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Among the Cliff Dwellings

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Among the Cliff Dwellings

HERE sits the wind with hollow thoughts,
 Brooding into the quiet day
 Upon the long forgotten host of men
 Who toiled with patient hands
 To carve their peace and comfort from the rock.

Then the wind rises, singing, "Lost, all lost,"
 And goes its way.
 The setting sun once lifts its head in hope
 And warms the quiet ruin to a glow.
 In vain—the reaching shadows of the hills
 Fold like a mystic garment—are supreme.

But in the twilight come the women back,
 Poor searching ghosts, to find what they have left.
 Their feet fall lightly, and they leave no track,
 Nor find a trace of that from which they went.
 Into the night they creep, into the caves
 And in and out along the cliff's rough arm—
 Poor shadows, toiling, hands that cannot touch,
 Their hearts now being dust.

In the deep midnight, unaware of stars,
 The women rise, and in a host depart;
 The women—or the wind—tonelessly wailing, "Lost!"
 And, "Lost, all lost!"

Now are the caves alone again with Time—
 Time and the moon, which too has long been dead.
 The hills their shadows keep, and no dust stirs
 Along the tired floors within the cliff.

DOROTHY ELLIS.