Beautifully, beautifully.

And he bent slowly over, a

"There they are, you two, on the battlements, and I think my eyes are moving under the half-down lids. "No, they're in love, these two."

"For heavenly sake," said Juliet, "did we ever make them crawl down there?"

"No, they've been there for years and years," said Anna.

"You can't tell me they've been in that cistern for years, living together," protested Juliet.

"Did I say they were alive?" asked Anna, surprised. "Oh, but no. They're dead."

The eels scrambled in wild, pushing pellets down the window. Drops came and joined with others and made streaks. You can't tell me they've been in that cistern for years, living together," protested Juliet.

"Yes," said Anna, pleasantly. "He's dead and she's dead. This seemed to satisfy her; it was a nice discovery, and she was proud of it. "He looks like a very lonely man who never traveled in all his life."

"He looks like the kind of man who never traveled but wanted to. You know by his eyes."

"How do you know?"

"Yes. Very ill and very handsome. You know how it is with a man made handsome by illness? Illness brings out the coarse hand."

"For five years." Anna talked softly, with her eyelids rising and falling, as if she were about to tell a long story and knew it and wanted to work into it slowly, and then faster and then faster, until the very momentum of the story would carry her on, with her eyes wide and her lips parted. But now it was slowly, with only a slight fever to the telling. "Five years ago this man was walking along a street and he knew he'd been walking the same street on many nights and he'd go on walking it, so he came to a manhole cover, one of those big iron waffles in the center of the street, and he heard the river rushing under his feet, under the metal cover, rushing toward the sea."

Anna put out her right hand. "And he slowly and lifted up the cistern lid and looked down at the rushing foam and the water, and he thought of someone he wanted to love and couldn't, and then he swung himself onto the iron range and walked down them until he was all gone. . . ."

"And what about her?" asked Juliet, busy. "When'd she die?"

"I'm not sure. She's new. She's just dead, now. But she is dead. Beautifully, beautifully dead."

Anna admired the image she had in her mind. "It takes death to make a woman really beautiful, and it takes death by drowning to make her most beautiful of all. Then all the stiffness is taken out of her, and her hair hangs up on the water like a drift of smoke."

She nodded her head, amusedly. "All the schools and etiquettes and teachings in the world can't make a woman more in this dreamy ease, supple and ripply and fine."

Anna tried to show how fine, how ripply, how graceful, with her broad, coarse hand.

"He'd been waiting for her, for five years. But she didn't know where he was till now. So there are they, and will be, from now on. . . . In the spring season they'll live. But in the dry seasons—that's sometimes months—they'll lie in little hidden niches, like those Japanese water flowers, all dry and compact and old and quiet."

Juliet got up and turned on yet another little lamp in the corner of the dining-room. "I wish you wouldn't talk about it."

Anna laughed. "But let me tell you about how it starts, how they come back to life, and wanted to work into it slowly, and then faster and then faster."

She bent forward, held onto her knees, staring at the street and the cistern mouths. "There they are, down under, dry and quiet, and up above the sky gets electrical and powdery. She threw back her full, graying hair with one hand. "At first all the upper world is pellets. Then there's lightning and thunder and the dry season is over, and the little pellets run along the gutters and get big and fall into the drains. They take gun wappets and theatre tickets with them, and but tran..."