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POWER

Geoffrey Johnson

For days, through breakdown of electric power, We shared the joys of going primitive. In isolation of the dark and snow Half-lit by hearth-fire, cavemen we became, Our only problems those of warmth and food. More intimate, lovelier for the dearth of light The family texture felt; we finger-read What depths of bear-cub fur our children wore, Sign-language spoke our heart's beatitude.

It was a dream deep down ancestral pasts
Far older than the Seven Sleepers' Cavern
We sheltered in. But when the power came back
Sudden as daylight, with the radio-news
Of nuclear bomb-tests in as full a flood,
We woke and stared, then laughed ashamed, as though
Our revels in that backward episode
Were best forgotten. How we brisked about
Rejoicing to be civilized once more —
Even in world whose madness froze the blood.