Ellis Wyatt or Ken Danagger—who happens to be tone deaf—than with men like Mort Liddy and Balph Eubank? Whether it's a symphony or a coal mine, all work is an act of creating and comes from the same source: from an inviolate capacity to see through one's own eyes—which means: the capacity to perform a rational identification—which means: the capacity to see, to connect and to make what had not been seen, connected and made before. That shining vision which they talk about as belonging to the authors of symphonies and novels—what do they think is the driving faculty of men who discovered how to use oil, how to run a mine, how to build an electric motor? That sacred fire which is said to burn within musicians and poets—what do they suppose moves an industrialist to defy the whole world for the sake of his new metal, as the inventors of the airplane, the builders of the railroads, the discoverers of new germs or new continents have done through all the ages? . . . An intransigent devotion to the pursuit of truth, Miss Taggart? Have you heard the moralists and the art lovers of the centuries talk about the artist's intransigent devotion to the pursuit of truth? Name me a greater example of such devotion than the act of a man who says that the earth does turn, or the act of a man who says that an alloy of steel and copper has certain properties which enable it to do certain things, and it *is* and *does*—and let the world rack him or ruin him, he will not bear false witness to the evidence of his mind! *This,* Miss Taggart, this sort of spirit, courage and love for truth—as against a sloppy bum who goes around proudly assuring you that he has almost reached the perfection of a lunatic, because he's an artist who hasn't the faintest idea what his art work is or means, he's not restrained by such crude concepts as 'being' or 'meaning,' he's the vehicle of higher mysteries, he doesn't know how he created his work or why, it just came out of him spontaneously, like vomit out of a drunkard, he did not think, he wouldn't stoop to thinking, he just *felt* it, all he has to do is feel—he *feels,* the flabby, loose-mouthed, shifty-eyed, drooling, shivering, uncongealed bastard! I, who know what discipline, what effort, what tension of mind, what unrelenting strain upon one's power of clarity are needed to produce a work of art—I, who know that it requires a labor which makes a chain gang look like rest and a severity no army-drilling sadist could impose—I'll take the operator of a coal mine over any walking vehicle of higher mysteries. The operator knows that it's not his feelings that keep the coal carts moving under the earth—and he knows what does keep them moving. Feelings? Oh yes, we do feel, he, you and I—we are, in fact, the only people capable of feeling—and we know where our feelings come from. But what we did not know and have delayed learning for too long is the nature of those who claim that they cannot account for their feelings. We did not know what it is that they feel. We are learning it now. It was a costly error. And those most guilty of it, will pay the hardest price—as, in justice, they must. Those most guilty of it were the real artists, who will now see that they are first to be exterminated and that they had prepared, the triumph of their own exterminators by helping to destroy their only protectors. For if there is more tragic a fool than the businessman

who doesn't know that he's an exponent of man's highest creative spirit—it's the artist who thinks that the businessman is his enemy."

It was true—she thought, when she walked through the streets of the valley, looking with a child's excitement at the shop windows sparkling in the sun—that the businesses here had the purposeful selectiveness of art—and that the art—she thought, when she sat in the darkness of a clapboard concert hall, listening to the controlled violence and the mathematical precision of Halley's music—had the stern discipline of business.

Both had the radiance of engineering—she thought, when she sat among rows of benches under the open sky, watching Kay Ludlow on the stage. It was an experience she had not known since childhood—the experience of being held for three hours by a play that told a story she had not seen before, in lines she had not heard, uttering a theme that had not been picked from the hand-me-downs of the centuries. It was the forgotten delight of being held in rapt attention by the rems of the ingenious, the unexpected, the logical, the purposeful, the new—and of seeing it embodied in a performance of superlative artistry by a woman playing a character whose beauty of spirit matched her own physical perfection.

"That's why I'm here, Miss Taggart," said Kay Ludlow, smiling in answer to her comment, after the performance. "Whatever quality of human greatness I have the talent to portray—*that* was the quality the outer world sought to degrade. They let me play nothing but symbols of depravity, nothing but harlots, dissipation-chasers and home-wreckers, always to be beaten at the end by the little girl next door, personifying the virtue of mediocrity. They used my talent—for the defamation of itself. That was why I quit."

Not since childhood, thought Dagny, had she felt that sense of exhilaration after witnessing the performance of a play—the sense that life held things worth reaching, not the sense of having studied some aspect of a sewer there had been no reason to see. As the audience filed away into the darkness from the lighted rows of benches, she noticed Ellis Wyatt, Judge Narragansett, Ken Danagger, men who had once been said to despise all forms of art.

The last image she caught, that evening, was the sight of two tall, straight, slender figures walking away together down a trail among the rocks, with the beam of a spotlight gashing once on the gold of their hair. They were Kay Ludlow and Ragnar Danneskjöld—and she wondered whether she could bear to return to a world where these were the two doomed to destruction.

The recaptured sense of her own childhood kept coming back to her whenever she met the two sons of the young woman who owned the bakery shop. She often saw them wandering down the trails of the valley—two fearless beings, aged seven and four. They seemed to face life as she had faced it. They did not have the look she had seen in the children of the outer world—a look of fear, half-secretive, half-sneering, the look of a child's defense against an adult, the look of a being in the process of discovering that he is hearing lies and of learning to feel hatred. The two boys had the open, joyous, friendly confidence of kittens who do not expect to get hurt, they had an