

appeared to be old. They had a way of hunching over, but maybe that was because of the hole, it was awkwardly placed halfway up the hill on an incline. Then they all came out of the hole and closed it off with a wooden lid.

They wound their way around the hill and I followed them, moving along the lines of blackberry bushes, which made a concentric circle around the hill. Once I caught up with them, maybe thirty yards off to their side, they started to sense me and a few looked at me, I thought I was well concealed, but they could clearly see me through the bushes, and made no motions to me, so I continued walking and looking at them, making no sign to them either. For some reason, it felt that they should say hi to me, you'd think the burden of introduction would be on the larger group rather than one person, but I had forgotten that I could play the role of the lost individual, simply looking for directions, instead I followed along as they walked down the hill. In a short time, they were all looking at me, walking at my same pace, and they were hunched over, something simian about this. They had an inscrutable look in their eyes, like animals. Then they wound around the hill again and their path went down a dark ravine and they disappeared from view.

I hurried to follow them. I went down the dark ravine and went into a cave at the end. The men were gathered inside, standing in a circle with their heads together. There was little light and no sense of human presence. It was cold and they stood like stones. One man who had a ripped sleeve turned to me and said harshly, "Shut the door." He held a metal tube in his hand.

I stepped back. "You want me to shut the door?"

It turned out that I had misheard him because the man with the ripped sleeve repeated himself and it was in French, "C'est de dore."

I didn't know, still don't, what "de dore" would mean.

I departed the cave and walked on the pathway. I left the ravine and stood aside. I thought of going back in, maybe that was rude to run away. But