute plea. After a time there was only the fog and the blur.

Linda Phillips '73